

The Absolute Beginners Guide to How to Write a Screenplay

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Drill Hall Workshops

Professional script editor and Euroscript tutor Fenella Greenfield (pictured) runs an intensive, one-day screenwriting for beginners class that is terrific fun and highly informative. The morning begins with the basics: the importance of a dramatic opening scene; what the main members of the film crew do; how to set your screenplay out on paper; writing dialogue (theatre is 80 per cent dialogue, television drama 50 per cent and film just 20 per cent); and creating a 'character arc', ie planning how your protagonist will develop during the film. Just as important is what to avoid: one of Greenfield's pet hates is autobiographical tales.

There's a lot to take in, but the volume of information never feels overwhelming, largely because each new element – from devising a plot to developing a subtext –

is introduced through practical exercises, often involving photographs around which to base your plot. You might, for instance, be asked to write a poem or condense your story into six words. The class structure is reassuringly informal and groups are small, so discussing ideas or asking questions doesn't feel intimidating.

Greenfield is bursting with energy, suggestions and advice, and the course bounds along. By the close of play, though you may not quite be the next Diablo Cody, you'll have enough ideas and inspiration for the makings of your own one-minute screenplay (though bear in mind that it can take seven years to develop a script from scratch to screen).

Kathryn Miller

*The next course is on
September 14 10.30am-
4.30pm at the Drill*

*Hall, Chenies St, W1.
Goodge St tube.
£85, concs £75.
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