

GREEN STORYTELLING CHECKLIST



A tool provided by the **Green Storytelling Initiative** **, designed for screenwriters, dramaturgs, producers, broadcasters, and other key decision-makers, to raise awareness about the ecological impacts of their narratives and productions from the earliest stages of script development.

What we want:

Inspiration and Support: We want to inspire and support the creative minds in the film industry - whether as writers, producers or in other key roles - without compromising their artistic freedom.

Developing ,Green' Narratives: Our aim is to provide food for thought and highlight opportunities to realize film productions sustainably and consciously from the outset.

Harnessing the Power of Storytelling: We believe in the power of stories to evoke emotions and initiate change in the world. Stories should touch people's hearts and inspire positive transformation.

Authentic Portrayal of Pressing Issues: We want stories to address issues such as climate change and sustainable lifestyles in a cliché-free and authentic manner to emphasize their urgency and inspire action.

What we don't want:

Restriction of Artistic Freedom: We do not want creative minds to feel restricted in their expression or their ideas.

Superficial or Clichéd Portrayals: We do not strive for stories that treat important issues such as climate change and sustainability in a superficial or clichéd way.

Be part of it:

We regard this document as dynamic and changeable. Your feedback is therefore not only welcome, but essential (please email dordel@filmbuero-nds.de).

Let's experiment together. Good luck with your creative processes!

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A Definition of "Green Storytelling"

Green Storytelling is an approach within filmmaking that focuses on integrating climate change, biodiversity, environmental protection themes and sustainability practices into the narrative. It can be divided into three main components:

1. Pragmatic Green Storytelling (Sustainable Screenplay Decisions):

Screenplay decisions, for example with regard to filming location and time, set-design and special effects, are made sustainably to positively impact the CO2 and energy balance of the production. (Overlap with Green Producing)

2. Implicit Green Storytelling (Character Behavior & Visual Imagery):

Integration of environmental and sustainability issues into stories without explicitly addressing or foregrounding these issues. The setting and/or actions of the characters are sustainable: wind turbines are visible in the background, the characters use environmentally friendly means of transportation, choose reusable materials, reduce waste, save energy, prefer sustainable food, advocate for nature conservation and consume responsibly, etc.

3. Explicit Green Storytelling (Thematic Integration):

Themes such as climate change, biodiversity, environmental protection, eco-friendly innovations and sustainability are explicitly integrated and creatively told in feature films, series and other formats. These themes are foregrounded and directly affect the protagonists.

Green Storytelling serves not only to raise awareness of environmental issues, but also to minimize the ecological impact of filming the script. It can also be used to create deep, complex and realistic characters that inspire and provoke thought in the audience.

The Green Storytelling Checklist was developed by Dr. Julia Dordel as part of the Green Storytelling Initiative, a working group of screenwriters, dramaturgs, producers, scientists and funding commissioners, and is being further developed in dialogue with the industry.

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Green Storytelling in the Narrative Structure and Elements of the Story

This checklist serves as a tool for screenwriters, dramaturgs, producers, broadcasters and other decision-makers to integrate environmentally friendly issues and practices into their work and consider the ecological impact of their stories.

Pragmatic Green Storytelling (Sustainable Storytelling Decisions)

1. Does the script allow for the choice of easily accessible or locally available shooting locations to reduce travel and CO2 emissions?
2. Does the script limit the story to a small number of shooting locations?
3. Does the story take place at times of the year and/or day that allow for resource-efficient filming, such as the use of natural light, and no heating, etc.?
4. Does the script avoid or reduce the use of environmentally harmful special effects?
5. Does the script allow for the use of used and/or reusable costumes?
6. Does the script allow for the use of existing filming locations with minimal equipment to reduce set construction and associated environmental costs?

Implicit Green Storytelling (Character Behavior)

1. Do characters use sustainable means of transport, such as (cargo) bikes, public transport or trains?
2. Do characters choose reusable materials, such as glass bottles instead of plastic?
3. Does the script show examples of waste prevention or recycling?
4. Are characters portrayed saving energy?
5. Do characters opt for vegetarian or vegan meals and/or buy locally grown, organic food?
6. Do characters buy consciously, avoid unnecessary consumption or support environmentally friendly companies?
7. Do characters use environmentally friendly alternatives in their daily lives?
8. Do the characters operate in a society or story world that acknowledges environmental problems and/or makes solutions visible, e.g. solar and wind energy, sustainable building methods or an extended public transport system?

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Explicit Green Storytelling (Thematic Integration)

1. Does the story have at least one relatable character who makes environmentally friendly decisions?
2. Does the story have at least one relatable character who advocates for environmental protection (climate activist, scientist, etc.)?
3. Is the theme (or one of the main themes) of the story related to environmental issues such as climate crisis, species extinction, environmental protection or sustainability?
4. Are scenes or dialogues in the narrative that address environmentally relevant topics such as climate change, sustainability, biodiversity, or environmental protection?
5. Does the plot or fate of the characters directly or indirectly affect environmental problems or solutions?
6. Does the story show the consequences of ignoring environmental problems?
7. Are behaviors that harm the environment portrayed as negative character traits?
8. Is there a clear shift in the narrative or in the characters' behavior towards more sustainable practices or attitudes?