

AUDIO STORYTELLING

A lesson plan for the narrative podcast
Level: High School



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Assignment:

Tell a true story using only audio.

Required: At least one interview

Also required: Narration, natural sounds

Optional: Non-copyrighted music used for transitions or effect.

Total Running Time: At least 5 minutes

Our “text” for this lesson will be:

“The Summer of the Cobras”
Reporter: Allison Green

First aired on the “Bay 11” podcast in November, 2017



CLICK NOW...as you listen to the podcast think about these

*This specific introduction features Emily, the host, and it utilizes a song to get your attention...it is a copyrighted song, but under “**Fair Use**” we used it to set the scene historically. The opening narration justifies it, and also acts as a tease (“stay tuned and we’ll tell you all about it”).

*Bay 11’s regular podcast opening includes our original theme music, written and recorded by one of our podcast staffers. It is important to have some sort of opening device that identifies and brands your show.

*The story begins with natural sound of the old elevator Allison, the reporter was riding. Little sounds like this help place the listener alongside the reporter.

*The exchanges with Katie, the office manager, were recorded on a cell phone. Later the main interview with John was recorded on a Zoom H4n audio recorder.

*Notice how Allison turns a negative (her main interview source was late—he forgot about the interview) into a positive and uses the time to get a great anecdote from Katie

*Instrumental music at 2:04 is used as a transition as Allison uses informal language to explain the story (“I promise, this really happened...”)

*Listen to Allison’s reactions. They are genuine. She represents you, the listener. Also notice how John reacts to her questions and comments. They are having a conversation, not a rapid fire Q and A interview.

*The story has a lot of layers. Those are the best stories. The surprises you can add along the way, like the story of who actually caused the cobra scare, keep us engaged.

*John is the perfect source to tell this story because he lived through it. Find that person every chance you can. The best source is invested.

FOCUS Your Show

Decide what it is, who it's for

- “Stories and interviews by teens, for teens” is the Bay 11 focus
- Others might focus on school-based content, sports coverage, news, topical discussions and debates, profiles of teachers, students, etc.
- Do your best to make it sound great: Free software (Audacity) and free hosting (anchor.fm)
- Get it out there to iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, Google Play, iHeart Radio, or just use it in class.



Podcast Advantage: Audio Stories Do Not Need Video

You can interview anyone...they are a phone call away

- Remember, podcasting is a wide open format. Find your own comfort zone: True stories, fictional stories, pop culture reviews and discussions, interviews with newsmakers, or conversations with obscure guests you find interesting.
- What's hard? Audio quality. Do the best you can. Cell phones will work, and there are accessories that make them even more professional-sounding.
- A music library such as artlist.io, which is \$199 a year, unlimited use, is so valuable for podcasting.
- Podcasts can be five minutes long, or ten times that. They can be daily, weekly, twice a month. Again, it's wide open.
- Learn your editing software so you can really polish your stories/shows

Small Steps

Exercises to build podcast skills

- Interview a parent or grandparent and find out three things you did not know about their lives. (Include a quick intro: “This is my dad, Robert...thanks for doing this, dad.”)
- Write and record a 1-minute opinion piece about a news or sports event
- Sit with a friend and record a 3-minute discussion about a new movie
- Using your cell phone, record 20 separate sounds. See how many your classmates can identify when you play them back.

To emphasize gathering sounds, and writing conversationally....

My Day

A Beginner's Podcast Challenge

Record sounds of your day...all day

Use a cell phone and take us along for a day in the life of YOU

After you collect all that awesome sound, everything from brushing your teeth to making dinner, it's time to write and edit.

*Write an introduction to your story about your day. Be as clever as you want. Even if it's boring day, make me want to hear about it.

*Think beginning/middle/end. Take me on a journey.

*Write conversationally. Just talk to us. Have fun with it. And write to the SOUNDS you will be sharing from your day. ("That's my car NOT starting the first three tries...")

*See if you can edit it to 4 or 5 minutes. You can use musical breaks for transitions. Even name the story, or your show about...YOU.

Some final reminders...

The world of podcasting is huge...there are so many out there already...but scholastic podcasting is in its infancy. It is a great time to try the medium.

Promote your show. Do not be shy. Let folks know where they can hear it.

If you have trouble settling on a format, try new approaches until you land on the best one for your students.

For grading, see the rubrics Don Goble has made available on his website. Use them, or adapt them to suit your own needs.

GOOD LUCK! We can't wait to HEAR from you soon!

Questions? Write: davishtv@gmail.com