The 5-Minute Scene Audit

Does your scene actually move the needle?
Use this diagnostic to find out.

CELTX

PHASE 1 | The Goal/Conflict Test

○ **Identify the "Scene Lead":** Who is the primary character driving this specific scene? (It isn't always your protagonist)

○ **Define the Micro-Goal:** What does this character want to achieve before they leave the room?

○ **Identify the Resistance:** What (or who) is standing in their way? If there is no resistance, your scene is "chitty-chat" and needs to be cut or merged.

PHASE 2 | The "Value Shift" Diagnostic

○ **Starting Value:** Is the character +/- (Happy/Sad, Safe/In Danger, Informed/Ignorant)?

○ **Ending Value:** Has that state flipped?

○ **The Audit:** If the character starts "Sad" and ends "Sad," the scene is flat. You must find a way to move them toward a win or a deeper loss.

PHASE 3 | The "In Late, Out Early" Trim

○ **The Entrance:** Can you start the scene three lines later? (Delete the "Hello, how are you?" intros).

○ **The Exit:** Can you end the scene two lines earlier? (Delete the "See you later" outros).

Pro-Tip: Aim to start the scene at the moment the conflict begins and end it at the moment the "Value Shift" is realized.

PHASE 4 | Technical Formatting Audit

○ **White Space Check:** Are any action blocks longer than 4 lines? (Break them up for better pacing).

○ **Slugline Clarity:** Is the INT/EXT, LOCATION, and TIME OF DAY clear enough for a Line Producer to schedule?

○ **Visual over Verbal:** Is a character saying how they feel, or are they doing something that shows it?

How to Use Celtx for Your Audit

Script Insights: Use the Dialogue vs. Action pie chart. If a scene is 90% dialogue and 10% action, it's a red flag for a "talking heads" scene that lacks visual storytelling.

Character Distribution: Check if a side character is taking over the scene. Script Insights shows you exactly who is dominating the page count.

Read-Through Tool: Use the automated "Read-Through" to listen to your dialogue. If it feels repetitive or "on-the-nose," your ears will catch what your eyes missed.