

"Shakespeare and Star Wars": Lesson Plan Day 6  
by Adam Watson (NBCT)

*Academic Goals:*

Analyze the impact of an author's different language choices.

Explain changes that occur when the same source material is adapted in various media.

Compare the different structural components of different dramatic texts (for example, a screenplay contains "slug lines" to show scene changes).

Infer the meaning of a dramatic text, using "helpers" depending on the form (for example, stage directions in a play; parentheticals and narrative action descriptions in a screenplay).

*Core Content Standards (for Reading Literature, 9th Grade):*

9-10.RL.1, -7, -9

*Core Content Standards (College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading):*

CCRA.R.5

*Handout:*

[WSSW Screenplay vs Play](#)

*Instructional Plan:*

1. Remind students that as the purpose of writing changes (am I making a film? am I mounting a state production?), so does the form and structure. Hand out [WSSW Screenplay vs Play](#) as well as a copy of the Mos Eisley Cantina scene from the 1977 original screenplay (from "Threepio and his stubby partner..." to Han's "Sorry for the mess"). You can easily find a copy of the script via your favorite online search engine, but as always, be mindful of copyright and careful downloading anything from an unknown site.
2. Have students read the script excerpt silently and individually. Look for and notate 3-5 structural devices or formatting differences that make screenplays unique (versus plays, novels, etc.). Mark them in bullets inside the top box of the handout. Discuss and share. Some screenplay structural examples include "sluglines" for scene changes (EXT. TATOOINE - MOS EISLEY - STREET) and the much greater emphasis on narrative information. Students should keep these differences in mind as they find comparative examples in the next step below.
3. Compare the differences between the screenplay version of the scene with the WSSW scene (III:i, pages 71-77), and answer the final question. Students can work in pairs or alone, but EACH individual student needs to turn in a completed analysis sheet at the end of the period.
4. If time, share and discuss the analysis results.

*Suggested Extensions and/or Alterations :*

In today's lesson, and for the sake of the unit, memorizing the various screenplay structure names is not necessary. However, you might want a deeper approach, especially if you would like students to write

original screenplays as part of a later activity. If you want a compact and easy to use reference for the formatting of a screenplay, I recommend [\*Elements of Style for Screenwriters\*](#).

*Post-Lesson Reflection:*

Despite the directions, some students struggled to find differences between the screenplay and WSSW that didn't simply involve modern versus Shakespearean language. I realized I had not done a good job of providing some helpful examples before releasing students to find their own. For instance, Ben cutting off the creature's arm is handled with a short stage direction in WSSW, but is narratively handled with much more detail in the screenplay. What is good and bad about both approaches? Why is the screenplay's detail necessary?

For the full unit overview, [click here](#).