

Stretch Your Story

THE
SCRIPT
READER

If you have an underwritten script, resist the urge to add filler scenes or content that doesn't particularly add anything to the story just for the sake of it. Instead, consider the strategies listed here, which can all help to add length to a script, enhancing it in the process too.

Add Subplots

Introduce new subplots that can enrich the main plot and make the story more complex. These subplots should ideally be related to the main plot and enhance the themes and character arcs.

Some suggestions include:

- **Incorporating Secondary Characters' Goals:** Give your supporting characters goals that directly or indirectly affect or relate to the protagonist's journey.
- **Add a Love Interest:** Introducing a romantic subplot can create emotional depth and add conflict.
- **Create a Parallel Plot:** Introduce a subplot that mirrors the main plot in some way, reinforcing themes and creating contrast or comparison.

Deepen Characterization

Spend more time exploring your characters. This can be done through more dialogue, more scenes dedicated to character development, or exploring their backstories.

Some suggestions include:

- **Add Backstory:** Include scenes that provide insight into what shaped your characters' personalities, desires, and fears.
- **Show Character Flaws:** Flesh out your characters by giving them flaws or weaknesses that they need to overcome.
- **Show Change Over Time:** Demonstrate character growth or change through their actions and decisions over the course of the story.

Expand the World

Build on the universe of your story. This can be done by exploring the setting in greater detail, introducing new locations or adding unique elements to the world that make it more interesting.

Some suggestions include:

- **Include Evocative Descriptions:** Elaborate on the sights, sounds, tone, and atmosphere of your settings whenever it's relevant to the story, but without going overboard with lengthy description.
- **Add Unique Cultural Elements:** If your story is set in a unique culture or society, explore its traditions, norms, and values. Could they add more layers or parallels to the story you're telling?
- **Introduce New Locations:** Add new scenes that take place in different settings, adding visual variety and depth to the world.

Explore the Theme

Dive deeper into the themes of your story. This could mean adding scenes that further explore the underlying message or introducing new plot points that are directly related to the theme.

Some suggestions include:

- **Add Symbolism:** Use symbolic objects, settings, or actions that reflect your themes.
- **Include Thematic Dialogue:** Have characters discuss topics related to your themes.
- **Create Scenes that Echo Theme:** Add scenes where the action or conflict directly reflects your story's themes.

Add Obstacles

Story is conflict, so make the characters' goals harder to achieve. This can be done by introducing new conflicts, obstacles or antagonists.

Some suggestions include:

- **Add Physical Obstacles:** Put tangible barriers between your characters and their goals.
- **Create Personal Conflicts:** Introduce internal struggles that make it harder for characters to reach their goals.
- **Introduce New Antagonists:** Bring in new characters who oppose the protagonist's objectives.

Improve Pacing

If your story moves too quickly, you may need to slow down and spend more time on key scenes. This can help build tension and develop characters.

Some suggestions include:

- **Create Breathing Spaces:** After intense scenes, include quieter scenes for characters (and readers) to react and reflect.
- **Expand on Emotional Scenes:** Spend more time on moments of emotional significance, allowing characters to process their feelings.
- **Add Suspense:** Stretch out tense moments to keep readers on the edge of their seats.

Include More Visuals

Add more visual description and action sequences. This not only adds to the page count but also creates a more vivid and engaging story.

Some suggestions include:

- **Show, Don't Tell:** Replace exposition with visual ways of revealing character traits or plot information.
- **Create Visual Metaphors:** Use visual action or elements to symbolize deeper meanings.
- **Expand Action Sequences:** Add more detail to action scenes to make them longer and more engaging.

Strengthen the Stakes

Increase the stakes for the characters. This could mean making the consequences of failure more severe or making the rewards of success more appealing.

Some suggestions include:

- **Threaten What Characters Value Most:** Make the potential losses personal to the characters.
- **Increase Consequences:** Make the potential outcomes of failure more disastrous.
- **Create a Time Limit:** Add a ticking clock element to create urgency and heighten stakes.

Deepen Relationships

Explore the relationships between characters more. How do these relationships evolve over the course of the story? Are there conflicts or alliances that could be developed further?

Some suggestions include:

- **Add Conflict:** Introduce disagreements or differing goals among allies, not just antagonists.
- **Explore Past Relationships:** Delve into shared histories to deepen relationships.
- **Show How Relationships Affect Decisions:** Have characters' decisions be influenced by their relationships with others.

Notes:

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