

1. Introduction

	<i>A trick you do</i>	<i>A trick you used to do</i>	<i>A trick you want to do</i>
What idea does the trick express?			
How does the plot express the idea?			
Who are the characters?			
What world does it take place in?			

2. Big Ideas

Name of the trick	
What is the most important thing you have learned in your years on Earth?	
What surprises you the most (or the most recently)?	
What is it that you see but no one else does?	
What ideas do you think are worth expressing?	
If you could send a five-word message back in time to yourself, what would you say?	
What piece of ground do you stand on that nobody else stands on? What do you see from there?	
What do you love about magic?	
What do you love about this trick?	
When you look at the trick, what idea do you see it expressing?	
What old saying does the trick make you think of?	
What is the most fun part of this trick?	

3. The One Thing

	<i>The tricks you have performed the most</i>	<i>The One Thing</i>	<i>Make it clearer</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

4. Plot and Effect

	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Power being played</i>	<i>Another way to demonstrate that power</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Can you fit any of these new demonstrations back into your presentations?

5. Confessions

Something anyone would hide	
Something trivial	
Something obvious	
Something impossible	
About magic	
About this trick	
About a prop you use	
About performing	
About today	
From middle school	
From when you were a little kid	
My last confession was:	
I secretly like:	
I am secretly:	
I'm not really:	
I may look _____ but I'm really:	
This trick is actually:	
This deck of cards is:	
This deck of cards is actually a:	
This is my first _____.	
I almost didn't _____ tonight.	
When I was younger I was:	

6. The Christian Cagical Inspired Worksheet

Trick	
Prop(s)	
Replace the prop	
Personalize the prop	
Mechanism for the magic	
Word(s) that tell the story	
Jeopardy	
Empathy	
Likability	
Authority	
Affinity	
Exclusivity	

7. First Lines

The news lead gives a capsule version of the story. The descriptive lead provides a single evocative detail that tells just enough to be intriguing but not enough to give the game away. A magician might say “If it weren’t for this next trick, I would not be here today.”

Trick

News Lead

Descriptive Lead

8. Structure and the PATEO Force

	<i>Something dark</i>	<i>Something funny</i>	<i>Something personal</i>
Overall concept			
Why are two items chosen?			
Why is one eliminated?			
Why is the final result magical?			

9 .Uta Hagen: 9 Questions for a Magician

Who am I?	
What time is it?	
Where am I?	
What surrounds me?	
What are my circumstances?	
What is my relationship?	
What do I want?	
What is in my way?	
What do I do to get what I want?	

The Scripting Magic Workshop

“Today you’ll make your magic better. Just be honest and follow the directions.”
—Pete McCabe

Before we start, introduce yourself to everyone else in your group. Share how much scripting you have done and also how much experience you have doing a group workshop.

Magic

Take sixty seconds to write down what you like most about magic. Somebody time it.

Share what you wrote around your group. No feedback yet, just get used to sharing.

You

Write the three adjectives that best describe you. Take 60 seconds.

Take turns sharing your three adjectives. This time you can give each other feedback.

Most Tricks

Write the three tricks that a) you do the most often, b) you have the most fun doing, and c) you want to do but need a presentation for. These can overlap. 3 minutes, then share.

Most often:

Most fun:

Need a presentation:

Title

Pick one of your tricks and write the title of your presentation. Do not write the name of the trick. For example: I do the Ambitious Card as a demonstration of moves that cheaters use. Ambitious Card is the name of the trick. The title of my presentation is "The Ultimate Card Sharp's Weapon."

If you don't have a title, write what the audience would guess was the title. 60 seconds.

Share around, then tell your groupmates which of their titles interests you the most.

The Plot in One Sentence

Pick a different trick and write the plot of your presentation in one sentence. For my Ace Assembly as poker game presentation, my sentence would be "Four Aces magically travel to my poker hand." You have 60 seconds only. No time to think, just write.

Share around, then tell your groupmates any suggestions you have about their plots.

First line

Pick a third trick and write the first line—the first thing you say when you do the trick. If you improv your scripts, no problem—improv a first line and write it down. 60 seconds, share.

Rewrite

My first title for the Ambitious Card was “The Ultimate Card Sharp’s Weapon.” I rewrote that to “Cheaters Sometimes Prosper,” which sounds more like a story, and it has some character. Take the title you wrote earlier and make it better. 60 seconds and share.

For the Ace Assembly, my first plot was: Four Aces magically gather in my poker hand. Too prop-focused. I rewrote it to: I beat three legendary magicians in a cheating contest. Revise the one-sentence plot of your presentation. 90 seconds and share.

Journalists have techniques for writing first sentences. A “news” lead is a summary of the story. So for coins through table you might say “In this trick, four coins are going to pass right through this table.” In a “descriptive” lead, you tell a piece of the story that’s intriguing but doesn’t reveal too much. Like “This next trick is why I’m not allowed in casinos.”

Revise the first line of your presentation, first as a news lead, and second as a descriptive lead. Take four minutes, then share.

News:

Descriptive:

Congratulations—you just improved three of your tricks. The next step is to revise the presentation for each trick to match your new improved title, sentence, and first line.

—Pete McCabe • saythemagicwords.com