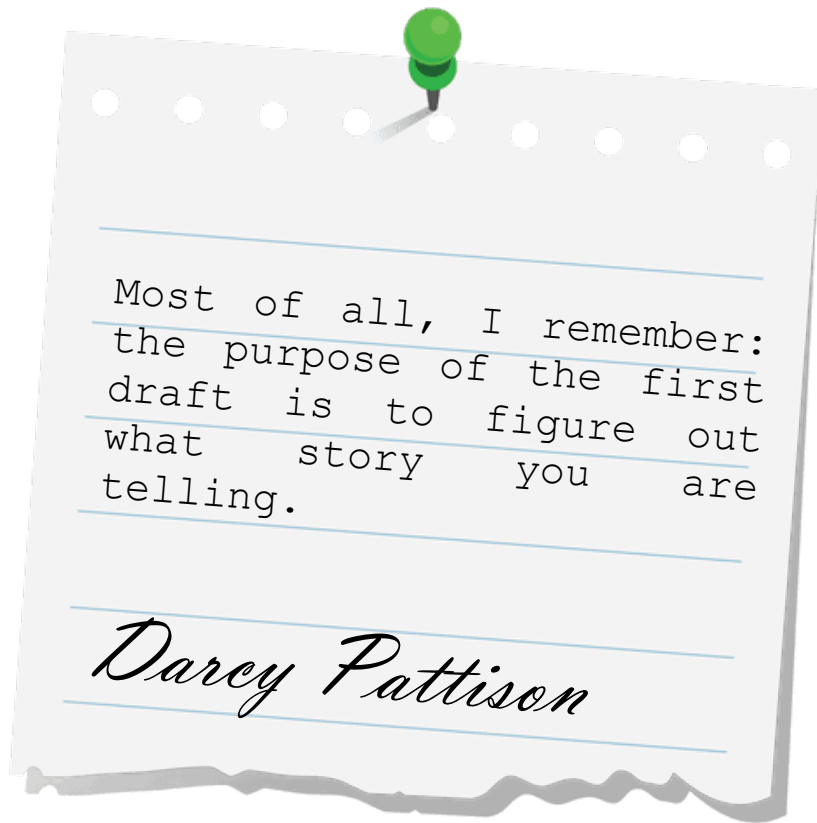




SCREENWRITING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



ACT 3



You made it! Welcome to the final week of our Screenwriting Mentorship Program!

Can you believe that eight short weeks ago all you had was an idea? By the end of this week you will have a completed draft. Take a moment to congratulate yourself. The first draft is by far the hardest draft you will write. It is only going to get easier from here. With that in mind, you are probably wondering this: What do I do next? This week, we are going to answer that question for you by taking an in depth look at your next steps. These steps include:

1. Feedback (good and bad)
2. Approaching your next draft
3. Online Marketing & Festivals

If you still feel lost, I'm only one email away. We are also going to go through the usual information about Act Three, to keep you motivated

Kate Niemuller



WRITING ACT THREE



You're into the final stretch! You only have thirty pages to go.

Then you will have a completed first draft. Whether this is your first screenplay or your fifth, I hope you take a moment to really appreciate this journey that you've been on for the past eight weeks. Writing a screenplay is hard. You're unlikely to get it right the first time. But, you're already ahead of the pack. You are no longer a dreamer. You are a "doer".

Think about this as you write your final pages this week. Let your excitement and the finish line motivate you, but don't allow it to rush you. A third act, just like those before it, has a purpose to serve in the overall story.

For many, this is the act they have been waiting patiently to write. This is the point in your plot where everything *finally* happens. The climactic moment is



upon us! Now, if you have properly developed your characters, effectively set up your plot and story, this act should be a breeze to write.

If it's not, and you are finding issues within the plot, don't worry. Just get your draft finished. Then, you can look back and review after. Issues in Act Three generally stem from a lack of setup in Act One.

With that in mind, there is only one thing that the third act needs to answer:

The dramatic question posed in Act One.

When you set up the conflict of your screenplay in Act One, you also inadvertently set up a dramatic question for the screenplay to answer. This question is the journey that your protagonist embarks on and must be answered in Act Three.

For Example:

Let's say your conflict is an evil super villain is threatening nuclear war against the world. Our Protagonist is a special agent, tasked to stop him. Your dramatic question would then be: Can Agent Williams stop the Villain before he blows up the world?

In Act Three that question is answered one of two ways: either he can or her can't.

The issue arises if your third act avoids the question. In this case, that could be a third act that suddenly focuses on the Agent's love affair with a female agents and completely ignores the main storyline.

Since you wrote a beat sheet and treatment, this shouldn't be an issue for you. But, it's something to keep in mind either way.



FEEDBACK

As you've probably noticed with this program, feedback is a huge part of the screenwriting process. As a writer it can be hard to look at your screenplay objectively, especially when it's been living inside of your head for so long.

Getting feedback on your work is a necessary step to help improve it. However, there is such a thing as **bad feedback**. In this guide we are going to go over where to seek feedback and how to become a critical writer.

FEEDBACK SOURCES



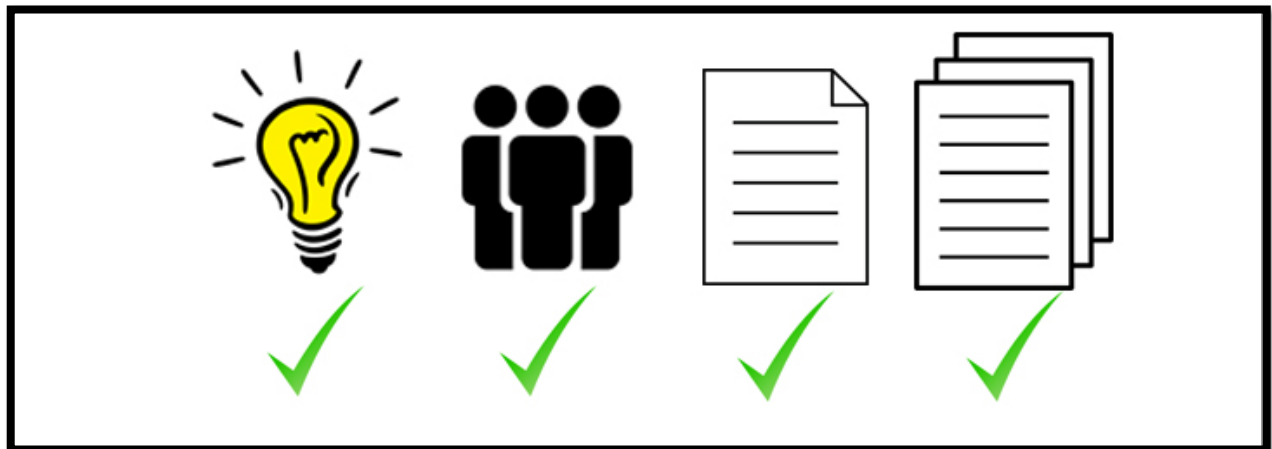
There are two main sources where you can seek feedback once you have completed your screenplay: friends/ family & industry professionals. Many writers will use Source #1 or Source #2, exclusively.

My advice is to mix and match. The advice you get from family and friends, will vary from that you get from a professional, but variety in feedback is a good thing. Friends and family will likely provide more emotional responses to your work, whereas a professional can tell if your idea is marketable. Both sides have value.

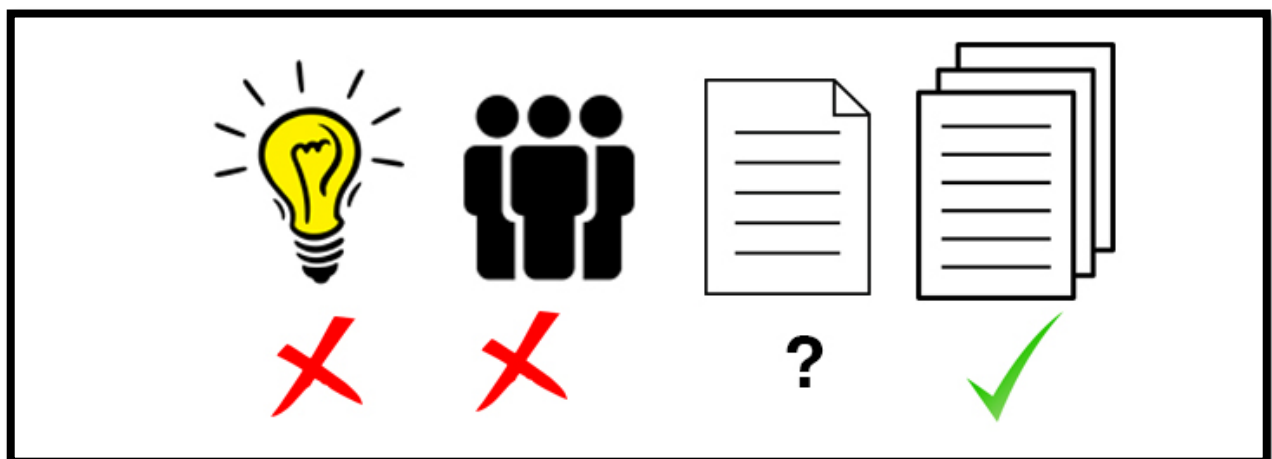


I would also urge you to get professional feedback from different analysts. That's why at Script Society we have three readers to provide variety and give you a better sense of the problems and strengths that everyone is noticing.

FREQUENCY OF FEEDBACK



When you are writing a first draft (as you have just done), it is necessary to get feedback at every stage of development if you can (idea, characters/setting, beat sheet, treatment & screenplay). Not only does this make the writing of a first draft much easier, but it also helps ensure that you are on the right track, with no glaring errors.



However, after you finish that first draft, you no longer need that level of constant feedback. It will likely slow you down. Instead, seek feedback upon the



completion of each draft. This will help you see where you've improved and what needs more work, giving you a focus and direction for the next draft.

That being said, if the draft you are pursuing is a *big* rewrite, you may find it helpful to seek feedback on your beat sheet & treatment before you begin to write. That decision is yours to make.

GOOD FEEDBACK VS. BAD FEEDBACK

There is a big difference between good feedback and bad feedback, and it's important to know the difference between them. As a writer, you do need to develop a bit of a thick skin. Chances are not everyone is going to love your story. The truth can hurt. But the truth is also necessary.

That being said all feedback should be taken with a grain of salt. You are looking for constructive criticism at this point in the process.

Here is how to differentiate good feedback and bad feedback:

GOOD

- Constructive feedback
- Evaluation of strengths & weaknesses
- Suggestions for *how* to improve script
- Use of page numbers as reference
- Focus on how to proceed

BAD

- Unorganized rambling
- Lots of comments but no solutions
- Focus on negatives *only*
- Wasted page space summarizing plot
- Vague comments

Earlier drafts will likely receive more negative comments than later drafts and vice versa. Expect this. What you want to look out for is the reversal. If you find your



early drafts are being given *only* positive comments (“I love everything about it!” says your Mom), take note. This is probably not reliable feedback.

With anything, you need to be able to look at feedback objectively. Recognize the flaws in your story. Be open to changes. This is the only way your screenplay can improve.

APPLYING FEEDBACK

The last step in this process is applying your feedback. The first thing you should do after completing any draft is take a step back. Don’t look at your screenplay for a week or two. This will allow you some distance and perspective. Then, send it out for feedback when you are ready to look at your screenplay objectively.

Using the feedback you receive (and any personal feedback you have for yourself!), make a list of needed changes and modify your beat sheet and treatment according. Then, move on to your next draft. And repeat.



FESTIVALS & ONLINE MARKETING

The next big question a lot of writers have is what to do once you finish the final draft of their screenplay. It's a good question, and unfortunately there is no set step-by-step method once you reach this phase. I can provide you with a list to help you get started:

1. PREPARE YOUR MATERIAL

Before you release your screenplay out into the world you need to be sure that you are prepared. This means crafting up a logline (more refined than the mock logline we wrote at the start of this program!), short and long versions of your synopsis, a verbal and written pitch and a query letter.

2. FIND A LAWYER

A lawyer will protect you and your work in case of a sale or option. You won't need to use one until someone is interested in buying your screenplay, but you should have one on hand, ready to contact when you are ready!

3. FESTIVALS

Screenwriting festivals are a great way to get exposure, if you place well. Check out "Film Freeway" for a list of all ongoing screenwriting festivals and rewards. My general rule of thumb is if the cash reward is under \$1000 and/or does not include industry exposure, it's not worth it to enter. Only spend money on something that can give you a return.

4. ONLINE MARKETING

The last thing you can do is start pitching your concept and sending out your query letters to producers. Stage32 hosts monthly pitch fests that allow you to book a meeting directly with a producer who is looking to buy and SellingYourScreenplay has a query letter blast service that is excellent.



5. START WRITING AGAIN

As you pursue all of this with a completed screenplay, don't just sit around idly. It's time to start writing your next project.