**SCRIPT WRITING TIPS**

**EXPOSITION:**

*"One of the tricks is to have the exposition conveyed in a scene of conflict, so that a character is forced to say things you want the audience to know. As, for example, if he is defending himself against somebody’s attack, his words or defense seem justified even though his words are actually expository words. Something appears to be happening, so the audience believes it is witnessing a scene (which it is), not listening to expository speeches.”* - Ernest Lehman

1. Eliminate exposition that isn’t absolutely necessary or that will become clear as [the story](http://thescriptlab.com/screenwriting/story) moves forward.

2. Deliver exposition through conflict or humor.

**SUBTEXT:**

The subtext is all the content underneath that is not announced explicitly by characters but is understood by the readers of viewers.

1. Avoid repetition. If the line is well written and clear, the audience will understand!
2. Use stage directions and design elements to create subtext. Look at the difference between the following two examples:
   1. **Husband:** “You okay, honey?”

**Wife:** “No.”

**Husband:** “What’s wrong?”

**Wife:** “I think you’re having an affair and you forgot our anniversary.”

b. *(A husband comes home late. His hair is tousled and he has lipstick on his collar. He stumbles into the kitchen where his wife is washing dishes angrily.)*

**Husband:** “You okay honey?

**Wife:** I’m fine! *(she slams the dish down and storms out of the room)*

*(Husband sees on the dinner table a card and a present. He picks up the card which reads “Happy Anniversary!”)*

**LOGIC:**

Make sure the world you have created makes sense.

1. Don’t ignore important details. If it doesn’t make sense to you, it won’t make sense to the audience.
2. Make sure your audience knows what is going on! Just because it makes sense to you, doesn’t mean it will make sense to them!

**TRUE TO LIFE:**

This is a tricky balance. Dialogue does not have to be exactly like a real conversation with every like, um, and redundancy. But it should feel real and sound like something your character would say.

1. Avoid using a lot of idiomatic phrases and clichés.
2. Avoid being “corny.” Try saying lines aloud and you will hear when it sounds uncomfortable or unnatural.