



MASTER THE REWRITE
MODULE 1: STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

by Script Society



Module 1: Lesson 3

EVALUATING STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Now that you have read over your feedback and allowed it to digest, it's time to use the information within it to improve your screenplay.

STEP #1: Open a blank document on your computer and make two lists: one for strengths and one for weaknesses.

UNTITLED SCREENPLAY

Rewrite Notes

STRENGTHS

- The opening scene serves as a great hook
- The relationship between Laura and Jim
- The building tension after the midpoint

WEAKNESSES

- The Climax is weak
- Laura lacks a strong motive
- Too much exposition in dialogue

Using the feedback you received, populate these sections; starting with the elements that *everyone* thought was good or bad. Then, as the feedback becomes more divided, make the choice yourself. For example, maybe two people loved a section that the third hated. Majority rules, so you put it in the “strengths” list, but maybe you highlight it in yellow to remind you that one of your readers didn’t like it. Maybe there is a way to improve this scene so that everyone loves it?



When you finish populating that list according to the feedback from your external sources, add your own notes to it (not altering or changing those of your feedback sources for the time being). Once that is complete you should have two pretty full lists that depict the strongest and weakest aspects of your screenplay.

Let's focus on the weak category first.

Go through your list and start to jot down a few solutions for each of these problems. Don't worry if this starts to get a bit messy. Right now, we are just brainstorming.

UNTITLED SCREENPLAY
Rewrite Notes

STRENGTHS

- The opening scene serves as a great hook
- The relationship between Laura and Jim
- The building tension after the midpoint

WEAKNESSES

- The Climax is weak
 - Solution #1: Build up the final chase scene with higher stakes
 - Solution #2: Tie Laura's mother's death into the killer's motive
- Laura lacks a strong motive
 - Solution #1: Maybe the killer was her brother?
 - Solution #2: Maybe Laura can't have children?
- Too much exposition in dialogue
 - Solution #1: Examine all scenes with exposition and "show" instead of "tell"
 - Solution #2: Bury the exposition in more thrilling scenes??

Once you have done that, take a look at your Strengths category and make a note of any items you highlighted. Quickly jot down how those scenes could be made stronger. Then, we are going to set that list aside.



One of the **biggest mistakes** aspiring screenwriters make is that they *only* apply the changes mentioned in the critique and they ignore the rest of the screenplay.

Feedback typically only comments on the main strengths and weaknesses of a screenplay as there simply isn't the space or time to evaluate all of the "neutral" scenes. These are scenes that serve the plot, but aren't that interesting otherwise.

With that in mind, we are going to create a new table with three categories: Strong, Neutral and Weak. Then, you are going to open up your screenplay and go through it, scene-by-scene, placing each scene in the category it deserves (it helps if you do this by scene number!).

WEAKNESSES

- The Climax is weak
 - Solution #1: Build up the final chase scene with higher stakes
 - Solution #2: Tie Laura's mother's death into the killer's motive
- Laura lacks a strong motive
 - Solution #1: Maybe the killer was her brother?
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STRONG	NEUTRAL	WEAK
2	4	56
5	3	32
6	7	14
1	11	15
90	34	8
		9

Strong scenes are visual and compelling. They might only need a few tweaks here and there.

Neutral scenes serve the plot and characters, but are bland and visually dull. Changes to the location, action or dialogue could make these scenes more interesting while continuing to serve their purpose.



Weak scenes do none of the elements stated, or if they do, it's done poorly. They need to be removed or rewritten entirely.

As you work your way through this process, keep in mind the feedback you received from your sources. Once complete, take some time to jot down solutions to improve your neutral a weak scenes. By now, you should have two very detailed lists that will help you rework all aspects of your plot and characters.