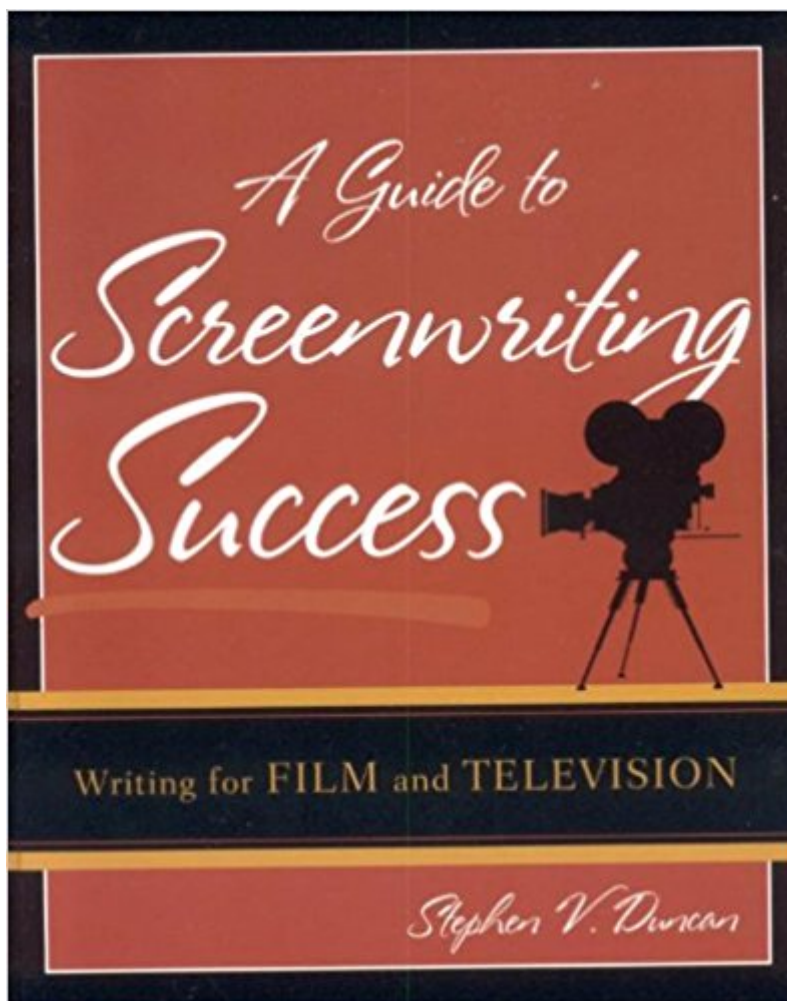


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# A Guide To Screenwriting Success: Writing For Film And Television



## Synopsis

Sample Script 1: Act One of a Screenplay ~ Sample Script 2: One-Hour Teleplay ~ Sample Script 3: Situation Comedy

A Guide to Screenwriting Success provides a comprehensive overview of writing and rewriting a screenplay or teleplay. Duncan's handy book teaches new screenwriters the process of creating a professional screenplay from beginning to end. It shows that inspiration, creativity, and good writing are not elusive concepts but attainable goals that any motivated person can aspire to. Duncan includes sections on all aspects of screenwriting from character development to story templates and breaks down the three acts of a screenplay into manageable pieces. A Guide to Screenwriting Success contains dozens of exercises to help writers through these steps. The second half of Duncan's practical book covers another, often overlooked, side of screenwriting the teleplay. Aspiring writers who also want to try their hand at writing for television will need to learn the specifics of the field. The book breaks down this area into two parts, the one-hour teleplay and the situation comedy. Success in screenwriting is no longer a dream but an achievable goal for those who pick up Duncan's guide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've been a working screenwriter since 1995. I've been produced several times in both film and television. I've also read all the major screenwriting texts on the market, and this is still the best. Most of the books you see on the shelf at Barnes & Noble are written for one reason: to sell more books. But the author's not interested in Saving Cats, nor is he someone who can teach but "cannot write." He knows what he's talking about because he's a produced writer. Duncan succeeded in both film and television, unlike many of his book writing peers. This book is a no bulls\*\*\* tutorial in the craft of screenwriting. Written like a textbook, by someone who knows what it's like to teach the craft. Duncan delivers a practical treatise in screenwriting, covering everything from story, character, structure, and dialogue. Simply put, this is the only book you will ever need on the subject.

Never thought I'd actually take the time to write a review, ever. Surprising Gem. I have formulated my own film and tv plotting template over the years for clients and in house work. I primarily combined and blended all the more well known film writing guru methods. I originally purchased this book because of parts I came across for sub plotting in Google books. Much to my surprise Mr. Duncan basically already had what amounted to my template, on steroids and more succinct. Really, really wish I'd known about this book before. The ONLY reason I didn't give it a 5 star is because it jumps around on the part I originally bought it for, subplots. If he gets around to a new version, I would suggest a separate more detailed chapter with multiple examples on his Subplot paradigm.

Stephen Duncan clearly explains feature structure in an easy-to-understand way. Even better, he demonstrates how to write in each genre. No matter which genre you're writing for, this book clearly outlines the do's and don'ts, and how to build and hold viewer interest through character development. There are many writing exercises to help, and Duncan's conversational tone makes for a very pleasant read. Even better, this book teaches feature AND television writing. Thus far, it's the most best, most concise guide I've read.

This such an amazing book for a writer who is just diving into screenwriting. It makes writing so much easier. I would recommend it to anyone who is starting out in film/tv industry looking to create their own context!

Excellent,

For most of us, becoming a successful screenwriter is an uphill struggle. Yet in the beginning I was

confident that after reading a number of how-to books I would quickly blaze a trail to screenwriting success. I was *The Little Engine That Could*. But after writing three screenplays, I found myself no closer to the top of the hill than when I started. My head was a jumbled mess of screenwriting teachers' theories from *12 Steps to 15 Beats*, so when I came up with a couple of great characters for my next script, I was no longer sure where to begin. Fortunately, just as with my romantic heroine and her hero, Duncan's book and I found each other at just the right time. When I opened "*A Guide to Screenwriting Success*" and read the first line of the first chapter, "Where do I start?" I knew I had found the perfect guide. Duncan takes a very clear and practical approach to teaching the essential and fundamental skills every writer should master on the path to screenwriting success. His book is divided into three sections. The first deals with writing the screenplay, the second with rewriting it, and the third section is on writing for television. In the back of the book you'll find a wonderful appendix that includes specific templates to help you with your writing, as well as a structure analysis of the film *Witness*. As I began reading the first section, I soon realized I was being guided step-by-step through the process of writing a screenplay from premise to Fade Out. In fact, this is the first how-to book I've owned that I felt was useful enough to keep open and next to me on my desk as I wrote. While all three sections are full of practical advice and insights, I will comment on the first section in detail as this is the one I used to develop and write the first draft of my screenplay. Chapter 1 offers helpful tips on how to develop a solid movie premise and includes a listing of sample movie premises as a guide. Chapter 2 deals with inventing interesting characters and introduces you to "the five points of character arc." Duncan discusses the importance of character biographies and includes his Character Development Template to help get you started. Chapter 3 teaches you how to craft a strong story, taking into account such things as the central question you want to explore, the Act One metaphor, visual motifs, the protagonist's major moral dilemma, subplots, and runners, to name a few. He includes his very helpful Basic Story Development Template to get you started. Then comes creating your story's synopsis. Here he prompts you with about 15 insightful and story-provoking questions to help get your creative engines revved such as in Act One "what forces the protagonist into a new situation?" and in Act Two "how does he or she fail this time for the first major setback?" Chapter 4 - to me, this section alone is worth the price of the book. Here he teaches you how to use structure to frame an engaging story. Duncan says that "structure is really just guidelines that help to keep you on the track of good storytelling. It's a way of thinking about your story, not a way of writing it." He discusses various techniques such as linear versus nonlinear storytelling, flashbacks, foreshadowing, and subplot. He includes his Love Story Development Template as a guide to use for plotting your romance, if you

chose to include one. Then he gets down to the specifics of what to include in each of the three acts. I found his advice for Act 2 particularly helpful as I tend to lose my momentum here. Duncan shows you how to break Act 2 into four, 15-minute mini-dramas. I found this to be a much more manageable, as well as enjoyable, process for me. He also includes his Story Structure Development Template and shows you an example of one of his own scripts in the template. He also teaches you how to take your story synopsis that you created in Chapter 3 and expand it into a scene outline. Chapter 5 introduces you to visual descriptions and dialogue. This is where you'll find the technical information such as screenplay formatting and camera directions, how to format a flashback scene, intercutting scenes to create tension and suspense, and finally, the correct use of dialogue to write your scenes. I am just beginning to rewrite my script following the rewriting process in Part 2. With Duncan's book, I have finally completed a first draft that I am proud of and as I continue to work my way through the process and toward screenwriting success, I can actually see the top of the hill.

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