

Chapter 4 - Writing What You Know - Quiz

1. Explain the problem with only “writing what you know”. How will you, as a screenwriter, go about creating stories that exist outside your realm of experience?

The problem with only writing what you know is that it limits your perspective and after writing for a little while, it will start to get boring to you and the audience.

As a screenwriter, I will go about creating stories that exist outside my realm by using what I know, but expanding that into interesting journeys and stories that people can relate to and be entertained by.

2. Explain what makes a fantastical story believable.

What makes a fantastical story believable is when the writer understands people and writes them well. By properly writing characters and giving them relatable, basic notions that work well together, it will bring the story to life. If you only have a good setting but flat characters, the audience will not connect with them.

3. What tools are needed to write “believable” characters”?

The tools needed to write “believable” characters are, like I said above, giving them basic notions and in general, making them 3D. They need to know their story, their background, what scares them, etc. If we only know their name and age we won't feel a connection to them and feel scared or sad when anything happens to them.

4. How do you move a story idea beyond a simple spectacle?

You move a story idea beyond a simple spectacle by writing and creating something that is more than what you just see. If you have amazing dialogue or an

amazing bond between two characters that the audience feels, that will help the audience to feel connected with the movie and not just be entertained for an hour and a half. The audience wants to see good stories, not just explosions and car chases that mean nothing.

5. What ingredients are necessary to create a compelling story?

A key ingredient that is necessary to create a compelling story is to keep the audience on the edge of their seats by giving them action. It can also be the motivation behind the action that turns a story from good to great. Another ingredient is giving the characters in the story something to lose. If they have nothing to lose, no one will feel scared or tense in scenes. But when you write them having lots to lose, or maybe just one big thing, the stakes get much higher and the story gets much more interesting.

6. Explain the difference between the “inner” and “outer” focus of a story.

The difference between the “inner” and “outer” focus of a story is that the “inner” focus is how you arrange the order of a story’s elements to create movement towards the resolution while the “outer” focus of the story is more of the dramatic irony found in the story.

7. What is the biggest mistake beginning writers make? Why is it a problem?

The biggest mistake beginning writers make is writing the script like a novel. They do this by adding way too many details and taking up space on the page that should be used for more important things. The problem with this is that, when reading a script, you want it to be simple and easy to read since most of the people reading don’t have a lot of time. If it bores them or takes up way too much time to get the general idea, they’ll toss it.

8. What are the structural elements of a script?

The structural elements of a script are the plot, character, setting, time, dialogue, pace, etc. Films are like a puzzle. If all of these elements are puzzle pieces, and they all fit correctly with each other, you'll have a great film. But if one or two of these things are off, the whole movie could be off as well.

9. Why is it important to predict Hollywood's upcoming trends?

It is important to predict Hollywood's upcoming trends so you can stay ahead of the curve. If you are always behind, you will be trying to make movies that were already made and most of the time, people are already sick of. But if you are either with the trends or the one who is actually setting the trends, people will be much more attracted to your movies than others.

10. Describe what a synopsis should entail.

A synopsis should only be a few pages and entail the entire story without any heavy descriptions of scenes or small, insignificant details. You want to get straight to the point and have the reader wanting more by the end of it.

11. What is "creative discipline"? Why is it important?

Creative discipline is important because without it, it is nearly impossible to get the writing you need done. Stephen King said you should be writing 4-6 hours a day, six days a week. Even though that seems like overkill, you need to make writing your full-time job if that is really what you want to do for the rest of your life. It is so important because if you don't take writing seriously, you will never be able to finish a story or screenplay and pitch it to people in hopes that it will turn into a film you're proud of.