

LEARN FILMMAKING WITH CLAUDE

EPISODE 04

PHASE 1 · MODULE 1 · STORY & WRITING

SCREENPLAY FORMAT

Essay లా రాస్తే ఎవరూ చదవరు.

Course notes & worksheet

Scene heading · Action · Character · Parenthetical
Dialogue



EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

RAJU (40s), lean and tired, counts
three crumpled notes. Nothing more.

RAJU
(whispering)
ఇది ఎవరిది?

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EPISODE 4 AT A GLANCE

Your story is perfect in your head. A producer, an actor or a cinematographer can't see inside it. A screenplay is the shared language that puts your film on paper so everyone can read the same film.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

1. Why scripts are written in a fixed **format**, not as an essay
2. The five elements on every page: **scene heading, action, character, parenthetical, dialogue**
3. How to write action you can **see and hear**, in present tense
4. The **1 page ≈ 1 minute** rule and how to use it
5. How to turn a story paragraph into a formatted scene (Raju, the auto driver)
6. Using Claude as a **script formatter** and screenwriter check
7. The one part only you can write: **silence**

EPISODE	DETAIL
Number	EP 04 · Screenplay Format
Module	Phase 1 · Module 1 · Story & Writing
Builds on	EP 01 Idea vs Story · EP 02 Story Structure · EP 03 Characters
Running example	Raju, the auto driver who finds a lottery ticket
Time needed	30–40 minutes with the worksheet
You need	Your story from EP 01–03, Claude, any screenwriting app or plain text

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

EP 01

Idea vs Story

An idea becomes a story when someone wants something.

EP 02

Structure

Beginning, middle, end: the three-act skeleton.

EP 03

Characters

Want, Need and Wound give the hero life.

EP 04

Screenplay

Put it all on a real page.

CONTENTS

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LESSON 1

WHY FORMAT MATTERS

మీ story మీ head లో perfect గా ఉంది. కానీ ఒక producer కి, ఒక actor కి ఎలా చూపిస్తారు? Essay లా రాస్తే ఎవరూ చదవరు.

A screenplay is a **working document**. Every department reads the same page for different reasons, so the format is fixed and predictable. When the format is right, readers stop noticing it and see only your film.

✗ ESSAY

It was late at night and Raju was very sad because he had earned almost nothing that day. He was tired of his life and worried about his family. While sitting in his auto he suddenly found a lottery ticket and wondered whose it was...

Feelings the camera can't film · past tense · no clear place or time · nobody knows where a scene starts.

✓ SCREENPLAY

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

RAJU (40s), lean and tired,
counts three crumpled notes.
Nothing more.

His fingers find a pink lottery
ticket in the torn seat.

RAJU
(whispering)
ఇది ఎవరిదీ?

Place and time up front · only what we see and hear · the actor knows exactly how to say the line.

WHO READS YOUR PAGE, AND WHAT THEY LOOK FOR

READER	WHAT THEY NEED FROM THE PAGE
Producer	Is the story clear? How many locations, nights, characters? Roughly how long is the film?
Director	What happens in each scene, beat by beat, and what must the audience see?
Actor	Their lines, how to deliver them, and what their character does.
Cinematographer	Interior or exterior, day or night: the lighting plan starts with the scene heading.
Production team	Scene headings become the shooting schedule; page count becomes the budget.

KEY IDEA

Every part of the format has one job. The scene heading says where and when. Action shows what we see and hear. Character, parenthetical and dialogue say who speaks, how, and what.

ANATOMY OF A SCREENPLAY PAGE

Industry pages use a fixed layout: **Courier 12 pt** on a US Letter or A4 page, with each element starting at its own indent. Learn the shape once and every script you read will look familiar.

1.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A narrow street. Shutters down. A single streetlight hums.

RAJU (40s), lean and tired, sits sideways in his auto. He counts three crumpled notes. Nothing more.

He reaches back. His fingers find something in the torn seat – a pink lottery ticket.

RAJU
(whispering)
ఇది ఎవరిదీ?

He looks up and down the empty street.

CUT TO:

- 1 · SCENE HEADING
- 2 · ACTION
- First appearance in CAPS
- 2 · ACTION
- 3 · CHARACTER
- 4 · PARENTHETICAL
- 5 · DIALOGUE
- TRANSITION (optional)

ELEMENT	STARTS AT (FROM PAGE EDGE)	RULE OF THUMB
Scene heading	1.5 in (3.8 cm)	ALL CAPS: INT./EXT. · LOCATION · DAY/NIGHT
Action	1.5 in, to 1 in from the right	Present tense; short paragraphs of 3–4 lines
Character	about 3.7 in (9.4 cm)	ALL CAPS, directly above the line
Parenthetical	about 3.1 in (7.9 cm)	Lower case, in brackets, a few words
Dialogue	2.5 in (6.4 cm), about 3.5 in wide	Exactly what is spoken, nothing else
Transition	right side, about 6 in	CUT TO:, used sparingly

You don't need to set these by hand: any screenwriting app (or Claude, see page 10) applies them for you. Knowing the shape helps you read and check a page at a glance.

SCENE HEADING

Scene heading: ఎక్కడ, ఎప్పుడు. INT - Interior, అంటే లోపల. EXT - Exterior, అంటే బయట. తర్వాత place, day or night.

Also called a **slugline**. It opens every new scene and answers two questions in one line: **where** are we, and **when**?

EXT.

**INTERIOR /
EXTERIOR**

INT = లోపల · EXT =
బయట

CITY STREET

LOCATION

Short and consistent

—

NIGHT

TIME

DAY / NIGHT (or DAWN,
DUSK)

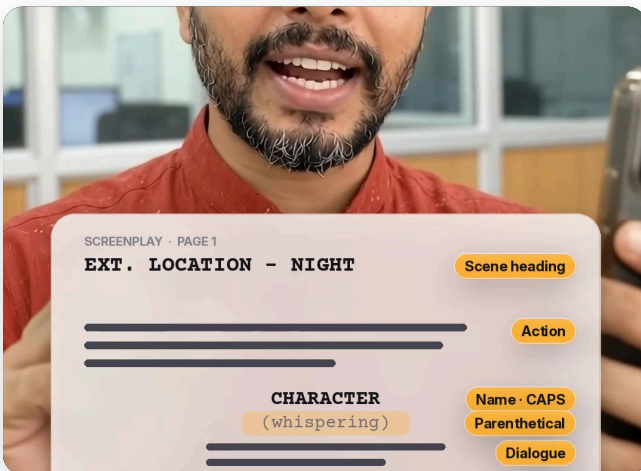
RULES

- Always **ALL CAPS**, starting at the left margin.
- Start a new heading whenever the **place or time changes**.
- Name a location the same way every time (AUTO STAND is always AUTO STAND), because the schedule groups scenes by heading.
- Keep time simple: DAY or NIGHT covers most scenes.
- Inside a moving vehicle at night, the convention is INT. AUTO – NIGHT.

FIX THESE HEADINGS

WEAK	BETTER
Raju's house, evening time	INT. RAJU'S HOUSE - NIGHT
On the road	EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY
Inside the auto, rainy night	INT. AUTO - NIGHT
Market	EXT. VEGETABLE MARKET - DAY

Weather and mood (rainy, tense) go in the action lines, not the heading.



From the episode: the screenplay page builds element by element as each one is explained.

WHY IT MATTERS ON SET

The cinematographer plans the lights from **INT/EXT** and **DAY/NIGHT**. The producer counts how many night exteriors you've written, because they are the most expensive to shoot. One clear line saves a lot of questions.

ACTION LINES

Action: screen మీద ఏం కనిపిస్తుందో, ఏం వినిపిస్తుందో అదే రాయాలి. Present tense లో. Feelings కాదు, చూపించగలిగేది మాత్రమే.

01

Only what we see and hear

If the camera can't film it and the microphone can't record it, it doesn't belong in action.

02

Present tense

The film happens now: "Raju counts", not "Raju counted" or "Raju was counting".

03

Show feelings, don't name them

Give the audience the evidence and let them feel it themselves.

FEELINGS ✗ SHOWABLE ✓

DON'T WRITE	WRITE WHAT THE CAMERA SEES
Raju is sad.	Raju counts three crumpled notes. Nothing more.
He is very tired of his life.	He rubs his eyes, leans his head against the auto's bar, and doesn't move.
He feels guilty about keeping the ticket.	He slips the ticket into his pocket. Takes it out. Looks at the empty street.
The street was scary at night.	A narrow street. Shutters down. A single streetlight hums.
He remembered his friend's betrayal.	His thumb stops on an old photo taped to the meter. He turns it face down.

CRAFT NOTES

- Keep each paragraph to **3–4 lines**. White space makes a page fast to read.
- Write a character's name in **CAPS the first time** they appear, with age in brackets: RAJU (40s).
- Use strong, specific verbs: *slumps, grips, slips* instead of *is sitting, is holding*.
- Sounds that matter can go in caps: **a horn BLARES**.
- No camera directions (CLOSE UP, PAN). That's the director's job.



From the episode: "Raju counts three crumpled notes" shows the sadness without naming it.

CHARACTER · PARENTHETICAL · DIALOGUE

Character name: capital letters లో, dialogue పైన. Dialogue: ఆ character మాట్లాడేది.
 Parenthetical: brackets లో చిన్న direction, ఆ డైలాగు ఎలా అనాలో అని.

RAJU
 (whispering)
 ఇది ఎవరిదీ?

A PASSENGER (50s) taps the
 auto's roof.

PASSENGER (O.S.)
 Station కి వస్తావా?

RAJU
 (pocketing the
 ticket)
 వస్తాను sir. ఎక్కండి.

3 · CHARACTER

The speaker's name in **ALL CAPS**, centred above the line. Use the same name every time.

Extensions: **(V.O.)** voice-over · **(O.S.)** off-screen, heard but not seen · **(CONT'D)** same speaker continues after action.

4 · PARENTHETICAL

A few lower-case words in brackets: *how* the line is said, or a tiny action during it. Use it only when the meaning would otherwise be misread.

5 · DIALOGUE

Exactly what is spoken, in a narrow column. Write it in the language your characters speak; Telugu dialogue in Telugu script is perfectly fine.

DIALOGUE THAT WORKS

HABIT	WHY
Keep lines short	People talk in fragments. Long speeches read like essays.
Don't explain feelings in words	"I am very sad because I earned nothing" is action written as dialogue. Show it instead.
Give each character their own voice	Cover the names: can you still tell who's speaking?
Use parentheticals sparingly	Trust the actor. Two or three per page is plenty.
Read it aloud	If it's hard to say, it's hard to believe.

LESSON 6

THE 1 PAGE $\approx$ 1 MINUTE RULE

Simple rule: ఒక page కి — minimum ఒక minute screen play time.



Because the format is fixed (Courier 12 pt, standard margins), one properly formatted page plays for **roughly one minute** of screen time. Professionals use this rule of thumb to estimate a film's length from its page count.

5-8

pages

a short film or one Reel-length scene

90-120

pages

a typical feature film

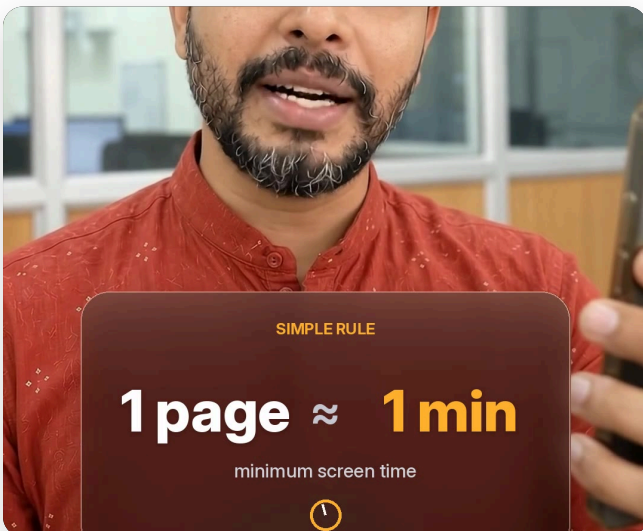
1

page

Raju's ticket scene from this episode

HOW TO USE IT

- **Plan your length.** Want a 5-minute short? Aim for about 5 pages.
- **Spot problems.** A 3-page scene where little happens will drag on screen.
- **Budget and schedule.** Producers count pages per location to plan shooting days.



From the episode: the rule gets its own card, separate from the page.

IT'S AN ESTIMATE, NOT A LAW

Dialogue-heavy pages play faster; pages full of action can play slower. A single line like "The battle rages" could be three minutes on screen. Use the rule to plan, then trust the edit.

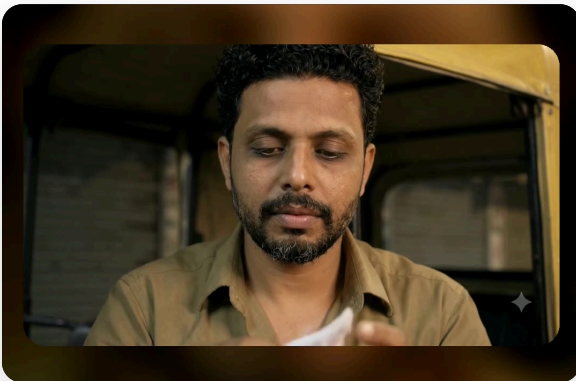
WORKED EXAMPLE

FROM STORY TO SCENE: RAJU

In Episode 2, the auto driver found a lottery ticket in his auto. In Episode 4 we give him a name, **Raju** (every character in a screenplay needs a name), and turn that moment into one formatted page.

BEFORE · STORY

One night an auto driver, tired and worried about money, is sitting in his auto after a bad day. He has earned very little and feels hopeless. Then he finds a lottery ticket stuck in the seat and wonders who it belongs to.



Episode 2: the scene before it became a script.

What changed

"One night... on a street"	→ EXT. CITY STREET – NIGHT
"tired and worried"	→ lean and tired, sits sideways
"earned very little, hopeless"	→ counts three crumpled notes. Nothing more.
"wonders who it belongs to"	→ (whispering) ఇది ఎవరిదీ?

AFTER · SCREENPLAY

1.

EXT. CITY STREET – NIGHT

A narrow street. Shutters down. A single streetlight hums.

RAJU (40s), lean and tired, sits sideways in his auto. He counts three crumpled notes. Nothing more.

He reaches back. His fingers find something in the torn seat – a pink lottery ticket.

RAJU

(whispering)

ఇది ఎవరిదీ?

NOTICE

We never wrote "Raju is sad". The three notes tell the audience everything. Audience కి అర్థమైపోతుంది.

CLAUDE AS YOUR SCRIPT FORMATTER

మీ scene ని normal గా, story లా రాసి ఇవ్వండి. Seconds లో scene heading, action, dialogue — అన్నీ correct place లో వస్తాయి.

Step 1 · Format it

paste your scene, written like a story, underneath
దీన్ని proper screenplay format లోకి మార్చు.
Use standard screenplay format: scene headings (INT./EXT., location, DAY/NIGHT), action in present tense, character names in caps, parentheticals only where needed. Keep Telugu dialogue in Telugu script. Output in Fountain format.

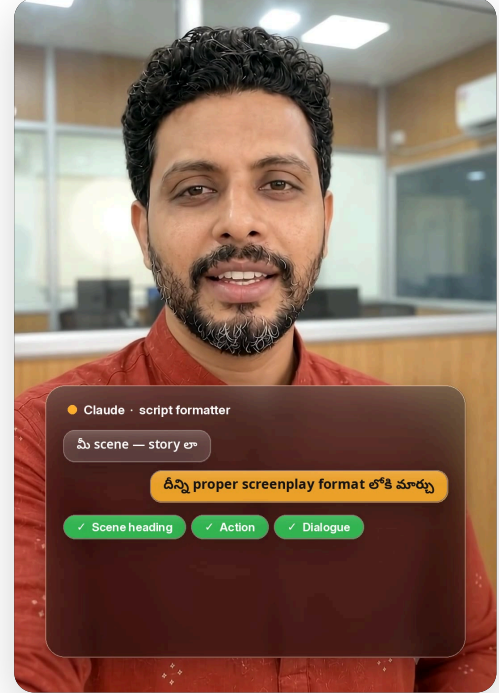
[your scene]

Step 2 · Screenwriter check

ఈ action lines లో చూపించలేనివి ఏమైనా ఉన్నాయా?
List every line that describes a feeling or thought the camera can't film, and suggest a visible action to replace each one. Don't change my dialogue.

Step 3 · Length check

Using the 1 page ≈ 1 minute rule, estimate the screen time of this scene. Which lines could I cut without losing the story?



From the episode: the prompts appear as he says them.

TIP · FOUNTAIN

Fountain is plain text that screenwriting apps turn into a formatted page. Ask Claude for Fountain and paste the result into your app.

FOUNTAIN IN 30 SECONDS

TYPE THIS	BECOMES
EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT	Scene heading (any line starting INT. or EXT.)
Raju counts three notes.	Action (any normal paragraph)
RAJU (whispering) ఇది ఎవరిది?	Character, parenthetical, dialogue (a CAPS line followed by text)
> CUT TO:	Transition

CLAUDE CAN'T DO THIS PART

కానీ ఒక్క విషయం. Format Claude సరిచేయగలదు. కానీ ఏ moment లో silence పెట్టాలి, ఏ line చెప్పకుండా వదిలేయాలి — ఆ instinct మీదే.

✓ CLAUDE CAN

- Put every element in the right place
- Fix headings, caps and indents
- Flag action lines that can't be filmed
- Estimate length from the page count
- Suggest alternatives when you're stuck

✍ ONLY YOU CAN

- Decide where a pause lands
- Choose the line a character **doesn't** say
- Know when a look says more than words
- Feel the rhythm of your own culture and people
- Write from what you have lived and seen

“Script లో మాటలు కాదు,
మౌనం కూడా మీరే రాయాలి.”

HOW SILENCE LOOKS ON THE PAGE

PASSENGER (O.S.)
భయ్యో, ఏదైనా దొరికిందా?

Raju's hand freezes on his
pocket.

A long beat. The streetlight
hums.

RAJU
...లేదు sir.

The answer that matters is the **beat before “లేదు”**, not the word itself. You write silence with action lines (*A long beat., He doesn't answer.*) and with what you leave out.

TRY IT

Take one dialogue exchange from your scene. Remove one line completely and replace it with a single action. Read both versions aloud. Which one is stronger?

WRITE YOUR FIRST PAGE

మీ story లో ఒక scene ని screenplay format లో రాయండి. Scene heading, ఒక action line, ఒక dialogue — ఈ మూడు lines comment చేయండి.

STEP 1 · PICK ONE MOMENT FROM YOUR STORY

Use the hero you built in Episode 3. Choose a moment where their Want or Wound shows.

STEP 2 · SCENE HEADING

INT. / EXT.

LOCATION

DAY / NIGHT

STEP 3 · ONE ACTION LINE (PRESENT TENSE, SHOWABLE)

STEP 4 · ONE LINE OF DIALOGUE

CHARACTER (CAPS)

(PARENTHETICAL, OPTIONAL)

DIALOGUE

SELF-CHECK BEFORE YOU POST

- ☐ Heading in CAPS with INT/EXT and DAY/NIGHT
- ☐ Action in present tense
- ☐ No feelings named, only what we see and hear
- ☐ Character name in CAPS above the dialogue
- ☐ Parenthetical only if it's really needed
- ☐ Read it aloud once

POST IT

Comment your three lines on the Episode 4 Reel at [@cinmaa.ai](https://www.instagram.com/cinmaa.ai). Bonus: paste them into Claude with the screenwriter-check prompt from page 10 and post the improved version too.

MISTAKES, QUIZ & GLOSSARY

5 BEGINNER MISTAKES

1. **Writing feelings.** "She is heartbroken" → show what she does.
2. **Past tense.** "He walked in" → "He walks in".
3. **Directing the camera.** Leave CLOSE UP and PAN to the director.
4. **Paragraphs that never end.** Break action every 3–4 lines.
5. **Parentheticals everywhere.** Trust the actor and the scene.

QUICK QUIZ

1. What two things does a scene heading tell us?
2. Rewrite in present tense: "Raju looked at the ticket."
3. Is this a good action line? "Raju is confused."
4. Where does the character name go, and how is it written?
5. Roughly how long is a 6-page scene on screen?
6. What does (O.S.) mean after a name?

Answers: 1 · Where (INT/EXT + location) and when (DAY/NIGHT). 2 · "Raju looks at the ticket." 3 · No, it names a feeling; show it (he turns the ticket over twice). 4 · Above the dialogue, in ALL CAPS. 5 · About 6 minutes. 6 · Off-screen: the character is heard but not seen.

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Screenplay	The script of a film, written in a fixed format
Scene heading / Slugline	INT./EXT. · LOCATION · DAY/NIGHT
INT. / EXT.	Interior (లోపల) / Exterior (బయట)
Action	What we see and hear, in present tense
Character cue	Speaker's name in CAPS above dialogue
Parenthetical	Short direction in brackets under the name
Dialogue	The words a character speaks
V.O.	Voice-over: narration or a voice not in the scene
O.S.	Off-screen: in the scene but not visible
CONT'D	Same speaker continues after an action line
Transition	CUT TO:, FADE OUT., used sparingly
Beat	A short pause or moment of silence
Fountain	Plain-text format that apps convert to a screenplay

THE EPISODE IN SEVEN BEATS

01 · HOOK

మీ story మీ head లో perfect గా ఉంది. కానీ ఒక producer కి, ఒక actor కి ఎలా చూపిస్తారు? Essay లా రాస్తే ఎవరూ చదవరు.

02 · SERIES TAG

Learn Filmmaking with Claude — Episode 4. Last episode లో మన character కి ప్రాణం ఇచ్చాం. ఇప్పుడు ఆ character story ని ఒక real screenplay page గా రాద్దాం.

03 · CONCEPT

Screenplay కి ఒక fixed format ఉంటుంది. ప్రతి part కి ఒక objective ఉంటుంది. Scene heading · Action · Character name · Dialogue · Parenthetical. Simple rule: ఒక page కి — minimum ఒక minute screen play time.

04 · APPLY IT

మన auto driver కి ఇప్పుడు ఒక name ఇద్దాం — Raju. EPISODE 2 లో ticket దొరికిన scene ని ఇప్పుడు script గా మార్చుద్దాం... ఒక్క page. ఒక్క minute. Scene ready.

05 · CLAUDE

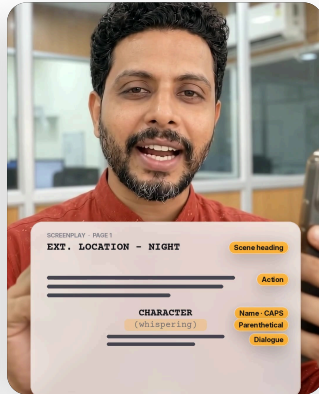
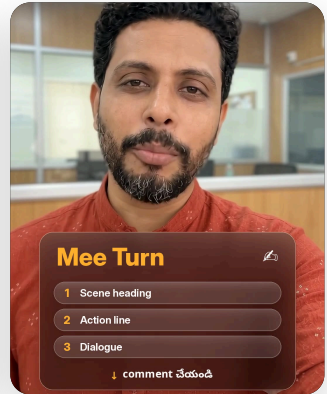
ఇక్కడ Claude మీ script formatter అవుతుంది... 'ఈ action lines లో చూపించలేనివి ఏమైనా ఉన్నాయా?' అని అడగండి.

06 · CLAUDE CAN'T

Format Claude సరిచేయగలదు. కానీ... Script లో మాటలు కాదు, మౌనం కూడా మీరే రాయాలి.

07 · MEE TURN + CLOSE

ఇప్పుడు Mee Turn... గుర్తుపెట్టుకోండి... ప్రతి సినిమా ముందు ఒక page మీద పుడుతుంది. ఈ రోజు మీరు ఆ first page రాయండి.



NEXT EPISODE

EP 05 · DIALOGUE & SUBTEXT

What characters say, and what they really mean.

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