

## Page One 2009/10: Writing For Games

### Guidelines

#### Background to the scheme

PAGE ONE is primarily a development programme, not a training initiative. The scheme's goal is to find writers capable of receiving industry backing in narrative gaming. We will work with regional games developer [Team 17](#) and will base selection primarily on the interest they express in a particular writer. The scheme is funded by Screen Yorkshire and supported by Yorkshire Forward.

#### What is involved?

**We would like writers to come up with a proposal for a game that conforms to the following brief.**

The game will have a sci-fi theme. The game setting is limited to one space ship. The player may be asked to traverse diverse area of the ship (such as Engineering or Hydroponics), but the setting is limited to the ship only. The game is intended for PC, XBLA and PSN and consists of 3 episodes.

It is a requirement that the story arc runs over the entirety of the three episodes, but each episode must be playable and make sense as a stand-alone game. Each episode must end in a way that provides incentive for players to purchase and play subsequent episodes and start in a way that summarises previous events (as necessary).

The mainstay of the gameplay is defending the player from alien attack. The player will control one character, viewed from a top-down camera angle for the entire duration of the three episodes. Other characters may be used for dramatic purposes, but any characters appearing in-game other than the player character will only be able to walk from one point to another or perform simple tasks (such as interacting with a door): they will not be able to path-find on their own or defend themselves from enemy attacks.

At the end of the programme, you will be required to submit a screenplay for the first episode and a beat sheet for the two remaining episodes, collectible text and in-game audio text. The development process is intended to assist you in producing this material and replicating as closely as possible the development process on a game.

We would therefore like as assessment material a one page summary of the game proposal, two pages of sample script (either screenplay or in-game audio text, with context) and one page of collectible text (diaries, found material etc).

#### Who can apply?

To be eligible to apply you must:

- Be aged 18 or over
- Live or work in the Yorkshire and Humber Region

(Companies, organisations, full-time students and MA students are **not** eligible)



## Example Screenplay Sequence

### 1. BLACKNESS

TIGHT on Conrad's eyes flipping open. He looks over to an alarm clock by his bunk...Tick... tick... tick...0328 becomes 0329...

FADE TO:

### 2. EXT. STARSHIP

A faint light appears... then another... close together, growing brighter. More appear. They resolve into a row of lights on the side of a STARSHIP hurtling towards us. Bristling with detail, the speed at which it travels is phenomenal. There is silence.

A SUPER appears across the bottom of the screen:

U.C.S. LEOPOLD  
TERRAN DIPLOMATIC ENVOY VESSEL  
10 NOVEMBER, 3785

PAN RIGHT to follow it as it speeds past into the blackness beyond. Even though it's travelling at speed, the size of the ship means it takes some seconds to pass. Framed against a white light, the scene seems almost absent of all colour.

Hold a beat. Then, below this, slowly appears:

0330 AM SHIPTIME

CUT TO:

### 3. INT. CONRAD'S QUARTERS

INSIDE the STARSHIP, the conditions seem cramped despite being a massive vessel. We're in Conrad's cabin (Episode 1, level 1).

Close on the CLOCK (the old kind where the numbers flip on little flaps). 0330 flips to 0331. A BUZZING NOISE from the closed door. Conrad's silhouette rises from the shadows.

The door buzzes again.

Next to the CLOCK is a battered BLACK AND WHITE FAMILY PHOTO. A man, his wife and a kid. They look happy. A WHITE WEDDING BAND lies nearby. We see the shadow of Conrad's silhouette crosses from our vision...

He taps a panel in the wall beside the door.

CONRAD (into panel)  
Who's there?

MIA  
Lieutenant MIA.

He scowls darkly. Hesitates. Then dismissively punches another button. The door opens, revealing MIA. She looks gravely at him.

CONRAD (eyes narrowing; stiffly)  
Yeah?

MIA  
I wanted to speak with you...

COMPUTER VOICE (OC)  
Hyperspace emergence in five...four...three...

#### 4. EXT. SPACE

The Leopold winks from an irisng wormhole, and SWOOPS into normal space...and, as we PAN right, we see it's hurtling right toward a huge, decaying HULK of an ancient ship...

#### 5. INT. CONRAD'S QUARTERS

MIA turns. Softly...

MIA  
Conrad...Why do you...

COMPUTER VOICE (OC)  
Gravitational anomaly detected. Warning.

#### 6. EXT. SPACE

The Leopold SMASHES into the side of the abandoned hulk – THOOOOOOM!!!!

#### 7. INT. CONRAD'S QUARTERS

The ship judders. Conrad and MIA stare at each other. There's a rising din of GRINDING METAL. Then a warped flaming girder punches through the ceiling, spins towards Conrad...

MIA shoves Conrad back, saving his life, as she moves into the path of the oncoming girder

WHAMMM!!! The slab of red-hot steel crushes her against the floor...

Conrad slumps, eyes shut, as the sounds of carnage throughout the ship fade slowly away...

Fade to black...

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 8. CONRAD'S POV:

His eyes open. MIA's standing over him. She leans over him, concerned...

MIA  
Can you walk?

CONRAD (dizzily)

Something hit us...you saved me...

MIA (smiling)

Indeed. Not much gets by you, Chief Engineer...

Conrad coughs, lets her help him (she's strong) to his feet. She starts to guide him from the room but he turns back, grabs the wedding ring from the bureau, and looks at the wedding photograph. It's been burned; the faces are now unrecognizable. He discards it grimly.

She stoops, grabs a burning girder blocking their way, wraps her fingers around it, and moves it one-handed.

MIA (impatiently)

I need to get to the bridge and see how dead we are.

CONRAD

What about the envoy... the mission?

MIA

She is probably dead, Conrad. The upper decks have been torn to pieces.

CONRAD

Maybe I can help...

MIA

Negative. Head to the main reactor and shut it down before it overloads. If it does, everyone on this ship is dead. Stay in radio contact.

CONRAD

Keep us alive.

She nods and passes leaves the cabin... Leaving Conrad alone in the wrecked room.

SEGUE TO IN-GAME....

## **Example Text File (from "Resident Evil")**

### **1. PLANT 42 REPORT**

Four days have passed since the accident and the plant at point 42 is growing amazingly fast.

It has been effected by the T-Virus differently than other plants have been and shows unique shape in addition to its size. Looking at the way it behaves, it is now difficult to determine what kind of plant it was originally.

There are two ways in which Plant 42 gathers nutrition. The first is through its root that reaches into the basement. Immediately after the accident, a scientist went mad and broke the water tank in the basement. Now the basement is filled with water. It is easily imaginable that some chemical elements were blended in the water and promotes the incredibly fast growth of Plant 42.

Another part of Plant 42 from the basement grows through the duct and hangs down like so many bulbs from the ceiling of the first floor. Many vines come out of those bulbs and they are the second resource for its nutrition.

Once sensing movement, Plant 42 shoots its vines around the prey and holds it. Then it starts sucking up blood, using the suckers located at the back of its vine.

It also has some intelligence. It blocks the door by twining its vines around it especially when it captures prey or is sleeping. Several staff members have already fallen victim to this.

May 21, 1998  
Henry Sarton

### **2. RESEARCHER'S LETTER**

Dear Ada,

Ada, by the time you read this, I'll be something... different. Today's test turned out to be positive, just as I expected. I feel like going crazy when I think about becoming one of them.

Ada, you're not infected and I hope you never will be. In case you're the last one left, take the material in the Visual Data Room and go to the Power Room to operate the Triggering System before you escape. And make all this public through the media.

If everything is in order, all the locks can be opened by the security system. You can access the system if you log in with my name from the terminal in the small lab and enter the password.

The password is your name. To unlock the door at B2 where the Visual Data Room is located, you'll need to access with our names first and then enter another password.

I've written the code below. I'm sure you'll understand it easily. And this is my last hope - if you find me completely changed, please kill me yourself.

## Example “Beat Sheet” (from the movie “Alien”)

Opening Image:	The Nostromo, a mining vessel slowly wakes up, turning lights on and waking the crew from their artificial sleep.
Theme Stated:	The crew have breakfast. John Hurt, in a terrible foreshadowing of the events to come comments that he "feels dead". Two members of the crew argue about why they don't get as much bonus as the other members of the crew. Dallas, the captain, tells them that they get what they're contracted for, and so the theme is stated: the value of a human life. Is one person worth more than another? Are the crew on the ship worth more than the investigation party? Is the alien worth more than all of them?
Set-up:	We learn that the crew have been asleep on their way back to Earth after a mining mission. They work for a company that communicates to the ship's captain Dallas via a computer called Mother. Mother has woken the crew up, but they're not home as they might have expected...
Catalyst:	Mother has received a distress call.
Debate:	The crew discuss whether they should investigate the distress call. Ash, the ship's science officer (and the "half man" that populates many Monster in the House movies), explains that they are contractually obliged to investigate, and that if they don't, their earnings from the mining mission could be forfeit. The sin committed by the crew is greed (the name of the ship, Nostromo references the Conrad novel about greed).
Break Into Two:	An investigation party leaves the safety of the Nostromo and enters the upside-down world of the alien ship, with it's amazing architecture and long-dead pilot.
B Story:	Ripley's conflict with Ash. Ripley deciphers the message once the investigation party have left and realises it's a warning. Ash tells her not to tell them. When the crew returns with an alien on Hurt's face, Ripley refuses to let them in as there's a quarantine procedure. Ash over-rules her by opening the door for them. This prompts a discussion between Ash and Ripley in which she states that the members of the investigation party were not worth risking the rest of the crew for. When Ripley eventually gains command of the ship and discovers the significance of Order 937 (that the crew are expendable), Ash is left with no choice but to try and kill her (in an overtly sexual way in keeping with the rape theme... by ramming a magazine down her throat).
Fun & Games:	John Hurt gets an alien attached to his face. The crew realise that the alien has impregnated Hurt by pushing something down his throat (essentially raping him). They can't remove the alien, but shortly after it drops off on it's own.
Mid-point:	Sitting down to eat with a now-awake John Hurt, the crew are horrified when a baby alien bursts from his chest, killing him in a

fountain of blood. The stakes are raised... the alien can kill.

- Bad Guys Close In:** The crew searching for the alien find a shed skin. It's grown. Then it appears and kills Harry Dean Stanton... it's huge!
- All Is Lost:** The alien kills the captain Dallas in the ventilation pipe. The crew have to reconsider the idea of capturing the alien. They're going to have to kill it.
- Dark Night Of The Soul:** The discovery that the company considers the crew expendable and that Ash is a robot acting on behalf of the company.
- Break Into Three:** Ash tells the crew that they can't kill the alien: it's the perfect being, and too strong for them. The crew think again, and Ripley takes charge, changing the plan to destroying the Nostromo rather than trying to kill the alien, with the remaining crew escaping in a pod.
- Finale:** The last two crew die (the woman in another sexual reference, with the alien's tentacle rising up between her legs) while Ripley sets the self destruct mechanism. Ripley goes back for Jones the ship's cat. After getting in the escape pod and destroying the Nostromo, Ripley discovers the alien in the pod. Jettisoning the alien, she's finally safe.
- Final Image:** Ripley goes to sleep, safe with Jones the cat for the duration of her return to Earth. She's changed from a character who would be prepared to sacrifice three members of the crew without a thought, to one who risked her own life to save the ship's cat. Her change is reflected in her increasingly feminine appearance.