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MEG LONG

Content | UX Writer | Narrative Design



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W R I T I N G S A M P L E 1

WRITING SAMPLE FROM A SCRIPT CREATED FOR A VISUAL ROMANCE NOVEL MOBILE GAME. Prompts were provided and I developed the script based on those prompts. Scenes also required me to create decision chains for the player based on dialogue or action choices with corresponding reactions from the in-game characters. (Script format follows the mobile developers' required style guide.)

PROMPT – SCENE 1

The protagonist is working late at night to try and finish up an assignment that was given to her by Chase, the lead reporter at their newspaper. She's lost in her thoughts when Chase walks in and asks her why she hasn't completed the assignment yet. They begin to talk more intensely but then they're interrupted.

SCENE: Newspaper Offices (Late at night)

[PROTAGONIST]

(Internally)

I've been staring at this screen so long everything is blurred. Chase expects me to finish this assignment by tomorrow...But if I can't find a reliable source, I won't be able to prove what I found out about GenCorps. And I can't let anyone know that I discovered the bribery by accident. No one would believe that it was beginner's luck that I happened upon the chauffeur delivering an envelope full of cash.

[PROTAGONIST] lays her head on the desk, trying to work out some solution.

CHASE

(enters silently)

That doesn't look like working.

[PROTAGONIST]

(jumping up in surprise)

Um, I was just thinking about how to phrase a certain sentence.

CHASE

You're still revising? That article is due in the morning! I can't believe you can't finish one assignment.

[PROTAGONIST]

It's not that I can't finish, it's...

CHASE

What? Too hard for a newbie reporter?

PLAYER DECISION:

I bite my lip, unsure what to tell him:

1. I may have uncovered some sketchy details about GenCorps.

Chase's eyebrows shoot up in surprise. You found something out about GenCorps? On your first assignment?

[PROTAGONIST]

Why do you seem so surprised?

CHASE

(ignoring her question)

What sort of sketchy details?

2. I found out some sketchy things about GenCorps but I can't reveal my source.

CHASE

(looking impressed for once)

Protecting your sources is one of the most important things a journalist should do.

[PROTAGONIST]

That's why I'm struggling with this.

CHASE

What sort of sketchy things did you find out?

END PLAYER DECISION

[PROTAGONIST]

They're involved with bribery.

CHASE

Bribery is a big accusation. Are you sure you feel comfortable printing such a story?

[PROTAGONIST]

I think it's important to expose GenCorps, but I want to do it the right way.

[PROTAGONIST]

(noticing Chase's expression.)

What?

CHASE

I'm surprised, that's all. Most new journalists will do anything for a big story. They'll cross lots of lines just to get that big break.

PLAYER DECISION:

I think about what he's implying before answering:

1. I would never compromise my integrity like that.

CHASE

That's good to know. It's something we have in common.

2. I think it really depends on the story.

CHASE

If we start compromising our morals just for fame, we're no better than the people we expose.

[PROTAGONIST]

I wouldn't cross lines for fame. But I might to protect the people who are suffering or are in trouble.

END PLAYER DECISION

Chase opens his mouth to say something else but a voice interrupts him.

BLAINE

Hey, [PROTAGONIST], I want to talk to you about this photo.

Blaine is rushing across the office, holding his camera. He stops when he sees Chase and [PROTAGONIST] so close. Instinctively, she leans back, away from Chase who is practically glaring at Blaine.

CHASE

We're sort of in the middle of something here, Blaine. Why don't you go home and [PROTAGONIST] can talk to you tomorrow?

[PROTAGONIST]

It's fine, Chase.

(Internally)

Why was he being so rude?

PROMPT – SCENE 2

The protagonist has stopped by Blaine's office on her way out to discuss a few of his photos with him. She feels that his photographic style has changed and was wondering if there is something going on.

SCENE: Blaine's Office (Late afternoon)

[PROTAGONIST]

(Internally)

I knock on Blaine's door. I don't even know if he's here right now or out on a shoot. But I need to ask him about his latest photos. They're so...different than the ones before.

BLAINE

What is it?

Blaine is bent over his computer. The office is full of photos hanging everywhere. Some look printed but others are developed on film. He's really a dedicated photographer.

[PROTAGONIST]

Blaine, do you have a few minutes to talk about your photos?

PLAYER DECISION:

He doesn't look up at me...that's not very encouraging. I take a breath and say:

1. Are you alright?

BLAINE

I'm...fine. There's just a lot going on, that's all.

2. Never mind, I'll just come back later.

BLAINE

No, I can take a short break to talk to you.

END PLAYER DECISION

BLAINE

So, what about my photos?

[PROTAGONIST]

I noticed that your style of shooting has really changed. Especially with the latest shots.

BLAINE

(Nervously)

What's wrong with them?

[PROTAGONIST]

There's nothing wrong exactly, they just seem to lack the soul you had before. And while I might not be a professional photographer, I want to help. If something is going on with you that's caused the change, you know you can talk to me about it, right?

He stands there, staring, as silence fills the space between them.

[PROTAGONIST]

Well, okay.

PLAYER DECISION:

I know I can't force him to talk to me. I just didn't think he'd push me away so hard:

1. I'll just go then.

BLAINE

Wait...

2. If you ever want to talk about it...

BLAINE

I...

[PROTAGONIST]

You know where to find me if you change your mind.

END PLAYER DECISION

Suddenly, Blaine's hand is on the door, blocking it from opening. His face is strained, like something is really bothering him.

[PROTAGONIST]

Are you alright?

BLAINE

I wish it was that simple.

[PROTAGONIST]

What are you talking about?

BLAINE

The photos aren't different because of me. They're different because of you. Because I met you. Ever since you waltzed into the office, so cheery and upbeat, it's like I'm surrounded by sunshine. And I've been trying to ignore it, to ignore you, how

you make me feel...But every time I look through my camera lens now, all I see is you.

Silence fills the room momentarily as [PROTAGONIST]'s heart starts racing.

BLAINE

And I don't know how to go back to the way I was before. Or if I even want to.

[PROTAGONIST]

What could I possibly say? He's staring at me, waiting for me to say something. Anything.

[PROTAGONIST] opens her mouth to talk...And runs out of the office door instead.

W R I T I N G S A M P L E 2

WRITING SAMPLE FROM MY DEBUT SCI-FI NOVEL THAT WILL BE PUBLISHED BY ST. MARTIN'S PRESS IN JANUARY OF 2022.

Chapter 1

I'm not one to run from a fight. But when I'm outnumbered and a storm is brewing, I'm not going to be an chump either. Storms on Tundar only mean more ice and nearly-instant death from hypothermia.

The three corporate thugs blocking my way don't seem to notice the coming storm as they're still pretty hellbent on kicking my ass. The ugliest one smacks a pipe into his palm while one of the smaller guys moves slowly to my left, trying to flank me. I mark him as the one to take out first. Especially since he's now standing between me and my exit.

I usually pick my marks better than this, but with the corporate presence growing on-world by the day, the commandos seemed like quick chits. But these guys weren't as green as some of the other corporate tourists. They must work for one of the bigger corporations. Or worse, the Corporate Assembly. I should've known better with the race coming up, but it's not the first time I chose the wrong pockets to pick. Some days I wish there were more than just mining or sledding jobs on this frozen wasteland of a planet. Then maybe I wouldn't be stuck picking pockets.

The wind picks up slightly and I can smell ice in the air. Tundar ice has a certain scent, like a wild caress and the kiss of a cold, cold death. It smells of promise.

I inch backwards and the ugly guy smirks. He thinks he's won.

He's not wrong.

But he doesn't know the Ket like I do.

I kick hard at the ground, spraying ice dust in his face and he jerks back. Small guy

lunges my way but I'm already ahead of him. My other leg spins and collides with the side of his head. I'm unbalanced by the force of impact and we both go down.

But I scramble away from him and slide myself in the opposite direction, fingers grasping at the manhole cover that none of them noticed. There's always another way out in this city. And it's always down. But the corpo-commandos are still tourists on Tundar, here for the racing season and gone before true winter hits. They don't know the extent of the Ket's underbelly.

I rip the manhole open and disappear into the dark before the thugs can catch up. By the time they make it down the ladder, I'm three streets over planning my next exit.

It's almost dusk. If I head over to Boss Kalba's den, I can probably lift a few extra chits from the drunk gamblers betting on the fights. I can't remember if tonight is flesh fights or hounds. But it doesn't matter. There's always pockets to be picked at the dens. And Boss Kalba's fights are the most popular in the city.

Decision made, I double back through a passage that leads to one of the main avenues. As I come to an intersection with a bigger tunnel, I have to dodge the incoming people flowing underground to avoid the storm.

I hear a voice shout out behind me, but I quickly lose myself in the crowd. Unfastening my cloak, I tuck it under my arm while slowing my pace and shuffling along as the tunnel opens up into a main strip. Shops and stalls decked in neon line the walls. Holofeeds work better down here so the strip is a maze of bright corpo ads flashing things I'll never be able to afford.

I let myself melt into the crowd, pausing here and there. I pretend to browse some arken blades while unbraiding my unruly hair, though the wistful longing in my gaze isn't faked. But there's really no point in drooling over the corpo knives. Not when the ion storms get so strong here the electric impulses that power the arc of deadly light on the dull side of

the blade grow unstable. Definitely no point buying a fancy bladed laser when the fancy parts won't work. Like most things on this strip, they cost more than I could ever steal. Doesn't matter. The only thing I'm willing to spend that many chits on is a ticket off this frozen rock.

I feel more than see the three thugs pushing through the crowd behind me. I fluff my frizz of dark hair, knowing they're looking for a girl with two braids and a cloak with silver markings. None of which is me. For now.

I make my way over to an intersecting tunnel that will take me straight to Kalba's den. Just as I clear the crowd, a shout follows me.

Crap.

I sling my coat back on and break into a sprint. Three minutes, two turns and I'm home free. Footsteps pound behind me and I push my legs. Faster. Faster.

This will definitely be the last time I steal from corporate military troopers. With all this incessant running, I wish I'd stolen more than the measly ten chits in my pocket. Wish I'd taken the lot. Shouts and footsteps get closer and I curse, forcing everything I've got into pumping my legs even faster. I can contemplate my life choices after I shake these guys.

I spy the ladder that leads to the back of Kalba's den. The main entrance beckons in the tunnel beyond. I could shoot for the main door and pray these chumps lose me in the crowds. Or I can take the ladder. I know that it opens up to the pens where the fighting animals are kept. There will be less people to hide behind in the pens but it'll be much harder for these bigger commandos to follow me through the narrow shaft.

Without breaking my pace, I leap at the ladder and scramble to the top. I hear the shuffling below as the three men struggle into the narrow space.

I jerk the latch open and press against the cover but it barely budes.

What the hell?

I throw my shoulder into it, pressing into it as hard as I can. It opens a fraction and

then shuts again.

I feel fingertips on my boots and I shove again, practically jumping off the ladder rung as I slam my shoulder into the metal. There's a squeal from the other side but it finally opens.

I scramble up and out, quickly slamming the cover back into place and locking it. Then I plop my butt down right on top of the damn thing.

The banging from the men below reverberates through the metal and up my spine. But the cover holds. No one bursts through.

My lungs are still burning as I finally look around me. The pens have been rearranged since the last time I was in here to pick up an injured wolf with my mothers. Where the manhole was in a forgotten corner five years ago, it's since been filled in with more cages for the fighting beasts. Of course they've expanded; it's the way of the syndicates just like it's the way of the corpos. Nothing is ever enough. And now I'm surrounded by fenced walls and cheap hay with restless animals pacing back and forth inside each cage. This probably isn't the best place for me to be.

A low growl from behind me raises the hair on my neck.

Because now I'm sitting inside one of those cages.

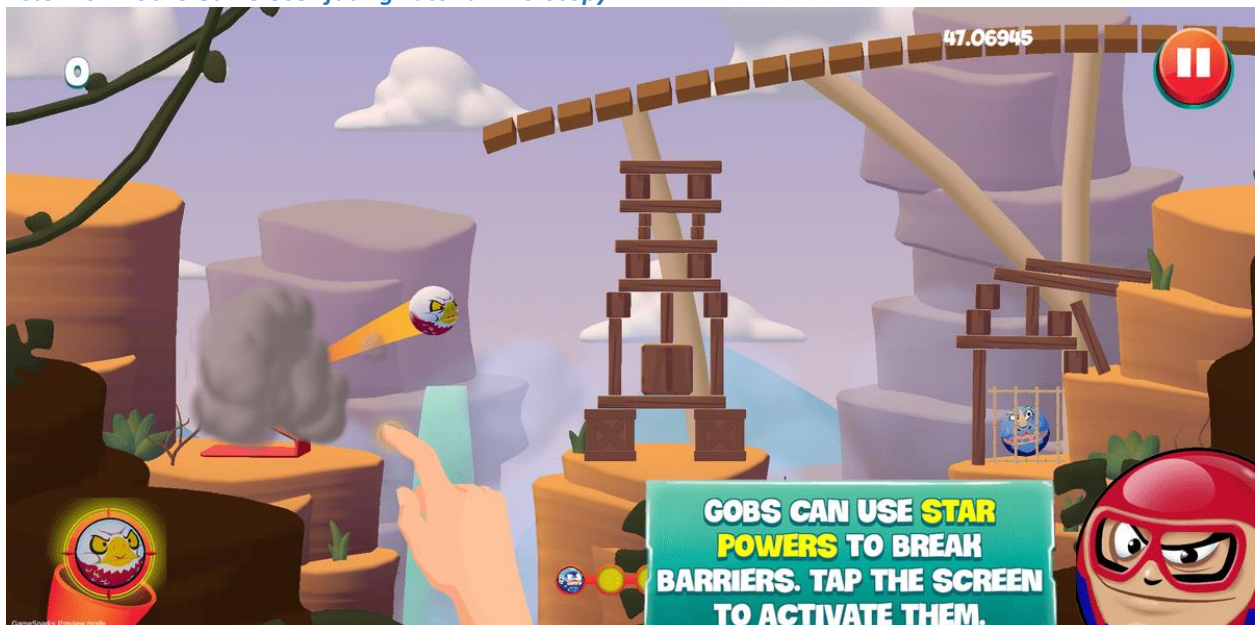
WRITING SAMPLE 3

TWO EXAMPLES OF MICROCOPY AND IN-GAME COPY THAT I DEVELOPED FOR ASTERI.IO'S MOBILE GAMES. I WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND LEAD DESIGNER TO HELP WITH THE UI AND UX DESIGN.

Asteri.io: Mobile Game UI Elements & Interactive Messages



Asteri.io: Mobile Game User-facing Tutorial Microcopy



Writing Sample 4

WRITING SAMPLE FROM A SCRIPT DEVELOPED FOR A GAME COMPANY BASED ON A PROMPT. *(Short summary: Olivia is actually a demon is trying to live peacefully as a teenage girl but a boy in her theatre department made a deal with another demon so he can be charismatic on stage. The only problem – Brendon doesn't know that the demons are trying to use him to open a portal and Olivia back to hell while Olivia doesn't know who's behind the recent demonic activity in the drama department.)*

INT. BUSY COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

The coffee shop is filled with students and young parents with small toddlers. Soft jazz wafts over the murmur of voices interrupted occasionally by the whir of the espressomachine.

OLIVIA RIVERA, 17 years old and wearing a hoodie with 'I'm not shouting, I'm projecting' written across the front, sets down a large mug of tea on a round table. Following her, a young boy, BRENDON GAINES, also around 17 years old with pale skin and messy hair, sinks down into the chair directly opposite. He's tall, gangly and sipping on a steaming cup of coffee from a to-go cup.

He drops a backpack on the ground before digging around and pulling out a stack of papers marked 'SCRIPT.' He shuffles through them as OLIVIA stirs her tea, thinking. She needs to find a natural way to question him about the demonic drama in the theater department but BRENDON interrupts her thoughts.

BRENDON

I was surprised when you said
you wanted to go over cues...

He glances away, taking another slow sip of his coffee.

OLIVIA

(confused)

What do you mean?

BRENDON shrugs, a blush creeping up his cheeks.

BRENDON

You're always so quiet in
rehearsals when we're not on
stage. I thought you didn't
like me or something and maybe
you wanted to tell me to my
face.

An awkward silence descends on the table. Olivia scrambles to salvage the conversation.

OLIVIA

(shocked)

What!? No! It's not like I'm purposefully ignoring you. I'm just...focused during rehearsals. I'm working on my character to experience their feelings. I really live for the time I'm on stage.

She glances down at the table and then looks up as the silence continues.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

I promise I don't NOT like you.

BRENDON

Well...I don't NOT like you either.

His blush deepens as he coughs. Olivia lets out a barely audible sigh in relief.

BRENDON (CONT'D)

And I can respect wanting to get into character. We have that in common.

OLIVIA smiles and studies him as she takes a sip of her tea, trying to think of an opening for her interrogation. Then she sets down the mug and leans forward with a charming smile intended to throw him off his guard.

OLIVIA

I guess so. But, if you're so into acting, why didn't you join the drama club before this?

BRENDON

I don't know. I was...out of town a lot last year.

OLIVIA

(raising an eyebrow)
Seriously, that's the excuse
you're going with? I'm not
buying it. You're a natural up
on stage. We really could've
used you in last year's
production of Sweeney Todd.
(mumbling)
Gareth wasn't quite devious
enough to really pull off a
believable Sweeney.

BRENDON

But you were great as Mrs.
Lovett!

OLIVIA

Oh, so you were in town
for the performance.

BRENDON

(cringing)
Oh man. I outed myself there.
You got me.

OLIVIA

So? Tell me the truth...What's
the real reason you didn't
join?

BRENDON

Um...

OLIVIA

Come on. Be honest. We lay it
all out on the stage. Might
as well lay it all out right
here.

BRENDON sighs.

BRENDON

Fine. You're right.
(beat)
I guess I was...scared. And
anxious. I'm anxious pretty
much all the time. And I am,
er, I was, really, painfully
shy. So, even though I was

dying to be on stage, I never signed up. I never had the guts.

OLIVIA

Well, what changed? You don't seem very shy to me. Especially not when you're on stage.

BRENDON

(shrugging)

I...don't know. Maybe I just got tired of doing the same thing over and over...Maybe, someone finally noticed me...

Something flashes across his face that catches OLIVIA'S attention. Brandon swallows audibly.

BRENDON (CONT'D)

(rushing)

Or maybe it was your performance last year. Even singing about human meat pies, you were still somehow cute.

OLIVIA is so surprised by his response, she barks out a laugh.

OLIVIA

(still chuckling)

Ms. Madison was freaking out about my performance the whole production! She thought I was overdoing it.

BRENDON

No way! You were great. There's something crazed about all those characters. Especially Mrs. Lovett. I mean, she didn't even have a real reason to be demonic. Not like Sweeney did.

OLIVIA'S smile drops from her face at the word 'demonic.'

OLIVIA
 Demonic? Interesting word choice.

BRENDON
 Come on, she cooked dead
 people into human meat pies.
 Isn't that a little demonic?

OLIVIA crosses her arms. She decides to bait BRENDON since he brought up demons in the first place.

OLIVIA
 (watching BRENDON carefully)
 Maybe...I don't know any demons.
 If I ever meet one, I'll have
 to ask them if they cook
 people and serve them up to
 hungry customers at low-rent
 meat pie restaurants.

BRENDON laughs. If he's uncomfortable by her suggestion, he doesn't show it.

BRENDON
 You have a pretty wicked
 sense of humor. I can see why
 Ms. Madison picked you for
 the lead in *Rumors*.

OLIVIA'S surprised again by his statement. She's confused and not sure whether she should push BRENDON harder or pull back on her interrogation. So far, he isn't taking any of her bait and she's no closer to finding out if he's the demon after her.

BRENDON (CONT'D)
 So, which do you like more?
 The dark dramatics of
 Stephen Sondheim or the light
 humor of Neil Simon?

OLIVIA'S eyebrows raise in further surprise. She definitely didn't expect this. She finds herself wanting to answer his question and hear what he thinks in return.

OLIVIA
 (shrugging)
 I don't prefer one over the
 other actually. Even though

they're on opposite ends of human emotions, an actor has to be all in, totally devoted to the role. Doesn't matter whether it's comedy or drama. Otherwise, their performance flops.

BRENDON

(nodding)

You're totally right. That's a really good way to look at it. Humor can take just as much work as dramatic scenes. Maybe next year, I'll get to do something more serious. I'd really like to try that juxtaposition.

OLIVIA realizes she's listening far too intently and needs to focus on what he knows about the strange occurrences these past few weeks. And this gives her a perfect opening line.

She leans forward again and lowers her voice to a dramatic whisper.

OLIVIA

If there's even a theater department next year at all.