



**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. There are no limitations on what a Podcast should be about or how the story is presented, whether it's documentary, fictional, discussion-based, a reading, a live recording or an edited piece. Podcasts might be one-off presentations, or a whole series. They might involve a group of people, or just one. Best of all – anyone can do it.

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. It doesn't need to be the whole story – it could be one chapter, or an excerpt, of a longer piece they've been working on.

Self-produced student podcasts will involve a combination of the following elements. Depending on the style of podcast, there will be varying amounts of each element.

- 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

Before the excursion:

In pairs, students will need to write content for their podcast:

For a 1.5 hour workshop, please have students write a **maximum of 250 words (1 page hand-written)**, and for the 3 hour workshop a **maximum of 500 words (2 pages hand-written)**. The script will need a title for the show and a short introduction, ie "Welcome to this week's edition of The Channel podcast. Today we're talking about Makey Makeys."

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. What elements will make your story really interesting and exciting to listen to?

- An interesting story with strong characters. Give 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 narrator and dialogue
- Dialogue only
- 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)

2. Documentary – a non-fiction story

Documentary style storytelling usually involves:

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

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 location 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.

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

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

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

- Sleepwalker
- The Real Thing
- Radiolab
- Song Exploder