

## The Treatment

A "treatment" is a term used by filmmakers to describe a document that sets out the story, goals, and creative and cinematic characteristics of a film...For students, writing a treatment is an important exercise in reaching agreement on what you want your film to convey.

Thinking about potential audiences comes in handy when writing a treatment. That's because a treatment is essentially a document that accurately describes the film from the point of view of the audience.

Answering the following questions can help put the treatment together:

- What is the story that will be told to the audience. Adapt the elevator version. How will the story unfold--beginning, middle, and end--on the "screen"?

What will they see first? What will they see next?

- What "locations" will the audience be shown by the camera?

- What are the natural, environmental sounds that the audience will hear at these locations?

- Who will tell the story? A storyteller (also known as a narrator). Interview subjects? A combination of both? (This is a very useful and traditional approach in documentary film.)

- Who is the narrator? Does he or she introduce herself to the audience or is the voice an "omniscient" storyteller?

- Who are the people that the audience will meet, and why are they important?

What unique contributions to the story will these people ("characters") make?

- What do you want your audience to know or realize after seeing the movie?

- How do you want your audience to feel after seeing the movie? What emotions are you trying to stir?