

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WRITING FOR RADIO	3
SCRIPTS	3
PROGRAMMING	4
PROGRAM FORMATS	5
<i>The magazine style</i>	5
<i>The talks program</i>	5
<i>The documentary</i>	6
<i>The specialist music program</i>	6
<i>The radio drama</i>	6
PLANNING PROGRAMS	7
RESEARCH	8
WRITING SCRIPTS	10
THE STYLE	10
<i>Think - say - write</i>	10
<i>The Listener/presenter relationship</i>	10
<i>Capturing the Listener</i>	11
<i>Key words and ideas</i>	11
<i>Conversational language</i>	12
<i>build visual images</i>	12
<i>the scripted 'ad lib'</i>	12
<i>The Words</i>	12
<i>Length</i>	15
JOURNALESE	16
WRITING FOR RADIO - KEEPING IT BRIEF	17
PUTTING IT TOGETHER	18
WRITING FOR A MUSIC PROGRAM.....	18
CONTINUITY WRITING.....	18
MUSIC AND EFFECTS.....	19
<i>Effects</i>	19
<i>Music</i>	19
THE MECHANICS OF SCRIPT WRITING.....	20
<i>Typing</i>	20
<i>Timing</i>	21
<i>Punctuation</i>	21
<i>Paper</i>	21
MAKING PROMOS	22
IDENTIFYING YOUR MESSAGE	23
WRITING PROMO COPY	23
<i>storing promos for scheduling on air</i>	25
<i>Comedy</i>	26
<i>Music and effects</i>	26
<i>Approach</i>	27
<i>Voice</i>	27
<i>The Production</i>	28
THE RUNNING SHEET	29
THE ELEMENTS OF A RUNNING SHEET	29
RADIO ADELAIDE NEWS GUIDELINES	31
PROGRAM STANDARDS	31
WRITING GOOD COPY	31
<i>Clarity</i>	32
<i>Simplicity</i>	33
<i>Grammar</i>	33
<i>Time Phrases</i>	33
<i>Brevity</i>	33

<i>Facts</i>	33
<i>Background</i>	33
<i>Pictures</i>	34
<i>Numbers</i>	34
<i>News Values</i>	34
NEWS TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES.....	34
NEW RECRUITS.....	34
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.....	35
OTHER DUTIES.....	35
USING THE COMMANDER PHONE SYSTEM.....	35
FILING THE NEWSPAPERS.....	36
FILING YOUR NEWS COPY.....	36
BBC NEWS.....	36
NEWSREADER'S INTROS AND OUTROS.....	36
STORY RESOURCES.....	36
<i>Breakfast</i>	36
<i>Faxes</i>	36
<i>Newspapers</i>	36
<i>Other Radio News Services (ABC, BBC)</i>	36
<i>The Producers' Contacts Database and Contact book</i>	37
VOICE REPORTS.....	37
PHONE INTERVIEWS.....	37
USING THE COMPUTER	38
CONCLUSION	39

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WRITING FOR RADIO

Radio is the medium of imagination - there are no visual cues. Radio deals only with sounds - so the texture of those sounds is vitally important. It is your role to create images in the listeners' minds from which they will form their own interpretation of your message. At present there is no rewind button on a radio. The information has to come out clearly the first time. Careful program planning and scripting is vital. Writing for radio will often go against the rules of 'literary' convention. It may even be difficult to read silently, but once it's spoken, it'll come to life. You will find your own way and style – and a conversational style is still done best if supported by good scripting.



SCRIPTS

Don't assume that the professionals don't use them. All news and current affairs links are scripted, so are most interview introductions and a lot of what seems to be 'ad libbed'. Triple J's This Sporting Life is a good example. The clever script writer writes and the expert announcer reads so that it *sounds* ad libbed.

If the information comes out in the wrong order or if bits are left out then it doesn't matter how important the material is, the listener won't get a clear grasp of what you are trying to say and will switch off.

Working from a script allows you to concentrate on your presentation, because you have already worked out what you want to say. Working from a script gives you a solid framework within which you can ad lib.

Writing for radio is the storage of talk and presentation of the script is the retrieval of talk out of storage. This chapter outlines the basics of program planning and the conventions for writing scripts that will give your message every chance of being understood the first and only time it will be heard.

PROGRAMMING

The control you have over the content of your program depends on the type of radio station you belong to and the amount of responsibility given to you by station management. Commercial stations give their announcers very little creative control; boards set targets and objectives, sales managers set criteria for keeping the advertisers happy, program managers design the program formats and music directors design music formats around the perceived desires of the target audience.

At Radio Adelaide, there is much more flexibility within each program given to station workers than they would have at a commercial station. Small changes in the programming tend to happen depending on the particular strengths of both staff and other station workers at any given time - but always within certain guidelines set down in the mission statement of the station and the CBAA Codes of Practice. So there will always be, to some degree, preset guidelines governing the format your program takes.

Most radio programs happen in one hour or half hour blocks that can consist of all or a number of the following elements:

- *music*
- *documentary style segments*
- *general announcing*
- *news*
- *interviews*
- *competitions*
- *sponsorship announcements*
- *community service announcements (CSA's)*
- *station promotions*

The mix of these elements, which we've discussed in the previous chapter, depends a bit on preset guidelines. For example, promotional announcements must be played when scheduled and some magazine programs are expected to play a certain type of music depending on criteria, such as the time of the day and the expected audience at that time.

As the program producer, the responsibility to put all this together into a logical and entertaining sequence rests with you. Think of the format as a guide to what you can do - preconditions shouldn't be seen as shackles that hold back your creative instincts. The format is a sort of map that tells you where you should end up at certain points in the program; the way you get there is largely up to you. There are many different program formats that have been proven to work, but, in the hands of others, have failed. It is the way the format is used, the way the announcer communicates with the audience, the content of specific segments and the consistency that will make or break a program.

The bottom line is that you need to spend some of your creative energies on not only the individual segments but also the way they fit together. What you choose to do with every second of that time is what makes the difference, more than the amount of what you have available.

PROGRAM FORMATS

There are several types of format a program can take and this will be largely determined at the time the program is initiated as part of the station's programming.

THE MAGAZINE STYLE

This style has become one of the most popular styles in community radio and is so called because, for the listener, it is the radio equivalent of reading a magazine.

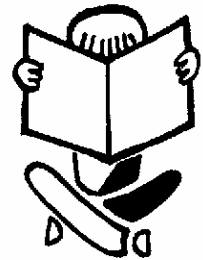
A printed magazine will normally be a series of articles, some short and some longer, all based around a particular subject, however broad that subject may be. Interspersed with the written word will be advertisements, comic strips, photographs and sketches all pieced together by a designer so that it's comfortable to flip from page to page.

The variety of information dealt with will be determined by the type of magazine but it will always be within a consistent format and targeted at a particular readership.

A magazine will have a mix of articles that require some degree of concentration and more trifling bits and pieces that require almost none but is nevertheless eye catching.

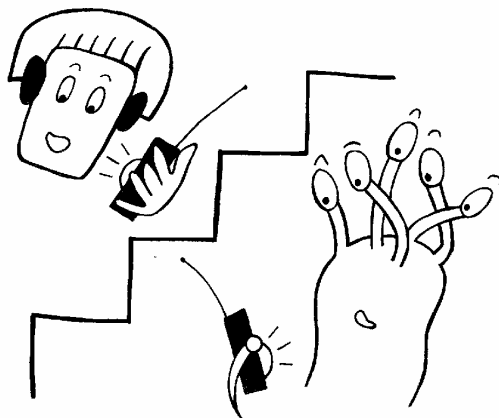
The style has become popular in radio because it puts into practice most easily one of the basic tenets of good radio - a mix of short segments interspersed with music that give the listener constant variety and where only short bursts of concentration are necessary.

The scope is enormous - interviews, actuality recordings, short pre-produced documentary style pieces, news bulletins, discussions, comedy and readings all interspersed with a style of music that complements the talk.



THE TALKS PROGRAM

The talks program referred to here is that which deals at length with one issue - perhaps over half an hour. Straight talks programs can be difficult for the listener to digest and need special care and attention to detail to keep them interesting.



The writer needs to be keenly aware of the needs of the listener and follow the points outlined in this chapter on length of sentences, the listener's concentration span, logical sequence plus a variety of voices, locations, ideas, pace and style.

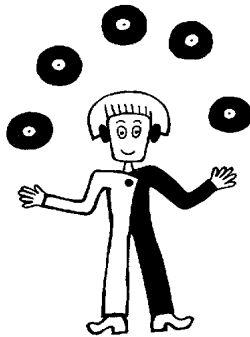
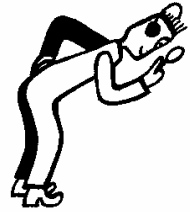
It may be necessary to mix studio presentation with 'on location' recording, for example, to maintain excitement and interest. The use of short music stabs, for example, will provide useful concentration breaks.

THE DOCUMENTARY

This type of program will usually occur as a one-off special or series.

Material will be drawn from texts, speeches, interviews, actuality (on location) recordings and other written material interspersed with sound effects and music. Actors can be employed to simulate actual events.

Comprehensive research will be of utmost importance. It will require sensitivity to the material, a good sense of balance and the ability to select only the material that will enhance the listener's knowledge of the subject whilst still providing enough entertainment to keep it engaging.



THE SPECIALIST MUSIC PROGRAM

Music programs offer their own special problems and rewards. Balancing the musical items is of paramount importance. The art of producing a good music program lies in your ability to balance variety with a comfortable aural flow.

Mix up female and male voices, vocal tracks and instrumentals, orchestral and chamber works, big bands and soloists, fast and slow tempi. The trick is to mix the different types whilst maintaining an easy transition between the tracks. Only your ear can tell you what works and what doesn't.

THE RADIO DRAMA

Radio drama is a highly complex type of radio production and requires a lot more space than this manual affords. There are numerous books that have been written over the years since the beginnings of radio in the early decades of this century which discuss the way things have been done and the pitfalls that can occur. They are readily available at major libraries. The bottom line with radio drama is that it is quite different from drama for the stage. A sound knowledge of the requirements of writing for radio is essential as well as a knowledge of the various technical production techniques that are available to you.



PLANNING PROGRAMS

Good radio programs are the result of careful planning. There's no need to leave anything to chance. Every sound that is going to be made in the studio should be scripted whether it be the continuity for a magazine program, reading and acting parts for a drama or documentary, interview inserts, sound effects or music bridges.

Every member of the studio team - all speakers, actors and technical personnel - should be equipped with a script before going into the studio and given the chance to read it through, ask relevant questions and make necessary alterations. Scripts and running sheets will:



be a safety net



help you avoid freezing up



increase the clarity of your words by having elements in the right order



make sure you include all the important information



prompt you with key words and names



keep you to time



stop you from waffling



make links smooth



help you refocus the listener's attention with signposting



ensure a good lead in to item



help keep the listener's attention



allow you to concentrate on presentation



alleviate stress

RESEARCH

Launching into writing a script, without planning and research, is asking for trouble. Different types of scripts will require different preparation, but there will always need to be some. The following points are largely relevant to the preparation of a script for a documentary program, like a series, but the principles are relevant to all radio presentation.

- Begin with a rough **sketch** of the ideas and materials that are likely to be used, arranged in a working order. Include as much detail as you currently have to hand – describe any ideas you have about possible sound effects, narrative ideas or appropriate music. This rough will also give anyone else working with you a clear idea of what to expect of the final product.
- **Discuss** with the Station Manager, or whoever is overseeing your program, what the limitations of the project are; the budget, the supposed audience, the general purpose of the exercise, the time frame, the broadcast details and, probably most importantly, any preconceived ideas that the initiators of the project may have in terms of the approach to the subject.
- Decide on an **approach**. This doesn't necessarily mean stating a theme or working out a sequence of events. It simply means narrowing your concerns so that you carry out research efficiently. It may need initial discussions with an expert or preliminary reading to familiarise yourself with the possibilities.
- Prepare a tentative **outline** of the script, or at least write a statement of intent. What you'll write at this stage will be an idealised version of the finished product, which may or may not be completely destroyed by the facts as you receive them.

Adequate research will tell you a number of things.

- Whether the topic is suitable for radio or not - some topics will be better suited to a visual or a print medium
- the potential difficulties
- the best sources of information
- whether location recording will be possible, appropriate and effective
- whether the topic can be adequately covered in the time frame available
- whether facilities and skilled personnel are available to carry out your ideas
- the various possible approaches to the topic
- various points of view
- whether there's an audience interested, or at least likely to be drawn to the subject

You are now ready to begin systematic **research**.

- Do your **homework** before you approach anyone for information.
- Start with a look at the information available in PRINT for a reasonable grasp of the subject matter so that you can formulate the most appropriate questions.
- Don't try to read exhaustively - you will eventually consult someone who *has* read all there is to read, or at least a lot of it. Leaf through writings on the subject and read the parts that strike you as pertinent. With a basic knowledge of the subject, you'll be able to make use of your resource people.
- Be careful with '**experts**'. Most will be invaluable but there are exceptions. The expert who has an axe to grind is a curse and an expert who wishes merely to complain about the finished product is a pain. On the other hand, the expert who answers questions in the early stages like "*Is this view reasonable?*", "*Who should I ask about that?*" or "*What should I read to understand x better?*" is invaluable.

Experts are experts in their fields. They're not in the business of creating radio programs and their views on writing scripts and producing programs are probably as useful as those of the next ten people you'll meet in the street. You are the expert in this area and must maintain the creative control of the program.

- If your research involves speaking with people, **record** these interviews even if they won't be used on air. They'll become an invaluable reference source and save you writing notes while the person is speaking to you.

You could make a narrative script of the recordings you've made. There was a case in Chicago of a producer who spent hours in conversation with a street gang. The conversations were fascinating, but when heard out of context became unintelligible. A script was formulated from transcripts and performed by actors. There are many more ways to deal with a topic other than putting a string of interviews together. You could sound as if you've put your research to air.

- The **time** you devote to research will vary from project to project. There's no formula. Take these factors into account:
 - ✓ the demands of the project so that it actually happens
 - ✓ the budget (if there is one)
 - ✓ the amount of time you're personally willing and able to commit

Some topics will be familiar to you while others will require more extensive research. Some topics will be controversial and will require delicate treatment while others won't. Some topics can be presented simply while others require complex production. The result is that some topics will take months to prepare while others can be tackled in a few days or even a few minutes. There is never enough time to do enough research and deadlines always happen yesterday! Be aware of that and you'll have a more realistic approach to what you can achieve.

WRITING SCRIPTS

Writing for radio is the storage of talk and presentation of the script is the retrieval of that talk out of storage. But writing on paper can be a very crude form of word storage. It doesn't give you any idea where the emphases should go. The written word provides no indication of the vocal sounds intended - the shape of the sentence as it's said. It's possible to give words quite a different meaning by subtleties of inflection. The written word provides no speed directions or indications of pauses. Yet all these qualities in speech help to convey the sense of the words. Presentation of a script at a microphone should give listeners the impression that they're being spoken to rather than read to.

Writing is only part of the communication process; the process is not complete until the words are said, and said with the proper intention of the writer. It's difficult enough to do well when you're going to read the passage yourself; you'll need to be doubly careful if you're writing a passage for someone else to read.

THE STYLE

You'll need to use different styles of writing for different programs. News writing is different from writing for an informational talks show or an introduction to a piece of music. But the fundamentals remain the same. Ultimately, if you manage to communicate to the listener, you've written a successful radio program.

THINK - SAY - WRITE

- The first thing with any communication, is to decide what you want to say. This may sound ridiculous, but it's easy to set the mouth or pen in motion before the brain is ready. You'll be merrily writing away, only to find that you can't finish the sentence - you've written yourself into a corner. At this point you ask yourself 'What on earth am I trying to say?' Think about it *before* you start to write and you'll save yourself a lot of time.
- Speak the script aloud as you write it. Don't write it in your head but from the sounds you make as you speak. Think about what you want to say then say it out loud, write it down, say, write, say, write
- If you can't read the script without stumbling over parts of it, it's unlikely that anyone else will be able to either. Don't waste time practising a difficult read - your time will be better spent rewriting the original until you can read it easily.

THE LISTENER/PRESENTER RELATIONSHIP

- Think about the relationship you wish to create between you and your listener and talk to your audience as individuals
- Try to visualise the listener - it'll help you to imagine that what you are writing will be heard by one person and one person only.
- Keeping the listener in mind helps to avoid becoming patronising. Think of putting a message *across* - this implies a horizontal communication.
- Radio is mass media - your words may be heard by thousands of people. Yet your message ends up in the mind of an individual with individual thoughts. Radio is *not* a group experience or a public address system broadcasting to crowds of people. It's an intimate communication between you and another individual whose ear is probably no further than a metre away from the receiver. Avoid phrases like:

*Listeners may like to know.... or
If anyone listening is interested*

- Speak directly to your listener, using YOU, with phrases like
You may like to go to this event coming up on Saturday afternoon
..... or *Do you remember the music of*

CAPTURING THE LISTENER

- Capture your audience with your very first words and 'keep hooking them in'. Radio is a very 'switch-offable' medium and you're speaking to a non-captive audience who have no attention-demanding visual images to watch.
- Don't spend too much time getting into the subject - start with an intriguing idea which will entice the listener to stay with you and follow with explanation.
- For a music program, start with something punchy and short, that will grab the listener's attention, before you launch into talk. This will help establish the tone and give the listener a chance to become familiar with the presenter.
- A reader picks up a magazine, book or newspaper with the intention of reading it. The radio listener is probably engaged in some other activity at the same time as listening to you, and it will be up to you to penetrate the distractions.

That listener may be a person at home cooking dinner, a sleepyhead trying to grapple with morning or someone listening to you between calls on the car phone.

- Build up to a good ending - present your conclusion in a way that will be remembered by the listener.

KEY WORDS AND IDEAS

- Know what the *key words* or *ideas* are and make sure they will be heard.
- What sort of impression do you want to leave behind?
- List the main points, necessary facts and aural illustrations to support them.
- Include a short summary near the beginning to give the listener an idea of what to expect as an enticement to leave the radio switched on.
- Assemble the ideas in a logical sequence - the sequence that'll make the facts most easily understood by the listener.
- If you get to a difficult point it's wise to include a phrase like:

How can I explain that?

or if you've finished with one idea then something like –

Let's move on and see how it works in practice.

This is a clear signpost that you're introducing a fresh idea, but in spoken word you can't use a paragraph heading, so you need to find a replacement.

- End with a summary and a reference to the main points to reinforce what you've said and provide as a recall trigger. If you want to leave a listener with a thought or motivate an action, these points must come at the end. Openings and closings are the most difficult part of any broadcast, but the final word is the one that is most likely to be remembered.

CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE

- The overall style of broadcast talk should be conversational - not sloppy or casual, but more colloquial than the written word.
- Abbreviations like *I'd*, *shouldn't've* and *this'll* will look ghastly on paper but sound quite natural in spoken word - they're the elements of a living, spoken language.
- The only way to check that it is written in a conversational style is to read it aloud.

BUILD VISUAL IMAGES

Tell stories - Build pictures - Use descriptive language for colour and meaning.

THE SCRIPTED 'AD LIB'

"Ad lib" means to talk freely and this is an essential skill of a radio broadcaster. The best announcers make **everything** they say sound like it's coming off the top of their heads. Sometimes it is. But more often it's the result of careful scripting and good reading. Learn the style of the scripted 'ad lib'. Bullet points are also a good basis for an ad lib.

THE WORDS

Don't use adjectives carelessly.

The new 25 storey, glass-fronted, brick veneer, shopping centre and office-block complex, the Lofty Towers...

You will have diverted attention away from the main focus with a jumble of information that could've been mentioned later or not at all. Words like '*brilliant*', '*famous*' and '*well-known*' are unnecessary. '*Brilliant*' is usually a matter of opinion, and if a person is famous or well-known then there is no need to say so. In fact, the listener will feel foolish if he or she has never heard of the 'famous' person.

Be economical with words. Word-wasting clouds your message. *Suffered a broken arm* is better said - *Broke an arm* and *thanked* is shorter than *expressed thanks*. Politicians are particularly good at saying: *in the ordinary course of events* when *normally* will do. Former U.S. President Nixon was famous for saying *at this point in time* when he meant *now*. Be careful of redundancies like *completely destroyed*. If something is destroyed then it's destroyed. Some words and phrases to avoid and alternatives:

<i>approximately</i>	<i>about</i>
<i>at this point in time</i>	<i>now</i>
<i>all time record</i>	<i>record</i>
<i>completely destroyed</i>	<i>destroyed</i>
<i>consensus of opinion</i>	<i>consensus</i>
<i>in the ordinary course of events</i>	<i>normally</i>
<i>estimated at about</i>	<i>estimated at</i>
<i>living memory</i>	<i>memory</i>
<i>plain clothes detective</i>	<i>detective</i>
<i>self confessed</i>	<i>confessed</i>
<i>violent explosion</i>	<i>explosion</i>
<i>weather conditions</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>past experience</i>	<i>experience</i>

Speaking your script aloud as you write it will also help to avoid tongue twisters which may not be apparent on paper.

*Six Swedish fishing vessels sailed into the Skagerrak.
In the Sydney Easter Show's sheep shearing section.*

Phrases such as these have no place in radio copy:

*the latter the former the following
as previously mentioned as noted above*

Listeners can't refer backwards if they happen to miss what you 'previously mentioned' and the statement becomes meaningless. *As noted above* means nothing coming out of a radio!

Don't use **hackneyed words** like 'colourful', 'interesting', 'dramatic' or 'tragic'.

They don't add any more interest, drama or feeling of tragedy to your message. Choose words that will provide colour to a visual image and which will describe *how* interesting the event was. Describing something as 'interesting' tells the listener nothing.

Superlatives have no place in broadcasting.

You may want to build up interest, but don't overdo it. A news bulletin, say, refers to a '*disastrous start against England in the first Test*'. A story about an earthquake disaster where there was considerable damage and loss of life follows. Most people would agree that the earthquake is considerably more disastrous than the cricket result.

Be careful with your use of **foreign languages**. Avoid the foreign language if there is an appropriate English equivalent. Fine music programs are particularly susceptible to being cluttered with words few people understand. If you must use foreign languages, give translations.

Numbers are particularly abstract and a great stumbling block for the reader. Don't say '*There were 5,689,234 people viewing the concert via satellite*'. Round off all figures where possible and compare the height, width, weight and distance with something the listener can reasonably be expected to relate to.

Be careful with sports results - most sports have elaborate jargon. For example, the figure 0 would be 'love' in tennis and 'nil' in soccer.

Vary repetitive items like the simple announcement and back announcement. For example, it's easy to fall into the habit of saying "*That was such and such and before that we heard such and such*". This is fine every now and then but dull if heard after every track.

There are many different ways to introduce items and many ways to back announce them - use your imagination.

Identify the source of the information before you give it:

President of the Association, Fred Bloggs has indicated that the issue is a very delicate one and should be given far more attention than it is currently receiving.

rather than

The issue is a very delicate one and should be given far more attention than it is currently receiving according to President of the Association, Fred Bloggs.

Be consistent with your use of **titles**.

As a general rule, put the title first and then the person's name in your introduction and thereafter in the segment drop the title.

The Prime Minister, Mr Howard, announced today... rather than:

Mr Howard, Prime Minister, announced today...

Begin the story with the source of the information.

In the above case, it's Mr Howard. It gives greater credibility to the story and sounds less clumsy than announcing the source at the end. Newspapers tend to reverse the procedure, beginning with the announcement itself.

It's best to avoid questions to the listener. If you ask the listener '*are you interested in?*' S/he may decide that s/he's not - and switch off. Catch the listeners' attention by your enthusiasm - don't rely on theirs. And another thing - try saying s/he aloud!

Lots of **link words and phrases** that we use in speech would rarely be used in written word: e.g. *anyway*, and *mind you*, but they sound fine in conversation - but don't overdo them. Words like *now*, *and*, *but*, *so to explain in more detail...* keep sentences flowing. Take care, however, not to use awkward sounding phrases.

Read the previous sentence out loud. The word *however* stops the flow of the sentence awkwardly and the sentence would be better like this:

However, you must take care not to use awkward sounding phrases.

Be very careful with **emphasis & punctuation**.

- Take this sentence - the words stay the same, but the meaning can alter in eight different ways depending on where you put the emphasis. Try it out loud for yourself.

You mean I have to be there at ten tomorrow.

- Read this aloud.

This morning our reporter spoke to Mr Smith on the golf course, as he played a round with his business partner.

- This shows what can happen if you don't show where to pause (pausation). It could mean that the Union believes that the report is incorrect. But changing the pausation reverses the meaning:

The Union said the report was wrong.

The Union..... said the report.... was wrong.

- The meaning can be changed by alternating the emphasis between 'restricted' and 'Australian'.

At first, supplies of the new car would be restricted to the Australian market.

- Try emphasising different words - *I was pleased to see the last picture.*
- Consider this:

*Dr Smith is travelling to London for the international conference on global warming.
Meanwhile, the Australian minister for the environment will be in New York.*

Emphasise the word *Australian*, and it implies that Dr Smith is the environment minister for some country other than Australia. Emphasise the word *environment*, and the sentence implies that Dr Smith is an Australian minister for something.

Punctuation will help, but it is a flimsy device when the whole meaning of the sentence relies on something that could look like a fly speck.

Use short sentences that can be read in one breath and are not complex.

Jo, who is about to leave the media school which she has attended for five years, during which time she was milk monitor for three months, is seeking employment in the radio industry.

On the air, this would be much better:

Jo's been at media school for five years where she was milk monitor for three months. She's now about to leave and is looking for a job in the radio industry.

LENGTH

Effective listening to spoken word programs demands a concentration and attention greater than in any other media. Each span of concentration should be limited to perhaps five minutes before a mental breathing space is provided.

This break can be as simple as a scene change bringing in a new voice and a new tempo, or with the use of bridging music.

Children have an even smaller attention span and will only cope with about four or five short periods of listening concentration - adults can accept more, but every audience, irrespective of age, education or experience has a limited period of concentration.

The most effective means of providing a mental break is with a contrast of sound - follow a scene full of tension with one in a light mood, or with a slow pace after a fast tempo. If possible, spread the facts throughout the script rather than bunching them all together where they'll be both hard to take in and dull. Mix the facts with examples and other highlights.

Everyone's reading speed varies, but, as an example, a rate of about 170 words per minute is about average for a newscast style presentation.

It's a great art and a great discipline to fit what you want to say in the time available and, as with most broadcasting skills, there's no substitute for practice.

JOURNALESE

Be aware of so-called journalese. There's no doubt that journalists have their own way to describe things and we read and hear all sorts of outrageous things every day without even turning a hair.

As a writer, you need to be wary of falling into the trap of using expressions just because you've heard them so many times before. Use them if you must, but be quite sure you know exactly what you are saying and how it may be interpreted.

The following is an extract from an article written by John Leo which appeared in Time magazine that will help to illustrate the point:

Much of the difficulty in mastering journalese comes from its slight overlap with English. 'imposing', for instance, when used to describe a male, retains its customary meaning, but when used in reference to a female, it always means battle-axe. 'Feisty' refers to a person whom the journalist deems too short and too easily enraged, though many in the journalese-speaking fraternity believe it is simply the adjective of choice for any male under 5 ft. 6 in. who is not legally dead.

'Crisis' means any sort of trouble at all, and 'revolution' means any kind of change at all, as in 'the revolution in meat packing'. 'Street-value' lends excitement to any drug-bust story, without bearing any financial relationship to the actual value of drugs being busted.

In political campaigns, 'underdogs fight uphill battles' and 'hope for shifts of momentum' and 'coat tail effects', all leading to 'rising tides' that will enable them to 'snatch defeat from the jaws of victory'.

A gangster who runs a foreign country will be referred to as a 'strongman' until his death, and a 'dictator' thereafter. 'Strongman', like many terms in journalese, has no true correlative. 'Nicaraguan Strongman Somoza' is not balanced with 'Cambodian Weakman Prince Sihanouk'.

It's probably a case of 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em' - just make sure you know what you are really saying.

WRITING FOR RADIO - KEEPING IT BRIEF

Do this this exercise to practice using short and concise sentences, one of the basic skills of radio writing. In the examples below remove unnecessary words. Avoid repeating either words or topics. Always use simple language and easily understood words.

- a) *Remove three words.*

There were a few people that did not enjoy the Fringe.

.....

- b) *Remove two words and change the verb 'illustrate'.*

This crime helped to *illustrate* the need for harsher penalties.

.....

- c) *Remove ten words.*

The fact of the matter is that she could not afford to go to the Festival.

.....

- d) *Remove nine words.*

There is reason to believe that the mobile telephone will be used by us all a great deal.

.....

- e) *Remove four words and avoid repetition.*

The best result the Adelaide Crows had last year was the result they had in first round.

.....

- f) *Remove seven words and change the verb 'allowed' to the present participle.*

As you may be aware, our players are taller and this *allowed* them to gain the ball more often.

.....

- g) *Remove eight words.*

It must be said that Shakespeare's wit is relevant to reader's today.

.....

- h) *Remove eight words and use 'despite'. Also change 'I have had' to present participle.*

In spite of the fact that *I have had* plenty of sleep, I tend to feel tired after lunch.

.....

- i) *Change *agreement* into a verb and remove twelve words.*

On the whole, there was a lot of *agreement* on the part of members.

.....

- j) *Remove ten words and change into present tense.*

I am convinced of the fact that Dickens managed to convey a social message.

.....

Thanks to Robert Taylor of 4EB for permission to use this exercise

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

This is where the creative bit comes in and it would be presumptuous to include 'good examples of radio writing'. But here are a few tips.

WRITING FOR A MUSIC PROGRAM

How you introduce each musical item will have an important bearing on how your audience enjoys it. There can be much more to music announcing than merely *that was x and this is y*.

With a little effort you can make the item a much more enriching experience for everyone, including the presenter. Your own enjoyment, or lack of, will be reflected on air.

How much do you know about an artist or composer? What were the circumstances surrounding the recording? What other music have these artists recorded? What makes this piece different from others? Why have you programmed it? What relevance does it have to your program? Do you have any anecdotes about it that you can tell?

Put some thought into the tracks you program. Even if a piece of music is a 'filler', make it either relevant in some way to the segments either side of it or interesting on its own merits. An isolated piece of music will sound isolated and is a handy switch off point for the listener. Keep it short - it's the content that's important. Whatever happens, it's the music listeners want to hear, not a lot of waffle from a presenter. A few simple words to enhance their enjoyment of the music can make all the difference to the program.



CONTINUITY WRITING

Continuity writing, that is the link bits, can be provided by music, narration or sound effects. Choose the most appropriate sounds so that the listener comfortably glides from one program element to the next. This applies to the links between scenes in a radio drama, between segments of a magazine program and between two programs. Transition in dramatic writing requires a great deal of skill from both writer and producer. The ending of one scene should lead naturally to the beginning of the next and the change of scene can be supported and emphasised by a change of sound using different voices, pace or acoustic; for example:

Smith: (Open air acoustic, traffic background) Jones - you ought to see your lawyer. Go on, - see her tomorrow...(fade voice and effects) see her tomorrow.

(Pause)

Receptionist: (Room acoustic) Can I help you?

Jones: My name is Jones.

Receptionist: Yes Mr Jones, Ms Brown is expecting you, please go straight in.

This shows a neat way to change scenes without actually announcing it; it's quite clear from the dialogue and the change of acoustic. The same technique can easily be applied to other program styles.

MUSIC AND EFFECTS

EFFECTS

Be careful with sound effects. Be sure that the effect you want is actually able to be produced by sound alone - don't fall into the trap of writing stage directions. Be sure that the sound is identifiable in context. Gunshots can sound like a car backfiring; rain on a tin roof can sound like a printing press.

The relevant volume of sounds in the script can be manipulated by the producer to give the illusion of perspective. Speakers directly on mic will sound the nearest; those who fade off will sound as though they are moving away. The listener's mental image of the scene could be completely altered by changing the relevant sound levels. If you have a person slamming a door, running from a house, jumping into a car and driving away, be sure that the sounds are all in their correct perspective.

Most effects will suggest some kind of action - footsteps, closing doors, a plane taking off. But used in acoustical settings these sounds evoke specific feelings. Echoing footsteps won't convey the same feeling as simple footsteps, just as a creaking door has a different quality and preconceived images to that of a regular door closing.

There are unlimited devices for altering and distorting sound, such as reverberation, which should be used with great care. The ear is the final judge - do effects make the message clearer or not? Listeners don't assess you on your production ability but on the extent to which they were informed or entertained.

MUSIC

Music will always convey certain feelings and should be selected with care - it will have great bearing on the overall effect of your production. Write music cues clearly in the script and indicate precisely where the music comes in, the relative volume, where it goes out and whether and when it should fade. Be careful with your choice of music. Some music, particularly if it's been used for popular advertisements, may be associated with products, emotions or events. If you feel you need to use effects because the script is found wanting, go back and rewrite the script. Use effects to enhance the script, not to disguise it.

Background music can be an effective way of writing mood or atmosphere into a script. But again, be careful - it can also be a distraction if handled badly. Music can be useful if you have several minutes of unbroken dialogue - played at low volume under the voice it adds interest and mood to the words. The music shouldn't compete with the voice - if the music is too loud, it will be very tiring for the listener.

Never talk over vocals. It's effective to talk over an instrumental introduction right up to the entrance of the vocals but talking over the vocalist is confusing for the listener and doesn't sound much different from interference from another radio station.



THE MECHANICS OF SCRIPT WRITING

Never worry about what the script looks like - it's how it sounds that matters. Do whatever it takes to make the script easier to read accurately. The variables that distinguish reading from writing are *Pace*, *Pitch* and *Emphasis*, so you need to indicate them in your script.

TYPING

- Always type your script and use double or triple spacing.
- Have large margins for alterations that won't obliterate half the text. Copy must be clean and legible - if you make mistakes, use white out, or retype. Messy handwritten alterations are distracting.
- End each page at the end of a paragraph.
- Don't split the words of an important phrase over two lines and don't use hyphens to break a word at the end of a line.
- Check pronunciations and write any hard to say words out phonetically - e.g. President **GOOZ - MOW**
- A sound or music cue should be typographically different from the rest of the script and have a line to itself.

There mustn't be confusion as to what is to be read and what is a production cue.

- Each person's portion of the script should be clearly marked as theirs.
- Avoid the use of capital letters, except where they are needed. If you use capital letters throughout, you won't be able to use them for emphasis.
- The rhythms of spoken language are irregular, so construct your script to indicate both irregular pacing and pauses of varying length. To indicate pauses use
- Use frequent paragraphs to avoid the relentless pull from left to right across the page - you don't speak from left to right!
- Choose a way of indicating emphasis and keep it consistent.

Underline

CAPITALS

Italics

bold

TIMING

- Time each portion of the script so that you are aware before you start producing or broadcasting what the timing of the whole program should be. It's usually a simple matter to fill between programs, but a disaster to go over time.
- Write the approximate times in the script as a guide for the reader.

PUNCTUATION

- In conversation we don't actually stop, but run our sentences together with a pause for breath. A dash in the script, rather than a full stop will indicate those pauses to the reader.
- You can use all sorts of markings - arrows to indicate inflections or words that should be joined as one phrase, musical notation or even directions like *smile* - !! ?? - anything that will help the reader recreate what the writer intended.
- Avoid parentheses (brackets) - you can't read a bracket.
- Avoid inverted commas in situations where you would be making an inverted comma gesture with your hands - you can't read them.
- Use commas if you can't live without them but its better to find a more conspicuous way to indicate a pause. Consider using dots rather than commas - For example:

The Premier..... back in Adelaide after 3 days in China.....called on all South Australians to tighten their belts.

PAPER

- Use a grade of paper which is stiff enough to be held up at a microphone without rustling or flapping about on a stand.
- Make sure that a talk break fits on ONE piece of paper so that you are not turning the page to finish reading the script - rustling paper sounds dreadful on air
- Type on one side of the paper to make sure you don't lose your place
- NUMBER your scripts, and mark the numbers on your running sheet.

MAKING PROMOS

Think about making promos for every production you do or every show that you broadcast. Why spend hours producing something that no-one knows will be broadcast. You owe it to yourself, the station and the listener to publicise your production. Book yourself enough studio time to do the production and make a promo - no matter how simple it is.

The purpose of a promo is to sell something. In community radio this often means selling the station to subscribers or promoting a particular program. The promo is not there simply to amuse or entertain people although these are certainly factors; it is there to draw people to the service you are offering. The producer must use a good deal of skill in motivating the target audience to a specific action. The promo should be informative and interesting to listen to from start to finish and the station policy is that all computer spots must be less than 30 seconds. So make sure every second counts.

The elements you must consider when making a promo are:

- The target audience - WHO is this message for?
- The product or service - WHAT is being promoted?
- The writing - what content and style will be appropriate?
- The voice or voices - what will best reinforce the style?
- The background - do you need music or sound effects?
- The rules and regulations governing announcements - producers must be familiar with station policy or code of practice governing making promos, especially sponsorship announcements.

The effective promo will
•
catch the listeners' interest
•
inform them of something
•
involve them
•
direct them to a particular course of action

IDENTIFYING YOUR MESSAGE

In a 30 second promo, it's not possible to say everything about anything. (Identify one, or perhaps two, key features about the program or service which mark it out as especially attractive. There are other possibilities but a single memorable point about something is far more effective than lengthy descriptions.

It is important to consider the overall style or image to be projected. Is the impression required to be friendly, warm and domestic or is it unusual, lively and adventurous? This should be communicated in the writing, but also via the voicing and the music. Each element should be consistent in creating a mood.

WRITING PROMO COPY

Writing copy is where the real art of making promos lies and it's worth remembering:

- Radio is a visual medium - people conjure up pictures in their minds based on the information they hear
- First impressions count - items presented at the beginning of a promo have greater influence than those coming later. The opening sentence should immediately identify the setting - the location, the persona and the key selling point
- The final statements also have an impact, probably because they are more easily recalled.
- Well chosen, appropriate words are more effective than sloppy clichés
- Express it simply enough so that someone who does not have a paper and pen ready can remember it
- You only have a few seconds to get the message across - it must be clear. Make it simple...
- A ten second promo with variations run frequently might be far more effective than an elaborate 60 second one.

No matter how clever or complicated a promo is, it is useless if it doesn't inspire the listener to some sort of action.

Look at the following examples promoting products.

This is not clear:

“Ever wanted to learn sign language? Well the South Australian Deaf Society is holding classes for those who want to learn sign language. They're at 262 South Terrace and for two hours per week for 5 weeks. The cost is \$50 for unemployed only \$40. For more information phone 22 33 335.”

It is too long and confusing, with unnecessary detail. Firstly, the opening line is clumsy. You will find it is difficult to say with any conviction. You should automatically assume the listener IS interested right from the start. Then you must keep the rest of the message interesting and clear to hold the listener's attention. It is also misleading...

This is better:

“Learn sign language!..... The South Australian Deaf Society is holding evening classes at their headquarters on South Terrace in the city..... they run for 5 weeks and cost ONLY \$50.....or \$40 concession ... for further details phone 822 33 335.”

The American copywriter Robert Pritkin has pointed out the value of specifically writing for the eye as an aid to product recall. He wrote a now famous illustration of radio's ability to help the listener to visualise even something as intangible to the ear as a colour.¹

The Fuller Paint Company invites you to stare with your ears at ... yellow. Yellow is more than a colour. Yellow is a way of life. Ask any taxi driver about yellow. Or a banana salesman. Or a coward. They'll tell you about yellow.

(FX - phone rings)

Oh, excuse me. Yello!! Yes, I'll take your order. Dandelions, a dozen; a pound of melted butter; lemon drops and a drop of lemon, and one canary that sings a yellow song. Anything else? Yello? Yello? Oh, disconnected. Well, she'll call back.

If you want yellow that's yellow-yellow, remember to remember the Fuller Paint Company, a century of leadership in the chemistry of colour. For the Fuller colour centre nearest you, check your phone directory. The yellow pages, of course.”

The listener is required to call up visual images - the key point here being not the paint's durability or feature but its colour.

¹ McLeish, Robert: The technique of radio production Focal Press, London, 1988

Creating something visual to produce a memorable image leading to recall demands great imagination - especially when your subject is a little mundane. For example:

(Music under - orchestral strings, urgent 'thriller' theme)

..it was about two in the morning and I was waiting for the lights when a foreign looking woman jumped into the car. "Drive", she said. My foot hit the floor. Five seconds later all hell let loose, soldiers were everywhere, tracker dogs, helicopters and armoured cars. I saw a rifle pointed at the windscreen. She grabbed me and literally threw me under the dashboard. There was a sharp crack and the windscreen gave in. Moments later, I was alone in the darkness - she'd gone, so had everyone else. On the seat I saw a card. It read simply, 'silver shield', they were with me in minutes.

Voice 2: "For the silver shield 24 hour windscreen service just dial one hundred and ask for Freephone Silver Shield - because you never know when you might need us."

(Music: up to finish)²

In a few seconds of airtime the script must gain the listener's interest, make the key point about whatever you're trying to promote (in the above case, immediacy) and say clearly what action the listener must take to obtain it.

Here the voices imitate two well-known cricket commentators.

FX: Cricket atmosphere (held under throughout)

Voice 1: Yes, hello everyone and welcome to Radio Adelaide sponsorship's 3rd test. It's a marvellous day here and interestingly enough, it's 89-99 for 5 broadcasts - Quite an incredible offer - how did we arrive at that John?

Voice 2: Well, it's 89-99 for 5 broadcasts once a night for a week. And that's the best sponsorship offer in community radio in Australia since 1893.

Voice 1: Quite amazing, and all we have to do is call Radio Adelaide during playing hours on 8303 5000.

(FX - light applause)

And here comes a sponsor now - running in with a cheque for 89-99

(Fx: bat on ball, applause)

and it's on the air in a flash - very good effort that I thought.

And so with the offer still at 89-99 for 5 it's back to the studio."³

STORING PROMOS FOR SCHEDULING ON AIR

Once a promo has been produced it should be stored in the folder called Promos – IDs – Themes within Transfer folder on the desktop. Then leave a note for the Broadcast Co-ordinator, on the clip on the wall outside his office door. It will be scheduled for airplay in other shows

² ibid

³ ibid - adapted

COMEDY

There is a perfectly logical connection between liking a promo because it makes us laugh, and liking whatever it promotes.



But the danger is two-fold - that if the joke is too good it may obscure or send-up the product, and that if it is not good enough it will not stand up to one hearing, let alone the repetition that radio gives. The answer lies in genuinely comic writing that doesn't rely on a single punch line, and in characterisation that can be over-played while still remaining credible. The good radio promo has much in common with the good cartoon drawing. Even so, exposure of such wit should be carefully regulated. It may be best to create a series of vignettes in a given style, and intermix them across the broadcast times to give maximum variety.

MUSIC AND EFFECTS

The main role of music is to assist in establishing mood. You may have unlimited effects at your disposal but beware of gimmicks. If you're tempted to use technical tricks to make the promo 'more interesting', check the writing again - are the words really doing their job?

One trap is to use a music track simply because of its title. The label may say '*Sunrise over the water*' but does it really sound like an early morning promise of a new day? Music in the context of the radio promo must do exactly what you want it to immediately. If in doubt, play your choice to someone else and ask them what it reminds them of? On your own you can convince yourself of all sorts of things.

The right music will almost certainly not be the right length. If you want the music to finish at the end, rather than to be faded, some judicious editing and careful planning will be needed.

Music should normally be instrumental as lyrics will distract the listener from your message. Music with lyrics will have been chosen specifically for the message it portrays and will be a feature of the promo. And music will be featured if you are producing a promotion for that music. Otherwise, the music bed should always be background music and not prominently feature in the promo. This does not mean the music itself is not important - your choice of music will make or break the effectiveness of the final product.

Sound effects, like music have to make their point immediately and unambiguously. They are best used sparingly, unless the impression required is specifically one of chaos or 'busyness'. The right atmosphere effect to set the scene, manipulated and added to at appropriate points in the script - works well. Don't be misled by the title of an effects track or what it actually is. It is only what it sounds like that matters.



your choice of music will make or break the effectiveness of the final product

APPROACH

Once you are fully satisfied with the script, the next step is to decide on your approach. You will need to look at the script and think in stages:

- the style of the script/wording
- the pace - it may be fast or slow and depends on the type of message
- background music or effects required or needed to enhance the promo must be appropriate to the actual style of the script and you will need to consider how you will marry the effects and the delivery of the script. Background effects may or may not be necessary. Simple emphasis on key words might be enough.

VOICE

The presentation of the voice is the most important thing next to the script. Voice techniques are explained in more detail in Chapter 4 - Presentation.

Obviously you shouldn't just read the copy; it will sound 'read'. Vocal inflection, emphasis, pace and projection are infinitely variable. Even though you may have started with a clear idea of how a piece should sound, you may want to try it a number of ways.

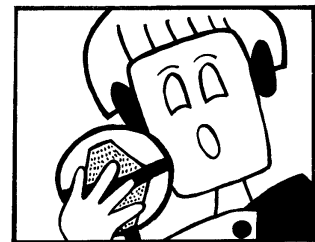
It's generally worth asking your speaker what sounds right or comfortable to him or her.

Should it be homely and relaxed or more excited? What emotional content is appropriate?

Emphasise key words and the inflection of the voice should rest in the right place in a sentence.

You only have a short time to sell your message - it's vital to consider each second.

Read through the copy a number of times until you get the 'feel' of it. By reading through, you will soon know whether or not the message needs a 'hard' or 'soft' sell. For example:



Hear EVERYTHING you need to know about literature, be it fact or fiction... tune in for Writers' Radio on Saturday at noon ... on Radio Adelaide on 101.5 as arty as you are.

The soft sell approach is probably the most appropriate for this one and the voice would be best in 'low key' mode. This doesn't mean dry and dull - it means a little more relaxed and mellow. You will still need to emphasise the key words and give the message shape. This is an example of a message suitable for the hard sell approach.

Every Monday night, State of Play hits the Adelaide excitement circuit all the latest on the visual and performing arts. ... from the State of Play team Monday nights at 6 on Radio Adelaide.... as arty as you are.

This type of message gives you more scope for building the voice to a high key level. The words attract excitement and the voice should reflect the natural feeling of the message.

THE PRODUCTION

There are many ways to go about putting all your sources together and experimentation is probably the best way to discover what works for you. The sky's the limit with this sort of production - you need to assess how much time it is appropriate to spend. If the promo is for a one off program to be broadcast in a few days time, there is little point spending hours on a promo that may be heard four or five times.

On the other hand, a general station promo, for example, will normally stay in the system for a month and is worth extra effort.

When producing the simple promo - voice and music bed - some producers prefer to record the voice separately and mix the music in later; others will prefer to mix them simultaneously.

Recording the voice separately means that you get it right before you start the job of mixing. On the other hand, some people will prefer to be able to hear the music to help them get the appropriate tone in the voice. It will be clear at this stage if you have chosen the best music for the effect you want to achieve. There are no hard and fast rules; you need to experiment.

Whatever you do there are a few useful hints for a simple voice/music bed promo:

- Open with a couple of bars of music - you should have planned exactly which point in the music is the most suitable spot.
- Bring the music level down at precisely the same point as you bring in the voice. This means there will be a transfer, but not a loss, in the concentration of the listener. If you drop the music level before the voice begins, the listener will be conscious of a change in the music and won't be concentrating on the first few words of the message.
- You will need to experiment to check the best level ratio of voice to music.
- If you wish to fade the music up at the end, it is best to fade the music up gradually under the voice a few seconds before the end so that it reaches the highest level just as the voice finishes. An abrupt fade up after the voice finishes sounds a bit rough.
- If you must fade the music out at the end, choose an appropriate point in the music to do so. (Avoid fading if possible.) If you are unsure, ask someone with some musical knowledge.

Making promos is one of the most challenging and rewarding parts of broadcasting - but it needn't be difficult - give it a go!

THE RUNNING SHEET

A running sheet is absolutely essential for a program that goes live to air. It is good practice - and standard broadcasting practice - to use a running sheet regardless of the type of program you are presenting. The running sheet is invaluable as you prepare your running order and also as you work through your program on air.

There is a standard running sheet that all programmers must use. The Running Sheet is needed for information on all music played on-air. During APRA weeks, a more detailed sheet is provided for you to fill in.

- A running sheet helps you plan your program so that you are well prepared before you go to air and keep precisely to time once you are in the studio.
- A running sheet should be laid out so that anyone could panel operate the program in an emergency.
- A running sheet is vital for someone panelling a program prepared by someone else. Never present your panellist with scraps of paper and scribbled notes. It is Radio Adelaide policy that if you do any interviews, your Running Sheet must serve as a record of **who** you have interviewed and the **topic**. Just listing the topic is not enough. Put a copy of your running sheet in the IN TRAY in Studio Two.

This gives the station an accurate picture of who has been interviewed on the station to assess how successful each program is in interviewing local and national people about issues of importance to the community of Adelaide. It also gives the station a record of interviews with people from the University of Adelaide which provides the bulk of our funding.

THE ELEMENTS OF A RUNNING SHEET

- The time the item should go to air - round time up to the next 5 or 10 seconds or work to the nearest minute of your show is not too tight
- The source - e.g. record, computer, another studio, telephone and so on
- A brief description of the item - for interviews, include the name of the interviewee, the topic and the telephone number if required.
- The name and track number of music tracks
- The duration of the item

Radio Adelaide Running Sheet				
Program: The Perfect Running Sheet Show			Date:/...../.....	
Presenter: Goody			Time: 3:00- 3:30 pm	
Panel Op: Two Shoes				
Clock Time	Source	Side/Track	Item	Duration
3:00	Comp		Theme (fade under voice at 30 secs)	30
3:00	Mic		Intro show, preview the interview Intro first track (See script 1)	2'00"
3:02	CD	4	Baby TUBBY JUSTICE	3'18"
3:06	MIC		Announcer chat Intro Interview (see Cue Sheet)	1'
3:07	Comp		Interview with Robert Crompton re play "On the Lake" OntheLake	4'10"
3:11	MIC		B/A Interview (see Cue Sheet)	30 "
3:12	CD	1	Sleeping Satellite TASMIN ARCHER	3'40"
3:16	Mic		B/A music / Community Announcement (Script 2) / intro next track	2'
3:18	Comp		2 spots from screen schedule	1'
3:19	CD	4	Dizz Knee Land DADA	3:06
3:22	MIC		B/A Track Intro live Interview (see script 3)	1:00
3:23	TEL		Interview with Umberto Ecco "Why Americans had to invent Disneyland" (03) 271 3222	4:00
3:27	MIC		B/A Interview / Preview next show / Outro Show (Script 4)	1:00
3:27	CD	3	Kylie Minogue LUCKY	3.10

Instructions for panel operator

Round up to the nearest 10 secs or work to the nearest minute if the show isn't too tight

Avoid confusion by using a different case for title and artist .

Include
1. FILENAME
2. Topic

Back announce every track

Allow average time of 30 secs each, scheduled AFTER back announcement and before music

Include phone number for telephone Interviews

3 min to spare for changeover. Start at 3:27 even if still talking, to end on time at 3:30

RADIO ADELAIDE NEWS GUIDELINES

As a community broadcaster, Radio Adelaide provides a regular news service which is written and presented by volunteers.

These guidelines are a complete and quick reference guide for volunteers joining the news team.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

The news team is guided by the MEAA Code of Ethics and regulated by CBAA Codes of Practice. It should also keep the following guidelines in mind.

1. The primary commitment of the service is to provide a comprehensive coverage of the day's news which is relevant to the people of Adelaide.
2. The secondary commitment is to provide coverage of marginalised issues: e.g. disadvantaged groups.
3. There should be an emphasis on local State stories or national stories that have a South Australian perspective.
4. No overseas stories - these are covered by the BBC - unless they are of particular significance to South Australia.
5. There should be less of an emphasis on violence than there is in other news services.
6. Radio Adelaide interviews should be used as a resource as much as possible.

WRITING GOOD COPY

There are ten things to remember about writing good copy.

- **Clarity**
 - **Simplicity**
 - **Grammar**
 - **Time phrases**
 - **Brevity**
 - **Facts**
 - **Background**
 - **Pictures**
 - **Numbers**
 - **News values**

CLARITY

- There must be NO opportunity for the listener to misunderstand your story. If there are two possible interpretations of what you've written, change your copy.
- Use words and phrases that are in common use in speech. Use abbreviations like *isn't*, *won't*, *she'll...* and dump the word *that* whenever possible:

Mike Rann says he will look at the issue.

- Use alternate names and titles to stop your copy sounding repetitive:

Premier Mike Rann says he's fed up with the Federal nuclear waste dumping policy.

Mr Rann says South Australia's electorate has been ignored in the Federal government decision

- Don't use longwinded titles. Instead of

The South Australian Minister for the Arts and Cultural Heritage Mr Mike Rann

try

State Arts Minister MIKE RANN.

Most organisational titles can be dispensed with. Instead of

*The CEO for the Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Mr DAVE CLARK*

try

The Environment Department's DAVE CLARK."

- Write people's names and anything else you want the newsreader to emphasise in upper case.
- Write hard to pronounce names phonetically: President **GOOZ- MOW**
- The paragraph before an audio grab (the THROW) should make it clear who's speaking and about what. Don't include the question by the interviewer in the grab:

Radio Adelaide's EWART SHAW asked PAVAROTTI what he eats for breakfast

If it's a grab from Breakfast then use the program name in the throw

KEVIN RUDD told Radio Adelaide Breakfast that he was outraged at the idea of detaining children of asylum seekers

Don't make the sentence reliant on the 'grab' - make it self-contained in case the grab doesn't play or you're short of time.

SIMPLICITY

- The first paragraph must be very simple and grab the listener's attention.
- Introduce no more than one or two characters or organisations.
- Limit yourself to one idea per sentence.
- Any sentence more than two lines long on the screen should be split into two separate sentences.
- Don't use dependent clauses, eg The players ran out onto the oval, covered in litter.

GRAMMAR

- Use the language of everyday speech, but don't let your grammar suffer.

TIME PHRASES

- Broadcast news happens NOW, not yesterday.
- Write in the present tense.
- Only include a time phrase if the story is meaningless without it.

BREVITY

- Cut out unnecessary words and phrases.
- For example: *...has announced at a news conference earlier today that...* can be shortened to *says*.
- Four sentences (paragraphs) are plenty for the vast majority of stories.
- Use the **active** rather than the **passive** voice. e.g. An egg hit the Prime Minister's head rather than The head of the Prime Minister was hit by an egg.

FACTS

- Write the facts, the plain facts and nothing but the facts.
- Keep your own adjectives out of the story.

BACKGROUND

- Every story must have at least one sentence of background. (Especially when you're writing from a press release.)
- The best place for background is usually in the second paragraph.
- Don't assume the listener knows the background of any story.
- There must be at least one sentence of fact rather than opinion.

PICTURES

- Radio works really well when it paints a picture for the listener. Try and get something solid rather than something abstract into the story.

NUMBERS

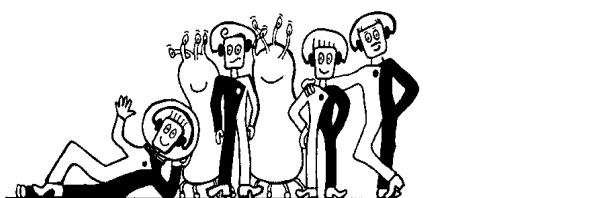
- A story that's just a string of statistics is deadly... think about the effect the figures will have on your listener... what will they mean for them... and how confusing it is.
- Round numbers up or down and use them sparingly.
- Write numbers above ten as words e.g. 3-hundred-and-eighty

NEWS VALUES

- Stories should be run in your bulletin in a descending order of importance.
- Make sure you have chosen exciting, meaningful and topical stories... otherwise listeners will change stations. Don't repeat a story more than once. Rewrite and update as much as possible.
- Always watch the TV News the night before your shift. That way you can identify the breaking stories in the morning and ignore the re-runs in the 'Tiser, and on ABC and commercial radio.

NEWS TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- **New recruits**
 - **What you need to know**
 - **Other duties**
 - **Newsreaders' intros and outros**
 - **Story resources**
 - **Recording grabs**
 - **Voice reports**
 - **Phone interviews**



NEW RECRUITS

These are some ways to familiarize yourself with the work of the news team, and jobs you can take on during that time

1. Phoning the weather bureau for the temperature before each bulletin
2. Putting newspapers on the filing table in the newsroom at the end of the shift.
3. Collecting & stapling the morning's news copy and leaving in the News Inray.
4. Observing the news team. Take home a copy of the day's news to practise reading.
5. Listen to Breakfast to identify stories and grabs that are newsworthy.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Every member of the team needs to know how to –

1. Record a news bulletin onto cassette. Monitor ABC - at anytime for news updates.
2. Record the BBC news and Breakfast interviews onto computer.
3. Cue and play the BBC news.
4. Play computer to air.
5. Open and use a mic.
6. Read clearly and monitor mic levels.
7. Monitor Breakfast in Studio 1 through **cue** on HL 1 before a news cross.
8. Use the news copy templates on the computer
9. Read the newspaper headlines with the Breakfast presenter at 6.45am.
10. Read the news headlines in Studio 2 at 7.35 and 8.35am.

Once you're comfortable with these, try:

11. Conducting and recording phone interviews
12. Recording a grab
13. Recording voice reports
14. Using a portable recorder to record vox pops, etc.

OTHER DUTIES

As a member of the news team you will quickly discover there's more to the job than writing and reading news. Recording the BBC news, welcoming guests to Breakfast, and filing the newspapers at the end of your shift, are some of your other duties.

One way to get everything done is to divide the tasks up amongst the team when you arrive in the morning. You may want to have a more experienced team member working on 'grabs'. Change the tasks around, give everyone a go at mastering the skills needed to put a good news bulletin together - and above all, make sure everything gets done.

USING THE COMMANDER PHONE SYSTEM

- **Answering** - Pick up the handset and press the line that is flashing. Always answer 'Hello. Radio Adelaide'.
- **Putting someone on hold** - Press the hold button and put the receiver down. The line used by the person on hold will now flash slowly. To get someone off hold simply pick up the receiver and press their line.
- **Intercom** - pick up the handset, press intercom button (ICM), press the number of the area you want to reach, and speak!
- **Making a call** Select a line from 5 to 11 and dial 0 to get out.

FILING THE NEWSPAPERS

At the end of each shift file The Advertiser and The Australian, including sport, in the newspaper filing area. This is an important duty that's easily forgotten - make sure someone is responsible for it.

FILING YOUR NEWS COPY

Staple and file copy, in the daily news copy in-tray in the Breakfast production area.

BBC NEWS

- At 6.30 and 8:30 am the BBC News is recorded by the Breakfast producer.
- Start recording one minute *before* it starts rather than one minute after.
- You should stop the recording at the exact five minute mark when the announcer says 'this news comes to you from the world service of the BBC.'

NEWSREADER'S INTROS AND OUTROS

Do not alter these under any circumstances.

7/8/9.00 AM

Intro: After the BBC News play the Local and National News theme and say...

This is Radio Adelaide Local News. It's...(time call) Good morning. I'm.....

Outro: After the last story

*it's(time call) The weather outlook for Adelaide today is.....
Currently on North Terrace it's...That's Radio Adelaide news. There'll be more news at*

STORY RESOURCES

BREAKFAST

Breakfast will have topical guests you can record and take 'grabs' from for the news service. Ask the presenter or producer what they think the news angle is. They've done the research and the interview. They should know. Make use of the presenters scripts, newspaper articles, press releases, other news services when writing your copy.

FAXES

Every morning the station receives a number of faxes and it's up to you to decide which ones are newsworthy. Politicians are often more than willing to talk on the release of a scheme or project promoted in a release. Ring them and get a grab, but try to contact their opposite number - particularly if the item is controversial - and check with Breakfast to see if they want to interview them.

NEWSPAPERS

When you start out as a new recruit a lot of your news copy will come from re-working newspaper stories. Don't run stories that were in the TV news last night unless the paper has a new development. Search for a new angle. Think of who you could ring for a reaction. Often there is another angle towards the end of a newspaper story.

OTHER RADIO NEWS SERVICES (ABC, BBC)

Use these to keep abreast of breaking stories. Remember that all of the stories in the newspaper were written yesterday, usually by 6 00 PM that night.

THE PRODUCERS' CONTACTS DATABASE AND CONTACT BOOK

Please also make use of the **producers' contacts** database on the computer.. Double click on the file to open it. For a search click on **select** and drag down to **find**. You can then use either a person's name, position, organisation or subject area to find their home phone number.

VOICE REPORTS

- Write an intro for the story - make it interesting.
- Then introduce the person doing the 'voicer':
Joe Bloggs reports the Premier won't admit he's wrong.
- Write your report and then record it.
- If you make a voicer, make sure you don't read other stories in the same bulletin.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

- Quick interview (2 minutes max)
- One or two very good questions
- Listen out for suitable grabs as you go
- Don't ring before 7 am unless a press release suggests otherwise

USING THE COMPUTER



LOGGING IN TO THE COMPUTER

You need to log-on as News01 to access news resources

USER NAME: News01
PASSWORD: (get the password from Station Manager or Current Affairs Co-ordinator)

It is a secure password, so don't tell anyone outside the news team



WRITING NEWS SCRIPTS

Use the News Template

- Find the icon on the desktop called Our Program Files (v-drive)
- Double click and open it
- Open the icon called News Template

You can print the script directly by selecting print

If you want to SAVE a copy of your script, Save As... and make sure you save in the News Scripts folder. Files saved anywhere else will be deleted.



ACCESSING THE AAP NEWS FEED

On the desktop Double Click on AAP Icon, or search for <http://www.newsplus.aap.com.au/>

You need to go through two portals with user names and passwords. One connects you to the internet (and so you use the username and password you have been given, usually the news01username). The second one gives you access to AAP.

First portal = internet access check that it's asking you for the proxy username

USERNAME: News01
PASSWORD: (same as the one used to log into the computer)

Second Portal = AAP access check that it's asking for the AAP password

USERNAME and PASSWORD are available from relevant station newsroom staff

CONCLUSION

If you

- ❖ read everything aloud as you wrote
- ❖ planned well ahead and researched your topic adequately
- ❖ visualised the listener as you wrote
- ❖ caught the listener's attention in the first seconds
- ❖ knew exactly which points you wished to make and made them
- ❖ wrote an ending that will be remembered
- ❖ took the listener's concentration span into account
- ❖ timed each segment accurately
- ❖ wrote in an easy to understand conversational style
- ❖ thought carefully about every word and avoided ambiguities
- ❖ used only the necessary number of words
- ❖ translated foreign languages
- ❖ gave as much thought to the links as to the bulk of the program
- ❖ used as much variety as possible
- ❖ marked the script with indications for how the script should be read
- ❖ typed the script in an easy-to-read manner
- ❖ used music as an integral part of the program - not just as a filler
- ❖ chose effects carefully
- ❖ pieced together the whole into a logical sequence
- ❖ used every second to it's best advantage.....

... you will have given everyone a chance - the presenters, the producers, the guests and, most importantly, your audience.

You will have communicated!

