

## Treatments

Major motion pictures are routinely pitched with treatments. They describe the action and story development in the briefest terms possible. Because of this, you generally won't find much dialog or specific production information (like camera shots) in treatments. In addition to allowing us to quickly describe the story, treatments are particularly useful development and revision tools.

A treatment serves as the blueprint for a script. It's much easier to make changes in a 5-page treatment than a 40-page script. So it's wise to first develop a treatment and then to revise and refine it. Once you (and your producer or clients) are happy with it, then write a script based on the treatment.

Once you have your idea, it's time to write a **treatment**. A treatment is a brief synopsis of your idea and how it is suited to television. It is not a script. We repeat, *it is not a script*. A television treatment is usually about 1-5 pages in length, written in persuasive, snappy language. No lingo about 'smash cuts' or 'three frame dissolves' - you haven't shot it yet, much less edited it, and if you are not a professional producer, jargon will only embarrass you. Your treatment is what your Development Executive will use as a guide when he/she pitches your idea to his/her bosses or what a screenwriter uses to get funding to finish a script. So edit it and rewrite it until it's perfect.

**For this class:** You're not making full length movies so your treatment doesn't need to be 5 pages. Whew! 1/3 typed or 1/2 to 2/3 page hand written is adequate. You will need a treatment for your final video project next week. (remember, the final project may be completed in groups – only one treatment needed per group)

Here as a sample is a treatment from a past student:

"This innovative film will artistically explore the differences between high schools located within the same school district. On one hand there is Mission San Jose High, a model school with test scores higher than the students' lavish homes in the hills. On the other hand there's John F. Kennedy, best known for its harsh reputation a problem school in the pages of local newspapers. Is there really a difference between the education provided at both schools? Director Melanie Smith seeks to find the answer to this controversial question in this riveting documentary."