



Scripted Pitch Deck Guide

At SBS, we are open to taking pitches and we want to ensure you put your best foot forward when coming to us. We have created this guide as a resource to help you communicate your story and ideas to us in the most comprehensive way possible. It also gives you a checklist of what we will be looking for when we read it.

SBS commissions scripted programs which reflect and explore Australia as the diverse country we are – increasingly multicultural and home to the world’s oldest continuous living culture. This is our reason for being as well as what we are passionate about. Before you speak to us, make sure you read our Charter and keep this in mind. You can explore the SBS Charter here: [sbs.com.au/aboutus/sbs-charter](https://sbs.com.au/aboutus/sbs-charter)

We commission stories that align with the SBS Commissioning Equity & Inclusion Guidelines. The Guidelines outline our commitment to creating inclusive content and includes practical tips for producers. You can explore the Guidelines here: [sbs.com.au/aboutus/diversity-commissioning/guidelines/](https://sbs.com.au/aboutus/diversity-commissioning/guidelines/)

At SBS Scripted, we are looking for distinctive dramas or dramedies that are 4 x 1 hour, 6 x 1 hour or 8 x 30 minutes in length.

We are not commissioning children’s, young adult or comedy content at this time.

Our approach to commissioning can change, so stay up to date by checking the SBS Content Commissioning section of our website - [sbs.com.au/aboutus/content-commissioning](https://sbs.com.au/aboutus/content-commissioning).

**March 2022**

A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace on a boat. The man is on the left, looking towards the right, and the woman is on the right, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. They are both wearing light-colored clothing. The background is a clear blue sky and the ocean.

# SBS Essentials

## What we are looking for:

1. EMOTION
2. CHARACTERS THAT GO ON A JOURNEY
3. A COMPELLING STORY
4. A STRONG VISUAL WORLD
5. CLARITY OF GENRE
6. THE TEAM TO DELIVER
7. PASSION
8. STORIES THAT ARE DISTINCT

# SBS Essentials

## What we are looking for:

### EMOTION

Story is about EMOTION.

Emotions hook audiences in and connect them to characters and story. Make sure you know how the emotional core of your story works and what emotional experience you want to give the audience.

***If you make your audience FEEL SOMETHING, they will continue to watch. The emotional journey should match the story: love, desire, joy, heartache, grief, redemption, passion etc.***

### CHARACTERS THAT GO ON A JOURNEY

Characters MUST CHANGE.

And when they change, they grow, for better or worse. That is the experience that we want.

What does the character WANT?

What is their plan to get it?

What gets in the way of that plan?

What is at stake if their plan fails? Why does it matter to them?

What changes in EVERY scene?

***Reactive heroes are not interesting.***

***Your characters need to be active in trying to get what they want.***

### A COMPELLING STORY

Hook them at the start.

Have a strong inciting incident that happens early in the story, and kick starts your story.

Have a clear narrative drive through the series.

Leave the audience hanging at the end of each episode.

***We want to see that there is enough story to fill as many hours as you are pitching.***

### A STRONG VISUAL WORLD

Use images in your pitch deck that give the reader instant visual cues about your characters, your story, and the story world.

The images you use should evoke the same feeling as your show.

***The images you use should display the strong, unique visuals of the world and engage the reader in the story.***



## CLARITY OF GENRE

Know what genre you are in. Or what genres you are blending.  
What are the rules of that genre?  
How are you fulfilling them, or breaking them?

*Your audience will have conscious and unconscious expectations of the genre and you need to satisfy (or consciously invert) these to ensure the audience is satisfied.*

## THE TEAM TO DELIVER

Having a great idea is the first step. But you also need to have the writing talent to deliver on the idea. Know who that person/people are.  
If it's a new talent we highly recommend they write a pilot script as part of the pitch.

*We want to know that you can deliver on your brilliant idea.*

## PASSION

As well as these Essential Elements we also want to see your passion for the project.  
- Why do you want to make it?  
- What do you want to say?

*Know what your show is really about and why you have a burning desire to make it.*

## STORIES THAT ARE DISTINCT

What is fresh and new about your show?  
What are you doing that has not been done before?  
Be distinct in the look of the show as well as with story and character.  
Comparison shows can be useful but don't offer up a version of something that has already been made.

*Find your own true voice and point of view and communicate that clearly in your pitch.*

***Surprise us. Delight us. Challenge us. Entertain us.***

# What should be in a pitch deck?

*Your pitch deck should be 5 – 10 pages long and contain the following:*

- 1.** Title Page
- 2.** Overview
- 3.** Story Summary
- 4.** World
- 5.** Tone & Style
- 6.** Character Descriptions
- 7.** Character Journeys
- 8.** Episode Outlines
- 9.** Creators
- 10.** Contact details

# Page 1: Title Page



***NAME OF SHOW e.g., The Family Law***

***Subtitle*** (what the show is)

e.g. A 6 x 30 minute comedy about a Chinese-Australian family unlike any you've ever met.

**Logline:** The logline is a short proactive statement that distills your series into a focused pitch. The logline should be less than 30 words and clearly depicts the most active character or characters, their flaws, their objectives, and the antagonistic forces in opposition to them. **The logline gives the reader a quick summary of the core of your story and helps orientate the reader to the story you are telling.**

## Page 2:

# Overview

This includes:

1. A short synopsis of the story. (one paragraph)
2. Why should it be made?

**The synopsis should have the following:**

- **WHO** is the hero and what do they want?
- **WHY** does the story start and what is the main arc?
- **WHAT** is the central conflict? What is at stake?
- **No backstory. Keep it short.**

**Why should this series be made?**

- What makes the story fresh?
- Are there any relevant hotbed issues being explored?
- Is it personal?
- Tell us about the themes. What is the show really about?
- What makes the story fresh & **differentiates it from others?**
- What is the genre?



## Page 3: Story Summary

*Your story summary should answer the questions listed below. This will give us more detail than the overview (a page or two) and will show us the essence of your story.*

- Who are these characters?
- What do they want?
- Why do they want it?
- How do they go about getting it?
- What are the central conflicts?
- What are the stakes?
- Why do the stakes matter to the protagonist?
- What are the themes?



# Page 4: World

## Where is your world?

The location should be a character in your story.

What is unique about it?

What are the rules?

What makes it fresh?

What makes it distinct?

## When is your world?

If it's set in the future or is fantasy, provide a mythology.

If it's a period piece, provide a historical perspective.

## Your hero in the world.

What your hero does for a living should be part of the world.

Know how they relate to the world, and how their world relates to them.

## What are you trying to say about your world?



## Page 5: Tone & Style

**Tone** is the feeling and atmosphere you want to convey to the audience when they watch your series. It can include elements like pace and attitude.

**Style** is the look and feel of the show.

*The tone and style must help you tell the story.*

- This section should give the reader a sensory and visual vision of your series.
- Your tone usually matches the emotional resonance of your themes. Is your show dark or light?
- You may want to talk about potential camera and shooting styles.
- Here is the place to use movie, television and pictorial references to help communicate your vision.
- Be intentional with your choices.

## Page 6:

# Character Descriptions



**Backstory:** What key information from their past informs who they are and the choices they make in your series?

**Traits:** What is distinct about their physicality, personality, beliefs, habits, values, etc? These should bring them to life and serve the greater story.

**Flaws:** These make them human and are usually the thing that they have to try to overcome to get what they want.

**Heart:** What matters to them and why? When we know this, we can also see what can hurt them most and what is at stake for them.

**Relationships:** How do the characters relate to each other and (importantly) to the hero? What do they want that is in conflict with other characters?

***A character has an external problem and an internal problem. The external problem cannot be overcome until the internal conflict is resolved.***

## Page 7: Character Journeys

- How do they change emotionally in the series?
- Where does the character begin, and what changes for them?
- What are their key moments within the series?
- How does the plot drive their emotional journey?

We should be able to clearly see the journey of each key character. Your characters should face big challenges. This is how we see what they are made of. Make sure there are big obstacles to them getting what they want.

## Page 8: Episode Outlines

**Provide brief outlines of all the episodes in your first series.**

**Episode 1:** (Title)

1 paragraph outline

**Episode 2:** (Title)

1 paragraph outline

Etc.

**Make sure we know the following:**

- **What is the dramatic premise of the episode?**
- **What is the inciting incident that triggers the episode?**
- **What is the central conflict or challenge of the episode?**
- **What are the complications? The antagonist?**
- **What is at stake?**

Each of these paragraphs should give the major plots of that episode and clearly demonstrate where the episode begins and ends.

The beginning and end of the episode should catch the audience's attention and should hook the audience into wanting more. What will bring the audience back to the next episode?

We should see character and plot progression in each episode.

Make sure there are high stakes, ensuring that it is as hard as possible for your characters to get what they really want.

## Page 9: Creators

Who created the show?  
Who is the writer?  
Who are the producers? (if they are attached)

## Page 10: Contact Details

Who do we contact if we want to know more?

*Once your pitch is all ready to go  
you can email it to us at:  
[scripted@sbs.com.au](mailto:scripted@sbs.com.au)*



# Resources

*Before pitching to us please also ensure you are familiar with the following information:*

**The SBS Commissioning page:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/content-commissioning>

**SBS Producers Hub:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/diversity-commissioning/producers-hub/>

**SBS Commissioning Equity and inclusion website:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/diversity-commissioning/>

**The SBS Equity and Inclusion Guidelines:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/diversity-commissioning/guidelines/>

**SBS Project Submission form:**

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f0fcb50f50da410ba942457fdc162f33>

**SBS Indigenous Protocols:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/the-greater-perspective-indigenous-protocols>

**NITV Commissioning Guidelines:**

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/explainer/nitv-commissioning-guidelines>



