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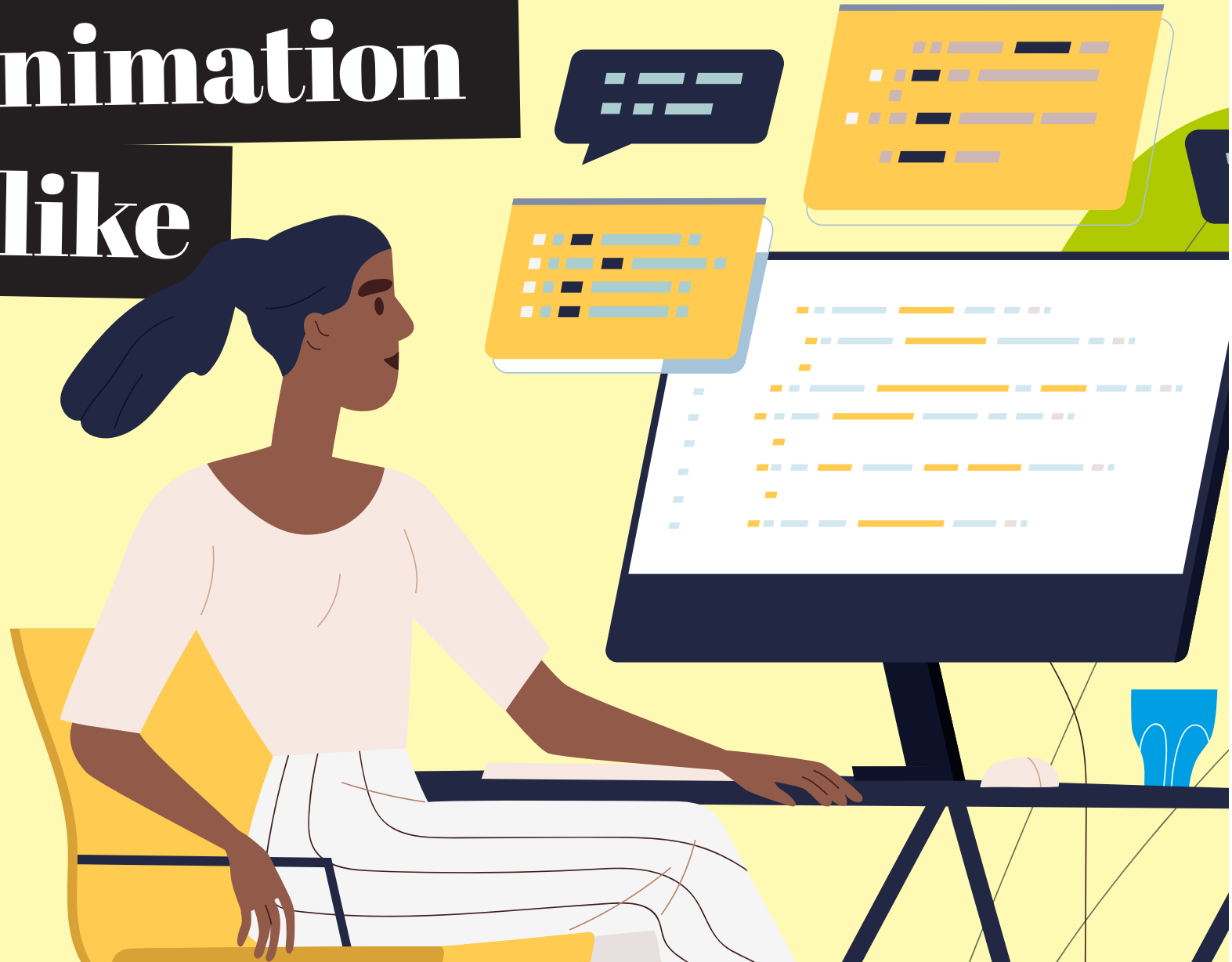
write animation
scripts like
a pro

alive

Writing a script like a pro

Whether your animation is educational, promotional or informative, it needs to start with a strong script. Think of your script as the soul of your animation and your words as the connectors that grab attention, engage and excite.

Like a soul, the perfect script is invisible. It must blend in seamlessly, like natural speech, allowing your messages and call to action to shine through.

Subtle writing doesn't mean that you can't be creative – quite the opposite. You are still creating a story, a world, emotions, characters and actions, but through natural-sounding speech. To do this you simply strip away all the fluff and work with what is left when your characters or narrator is speaking.

The perfect script will be instantly relatable to your audience and hold their attention whether you are writing about tap-dancing unicorns or how to sign up for a new staff service.

By following our advice, you can create a script that (quietly) screams quality, connects emotionally and triggers action no matter what your subject matter is.

Checklist

Define your message

Structure your story

Tailor your tone

Keep it brief

Call to action

Fine tune

It's over to you

Define your message

What's the point?

Why are you writing this script? What do you want the audience to do, feel or learn?

Got it? Good – that's your message.

Know

Feel

Do

Think like a pro!

For your script to be effective, you must first understand what you want your audience to know, feel and do.

Key words and phrases

Write down everything you need to include or refer to in your script. If it is part of a series or campaign, do you need to bring in context from frameworks and link to other documents? Collect these key words and references, they are the materials you will build your script from.

All the feels

You want your audience to do or feel something when they watch this animation? Otherwise you could just send them a fax. Decide where you want to take your audience. Do you have documents and resources you can refer to about your animation subject and the connections you need to create? What is the best tone to use to create empathy?

Them bones

Think of your messages and key words as the skeleton of your script, giving your work a form. Your collection of key words and messages is a pile of bones. Shape them. Refine them so they fit together and move smoothly. Chuck out any that don't fit and use them to build the skeleton of your story.

Structure your story

Although you are writing dialogue, a script is a story. You are taking your audience on a journey, with a start, middle and whopping call to action at the end.

2.

Why should they care? This is where the meat of your story lies. What are the facts? Where's the proof? What will they learn? How can you help them?

1.

You have about 10 seconds to grab your audience's attention, so make it snappy. Deftly outline your subject, convey the emotion of your piece and give a glimpse of where you are taking them. Use clear, active language.

3.

Your animation probably has a marketing motive, so unlike a book or movie script a happy or rounded ending is not the goal. You've got your message across. Now you need to clearly point your audience in the direction you want them to go and give them a shove.

Tailor your tone

Keep it simple

Writing a script is one of the most complicated forms of writing, which is ironic because it should seem natural and artless. Make it easy for the audience to absorb.

Kill your ego

If people notice (and even admire) the fancy word-play in your script, you're doing it wrong. You don't want the audience to enjoy the script. You don't want them to notice there is a script at all. If you want to throw in flashy words and show off try writing some poetry.

Speak their language

Steer clear of jargon. A top tip is to read it out loud. If you wouldn't say it like that to a friend in the pub, then write it again. If it is hard to understand, write it again. If there is a simpler way to phrase something, write it again.

Read the room

Match your language to the situation. If you are covering a sombre topic, don't be flippant or try to be funny. If you want to energise your audience, use active language, short sentences and an upbeat tone.

Think like a poet!

We joked about poetry, but using a tiny sprinkle of repetition, rhythm or alliteration can help make your message stick.
Why not give it a try?

Keep it brief

Use short, crisp sentences with a maximum length of 20 words. Shorter where possible.

And here's a useful benchmark for overall timings:

- 45 seconds - 90-110 words

- 60 seconds - 120-170 words

- **90 seconds - 200-250 words – optimal length!**

- 2 minutes - 250-300 words

Finish with a cracking call-to-action

You've spent a ton of time and effort skilfully shaping your script. Don't fizzle out with a weak call to action (CTA).

Good CTAs tell the audience what to do next. Great CTAs tell them WHY they should do it. Perfect CTAs do both and then explain what they will get from doing it.

Spoon-feed your audience their next step.

View the guide here

Fine tune to perfection

Edit, edit, edit.

Be brutal. Eliminate unnecessary words. Put all your sos, thats and adverbs (words that end with ly) in the bin. We recommend aiming to delete 30% of what you've written.

Read it out loud to yourself. Better still, get someone else to read it to you or get the computer to read it back to you.

Consider what type of voiceover you'll be using. What will their accent sound like? Will certain phrases or words sound unnatural?

Ask yourself these six questions:

- Is your script easy to follow?

- Does it set the right tone?

- Does it tell a relatable story?

- Does it convey your message?

- Would you say it like that down the pub?

- Is your CTA convincing?

It's over to you!

But never fear, we're always here if you need a little extra help.

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