

## The Synopsis

### The Synopsis Assignment Preparation:

What need to do before writing the synopsis:

1. Read “Introduction to Dramatized Summaries” again and follow the writing guidelines there carefully.
2. *Finish* the second draft of the script you intend to submit for a final grade.
3. Reread the script, outlining the major turning points *as it's written*.
4. Revise your Scenogram to reflect your script's changes if it will help you map out the major turning points more clearly.
5. Use the outline (and/or the Scenogram) as a map for writing a highly concise but detailed summary of your entire script.

### The Synopsis Assignment:

Your synopsis should be:

1. A dramatized summary of your final script
2. No more than one page in length,
3. Double-spaced,
4. Written in 12-point Courier Font only with standard one-inch page margins all around except for the left margin, which should be 1½ inches for binding.
5. Turned in as *a separate file* at the same time you turn in your final script for a grade.

You might be tempted to change fonts and font sizes, page margins and the like, but I suggest that instead you write the summary without worrying about length, then spend as much time as necessary cutting unnecessary information and revising your sentences for concision and readability until the synopsis fits the one-page requirement.

### The Purpose of the Synopsis

The synopsis is one of the most difficult assignments to write in this class because it's both a summary of your entire script and a selling tool that should hook its readers and make them want to move on to reading the treatment or the entire script. The synopsis you show to film industry professionals may take many more drafts before it's ready, so revise it until you've captured the essence of your script in as few words as possible.

Synopses are common in the film industry—the first thing, after the pitch, that script readers, script agents and readers logged on to online script sites will read. Like the pitch, if the synopsis isn't compelling and well-written, chances are low

that an industry professional will take the time to go on and read your treatment or script. In this sense, for industry professionals, it's the key to the door of your script.

Like pitches and treatments, actual script synopses are almost impossible find, and for this reason I've been unable to find a good sample synopsis for you to read. When in doubt, refer to "Introduction to Dramatized Summaries" as your guide. The synopsis is both like the pitch, only longer, and like the treatment, only much shorter.