



**Arts
Centre
Melbourne**

Sound Stage: Podcast

Teachers' Notes

What is a podcast?

A podcast is an audio file available for download that tells some kind of story. It can be documentary style, fictional, a discussion, a reading, recorded live or edited. It can be high tech or low tech, involve a group of people or one person, and be a series or a one off. Podcasts are great because anyone and everyone can record one and then develop their skills as they go in audio editing, music sourcing and making, script writing, storytelling and documentary making.

During the workshop your students will produce a 2 minute podcast. It's hard to tell a story that quickly, so they'll need to use their words carefully. If you prefer, they could write just part of a story: a chapter or scene, or produce part of a non-fiction podcast.

Before the excursion:

In pairs, your students will need to write content for their podcast according to the instructions below.

For a 1.5 hour workshop, please have students write a **maximum of 250 words**, and for the 3 hour workshop a **maximum of 500 words**.

The podcasts will have the following elements. Depending on the style of podcast chosen, there will be varying amounts of each element.

- Title and introduction
- Voice recording (of the story being told)
- Music to set the mood and add emotion/tension
- Sound effects to make your podcast feel 'real' – make the listener feel they're really there

Please choose one of the two options for your students' podcasts.

1) Fictional story

You are telling your story using sound only – no pictures, animation or filming, so you have to think about what elements will make your story really interesting and exciting to listen to.

- An interesting story with strong characters. Giving your characters a challenge or obstacle to overcome can be a great way to create a gripping storyline.
- Try not to get bogged down in detail. You only have 2 minutes to tell the story, keep it snappy!

Fictional stories may involve:

- a. A narrator and dialogue
- b. Dialogue only
- c. Narrator only

Have a think about what kind of emotions you want your listeners to feel when they hear your story. Happy? Sad? Scared? What kind of music could you make to enhance that emotion?

Consider what sound effects could bring your story to life. You don't need to pick them before you come to The Channel, but having a rough idea will be a big help.

Your story should be set in one or two locations only. Before you come for the workshop, think about where your story is set and what the main background sounds are in that place. For example, if your story is set in a haunted house, the background sounds might be wind and storm sound effects with scary organ music.

Some ideas for your story setting could be: fantasy world, the Wild West, outer space, safari, on a farm, a jungle, somewhere haunted, a castle, under the sea. Or make up your own!

Examples of good fictional storytelling podcasts you could listen to with your class –

- The Truth (please check episodes first for appropriate content)
- Limetown (thriller)
- Edict Zero FIS (cyberpunk crime drama)
- Hadron Gospel Hour (comedy)

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2) Documentary – a non-fiction story

Documentary storytelling usually involves:

- Someone telling their personal story of a time they had a particular experience
- An expert or series of experts in that experience
- Vox pops – gathering information and opinions quickly from a group of random people

For example, if you sleepwalk, you could tell a story of your sleepwalking experience, and then have a “doctor” tell the audience the science of sleepwalking. (For this exercise you will pretend to be the experts yourselves – this may mean doing some research for your scripts).

Writing prompts to start you off – the funniest thing that's ever happened to you, a scary experience you've had, a time you felt out of place, a story about your school, the most inspiring person you know is...

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We have hundreds of sound effects for you to choose from in the following categories:

Animals	Applause	Appliances	Arcade	Comical	Communications	Crashes
	Explosions	Horror	Household	Liquids	Mechanical	People Noises
Sport	Science Fiction	Shopping	Indigenous	Vehicles	Weapons	Nature

Examples of good fictional storytelling podcasts you could listen to with your class (please check episodes first for appropriate content) –

- Sleepwalker
- The Real Thing
- This American Life
- Radiolab
- Invisibilia
- Song Exploder