



LESSON 13: Creating Public Service Announcements for Radio

LESSON DESCRIPTION: Students work in teams to develop Public Service Announcements (PSA) for radio that will encourage students and families to go screen free or reduce media entertainment use and media violence. Students review and examine elements of good PSA radio ads. They use what they have learned to write the ad. Working in groups they brainstorm possible themes or topics and then use their ideas to create high quality ads. These ads can play on the radio during the screen free or media budget time. Hearing students on the radio is extremely motivating. Most radio stations will play these ads at no or little cost. The ads can also play during school announcements. If your school has a *Take the Challenge* assembly, have each group go up on stage and read their radio ad.

FOCUS QUESTIONS: How can we use radio PSAs to effectively communicate?

OBJECTIVES: Students will:

- work in teams to create an effective PSA radio ad.
- set a purpose, consider audience and develop focused ideas for a specific purpose.
- exhibit personal style, voice and design to enhance the informational content.

Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally). Explain how it contributes to a topic or issue under study.

LENGTH OF LESSON: This lesson will take between two periods.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- HANDOUT 1: Sample Radio Ad Scripts (3 pages)
- HANDOUT 2: Brainstorm PSA Ads for Different Target Groups
- HANDOUT 3: Radio Ad Persuasion Map
- HANDOUT 4: Writing Copy for Voiceovers
- HANDOUT 5: Radio Ad Persuasion Map

Teacher's Note: Students respond well to this lesson. If the local radio stations will play the ads this builds awareness in the community and is exciting for the students to hear the ads. Having the student groups read their ad at a group assembly also works well. Many students have a fear of public speaking but this is a very safe way to experience the thrill of performing before an audience. Motivation research has found that having students perform is highly effective in increasing motivation and commitment to behavior change.

PROCEDURE:

Activity 13.1: Students will view examples of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and discuss what makes a good PSA ad.

1. **Tell Students:** Talk to your partner about what a Public Service Announcement (PSA) is and how it differs from a regular advertisement. Call on a few students to define a PSA.

A public service announcement (PSA) is a message in magazines, billboards, radio or TV, promoting an idea for public benefit; may encourage fitness and health or increase awareness of services; typically created by government or nonprofit groups. The purpose of commercial advertising is to market a product or service, PSAs are messages that benefit the public by raising awareness of an issue, influencing attitudes or actions for the good. The media time and space is provided for free. The <http://www.psaresearch.com> website has good information on how to make great PSAs.

2. **Tell students:** *We're going to listen to a variety of PSA radio ads. As you listen to the first ad think about what group the ad was targeted towards and what made it effective. Talk to your partner and identify two effective elements of the radio ad.*

Provide examples of PSAs geared towards different age groups. The Ad Council: <http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Work/Current-Work> is one of the leading producers of public service announcements and provides a variety of 30 to 60 second advertisements on Education, Health, Community, and Safety. They also provide samples of radio ads: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrESfhJGEDSiBmDAz1rJ7gmhIHRqm5FM6&feature=edit_ok

The CDC website: www.cdc.gov has health videos including recent videos on second hand smoke: www.BeTobaccoFree.gov. Sesame Street has numerous PSA ads including Healthy Eating and Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhGWSfraeyQ>. The U.S. Forest Service has PSA radio ads. <http://www.discovertheforest.org/about/>

You may also use written radio ad scripts instead of or in addition to the online radio ads.

Distribute **HANDOUT 1: Sample Radio Ad Scripts (3 pages)**. Ask for volunteers who are willing to come to the front of the class and read one of the radio ads.

3. Play or have students read one of the ads geared towards children. After the ad has played and students have had time to talk to their partner, ask for volunteers to share with the class. Write down their responses on poster paper or blackboard.
4. Play or have students read several more ads geared towards adults or teenagers. Continue to have students discuss with their partner effective elements and what makes them effective. Tell the students you'll be having teams share their ideas with the entire class.
5. Have each pair share one idea with the entire class.

Activity 13.2: Students will brainstorm ideas for radio ads targeting different groups.

1. Divide class into groups of four and give each group four blank sheets of paper and post it notes.
2. **Tell Students:** *One person should write **Young Children** at the top of the first page. Divide up the post-it notes and when I give the signal you'll have two minutes to write down as many ideas for a radio ad targeting young children. Each person writes an idea on one post-it note and puts it on the first page. For example: I'm going to write "Teach how not to be afraid by "Turning off Scary Programs."*

After several minutes signal students to stop writing.

3. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: Brainstorm PSA Ads for Different Target Groups**. Each student in their group should read their Post-It Note ideas and then each student should decide on their two favorite ideas and write them in the box next to Young Children target group.
4. Repeat the activity with the post-it notes for Teenagers, then Adults, and finally Others. Explain that for this category their group should identify another target audience. It could be a more specific group, e.g., mothers, video gamers, parents of infants or toddlers, etc.

Teacher's Note: By the end of this activity students will have a lot of ideas for possible PSA radio ads.

Activity 13.3: Students work with a partner or in a team to complete HANDOUT 3: Radio Ad Persuasion Map.

1. Distribute **HANDOUT 3: Radio Ad Persuasion Map**.
2. Use the Handout with the example to explain how to fill out the form. Have students continue to work with a partner or in teams.

Activity 13.4: Students will read HANDOUT 4: Writing Copy for Voiceovers

1. Have students read this for homework.

Activity 13.5: Students will write a script for their Radio Ad.

1. Distribute **HANDOUT 5: Radio Ad Persuasion Map**.
2. Use the Handout with the example to explain how to fill out the form. Have students continue to work with a partner or in teams to write a script for their Radio Ad. Encourage teams to make sure that everyone has a part in the final ad.
3. Have student teams volunteer to read their PSA Radio Ad in front of the class. Encourage all of the teams to do this but don't force any group. Usually this

HANDOUT 1: Sample Radio Ad Scripts (3 pages)

Some radio ads involve only one person reading a message. Others may be more elaborate and include several actors, background music or sounds. Ads are usually 10 to 60 seconds.

Radio PSAs for Children and Families

Discover the Forest - Light Show: RADIO COMMERCIAL (60 seconds)

OPEN ON AMBIENT SOUNDS OF THE FOREST.

FIREFLY 1: Last night, we put on an epic light show!

FIREFLY 2: Yeah, we did.

FIREFLY 1: The crowd loved us...we loved the crowd.

FIREFLY 2: Wait but there were only four people out there.

FIREFLY 1: Yeah, but did you see their four faces? All eight of their eyes lit up 8 brighter than ours.

FIREFLY2: Ahh.

FIREFLY 1: And we're fireflies!

FIREFLY 2: Yeah we are.

FIREFLY 1: That one girl she looked like she'd never seen glow in the dark like this before. And we invented glow in the dark.

FIREFLY 2: Yeah, we invented it!

FIREFLY 1: And we're gonna be out here every night, rockin' out our light show at a forest near you.

FIREFLY 2: Woohoo

FIREFLY 1: So come check us out.

FIREFLY 2: Check us out.

FIREFLY 1: And bring your kid, all ages show. Oh...But ahhh...don't bring any of those glass jars. Cause they make us kinda nervous.

FIREFLY 2: Yeah and I'm super claustrophobic.

MUSIC: UPBEAT MUSIC BED FADES IN.

ANNOUNCER: Whether you're rocking their world, or they're rocking yours, some memories never fade. Come alive with the forest. Visit discovertheforest.org to find a forest near you. And discover other cool things to do when you go, like fishing, biking, or even camping. Visit discovertheforest.org.

FIREFLY 1: See ya later!

FIREFLY 2: Yeah, see ya soon!

ANNOUNCER: Brought to you by the US Forest Service and the Ad Council.

Discover the Forest - REDWOODS :60 RADIO COMMERCIAL

Sound Effects (SFX): BUSY, VIBRANT SOUNDS OF THE FOREST.

BOY: Dad, come on! Over here!

SFX: FEET RUNNING THROUGH THE LEAVES.

BOY: Look at this dad. Over he-

SFX: FEET SUDDENLY STOP. FOREST SOUNDS FADE TO A LIGHT CALM.

BOY: (Almost at a whisper). Whoah!

DAD: The moment my son saw a redwood tree...

BOY: It's huge!

DAD: ...is the moment I knew that for him ...

BOY: You can't even see the top of that thing!

DAD:even the sky has no limit.

FEMALE: There are some moments only the forest can inspire. Find yours at DiscoverTheForest.org. Learn about forests near you, and discover cool things to do when you go like hiking, biking, fishing, and camping. Or do your own thing when you get there with family and friends. Your moment is out there. Find it at DiscoverTheForest.org. That's DiscoverTheForest.org.

Discover the Forest - Busy Family: RADIO COMMERCIAL (60 seconds)

Mom: So, Jaclyn.

Girl: Yes Mom....

Mom: I wanted to talk to you about (BUZZ) something and... oh wait (BUZZ) hold on I just got a text. Oh, there's another one! Wow, busy, busy me! So anyway

Girl: (DING) Oh wait Mom I just got a message (ding). My friends keep commenting on my comment (ding) . Oh there's another one! Soooo many comments on my comment!

Dad: Oh I can't wait to watch TV tonight. Playofffffffffs! (TV SOUNDS)

Boy: Hey guys, check out my new video game! Broom boop boom (VIDEO GAME SOUNDS)

(All sounds now overlapping, them Simultaneously:)

Girl: Wait mom what?

Boy: Wait a sec, what?

Announcer: This weekend (SUDDENLY, ALL SOUNDS STOP) Un....plug

(MUSIC UP) Take your family to the forest. There's nothing in the world like experiencing nature first hand. Trees, paths, blue birds, streams. Getting closer to nature, can get you closer to your family. To find the forest nearest you, go to discovertheforest.org. Brought to you by the US Forest Service and the Ad Council.

PSA Radio Ads for Teenagers and Adults

Length: 10 seconds each

High school seniors! Friendship shouldn't end at graduation -- keep the memories alive! Don't drink and ride with someone who has been drinking. This message is presented by SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions at (name of school.)

Length: 20 seconds each

The consequences of underage drinking are serious. Alcohol-related highway deaths are a major killer of teens and young adults today. Alcohol use is associated with youth homicides, suicides, and drownings. The solution is simple -- If you're underage, don't be under the influence! Know the facts. They're sobering.

Length: 30 seconds each

You and your friends are finally on your way to the prom. You've found the perfect outfit, and you want to show up looking great. So, you decide not to buckle up. But, what about not showing up at all? Riding unbuckled could mess up more than just your clothes. It could mess up your future. Get you and your friends there safely. Enjoy the prom. Buckle up.

This message is brought to you by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and the US Department of Transportation.

RADIO PSA SCRIPT: USDA-IS IT DONE YET? Food Thermometer Use (60 seconds)

OUTDOOR SOUNDS - BIRDS, ETC.

SOUNDS OF A COOKOUT, MEAT SIZZLING ON THE GRILL

Kid 1 (age 8): Dad, we're starved—is the food done yet?

Dad 1: Let me check—almost, Josh.

Dad 2: Russ, come on, serve up those burgers, look how brown they are.

Dad 1: Mike, you can't tell if they're safe to eat by the color of the meat.

Dad 2: Hey, is that a meat thermometer—it looks like one of the kids' video games.

Dad 1: It's digital—you can set it, and it beeps when the meat is perfectly cooked.

Dad 2: Leave it to you to own the most cutting-edge barbecue technology in town.

Dad 1: You better believe it, when it comes to keeping our kids safe.

Dad 2: Good point. Where can I get one of those?

Dad 1: Supermarket, online. You don't need a fancy thermometer, just one that works.

Dad 2: You're not having all the fun—I'm getting one of those ... do they come with ring tones?

Kid 1: Dad, is it done yet? (the thermometer beeps)

Dad 1: 160 degrees. Perfectly cooked, perfectly safe.

ANNOUNCER: You can't tell by looking—use a food thermometer to be sure. For more information visit www.isitdoneyet.gov

HANDOUT 2: Brainstorm Radio Ads For Different Audiences

BRAINSTORM RADIO ADS FOR THESE TARGET AUDIENCES:	
YOUNG CHILDREN	
PARENTS	
TEENAGERS	
OTHER: <hr/>	

HANDOUT 3: Radio Ad Persuasion Map

Target Group:

Purpose or Goal of Radio Ad:

Reason

Facts or Examples

1.

2.

3.

Action or Conclusion:

HANDOUT 3: Radio Ad Persuasion Map (Example)

TARGET GROUP: *Teenagers and Adults*

PURPOSE OR GOAL OF RADIO AD: *Educate others about the connection between weight gain and media.*

REASON:

Research has shown that weight gain is associated with higher levels of screen time.

FACTS OR EXAMPLES

1. *College students who ate macaroni and cheese while watching television consumed 71% more calories than students that ate while listening to music.*

2. *According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, considerable research has shown that media contributes to the development of child and adolescent obesity.*

3. _____

ACTION OR CONCLUSION:

If your New Year's resolution includes a healthier lifestyle make sure you don't eat meals in front of a screen. You'll be healthier and happier.

HANDOUT 4: Writing Copy for Voiceovers

by Peter Drew

As with any of the performing arts, an effective voiceover begins with a well-crafted script. You don't have to have many years of writing experience to create copy that is both effective and a pleasure for the voice actor to perform. Here are some ideas to consider before you put your pen to paper or fingers to keyboard.

Commercials: Radio and TV

Determine the purpose of the ad, e.g. drive traffic to a store, produce direct response inquiries, announce a grand opening, move end-of-season merchandise, etc.

Determine who your customer is and speak to that person one to one, and, ideally, present one main idea in the copy.

Use A.I.D.A.:

Attention: Get the listener's attention to the ad;

Interest: get the listener interested in what you're offering;

Desire: get the listener to want to take some action on your offer

Action: give the listener a means to act and urge that action.

Narrations (also called "Industrials")

For a video script, use the story board, if you have one, to guide the development of the script. This will help you time the voice over to the video's scenes.

For audio only, where no storyboard exists, do a rough outline. This will help you create a basic logical structure before you start writing. The result will be a script that flows much better for the narrator and the intended listener.

All Scripts

Leave room for "verbal white space." Just as a large block of densely printed copy is intimidating and difficult to read, a voice-over script that's crammed with copy is difficult to follow and understand. A good rule of thumb for 30-second radio or TV copy is eight lines down (double-spaced), 10 words across the page. For a slower, more intimate read, go with seven lines, 10 words across. The same idea applies for a briskly paced 60-second ad: 16 lines down, 10 words across. For a slower pace, 14 lines, 10 words across. This 60-second guideline is helpful in timing long-form scripts, too. Just count the pages and you have the total number of minutes.

Numbers are words, so be sure to consider them in your word count. A phone number, such as 1-860-291-9476, is eleven words. That's more than one entire line of copy! Try spelling out numbers as words to get a good handle on the actual length of your copy. For example:

1-860-291-9476, when written out, is one-eight-six-oh, two-nine-one, nine-four-seven-six.

You can see how long the line really is when the numbers are spelled out. Then, after you're ready to print your final draft, convert the words back to numbers.

Write for the ear, not the eye. Construct short, conversational sentences, with natural breaks for taking a breath. This is especially helpful to narrators when they voice technical or medical copy, which contains large, complicated, and difficult-to-pronounce terms.

Read your copy out loud, just as you intend the voice talent to read it, and time it. Then adjust your copy accordingly for timing.

Try to write in the active voice, not passive voice.

This is a passive construction: "When writing a script, be sure you're saying some exciting things, or else you'll be losing the attention of the listener."

Instead, use the active voice, structured something like this: "When you write a script, say something exciting, or you'll lose the listener's attention."

Active voice is more conversational and easier for the ear and mind to follow.

Happy writing! © Peter Drew, 2005

Peter Drew, a freelance voice-over talent and copywriter/producer with decades of experience, is heard on radio and television stations, corporate presentations, web sites, and messages-on-hold across America and countries around the world. To send an email regarding this article, please visit [Peter Drew Voiceovers](#).

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HANDOUT 5: 30 to 60 Second Radio Script (PSA)

Sound Effects	Characters:	Script:

HANDOUT 5: 30 to 60 Second Radio Script (PSA) Example

Sound Effects	Characters:	Script:
Muted television in the background. Make sure it's not possible to determine the program so you don't have to worry about copyright.	Teenage boy 1:	Wow! That's great macaroni and cheese! Can I have some more?
	Teenage boy 2:	That's your fourth bowl. Aren't you full yet?
	Announcer:	A study at the University of Michigan showed that college students ate 71% more food when they were eating in front of a television.
	Announcer:	Don't eat in front of a screen. Instead, talk to your friends and family during meals.
Background sound of a group of friends eating pizza with talking and laughter..		You'll be healthier and happier.