

How to Write a Television Show Pitch

Whether you're writing for Netflix or CBC, you are going to have to create a pitch for your show: a brief summary that will capture the attention of producers and convey the essence of your amazing ideas to them. To help you understand how to set out your pitch, we've taken an example of the original pitch for the show 'Stranger Things' and broken it down for you here:

EXAMPLE: *STRANGER THINGS* Synopsis

(From https://screencraft.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/StrangerThings_Bible.pdf)

We begin at Camp Hero in the fall of 1980, a few months before the base will be shut down by the U.S. government. A mysterious experiment has gone horribly awry. And something has gotten out.

On this very night, a young boy, WILL BYERS, vanishes into thin air. His disappearance has a potent effect on the small-town community, particularly on his best friend, MIKE WHEELER, his brother, JONATHAN, his mother, JOYCE, and the reluctant Chief of Police, JIM "HOP" HOPPER. We will follow each of these characters as they grapple with and investigate Will's disappearance.

As they peel back the layers of this mystery, they will all arrive at the same shocking conclusion: Will was abducted by supernatural entities which were inadvertently released during an experiment. These entities exist between dimensions and have begun to feed on life from our world -- Will's disappearance is only the beginning....

Over the course of the series, the "tear" or "rip" that separates their world from ours will begin to spread across Montauk like a supernatural cancer. This cancer will manifest itself in increasingly bizarre paranormal ways. Electrical fields will be disrupted. Strange fungi will grow on structures and people. A heavy fog will drift in from the Atlantic. The temperature will plummet. Food will rot. Gravity will fluctuate. People will glimpse bizarre entities in their homes and businesses. There will be an escalating number of "vanishings." The entire town will become "haunted" — and in grave danger. If people can disappear... can an entire town?

In order to save Will and the town, our heroes will have to outsmart FEDERAL AGENTS and tap into the preternatural abilities of a mysterious child telepath, named ELEVEN, who has recently escaped from Camp Hero. ELEVEN will ultimately give them access to this "in-between" dimension, a nightmarish reflection of our own, where they will find themselves face to face with unimaginable horrors -- horrors from which some of them will never escape. Those who do will be forever changed.]



Story Studio

Quickly explain your setting and background. In broad strokes, provide a sense of when and when the show is taking place.

Story Studio

What is the event that kicks off the series? A new kid arrives at school? A spaceship launches into space? What starts off the series?

Story Studio

Introduce your main characters, and their relationship to each-other. Just the main characters - keep it simple.

Story Studio

Capitalize names so that they are easy to pull out of the synopsis.

Story Studio

Now tell the general story. That is, don't worry about the specific details and plot twists. Instead focus on examples of the kinds of events that might happen in each episode.

Story Studio

What will cause the tension to rise? What obstacles will the characters face?

Story Studio

How will the TV series end, at least in season one? More importantly, how will the main characters be changed by what happens to them during the series?