

MARGIN NOTES EXAMPLE - SCRIPT READER PRO

FADE IN:

It's not big deal but FADE IN is usually justified left.

VIDEO MONTAGE: World War Two black & white photos and video from the Battle of the Atlantic; numerous German U-boats attacking and scuttling of Allied naval and merchant ships.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

(elderly male voice)

In nineteen forty-two, and at the height of the second World War, Germany secretly dispatched forty of their infamous U-boats across the Atlantic Ocean under the code name Operation Drumbeat.

INT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

I'd go for something like this in the slugline:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN (UNDERWATER) - DAY

The Atlantic is always going to be an Exterior location and "Underwater" makes it easier for the reader to quickly place where we are.

Endless depths of dark blue water. The silhouette of a German U-boat moves underwater along the coast of Maine.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Submerged along the East Coast, the U-boats triggered vast amounts of known and unknown damage to the United State's war efforts.

EXT. LOCKHEED PV-1 VENTURA - CONTINUOUS

Not all readers are going to know a Lockheed PV-1 Ventura is a plane and so this slug could be confusing. Try to make it clear in each slugline where we are and what we're looking at. e.g. you could write:

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

A bomber and patrol plane fly over Maine.

Or:

EXT. BOMBER PLANE (FLYING) - CONTINUOUS

We're flying over Maine alongside a patrol plane.

The bomber and patrol plane flies over Maine. Soaring over forests and rocky shorelines, it nears a seaside town.

EXT. EDGEWATER - CONTINUOUS

Spring. A quaint oceanside settlement. Docked boats match in number to structures standing on wooded seashores. A town where handshakes get business done, doors go unlocked, and a hint of blueberry pie scents the air.

Excellent description. Not sure we need the first half though -- "Spring. A quaint oceanside settlement. Docked boats match in number to structures standing on wooded seashores." We get a great sense of place from the handshakes, unlocked doors and blueberry pie.

SUPER: "Edgewater, Maine - 1945"

Boat enthusiasts uncover their boats from winter protection.

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH - CONTINUOUS

Lying on the ground, THEODORE "GOODY" OSGOOD, 14, watches the Lockheed PV-1 Ventura fly overhead. A reserved problem solver, he straps a leather brace on his lower right leg and struggles to find his niche with two older brothers.

Good, but where is Goody lying? On grass? Asphalt? Let us know where he is exactly outside the school.

Overall, this could be clearer. You write "A reserved problem solver" as Goody's strapping a lower brace to his leg, but there's no problem to solve here. I get that you're trying to establish character here, but it's better to *show* Goody solving a problem rather than explain that this is his character in the description.

Also, he's supposed to be watching the plane, but strapping his leg at the same time? I'd focus on one -- he's doing one or the other action -- and make this reveal as much about his character as you can.

The line: "...struggles to find his niche with two older brothers" is confusing. I was expecting his two brothers to actually be in the scene.

As the plane's BUZZ fades, Goody's nervous breathing loudens as a shadow looms over him. STU RASMUNSON, 14, stands over him with an air of thuggery. A brutish bully, he grunts as his Neanderthal disposition glares down at Goody.

Make Goody only start nervously breathing once Stu arrives.

Goody's holds his breath.

STU

(Maine accent)

Get up, Osgood! Stu wants to tug your tighty-whites into your teeth.

GOODY

You should genuinely think, Stu. If I stand, you will slug me. Not a tap either, a bona fide wallop.

I thought Goody was nervous?

STU

Twice if you don't stop talkin'.

GOODY

And when I go home and my older brother, Allan, sees you've slugged me, and then what? He'll then go bust on your brother's chops. And everyone knows your brother is a hiccup away from being expelled.

Not sure why Allan would beat up Stu's brother rather than Stu?

STU

So?

GOODY

So where's the buck going to be passed? Really think about it. Who will your brother, Warren, blame?

STU

Who?

Goody points at Stu, who turns around and faces LIONEL WHITE, 14, standing frozen with terrified eyes. A hefty worrywart, he balances a gullible and happy-go-lucky demeanor.

Clutching tight onto Lionel's stomach, Stu releases a loud cackle as he pulls and pinches Lionel's roll of baby fat.

END SAMPLE

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The Script Reader Pro team