

When it comes to creative writing, two mediums come to mind, the art of screenwriting and the art of prose writing. Screenwriting is easier to define; it is simply writing done in a script format that will be used to produce a story for the screen be it a movie or show. Prose writing is much broader, technically most writing that isn't poetry is prose. Prose is writing that follows basic grammatical structures like sentences and paragraphs. However, in terms of creative writing prose usually refers to two things; long narratives or short stories written with basic grammatical structures as opposed to the specific format involved with scripts.

These two formats offer unique and specialized methods for authors to communicate their stories, but the audiences for those stories are wildly different. The purpose of prose writing is to tell the story directly to your audience. This differs from screenwriting where your format is designed to communicate the story to the filmmaker. The difference between these audiences means certain things should be present or absent in both formats.

Since in prose you're writing to the average reader, this gives you a lot of freedom in your story. Prose has very few actual rules, aside from the grammar of whatever language you choose to write in. You can world-build, go into depth about any chosen detail, and (to a reasonable degree) format the page in the most interesting way to serve the narrative. You are the sole author of the story. But it is important to remember what communicating to the common reader entails. Your wording and style should cater to that audience. Diction and style shouldn't be so abstract that it is unrecognizable to the average reader. It doesn't matter how smart you sound or how original your structure is if no one can understand it. The knowledge of your audience shouldn't be assumed to be that of a professional. Write your story in a way that would excite a non-writer. That being said prose encourages creativity. There are traditions and

preferences, but at the end of the day, there are no real hard rules that can't be broken under the right circumstance.

Screenwriting on the other hand is a bit more restrictive. At its core, the film industry is a collaborative process, that includes screenwriting. Unlike in prose writing, the screenwriter isn't the sole author of the story. The script is essentially a blueprint or the foundation that the director adds their own vision into and then releases to the movie-going audience. As such your writing shouldn't bog down the director with specifics that would restrict their creativity. This means one should not overwrite or add too much detail to their story. Traditionally scripts shouldn't include camera movements, specific line delivery, or an abundance of world-building. Additionally, since your writing is intended for a professional in the industry, it must follow a traditional script format to aid in the work they need to do. The script format is loaded with little details and rules that should be followed. Specific capitalization, indents, headers, and even font choice are part of the needed layout of the script.

However, screenwriting also offers possibilities that prose doesn't. Screenwriting is intended to be represented visually in the final product. As such a lot more story and emotion can be told through actions and expression. This allows the viewer to be brought into the story more, as they can see and feel the people in the plot.

Prose and screenwriting both have freedoms and limitations. Prose has individual freedom, but is limited by one creative force. Screenwriting has individual restrictions on the writer, but a well of creative forces at play, as a collaborative piece of work. A story may benefit more from being a closed and tight movie or it could succeed with the sprawling time and openness prose writing offers. But despite these differences, neither is more valid than the other. A story is a story, and a connection to your reader is always valid, no matter the medium. All

preconceived rules mentioned in this essay are flexible. Trailblazers have changed them, re-invented them, or even ignored them completely. But before you break these rules, you should know them. Potentially more so than any other career, as a writer, not only is your art in your hands but so is the field yours to change and evolve with your work.