

**\*\*\*Important\*\*\***

**All descriptions must be legally vetted and approved prior to submission**



## **Writing Instructions for Production Companies**

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## **Episode Descriptions Do's and Don'ts**

- **Do not** incorporate questions into the descriptions.
  - ~~“Will they ever find the killer?” “...but was it a murder?”~~
- **Do not** use special characters.
  - ~~#\$%@&!~~
- **Do not** use second-person pronouns.
  - ~~“You won’t believe who killed her”~~
- **Do not** use date/time information.
  - ~~“This April...” or “Next Thursday on Evil Lives Here...”~~
- **Do not** use episode titles or mention the episode in the description.
  - ~~“On Evil Lives Here, a man who broke out of...”~~
  - ~~In this episode, three women run into a killer...~~
- **Do not** spoil the episodes in the descriptions
  - ~~“Police believe the killer is her father, but her son is the true murderer.”~~
- **Do not** use past tense
  - ~~“A woman was killed in her bathtub, and her death was ruled a suicide.”~~
- **Do Use** present tense
  - “A woman lies dead in her bathtub, and police rule it a suicide.”
- **Do not** repeat words or phrases
  - “A ~~killer~~ strangles a woman but the ~~killer~~ doesn’t realize she is the wrong target.”
- **Do not** use passive-voice sentences.
  - ~~“A woman who had been walking down the street was stabbed by a cold-blooded killer.”~~
- **Do Use** active-voice sentences
  - “A cold-blooded killer stabs a woman walking down the street.”

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(cont.)

- **Do not use command words for episodic content** (Watch, Join, Tune in, etc.)
  - ~~“Join Joe Kenda as he solves the case of the missing baby.”~~
- **Do not start sentences with “But” or “And” if you can help it.**

**Writing Tips**

1. Descriptions should be complete sentences. With strict character counts, it can be tempting to leave out articles to meet the limitations, but only grammatically correct, full sentences are acceptable.
2. Descriptions are a marketing tool to inspire viewers to watch our programming. Please write compelling sentences that will intrigue and attract the audience without editorializing.
3. Direct sentences with active voice are easier to skim than ones with several clauses to parse.
4. Viewers are just glancing at the description to figure out if they want to watch it or not. Short and sweet is what we're after, (hence the 75 and 255-character limits), so don't include extraneous details that don't relate to the central point of the episode.
5. Because this is true crime, we want to create a feeling of suspense. Please don't spoil the episodes with too much info about how the case turns out. You want them to be intrigued enough to tune-in.

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## **Instructions for Writing Series-Level Descriptions**

Launching a Brand-New Show Never-Seen-Before on ID or D+

**Series-Level Description - A compelling encapsulation of the show's plot.**

- **75-character description** – 75 characters max. (spaces and periods count in the character count)
  - Example: *Chilling tales of neighbors who turn home sweet home into home sweet hell.*
- **255-character description** – 255 characters max (spaces and periods count in the character count)
  - Example: *People recount their horrifying true stories about living side-by-side with sociopathic friends or family who go on to commit heinous crimes.*
- **Production Notes** – 100 words or less. A detailed description of the show.  
**Not consumer-facing**

**Important:** The database will reject descriptions that exceed 75 characters (or 255 for the longer description)

Short Description

Mixing business with pleasure spells murder for two neighboring best friends.

77 of 75 characters

✘ Please update the errors before saving. ✘

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## Instructions for Writing Episode-Level Descriptions

Episodic Content for Both New and Ongoing Series

**Episode-Level** – A compelling description of the episode’s plot without giving away spoilers.

- **75-character description** – 75 characters max. (spaces and punctuation count as characters)
  - Example: *A former marine's death reveals a string of angry coworkers and irate exes.*
- **255-character description** – 255 characters max. (spaces and periods count in the character count)
  - Example: *Mystery shrouds a San Diego exotic wildlife park when one of its valued employees goes missing. As the search for Denise Vasseur intensifies, investigators fear that the most dangerous predator at the park is not an animal.*
- **Production Notes** – APs/CPs attach in Describe (formerly Monarch) database. No Character Limit. A brief but detailed synopsis of the episode. **Not consumer-facing.**

**Important-** The database will reject descriptions that exceed 75 characters (or 255 for the longer description)

Short Description

Mixing business with pleasure spells murder for two neighboring best friends.

77 of 75 characters

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### **Instructions for Writing Season-Level Descriptions**

**Season-Level** - Not required unless the the seasons are very different. Examples of this are shows that focus on one crime for the entire season and then a different crime for each subsequent season. Also, competitive reality shows where the rules, location and/or competitors are different each season. ID almost never needs to craft season-level descriptions. In the rare cases they do, they follow the same 75/255 character requirements as the series-level.

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## Title Guidelines

**Series-Level Titles (D+ and Linear) - Main Title:** Desired Character Limit is **under 70** (although there is room for up to 150 characters, it's been decided that under 70 produces a cleaner look). Spaces between words are considered characters.

**Episode-Level Titles (Linear Only) - Main Title:** Desired Character Limit is **under 55** (spaces between words are considered characters).

**Episode-Level Titles (D+) - Short Title:** D+ episodes use the **Short Title** field instead of the Main Title field. The absolute max title limit is **30 characters or less** (spaces between words are considered characters).

**Important:** Short titles longer than 30 characters will be rejected by the database:

26 of 150 characters

Short Title

Old Friends Equal Bad Neighbors

31 of 30 characters

✘ Please update the errors before saving.

Please craft **Main Titles** so that they be edited down to fit the Short title field of 30 characters and still make sense.

**Example:**

**Series-level Main Title: The Co-Ed Killer: Chaos on Campus**

**Series-level Short Title The Co-Ed Killer**

*Note: Ampersands (&) may only be used in Series-Level titles not Episodes.*

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**Additional info Required**

- **Victims' Names (if a specific victim must remain anonymous, please note. We do not tag victims with fake names created just for the episode)**
- **Perpetrators' Names**
- **Host(s) if applicable**
- **Major Locations appearing on the episode (City and State)**
- **Year of the Crime**
- **Theme - Example: murder for hire, workplace killing, Infidelity, etc.**