

Week One:

Use the franchise triangle to identify the franchise of four series:

Good Trouble:

- Characters: Callie and Mariana Foster
- Genre: Dramedy (one hour)
- Story: Two sisters move to LA and navigate their careers, relationships and activism in their 20s

The Bear:

- Character: Carmen "Carmy" Berzatto
- Genre: Dramedy (30 minutes)
- Story: A professional chef struggles to take over his brother's restaurant in Chicago

The Handmaid's Tale:

- Character: June Osborne
- Genre: Drama/Science Fiction (one hour)
- Story: A woman navigates surviving a totalitarian, extremist society

Abbott Elementary:

- Character: Janine Teagues (and the Abbott Elementary Staff)
- Genre: Workplace Comedy/Mockumentary (30 minutes)
- Story: Abbott Elementary follows Janine Teagues and a group of dedicated teachers who work for an underfunded elementary school in Philadelphia. But that doesn't stop them from giving their students their all.

For this in-class assignment, I chose to identify the franchise of Good Trouble (Freeform), The Bear (FX), The Handmaid's Tale (Hulu) and Abbott Elementary (ABC).

Week Two:

Identify the main character arc and story arc for one episode for two series:

The Originals: Season 1, Episode 1

Main Character Arc: Klaus Mikaelson is a cold, callous and sarcastic vampire/werewolf hybrid living in New Orleans, who pushes away everyone, including his family. He finds out his lover (Hayley) from a one-night stand is pregnant. After attempting to push her away, he realizes this baby is just what he needs to gain power and control.

Story Arc: After finding out Hayley is pregnant, Klaus deals with a number of issues throughout the episode, including a battle between his old friend, whom he thought was dead, and dodging witches conspiring against him and his unborn child.

Season Arc: Klaus grows a bond with his family and they work to protect Hayley and their child before she is born. After taking down his long list of enemies, he starts to slowly learn the true value of family and relationships. He still has work to do to break free from his cold, hard exterior and still aims for power and control over his family and everyone in New Orleans.

The Bear; Season 2, Episode 1

Main Character: Carmy Berzatto

Main Character Arc: Carmy is anxiety-ridden. The restaurant bills are piling up, he struggles to create the new menu and he stresses about a re-opening date for The Beef.

Story Arc: Carmy, Sydney (his sous-chef), and Natalie (his sister and co-owner of The Beef) realize that they need to open the restaurant as soon as possible. As they consider new employees and management methods, they break down the cost of opening and make a plan to open by the end of three months.

What makes the story interesting: An element that makes Carmy's character arc memorable is that fact that he is navigating his brother's death and restaurant, all while leaving behind being an award-winning chef with a Michelin star. As far as the story arc, I found learning about the opening of a restaurant interesting, which is why I chose this episode. Breaking down the cost is the most important thing, but factors such as prepping the chefs, passing inspections, receiving loans and planning out a menu are also fascinating and I loved how this episode was able to tell a story through an informative lens.

Give Your "Hero" a clear goal:

1. Carmy has to map out a plan for the reopening of The Beef. He, Sydney and Natalie come up with a budget, and after realizing they are way below it, they ask for a loan, go over hiring employees and start planning a menu.
 2. He slightly reaches his goal. He comes to the conclusion that he has to open the restaurant as soon as possible, which means closing the door on his six-month goal and opening in three months instead. After mapping out his plan, he gets to work. Spoiler: By the end of the season, they successfully do a soft launch opening.
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Week 3:

Identify the 10 Pilot Points of two series episodes:

Abbott Elementary: Season 2, Episode 1

Act #1:

Opening: Janine is a quirky, awkward second grade teacher at Abbott Elementary.

Hook: It's development day for teachers, and Janine has planned a mixer for the teachers and is ready to get back into the classroom.

Lock: She has just broken-up with her long-term boyfriend (Tariq) of over a decade and this school year is going to be different.

Act #2:

1st Test: Janine is struggling with paying her rent since her ex-boyfriend moved out.

Transition: Jacob and Gregory talk with Janine about her possibly getting evicted, but she claims she'll be fine.

2nd Test: Janine's car is getting towed in the parking lot. She can't afford to pay for her unpaid parking tickets or to get her car back from the towing lot.

All Is Lost: Janine tries to move her car, despite having a metal bar on her tire and she blows her tire. Upon getting out of the car, she realizes she scheduled the entertainment for the teacher's mixer for the wrong day.

Act #3:

On the Defense: Janine admits that she hasn't been herself, explaining how the breakup has affected her personal life.

On Offense: Janine has a heartfelt moment with Barbara and Melissa. They comfort her and give her advice on moving forward. Jacob loans the rent money to Janine to prevent her from being evicted.

Final Struggle: Janine realizes with the help of the teachers at Abbott, it's going to be a great school year.

The Handmaid's Tale: Season 1, Episode 1

Act #1:

Opening: June is a woman, subjected to a world where women have no rights. She is one of many handmaids, forced to bear children for extremist-power hungry families because fertility rates have collapsed.

Hook: (opens with a flashback scene): June, her husband (Luke) and her daughter (Hannah) are running from the cops when they are separated. June's daughter is taken from her, Luke is shot and she is knocked out.

Lock: June narrates her life as a handmaid now, sitting in her uniform, which is a long, conservative red dress and a white covering over her hair. Her name has been taken from her and changed to Offred and she has just been assigned to a new house.

Act #2:

First Big Test (flashback scene): June is brought to the red center. Scared and confused, she learns what Gilead plans to do with all of the fertile women.

Transition: June finds her best friend Moira at the red center, and they discuss how they got caught. Moira tells June that they will find a way to escape and get her daughter back, however long it takes.

Second Big Test: June has to prepare for the ceremony with her new commander and his wife Serena, a cold and callous couple.

All is Lost: June is struggling coming to terms with her new life. She feels sick after the ceremony, and also can't stop thinking about the dead bodies she saw on the wall. She worries about her daughter and is also suspicious of her shopping partner, Ofglen, her Martha, Cora and Nick, the commander's driver/go-to man.

Act #3:

On the Defense: June can't stop thinking about her previous life. She thinks Moira is dead, and is also forced to attend an execution, where the handmaids must beat a man to death. She takes her rage out on him, leaving blood on her white headpiece.

On The Offense: June connects with Ofglen, where they share their love for a former ice cream shop, now turned into a clothing store for the children of Gilead's uniforms. They continue to talk on their way home, silently chatting about their children, families and how they got caught.

Final Struggle: Ofglen warns June that there's an eye (people who are spies for Gilead) in her house, and tells her to be careful. June realizes that there is one person in Gilead that she can trust.

Week 4:

Identify the theme and tone of three series, two current and one past.

One Piece (Netflix Live-action):

- Theme: The theme is comedic and lighthearted with lots of action. Luffy and his pirate friends are searching across the Grand Line for treasure, and are willing to find it at all costs.
- Tone: Humor, friendship, inspirational, action-adventure

Insecure:

- Theme: A comedic and dramatic take on life in your late 20s/early 30s. Issa has gone through a series of events that will change the course of her career, personal life, friendships and long-term relationship.
- Tone: Dramatic, funny, honest

Bob's Burgers:

- Theme: A comedic theme regarding family bonding, adventures and food. A family bonds over owning a restaurant and serving up burgers, among other things.
- Tone: comedic, lighthearted

Choose an episode from your list. Identify the theme and tone. Describe one scene that shows the theme and one that shows the tone.

Bob's Burgers (Season 9, Episode 16):

Theme: Family, food, working, adventures

Tone: Family comedy, lighthearted comedy, animated sitcom

One scene that shows the theme: Bob's family forces him to take the day off work, as he is burned out and stressed. Instead, he decides to work for another restaurant.

One scene that shows the tone: Bob realizes that his family is the most important thing, putting them before work and the restaurant.

Week 5:

Identify: Formats for 3 series

Pick 3 series that interest you. Cut and paste the main format info from the WGA primer. Note at least 1 aspect of the format that is helpful, challenging or surprising to you -- and why.

Snowfall (FX)

Average page count: 42-46

Average scene count: 34-45

Broken into acts? Yes, 4 and a teaser

Other things to consider:

Scene headings are in **bold**.

Act headings are centered, **bolded** and underlined — ACT ONE / END OF ACT ONE... At the end of the fourth act, it's END OF EPISODE.

Scripts also include a teaser, but the teaser is not noted on the first page. The script just starts. At the end of the teaser, it's END OF TEASER, centered, **bolded** and underlined. There is no cue for the main title.

- The teaser as well as acts one through three average about 7-11 pages in length. The fourth act is almost always shorter, usually around 4-6 pages wrapping everything up .
- Significant props, actions and heightened emotions are sometimes CAPITALIZED in the text for emphasis. Occasionally in the description, a character's thoughts are *italicized*.
- Don't be afraid to write rich, visual description. It's all about the atmosphere and tone.
- Flashbacks are written into the scene heading, e.g. INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - FLASHBACK
- The text in the flashbacks is in *italics*. See example below on how to oscillate between past and present.
- When characters speak a different language, the translation is in a parenthetical underneath as in the example below.

One aspect that I found helpful was the use of flashbacks in different scenes. Also, several of the characters speak Spanish, so it was interesting to see how they transition between languages.

Abbott Elementary (ABC)

Average page count: 29-33

Average scene count: 28-33

Broken into acts? Yes, three acts + cold open + tag

Other things to consider:

- Scripts begin with a cold open, then have three acts and end with a tag. The cold open is typically 2 pages or less. Act one is usually the longest, clocking in at somewhere around 9 to 14 pages; act two is around 8-10 pages, then act three is the shortest, usually around at 5-7 pages. The tag is almost always 1 page.
- Act breaks in *Abbott Elementary* scripts are formatted: **COLD OPEN / END OF COLD OPEN ... ACT ONE / END OF ACT ONE** ... centered, bolded and underlined.
- In terms of talking heads, Abbott Elementary scripts are formatted much like *The Office*. To write a talking head, you'd put AVA TALKING HEAD on the left-hand side of the page—just as you would a scene heading. Talking heads are underlined. Scene headings are not.
- Major locations include the teachers' lounge, Janine's classroom, admin area, etc.
- Sometimes in the scene heading, for time of day, rather than saying simply "DAY" or "NIGHT" scripts will say "LUNCH," e.g. - "INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LUNCH"
- At the end of the tag (which is the end of the script), **END OF SHOW** is centered, **bolded** and underlined.

One format that is helpful is the comparison to *The Office*. Since it's written in a specific way, it's easier to break down how the exact format of the script should be. Learning about how the act breaks are formatted is also incredibly helpful.

The Last of Us (HBO)

Average page count: 42-67; the length varies (the pilot is 112 pages)

Average scene count: it varies wildly, so try not to worry too much about it

Broken into acts? No

Other things to consider:

- All scene headings are in bold.
- The prose is very visceral with descriptions of sights, sounds, and smells. Sentences are short and active. Scripts consist of A LOT of description. It's a very visual show.
- Signage on screen helps tell the story. Important signs are written in ALL-CAPS and bolded. These include highway signs like "WELCOME TO WYOMING," FEDRA signs and graffiti. Sometimes significant signs/text are bolded in huge 48pt font or in red to really signify importance and draw the reader in.
- Flashbacks are indicated by adding the year to the end of the first scene heading of the flashback and then the year 2023 when we return to the present action.
- *Italicized* words and phrases are peppered throughout all scripts, mostly letting us know characters' internal monologue. These are notes for the reader about what we're feeling more than seeing. In the example below: "They aren't here for lunch. They're interrogating the hostess of the restaurant. *Hmmm, wonder what she did.* Another bite. Chew. Chew. Chew. The hostess nods, and points toward where Ratna is seated. *Oh. Someone near me did something?*"
- Scripts are not broken into acts, but each script ends with "**END OF EPISODE**" in **bold**, ALL-CAPS, centered and underlined.

One aspect that I found helpful was the description of using signage and visuals to tell a story. The Last of Us does a great job at storytelling, especially for folks like me who haven't played the game.

Read/View Series #5: Read the script of a currently existing show and format it as if it would be in the WGA primer.

Outerbanks (*Netflix*)

Average page count: 60-65 (The pilot is 62 pages)

Average scene count: It usually varies depending on the episode

Broken into acts? No

Other things to consider:

- The main character's narration is incorporated into the script, labeled John B. (V.O.)
- The characters names are introduced in bold
- Similar to scripts like The Bear or The Last of Us, Outerbanks also uses visuals for storytelling. For example, it tells you in bold when they're in a mansion, on a boat, at home, etc. They use INT. and EXT. to tell you when they arrive and leave different locations.
- Each character has a distinct dialogue. For example, JJ is always cracking jokes, John B is the group leader, and narrates the story, Pope is the smart, level headed kid and Kiara is the upper middle class hippie.
- Important details are usually bolded. In the pilot episode on page five, the phrases 'FADED FAMILY PICTURE' and 'CLOSE ON' are in bold to showcase pictures of John B. and his family.
- Parts of the script are labeled cut to and fade out to switch to different scenes
- Motions like hand gestures and looks are put into parenthesis
- I'm linking to the 'Outerbanks' pilot script [here](#) if you're interested!

The Bear Group Project:

For this group project, my classmates and I acted as if we were in a writers room. We created the character arc, story arc, ending/beginning and 10 plot points for the pilot episode and script of The Bear. I was assigned to work on the character arc, story arc and 10 plot points.

Character Arc: Carmy is an award-winning chef from Chicago who struggles with anxiety and stress. He has just suffered the loss of his brother and has moved back to Chicago to take over his brother's restaurant. In the midst of grieving his brother, dealing with family issues and working with a staff that doesn't know or respect him, he pushes through.

Story Arc: Carmy struggles with his new job at The Beef. Between past due spreadsheets scattered across his desk, bills piling up and machines not working, he thinks of ways to improve the restaurant. Time, money and even the staff are not on his side, but he continues on in the midst of chaos.

The restaurant is just mere hours from opening at this point. The Ballbreaker machine is driving him crazy, his cousin Richie pushes his buttons more and more, and Carmy's knife is nowhere to be found. After accidentally cutting himself with the dull knives in the kitchen, he bandages his hand. Despite his struggles, bloody hands and all, he perseveres. He tries to get the attention of his staff, but no luck again.

After the crowd of gamers appear outside of the restaurant, Carmy unsuccessfully tries to calm down the mob. Richie saves the day and controls the gamers by firing a gun, but is still upset

with Carmy, telling him to stick to the old menu and make the spaghetti. As Carmy prepares to open the tomato cans, something in him says, “No, don’t do it.” Going against his better judgement and anxiety, he throws away the tomatoes.

Ending/Beginning: The ending and beginning of the pilot are connected by the general theme of Carmy’s relationships with the staff and himself, along with the visual element of the **tomatoes**. At the start of the screenplay we see Carmy wake up by a “field of **tomatoes**.”

He’s not open to any feedback from The Beef staff, who’ve worked there for years. He barely has any connection with them and they have little to no respect for him and his decisions. Additionally Carmy doubts his and the staff’s ability to successfully run The Beef, which we also see with the bills and Carmy’s stress.

But by the end, things have changed a bit. While Carmy and the staff aren’t suddenly the best of friends, the relationship has improved after they work as a team to get ready for the oncoming rush of customers. He has earned a little respect when Marcus refers to him as “chef,” but he’s also put in his place by Richie who reminds him he’s still a newbie in their kitchen.

Additionally, Carmy seems a little bit more confident in his staff’s abilities to run The Beef with him. However when we see him throw away the tomatoes at the end, it implies that his anxiety and self-doubt hasn’t gone away.

10 Plot Points:

Act #1:

Opening: Carmy is an award-winning chef who moves back to his hometown of Chicago to take over his brother’s restaurant. His brother has recently passed and he is figuring the ins and outs of running a restaurant on his own, training employees and creating a menu.

Hook: The restaurant is having money problems, most of the machines are broken and everything is chaotic. He trades his personal items and empties out the coins from the arcade machines in the restaurant.

Lock: Carmy has just hired Sydney, a sous chef from Chicago. He can only afford short ribs for the restaurant, which takes longer to prep. He ferociously starts chopping up veggies and prepping to make sandwiches.

Act #2:

First Big Test: Carmy argues with his cousin (Richie), who is upset about the way he is running the restaurant. After the big fight, he takes the spaghetti off the menu, which causes another fight between him and the employees. Someone has also taken his knife, which means he’s forced to use the dull knives in the kitchen.

Transition: He talks with his sister, who thinks he should sell the restaurant. Carmy is adamant about continuing his brother's legacy and turning The Beef around.

Second Big Test: None of the employees are listening to Carmy. He cuts his hand, due to the dull knives. Then, he finds his stolen knife under the refrigerator.

All is Lost: A mob of gamers has formed outside of The Beef. Carmy tries to control the crowd, but they've overtaken him.

Act #3:

On The Defense: Richie notices that Carmy is struggling and comes outside to handle it. He fires his gun and yells at them to control themselves. Carmy realizes he has no idea what he is doing.

On The Offense: Richie convinces Carmy to make the spaghetti, so they can make a large meal for the mob that they aren't prepared to feed.

Final Struggle: He has finally earned the respect of one employee, Marcus, who works as a baker for The Beef (Marcus finally responds to him, saying "Yes, Chef"). Carmy opens the can of tomatoes, looks at the clock and throws the can in the garbage.

Week 6:

For this last Read/View, reflect on the elements you've explored during this course by describing each one in 1 sentence for this Week's Read/View.

Adults (FX) - Season 1, Episode 1

Franchise

- Genre: Comedy
- Characters: The series follows five 20-something-year-olds, Samir, Billie, Paul Baker, Issa and Anton
- Story: A group of friends in their 20s experience adulthood and everything that comes with it

Character Arc

- Adults follows five friends in their 20s as they navigate adulthood (sorta).
- Issa is the comedian of the group, who worries about not being taken seriously enough.
- Anton is super outgoing and makes friends everywhere he goes.
- Billie is the most conservative of the group and navigates trying to explore her sexuality and her career.
- Samir is the most level-headed of the group, yet he still doesn't always know what he's doing. Since the group is staying in his parents house, he tries to manage the maintenance, mail and other house duties, all while not even knowing his own social security number.
- Paul Baker is Issa's sexually fluid fling. He moves into the house in episode two.

Story Arc

- Beginning: A group of 20-something-year-olds navigate adulthood, bills, work, relationships and friendships. They are all living rent-free in Samir's parents house in Queens. Issa tries to convince Samir that her boyfriend, Paul Baker, should move in, but he is adamant about only four people living in the house. Billie tells the group that their friend Kyle is trending for exposing his company for sexual harassment.
- Middle: Issa and Anton show up at Kyle's protest in support. Samir tries to get the hot water fixed in the house. Billie tries to get noticed at work. Issa tries to get more involved in Kyle's event.
- End: Anton, Issa and Samir decide to do coke at Kyle's event instead. After they go home, they try to fix the hot water themselves, still high on drugs. One of the pipes ends up exploding. Billie takes things too far at work and accidentally threatens her boss. Now, she's worried about getting fired.

Structure

- 1-liner: Adults follows Issa, Billie, Paul, Anton and Samir as they live rent-free at Samir's parents house in Queens.
- Three Paragraphs:
 - Beginning: We first meet the group of friends in their house, discussing whether or not Paul Baker should move in.
 - Middle: The group decides to attend an event for a mutual friend, where instead of organizing and helping, they do coke.
 - End: Still high, they try to fix the hot water heater, but are unsuccessful.
- Turning Points: Billie worries about getting fired from her job. Issa tries to help out at the event, yet no one takes her seriously.

Theme: Friendship, Relationships, Adulthood

Tone: Comedy, Sitcom, Honest, Awkward

