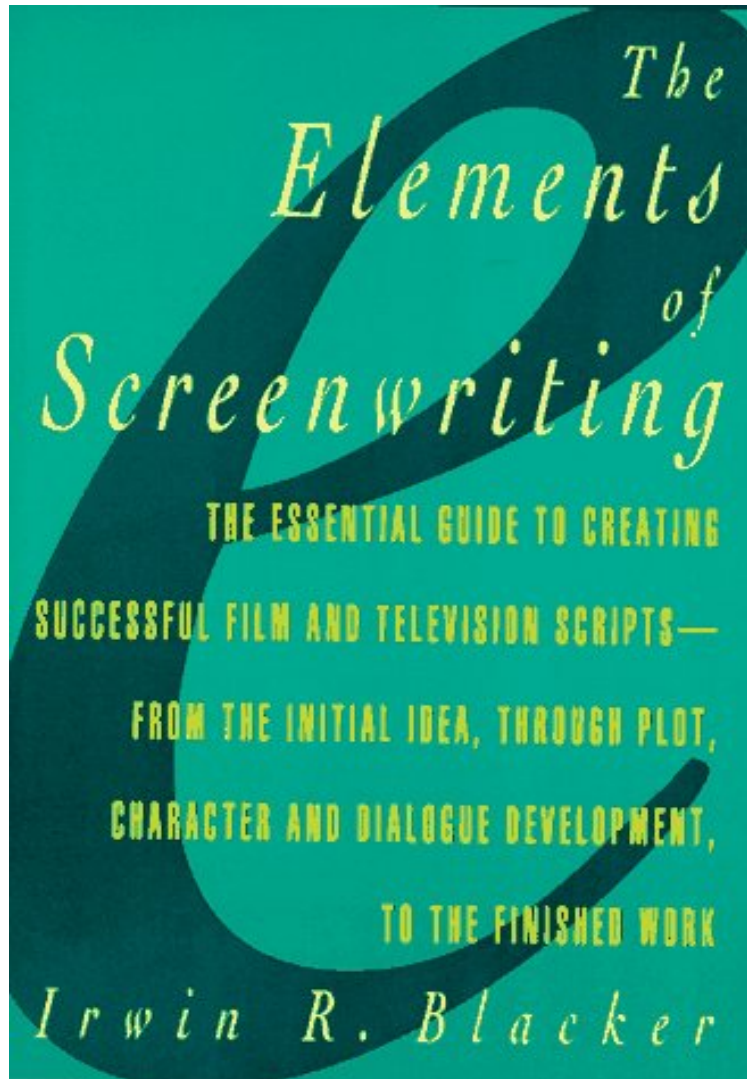


# Elements of Screenwriting: A Guide for Film and Television Writing

*Irwin R. Blacker*

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**Irwin R. Blacker : Elements of Screenwriting: A Guide for Film and Television Writing** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elements of Screenwriting: A Guide for Film and Television Writing:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Still the best.By David SheppardThis unassuming, no-non-sense little book is one of the best, if not the best, ever written on screenwriting. The book is divided into two parts. The first concerns basic storytelling and is appropriate for any genre: fiction, narrative non-fiction, screenplays, etc. These

initial chapters discuss conflict, structure, character, exposition, and dialogue. The second half is primarily devoted to the mechanics of putting a screenplay together. It addresses the look of a professional script and production considerations. The last chapter concerns the business aspects of screenwriting. The book was originally published in 1986, so this 1996 re-publication is simply a photocopy of the original with a new cover. But don't let the publication date fool you into thinking the material is outdated, even though the material may well show its age. Still, this is the place to start to build the basic skills for screenwriting. Many established screenwriters would do well to heed Irwin Blacker's sage advice. You can wade your way through Robert McKee's 465 pages in *Story, Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting*, and you should, but I find that book unnecessarily complicated when discussing the essence of story. On the other hand, Irwin Blacker understands that story is conflict, pure and simple. Blacker's book cuts to the chase. It's his initial focus on conflict and the way it structures the telling of a story that is the most impressive. His description of "locking the conflict" had a major impact on my book concerning novel writing. Erwin R. Blacker didn't come upon his expertise by accident. He was a graduate of Ohio University, had a doctorate in English from Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and was the author of twenty-two books of fiction and non-fiction, plus numerous screenplays and teleplays. He was a reviewer for the New York Times and taught at USC from the mid-1960s to 1978. He was an emeritus professor at the USC School of Cinema and Television at the time of his death. Professor Blacker was at work on this book, and indeed, it wasn't yet complete. His wife, daughter, son-in-law, and teaching assistant completed the work from his class notes and audio recordings of his lectures. He taught many of Hollywood's most-successful moviemakers. One of them was George Lucas. Professor Blacker died in February 1985 of a heart attack at the age of 65.

1 of 0 people found the following review helpful. All you need to know in a compact package By Lance Thorough, concise and practical guide to screen writing. The contact information for agents and production companies at the end are out of date, but the meat of this excellent book is outstanding. I refer to this one often.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good primer on screenwriting without all the fluff By Tim Daiss The Elements of Screenwriting is a quick read at only 102 pages, not counting the appendix. However, its nuts and bolts treatment gives clarity where many longer screenwriting books bog down and are long winded, even confusing for the beginner. This is the fourth book I've read so far on screenwriting and I think it should be the first any aspiring screenwriter should begin with. Then, after understanding the basics as discussed in *The Elements of Screenwriting*, other longer, weightier tomes can add insight and propel you further along the road to writing screen plays.

In the tradition of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, this screenwriter's guide covers writing specific to the film and television industry as well as general writing advice - truly an "Essential Guide" for the screenwriting process.

From the Back Cover An indispensable guide written in a clear, no-nonsense style, 'The Elements of Screenwriting' is a handy, reliable reference to the basics of writing for the screen. From devising the perfect pitch to presenting a finished work, this book coaches writers in the arts of character, plot, and dialogue development; the structure and look of a typical script; the considerations that must be addressed during production; and the complex and unnerving business of filmmaking itself.