

## **Tips on writing a treatment**

A treatment is your opportunity to convince a third party that your project is worth making. More than a proposal, the treatment includes a description of the video itself and in the end will help keep your project focused. There is no one “right” way to write a treatment, but here are some guidelines.

Hint: The best stories require storytelling. For instance, a video about “The Environment” is too broad a subject. A video about ground water contamination on Navajo land is still an unwieldy concept, but a story about a family affected by ground water contamination on Navajo land will appeal to a wider audience.

- I. Start with an Overview paragraph. Be sure to include a working title, the proposed length of the film, and a brief review of the story. This is an important paragraph: make sure the reader can grasp the importance of your story in two sentences. Think “TV Guide” – how can you make your story clear and appealing in as few words as possible?
- II. Spend the next several paragraphs outlining how you expect your story to unfold. Outline the story from beginning to end and include the following:
  - Your editorial approach: What is your point of view? What is the story and how do you plan to tell it?
  - Who are the characters and what do the viewers see them doing?
  - Your visual approach: Help the reader visualize your video. What kind of style will help you tell your story?
- III. Close the treatment with a brief summary of your background, and your own reasons for choosing the story. Make the reader understand why the story is important to you – and what you want your audience to take away from their experience viewing your film.

### **In general:**

- The treatment should clearly state your idea, clarify your point of view, and convince the reader that you are organized, professional and imaginative.
- Make sure you have access to the people, places, and information necessary to complete the film before you propose it.
- Remember that in the beginning, a treatment is what you dream your project to be. In the end, it’s what you can deviate from or build on when your material is actually in hand.
- Think in terms of reaching a meaningful audience, and why this audience will be interested in your film.
- Refrain from including all of the research you have on the subject at hand; focus on the story.
- A note on bios: These should be very brief. You may include a bio for yourself, your subject(s), and/or any team members you plan to have on board.