

PROGRAM NAME GOES HERE

"Episode Title Goes Here"

An original radio drama by

Author's Name

Production Company Name
12345 Main St.
RuyaSonic City, CA 90019
(323) 555-1234
Email@something.com
<http://website.com>

PRODUCTION SCRIPT
August 29, 2005
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author@whatever.com

PROGRAM NAME GOES HERE

"Episode Title Goes Here"

Prod. #27

CAST

ANNOUNCER	The announcer.
CHARACTER NAME #1	Brief character description.
CHARACTER NAME #2	Nervous novice writer. (Age 14)

NOTE:

The above list is for a cast of XX. A smaller cast of X can be used if the following roles are combined for one actor each:

CHARACTER #5/CHARACTER #6
CHARACTER #7/CHARACTER #8/CHARACTER #9

Four sound effects artists are also required.
Two walla walla artists are also required.

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources website:<http://www.RuyaSonic.com>

NOTE: To make better use of this template, go to my website listed above and read my "Radio Drama Resources" articles and lessons on Writing, Engineering, Directing, Scoring, and Sound Effects. They'll fill you in on what the various conventions of this radio script format mean--things such as why the music cues have a box with [A-4] and other bits that I don't want to cram into this template. My very detailed lesson in writing clear radio drama cues is found at:
http://www.RuyaSonic.com/wrt_cues.htm

NOTE: At the very end of this document you will find instructions for how to make good use of the template.

NOTE: This template uses headers and footers, like the one below with the production company address. You'll want to change the titles and other info, and because I use multiple sections in the document, you'll need to change them in each section. It's easy. Go to the "View" menu and click on "Headers and Footers" then maneuver around and change them. Word's search and replace feature is handy for these kind of changes.

Episode Title Goes Here

1. MUSIC: [A-1] PROGRAM THEME--UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE
UNDER.

2* ANNOUNCER: Yes, friends! It's time for Blah blah
blah... Today's story: "Episode Title Goes
Here." (PAUSE)
And, please notice the use of bold 12-point
courier font everywhere in the script--
that's because it photocopies better.

PRODUCTION NOTE:

This kind of note is for instructions. I'm using this
right now to inform the writer that I've included an MS
Word toolbar in this template. If you click on the menu
for "View" and go to the "Toolbar" tab, you can click on
a toolbar for "Radio Script" and it'll pop up some
buttons that allow quick formatting of text for notes,
sound, music and dialogue styles. Also, use the "page
layout view" of the script--it's more life-like. OK,
back to scene...

3. MUSIC: [B-2] ACTION THEME--UP FULL. FADE.

SCENE ONE: EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY
(ANNOUNCER, CHARACTER #1)

4. SOUND: LIVE SOUND EFFECT GOES HERE. GUNSHOT (4X)
WALLA--PASSENGERS GRUMBLING.

5. ANNOUNCER: That was four gunshots--one for each "X".
Blah Blah Blah with underline used for
emphasis... and that ellipsis to tell actors
to slow their delivery, then pick up later.

1. CHARACTER 1: (SARDONICALLY) I got a present for ya!
2. SOUND: SWORD UNSHEATHED. WALLA--CROWD GASPS.

SCENE TWO: INT. MUSIC HALL - MOMENTS LATER
(ANNOUNCER, CHARACTER #2, CHARACTER #3)

3. MUSIC: [A-3] EXOTIC THEME--UP AND UNDER.

- 4* ANNOUNCER: Please note that each new page restarts the numbering scheme for ALL cues. This allows quick references to "page 4, cue #2" when rehearsing. But, look! Here comes Character number one. Notice how I spelled out the number? My, but this fellow looks dazed...
5. CHARACTER #1: The last thing I remember was pulling a sword on everyone at the train station.
6. CHARACTER #2: Well, we changed scenes and if the character is speaking the last line in a scene and then the first line in a new scene, the audience doesn't know what is going on. So either the announcer speaks for a moment or you add somebody--like me--to your script.
7. SOUND: CHARACTER #3'S FOOTSTEPS--RUN UP, STOP.
- 8* CHARACTER #3: (OUT OF BREATH) I try to keep all of a character's lines on a page, but sometimes you run out of

(MORE...)

1. CHARACTER #3 (CONT'D) room. Then you have to use this "more" and "continued" trick. Just like in the movies. Try to break at the end of a sentence, though--or the actor suffers.
2. SOUND: CHARACTER # 4 DOORKNOCK (3X) OPENS.
- 3* CHARACTER #4: (DISTANT) But what about me? I'm on the other side of the room!
4. CHARACTER #1: Blah Blah blah, as I walk off mic. (EXITING)
5. CHARACTER #2: My, but this script is just full of dialogue demonstrating radio writing conventions. You can delete all this junk and save the template as radio_script_blank.dot.
6. MUSIC: [B-4] CLOSING THEME--UP. CONTINUE UNDER.

ENGINEER'S NOTE:

The [B-4] in the music cue above indicates playback device "B" and track number "4"--as in CD player "B", track "4." It's nice to have two playback devices, so I can have [A-5] if that cue comes right on the heels of [B-4]. You can also use something like [A-5S] to indicate that A-5 is a sampled sound effect--rain, for example.

- 7* ANNOUNCER: Join us again next week for another exciting adventure of "Program Name Goes Here!" This has been a production of the company name goes here. So long!
2. MUSIC: CLOSING THEME--FADES.

THE END.

Writer/Director's notes for "Episode Title Goes Here"

NOTE:

This is where the writer or director can include general notes on how to interpret the script. It will explain delivery or character shadings, sound effects, or musical instructions, and discuss technical issues such as how to use reverb or walla walla.

If necessary, I often include the back story for a multi-part program or a description of the genre and background that the production crew may find useful.

For an example of the kind of notes I provide in my own scripts, see my page of program notes on my Radio Drama Resources website:
http://www.RuyaSonic.com/script_notes.htm

Radio Skills School

Microphone Technique:

- 1) Sensitive and dead areas. Don't touch!
- 2) Proximity effect. (Boomy if too close.)
- 3) Proper distance for radio acting.
- 4) Dynamics and distance. (Back off to yell.)
- 5) Off-mic use for distant sounds. Asides.
- 6) Popping "P"s and S-S-S-Sibilance.
- 7) Mic safety. (hitting, blowing, dropping)
- 8) Assume every mic is always ON.
- 9) Quiet script page turning.

Radio Acting:

- 1) Quiet in the studio.
- 2) Don't cough, laugh, or talk during production.
- 3) Watch the director. Wait for your cue. (Q)
- 4) Speed equals excitement. Don't bore the audience.
- 5) Jump in if there's dead air.
- 6) Wait for director's signal at end of show.

Radio Direction "Sign Language"

- 1) "Wait." Open hand.
- 2) "5-4-3---" Finger count down.
- 3) "You're on." Pointing finger.
- 4) "Quicken the pace." Finger draws circles.
- 5) "Stretch it out." Pulling taffy.
- 6) "Louder." Pull ear.
- 7) "Quieter." Finger to lip (Shhhh-style)
- 8) "Cut." Finger slits throat.
- 9) "Come in" or "Back off" microphone.

NOTE:

The next two pages cover the casting monologues and casting sheet listing the characters. The director uses this to cast the show.

"Episode Title Goes Here"**CASTING MONOLOGUES:**

All actors are asked to read some lines, called "sides," aloud, to audition. The director will cast the roles in our production based upon these readings. Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues can also provide some "back story," giving an idea of who the characters are and what kind of story we are producing. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents when auditioning for the different roles.

ANNOUNCER: I'm the announcer. I quickly describe the setting for each scene and report on all spine-tingling suspense for the radio listener. These lines often include underlined phrases to instruct the actor to stress or emphasize or just read the underlined words slower.

CHARACTER #1: Hello, I'm Character #1, this text describes me and contains certain typical phrases I use. It is to educate the cast and crew about the characters before we begin work. Also, by giving a fairly long speech--in character--a director can evaluate my voice for its tone and my ability to read a script--live--well.

CHARACTER #2: I'm Character #2, this text describes me and contains certain typical phrases I use. By having the actors say all these lines we can cast the better speakers in the leading roles.

SOUND EFFECT ROLES: "Episode Title Goes Here"

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #1:

SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE
SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE
SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE
SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #2:

TRAIN SLOWING
CAR CRASH

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #3:

SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE
SOUND EFFECT NAME GOES HERE

CAST MEMBERS:

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE
AUDIENCE WALLA WALLA
WOMAN SCREAMS

PRODUCTION NOTES:

This page is provided by the Director and/or Sound Effects Chief and is used to organize the sound effect artists' roles. Go through the script and find which effects are used at the same time and then split those effects up between several SFX artists. Then, use colored high-liter pens and highlight the scripts for the SFX artists so they can see which effects are coming up as they read along during the cue rehearsal and actual production. I usually assemble 3-5 SFX books with identical highlighted scripts and put them in plastic page slip covers, so they can be turned silently with one hand by the SFX artists. I also make little notes a page or so in advance of when the cue comes--to allow the artist to have that device ready ahead of time.

SOUND EFFECT HOW TO: "Episode Title Goes Here"

TRAIN SLOWING:

Drummer's brush on washboard

TRAIN WHISTLE:

Wooden train whistle.

SWORD UNSHEATHED:

Pancake flipper scraped against metal mixing spoon.

INTERMISSION CHIME:

Doorbell SFX device.

SCREECHING AUTO BRAKES:

Train brake SFX device.

TAPPING ON WINDOW:

Tapping on glass sheet.

BLOWGUN:

Blowing through a cardboard tube, then slapping the tube.

OPEN/CLOSE WINDOW:

Roll wooden cart back and forth on table.

FIRE:

Crinkle plastic bag.

SIREN:

Blow on siren whistle.

RAIN: [A-5S]

Pre-recorded sample of jungle downpour on tin roof shack from inside POV--1 minute long.

PRODUCTION NOTE:

This page is provided for, or by, the Sound Effects Chief explaining exactly how each sound effect is produced. It is then incorporated into the script so future productions won't have to figure it out again. It is arranged, not alphabetically, but grouped by the SFX artists designated for these sounds. I include it in the front of the SFX books--also in a plastic page slipcover.

ENGINEER'S NOTES: "Episode Title Goes Here"**EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

A typical notice here would be: This show requires the use of a filter mic for telephone effects (A "Go-Filter Mic" available from www.RuyaSonic.com/s Depot page.) Also, run the Sound Effects microphone through a reverb and be prepared to vary the amount of reverb as the director indicates by hand signals.

MUSIC CUES:

A complete engineer's script will be provided with colored highlighting to show how long music cues run (through scenes and dialogue) and which characters are using reverb or filters, and when.

- 1) The Program Name Goes Here theme: (0:14) [A-1]
Composer Name "Musical Title Goes Here"
It is used in intro and outro only.
- 2) Action theme:
Composer Name "Musical Title Goes Here" [A-2]
(If it is a CD track, list the times of the cue)
- 3) Sinister theme:
Composer Name "Musical Title Goes Here" [A-3]
- 4) Graduation theme:
Edgar Elgar "Pomp & Circumstance, op.39 - March No. 1 [A-4]
in D major" from approx. 1:56 - 3:07
- 5) Hypno theme: [A-5]
Pat D. Musica "Hypno Tripping"

PRODUCTION NOTE:

This page is provided to the engineer for technical requirements for the program. It also lists the music cues in order of appearance in the script. This page goes into an Engineer's book that includes a full script which has the music and mic. effect cues highlighted. During production, the engineer will read along and see where the music and effects start and end. I usually put these pages in plastic slip covers so they can be turned easily with one hand. This page also serves as the table of contents for the music/sampled sound effects CD (or MiniDisk or

whatever playback device you use.) See the [A-1] [A-2]
etc.

NOTE:

This page is for the writer to list changes made to the script after initial production or other notes about possible problems, the origins of character names, or anything else the writer may want to write down. I often find it a useful place to keep scenes that were cut--just in case I want to restore them in a future re-write or later episode.

TEMPLATE NOTES:

This radio script template allows you to write in the final format of the script. This classic "block" style format uses a 12-point Courier font of 1940s typewriters, although I've bolded it to make it photocopy better. Each page of script in this format runs about 55 seconds of air time--it depends on the pace of the direction. Other conventions of the format are explained in the script itself.

Let me stress a few conventions I use in my radio drama scripts that differ from conventional script styles for stage and screen.

DIALOGUE DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS

For dialogue, I specifically recommend that you make full use of underlines, ellipses [But...] and parentheticals [(DRUNK) (WHISPERS) (PAUSE) etc.] to indicate how the actors should deliver the lines. There's never much rehearsal time in radio drama, so these instructions quickly convey just what the writer intended. We are working live, remember.

Some directors wish to let the actors deliver lines the way they feel it, and hope they get it right. However, as the writer, I wrote it one way and want to make sure it reads easily and is delivered as I intended it. Actors can still bring nuance and interpretation to their parts, but I don't want them mis-understanding what the lines are about--especially live! Clarity is paramount in audio theatre. Do it!

CHARACTERS IN A SCENE

After the "slug line" identifying a new scene, I include the character names used in the scene, to alert any actors who are sitting down to get up and come to the mic. It also allows for quick casting calls in rehearsal. ("I need Debs, Fido, and Cap'n Twitshire for this scene.")

Here's an example of the slug line with featured characters for a scene:

SCENE FOUR - EXT. PIRATE SCHOONER - DAY
(NEVILLE, TERESA, CATALINA, BAPTISTE, LOOKOUT)

CUE NUMBERING

Also, when I'm writing my script, I just put an "X" instead of a number for the cue. Then after I've finished with all my drafts, I replace the Xs with numbers.

Example:

X. NEVILLE: (CALLS OUT) Ahoy, you skulking dogs!

X. BAPTISTE: (DISTANT) Aye, Cap'n!

MARKING UP THE FINAL DRAFT

After I've printed out the production draft, I take a Sharpie pen and hand-write the letter "Q" alongside any cues where the actor, music, or SFX crew should wait for the director to cue them. Everybody will work off of the marked up script. This is usually in specific places:

- 1) On the first dialogue cue following a music cue--so the director can wait until the music cue is established or fades. This is often at the beginning of a new scene.
- 2) On a dialogue cue after an important sound effect--so that effect can "clear" and not get stepped on by the actors.
- 3) On a music or SFX cue that must precisely follow the director's timing. Say, where a gunshot SFX cue is followed by a suspenseful pause and then the sound of a body dropping to the floor.

These "Qs" easily tell everyone to wait for the director. They make rehearsals and performances run much smoother. Since it's handwritten and bold, these "Qs" really stand out amidst the typed text.

What I do when typing a script is substitute an asterisk for the period after a cue number, so I can remember where these hand-written "Q" marks should go. So, you'll see:

2* NARRATOR: Some dialogue goes here.

When marking up scripts, I also use a Sharpie pen to circle the walla walla cues (background crowd sounds). This way the cast can all see when walla is required.

PREPARING RADIO SCRIPTS FOR PRODUCTION

If you're using my script template, also take a look at my website's pages about preparing for production. The advice on using hi-lighters for the engineers and SFX department are real time savers.

<http://www.RuyaSonic.com/pre-prod.htm>

HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THIS TEMPLATE FOR YOURSELF

- 1) Make a copy of the template under a new name and store it as a template in your MS Word template folder. They end in .dot, instead of .doc for the file name's extension.
- 2) Now, print out the template, so you'll have a paper reference of the "how to" aspects.
- 3) Go through the template and delete all my notes, like this one. You may also choose to delete most of the dummy dialogue and other radio cues.
- 4) Go to the first page and use the MS Word "search and replace" feature to put your own info in place of my generic entries about author name and production company.
- 5) Go to the "View" menu, click on "Headers and Footers" and replace the footers entries for the production company address and e-mail address with your own info.
- 6) Make sure the floating toolbar is visible. Go to the "View" menu, click on "Toolbars" and check the "Radio Script" toolbar. You may wish to uncheck the standard Word "Formatting" toolbar since there are several duplications of commands.
- 7) Now, save the template again to whatever name you want. This will be your regular starting template for writing radio scripts. Close the document.
- 8) To write a script, go to the "File" menu, click on "New" and choose to base the document on your template. Then use MS Word's "search and replace" feature to put in your program name and episode title throughout the document and also in the headers.

Now, just remember--"write between the ears" and you'll be a radio dramatist in no time!

TONY'S TRICK TO WORKING FASTER

I make a second copy of my radio master template. On it, I go to the "Format" menu and alter the color for the following styles from black to:

- Red for Radio Music
- Blue for Radio Sound
- Green for Radio Scene
- Magenta for Radio Notes

I use this colored template when writing a script. It

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makes it very easy to see the sound and music cues. However, when I print the script, I must remember to attach the black master template and click on "update styles" or these cues will not print as darkly and thus, be hard to read for rehearsals and performances.

PRINTING BY SECTION:

This script uses many section breaks to allow for quick printing. The pages used for actors copies are Sections 1-3. You can print just these sections by going to the MS Word "Print" page, and designating pages: S1-S3. To print just a few pages from within a section, specify a page range first, like p18-24 S3 (Section is always last).

Here's a breakdown of the sections:

- Section 1 - Title (fly) page
- Section 2 - Cast listing page
- Section 3 - Script pages (dialogue, music, SFX)
- Section 4 - Casting Evaluation page
- Section 5 - Casting Monologues
- Section 6 - Director's Notes
- Section 7 - Sound Effects Chief's notes
- Section 8 - Engineer's Notes
- Section 9 - Writer's Notes.

WORD VERSIONS:

This template was saved using MS Word 6.0, which doesn't use the Visual Basic macros of later Word versions and thus isn't vulnerable to the infamous macro viruses that wipe out hard drives or cause other mischief. It will easily translate into later versions of Word. You can save your own templates and scripts as documents in whatever version of Word you are using. The section printing and swapping templates to overlay color or black styles may be a little tricky, so see your Word help files for more information.

EXTRA BONUS:

I've created a blanked out version of this template—so all the instructional text is gone. You can download it at http://www.ruyasonic.com/wrt_template.htm#BLANK

GOOD LUCK!

Tony Palermo <Palermo@RuyaSonic.com>
Revised: November 2005