

# Short Film Script Template

Lesson 5 · Writing a Short Film Script

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## Step 1 — The One-Sentence Story

“A [CHARACTER] wants [GOAL], but [OBSTACLE], until [CHANGE].”

Example: “A lonely robot wants to grow a flower, but the planet is dead, until its own tear waters the seed.”

## Step 2 — Three Acts

- **ACT 1 · SETUP** (~30%) — show the world and the WANT. (60s film → ~18s)
- **ACT 2 · STRUGGLE** (~50%) — the obstacle wins, things get worse. (~30s)
- **ACT 3 · CHANGE** (~20%) — the payoff, the transformation. (~12s)

## Step 3 — The Shot List (6–10 shots)

One line per shot: **[SHOT SIZE] + what we see**. Each line becomes one image prompt, then one clip.

- **WIDE** — shows the world. “Wide shot: dead grey planet, tiny robot walks alone.”
- **MEDIUM** — shows action. “Medium shot: robot kneels, plants a seed.”
- **CLOSE-UP** — shows emotion. “Close-up: a tear rolls down the robot’s metal cheek.”

## Director’s Rules

- Every shot must reveal INFORMATION or EMOTION. If neither — cut it before spending credits.
- Classic rhythm: wide → medium → close. Repeat.
- Story first, visuals second. “Epic space scenes” is not a story.
- Test: a stranger reading your shot list should be able to retell the story.

## Blank Template

One-sentence story: \_\_\_\_\_

Act 1 shots: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Act 2 shots: 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Act 3 shots: 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_