
SCRIPT LAYOUT

Conventions and techniques

The way in which a script is laid out can determine the final quality of your programme. If you go into the studio with a script that is badly written you may end up with a poor recording - because you couldn't read the words. This is why certain guidelines exist for laying out scripts.

Everyone involved in the recording will need their own copy of the script. It may also be necessary to make a spare copy to be filed after the recording (unless you know that an electronic copy or a used copy will be available for this).

TYPING IT UP

If at all possible your script should be TYPED. If it has to be hand-written, you must make sure it is all readable. Anything that is not totally clear at first sight will probably cause the presenter to stumble. For clarity, and as a standard, we recommend using type face 12 point Times New Roman or Courier New.

Your script should be typed only on one side of the paper so that you never have to turn it over, and it needs to be typed with double line spacing for easy reading. i.e. leave a blank line between each line of type - this should prevent the presenter from reading the same line twice.

Each page of your script needs to be identified with the name of the programme, its number in the series if applicable, and the page number. This makes it easy to find the relevant page quickly when doing retakes or editing. Some people find it easier if each line of script is numbered (1,2,3 ...). In any discussion they can then refer to Programme number, Page and Line number.

On each side of the page you will need to leave a wide margin in order to be able to hold the paper without covering over any text with your thumb.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions which are not part of the text also need to be typed in such a way that they stand out clearly.

BILL And now for something a little different

(AMUSED) Dick, what on earth is that?

These may be to the operator or to the presenter, and ALWAYS go in CAPITAL LETTERS. (Anything in capital letters should not be read out.) Any necessary instructions to the operator or presenter have to be given in the script in full detail. They need

to include information such as:

- The sound source - which presenter, tape or disc comes next.
- Any necessary identification for discs or tapes, including which track or insert.
- For inserts, give first few words or description of sound effect. This allows the operator to check it's the right insert. You also need to give the last few words so both operator and presenter know when it has finished. Also say how long the insert lasts - this goes at the right hand margin.
- For music you need to say how much you want. You may wish to fade it out part way through the piece. If so give the approximate length of time you want it to run, and also the total length of the piece so the operator knows how much more is available should it be needed.

TAPE 2/1 "WELL BILL, I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

... MORE THAN THREE FEET LONG"

0'54"

DO'S AND DON'TS

- Indent paragraphs rather than miss a line between them.
- Don't break words (using hyphens) at the end of lines.
- Certain words go together (e.g. names) so don't split them over two lines.
- Numbers can be written in words or figures - whatever seems easiest to read.
- Never put operator's instructions at the top of a new page.
- In drama, if possible, don't split an actor's speech over two pages.
- Each sheet should if possible end with a full stop, and each page begin with a new sentence.
- No mistakes in your final script if possible. Any corrections needed should not be obvious.
- Never staple the pages of a script together before it has been recorded. Use a paper clip.