

# SYNOPSIS

## WHAT AND WHY?

### 1. What is a synopsis?

A 1-page summary of all the important beats in your script.

It reveals the full story including spoilers.

### 2. Why is it important?

You – it is your roadmap for your story.

Others – it is your written pitch.

# SYNOPSIS

## STRUCTURE

1 page (approximately 400 words)

4 -5 paragraphs organised by the film's structure

Act I: Beginning  
Set-up  
Inciting Incident  
(1 paragraph)

Act II: Middle  
Obstacles  
Midpoint  
(2 paragraphs)

Act III: End  
Climax  
Resolution  
(1 paragraph)

# SYNOPSIS

## CHECKLIST

1. Beginning, middle and end.
  2. Clearly defined main character.
  3. Genre.
  4. Time and place.
  5. Includes important conflict
  6. Reveal the ending.
  7. Visual.
  8. Use present tense.
  9. Proofread for grammar, spelling, format.
  10. Does not include dialogue.
- Read as many screen synopses as you can.
  - Watch your favourite film or read a script and write a synopsis for it.

# EXAMPLE

## VAI Samoa segment

(Dir. Arahanga, B., Aumua, A., Freshwater, M., Fuemana, D., George M., Guttenbeil-Likiliki, O., McCartney, M. A., Whippy, N., 2019)

Vai (Title) is a drama (Genre) about (Protagonist) Sevai, a Samoan woman, (What is the normal?) who returns home, after many years away. (Inciting Incident) She must perform for an important village event but when (Obstacle) she finds it difficult to connect to the performance, she must learn (Theme) that her culture was never lost to her or (Stakes) risk losing her connection to her village, her island and her culture.

Vai is a drama about Sevai, a Samoan woman, who returns home, after many years away. She must perform for an important village event but when she finds it difficult to connect to the performance, she must learn that her culture was never lost to her or risk losing her connection to her village, her island and her culture.