

TUTORIAL

Introduction

Final Draft was designed to conform with Apple's standard user interface: the commands reside in the menu bar at the top of the screen and all work is performed in windows which appear on the Macintosh screen. If you have used a word processor on the Macintosh, most of the editing functions, from selecting text to changing fonts and text alignment, will be familiar to you.

Final Draft uses a number of keyboard commands to perform most of the formatting functions specific to writing scripts. Once you have learned these basic commands, you will have all of the information necessary to enter your script.

This tutorial will step you through creating a new screenplay and entering the first few lines of text. Afterwards, it will step you through numbering the scenes, creating a header and printing the screenplay.

The best way to learn is to do. It will help if you actually perform the steps outlined in this tutorial to actually create your first screenplay file.

Starting the Program

- Double-click on the Final Draft program icon to begin.

Once the program is opened and you get past the opening introductory screen, the Title window appears, and will stay there, waiting for you to select a command from the menu bar:

ou are ready to create a new screenplay. The first thing to note is the menu bar at the top of the screen:

o do anything at this point, you must click your mouse on the desired menu name in the menu bar. At that point, the commands in that menu will "drop down" from the menu name. Keep the mouse button depressed while dragging the mouse downward until the desired command is highlighted. Releasing the mouse button at that time will select the highlighted command.

Creating a New Screenplay

- Using your mouse, select the New... command from the File menu.

The following dialog box is displayed, prompting you for the name of the new screenplay:

- Enter the name for the script in the text area and click in the Save button (or press the return key).

The Final Draft opening screen will immediately go away, replaced by a blank screenplay window, ready for you to start entering your script:

here are several things to note about the screenplay window. First is the blinking "caret", or I-beam. This marker indicates where the next typed character will be placed. Second, there is the "Element Label" at the bottom-left corner of the window. This text area indicates the element (or style) for the current caret position. Elements represent the different types of information found in screenplays: Slug Lines, Action, Character, etc. Each element contains its own margin, justification and caps lock settings which insures that it appears in correct screenplay format. Although each element's settings may be changed to alter the format of the script, this tutorial will use the defaults provided by the program.

Note: The Element Label initially reads Slug Line. That is because Final Draft automatically starts us off with a slug line to begin our script. (For the uninitiated, the Slug Line tells us where and when the scene takes place). Take the time to enter a slug line at this time. Since Slug Lines, as a default, are preset to All Caps, the program will automatically capitalize each letter as you type, even if the Caps Lock key is not set.

We are now ready to enter some text.

Entering a Slug Line

Type:

INT. DARK OFFICE - NIGHT

Your screen should appear as follows:

he text you have entered is in Courier 12-point font. This is the default font and size used by Final Draft, which matches that used on most typewriters. Most submitted screenplays are printed in this font. You are free to change any or all of the text in your screenplay to another font or size, however for this tutorial we will again use the default.

Adding Action

Now that we have entered a slug line, it is time to enter some action for our scene. Since Action is a different element than Slug Line (different margins, etc.), we have to tell Final Draft to switch from Slug Line to Action. This is an "Element Change" and is accomplished by using the Command (Apple) key on the keyboard.

- Hold down the Command key.

When you hold down the Command key, the following text appears in the Message line at the top of the Script window:

he numbers in the brackets (i.e. [1], [2]) represent the keyboard characters which, when depressed while the command key is also depressed, cause an element change.

- While holding down the Command key, depress the '2' on your keyboard (or numeric keypad). This is the proper key for Action.

--or--

- Depress the Carriage Return key. This is a shortcut to move from Slug Lines automatically to Action without the need for an explicit Command-2. Remember this shortcut.

Your screen should appear as follows:

The Element Label now reads ACTION and a carriage return has been added automatically by Final Draft. We are ready to enter some action.

- Type:

The office is dark except for the dim light shed by a single bulb located on a small desk filled with piles of scripts. Hunched over the desk, staring intently at his Macintosh computer, sits a FRUSTRATED WRITER.

Your Script Window will appear as follows:

It is starting to look like a screenplay.

Every time you change elements, Final Draft automatically sets the left and right margins properly to place the text into correct script format. You only need to select the proper element as you type and Final Draft takes care of the formatting for you.

Adding a New Character

Our next step is to enter a character name and some dialogue.

- Type Command-3 (for Character Name)

The blinking caret is now positioned at the proper margin for entering the character name.

Note the text which appears in the Message Line at the top of the window:

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CHARACTER MATCHING ON - NAMES FROM CHARACTER LIST ONLY
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This is a reference to the Character List, which we have not touched on yet. Let's do so at this point.

Every Final Draft script contains a list of all of the character names used in the script. The main purpose of this list to help the writer avoid the frustration of having to type the same names over and over again by providing an automatic "typeahead" facility.

When the blinking caret is in a Character Name element, the list allows the writer to type in just as many letters as is necessary to match the desired name. The rest of the name is then automatically typed in by Final Draft.

There is one catch...Final Draft has to know the names of the characters in our script before it can know what to enter for us. In the case of our tutorial, the Character List is currently empty: Final Draft does not know any of our character names as of yet.

- Select the Open Character List command from the Character List submenu in the Document menu.

The Character List window appears:

Note that there are no characters in the list.

We could enter our character names in this window at this point, but for the tutorial we'll do it another way. We want to enter the name directly in the script. Final Draft does not force the characters to be typed into the Character List window; in fact, as we enter new characters into the script, Final Draft automatically builds the character list for us as names are typed into the script.

Let's give it a try.

- Click the mouse in the Close box at the top left corner of the character list window or select the Close Character List command from the Character List submenu in the Document menu.

he window disappears and we are returned to the Script window.

- Type **WRITER**

The Script window will look as follows:

- Type Command-5 (for Dialogue)

--or--

- Depress the Carriage Return Key. This is a shortcut to move from Character Name automatically to dialogue without the need for an explicit Command-5. Remember this shortcut.

The blinking caret is now positioned on the next line, ready for some dialogue to be entered. At this point, however, let us check our Character List and see what Final Draft has done.

- Select the Open Character List command from the Character List Submenu in the Document menu.

The Character List window now appears as follows:

inal Draft has automatically entered WRITER into the Character List. We will come back to this later.

- Click the mouse in the Close box to close the Character List window and return us to the screenplay window.

Adding Some Dialogue

Let's enter some dialogue:

- Type:

Boy oh boy, this computer stuff sure is fun. I can't believe I used that old Selectric for so many years.

Your screen should appear as follows:

Points to Remember

- The Element Label in the bottom-left corner of the screenplay window will tell you the element for the current caret position.
- To change from one element to another, hold down the Command key and depress the proper key for the desired element.
- Final Draft comes preset with standard margin settings for each element, allowing you to start entering your script right away.
- Final Draft will take care of setting the margins properly for each element. Should you wish to alter margins for a particular element, refer to the Menus section of this manual for more information.