

# WRITING FOR RADIO

**Time:** 45-75 minutes

**Workshop purpose:** In this workshop, youth learn about the differences between writing for radio broadcast and for print. They also learn what a “lede” is, and practice writing a lede for well-known fairy tales.

**Materials:**

- Computer and speakers
- 1-3 balloons or hacky sacks
- Story transcripts and story summaries for each student (see below for links)
- White board or chart paper and markers
- Pen and paper for students

<b>PREP:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gather materials</li> <li>● Load this link to listen to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ KUOW’s Phyllis Fletcher’s story: <a href="https://soundcloud.com/kuow/radioactive-writing-for-radio-example">https://soundcloud.com/kuow/radioactive-writing-for-radio-example</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Print these handouts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Story transcripts for writing analysis <a href="http://tinyurl.com/RAwritingWS1">http://tinyurl.com/RAwritingWS1</a></li> <li>○ Story summaries for writing practice <a href="http://tinyurl.com/RAledepractice">http://tinyurl.com/RAledepractice</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Optional – load one or both of these RadioActive stories to listen to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="http://kuow.org/post/water-sound-freedom-my-ba">http://kuow.org/post/water-sound-freedom-my-ba</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://kuow.org/post/how-my-basement-led-me-jazz-scene-jackson-street-0">http://kuow.org/post/how-my-basement-led-me-jazz-scene-jackson-street-0</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>OPENING 5 MIN</b>	
5 min	<p><b>INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Today you’re going to learn about writing for radio broadcast, and how it’s different than writing for print media, or writing essays for school. We’ll talk about what is different about the writing style used in radio, and then you’ll practice by writing a radio lede.”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “This workshop comes from RadioActive Youth Media, the teen journalism program at KUOW Public Radio in Seattle.”           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “At RadioActive, teens get paid to make their own radio stories about the topics that matter to them. We’ll listen to a RadioActive story today, and you can learn more about getting involved with them at <a href="http://kuow.org/radioactive">kuow.org/radioactive</a>.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● “Any questions before we dive in?”</li> </ul>
<b>LISTENING TO EXAMPLES 20 MIN</b>	
10 min	<p><b>LISTENING TO PRINT VS. RADIO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the group stand in a large circle.</li> <li>● Ask for two volunteers – each volunteer is going to read a story out-loud to the group – one is a print story, and the other is a radio story. As each person reads, you can’t take notes – you just have to listen and then we’ll discuss what you remember about each story.</li> <li>● BUT there’s an added twist – while you’re listening, you will be standing and bouncing two balloons around the room, trying to keep them from hitting the ground. Anyone know why? (Because when people listen to radio, they are often doing something else – the writing must be easy to understand even when you are distracted.)</li> <li>● Start tossing the balloons. Read the newspaper article out loud.</li> <li>● Ask students to stop tossing the balloons. Ask: What with this story about? What do people remember? Who were the major characters? What did they do? (call out specific facts, numbers, names)</li> <li>● Start tossing the balloon again. Read the radio story article out loud.</li> <li>● Ask students to stop tossing the balloons. Ask: What do people remember? Who were the major characters? What did they do? (call out specific facts, numbers, names)</li> </ul>
10 min	<p><b>WRITING FOR THE EAR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Now, give them a printed copy of each story</li> <li>● Ask them to read the print story silently to themselves.</li> <li>● Now play the radio story as they read along with it.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the major differences between writing for radio and writing for print?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As they say them, write their answers on the board. Add any of our own that they didn't cover.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Be sure to emphasize at the end that writing for radio is <i>clear, concise, and conversational</i>. [If time: how is this different from writing for school?]</li> </ul>
<b>WRITING PRACTICE 15-20 MIN</b>	
5 min	<p><b>WHAT IS A LEDE?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take a minute to read the first few lines of the radio story OR ask someone to read it out loud. This is the lede. What role does it play? What information does it provide? [CHART THIS]           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The lede is the beginning of the story, not the trailer</li> <li>○ A good lede will whet the listener's appetite for, and make them care about, the piece that follows: a question is set up and the listener wants to know how it will be resolved</li> <li>○ To summarize, a lede in 3 sentences looks like: hook/context/background, focus/summary, who is reporting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10 min	<p><b>WRITING A LEDE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Now you're going to get a chance to practice writing for radio by writing your own ledes to fairy tales.</li> <li>● Hand out the fairy tale summaries – one page per person           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the story. Who are the main characters? What is the important background info? What is the main action?</li> <li>○ Now, each person will write a 3-4 sentence lede for their story. Tell them how much time they will have.</li> <li>○ Write in the present tense – pretend this story is a current news event that you are covering.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Remember to keep it clear, concise and conversational – follow the tips we came up with together.</li> <li>● [IF PEOPLE FINISH EARLY] Find someone else who is done and share the lede you've each written. Ask each other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Is it conversational? Does it sound like how you'd actually talk, rather than an academic paper?</li> <li>o Is it concise? Is there just one idea per sentence? Are the words "dime" words and not "dollar" words?</li> <li>o Is it clear? Does everything make sense the first time you read it? How could it be more clear, concise or conversational? Rewrite as you go.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5 min [if time]	<p><b>SHARING LEDES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask for some volunteers to share out their lede – applaud each one</li> <li>● Ask for feedback / offer specific affirmation or advice</li> </ul>
<b>CLOSING 5 MIN</b>	
5 min	<p><b>REFLECTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What was surprising about writing for radio?</li> <li>● What was challenging?</li> <li>● What other questions do you have about writing for broadcast?</li> </ul>
<b>LISTEN TO A RADIOACTIVE STORY (OPTIONAL) 10 MIN</b>	
10 min (if time)	<p><b>LISTENING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Listen to a story from KUOW's RadioActive Youth Media workshop. This story was produced by a young person age 16-18. They did all of the interviewing, recording, writing and audio editing themselves! (with the support of adult mentors). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What parts of the story caught your attention and made you want to keep listening?</li> <li>o What did you notice about the writing?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	o What questions do you have about how this story was made?
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