

## SOUNDBITES ACTIVITY #11

# AUDIO RECORDING SHORT LISTS

### SET-UP:

**GUIDING QUESTION:** Can you make a compelling audio story out of nothing but a list?

### TOOLS:

- Internet connection
- Smartphone or computer and speaker (for playing audio/video)
- Smartphone or other digital audio recording device (for audio recording)

### INTRODUCTION

“Listicles” are all the rage over at BuzzFeed and other print outlets. Can you make a compelling audio story out of nothing but a list? In this activity, you’ll listen to examples of Short List stories, and then record your own.

This activity was adapted from [Third Grade Audio’s Short List Collection](#), Transom and WCIA’s [Short List Project](#), and [Audio Playground Assignment #8](#) by Sarah Geis.

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## WHAT'S A SHORT LIST?

A [Short List](#) is a list you create from your experience or research or daily life. You read it out loud for about 60 seconds and then tell us at the end what the list WAS. It's a story, with the title at the end. It might be funny, poetic, political... you decide.

## SHORT LIST EXAMPLES

Here are a few examples of audio Short Lists. Some are made by radio professionals, and some are made by third graders. In some, the topic of the list is a mystery until the very end. In others, you know what the list is about from the start. They're all short and sweet.

> [LISTEN: Third Grade Audio Short List #6](#) (45 sec)

Our first Short List comes from the third graders at [Third Grade Audio](#). Can you figure out what breaking a leg, chicken pox and smoking have in common before you are told at the end?

> [LISTEN: The Short List Project Short Lists Collection](#) (1 min each)

Next, choose a few examples from this collection of 13 one-minute Short Lists from The Short List project from [Transom](#) and WCAI. In each of these short lists, the title is a mystery until the very end. See if you can guess what each short list is about before you're told.

> [LISTEN: First Love and 27 Other Firsts](#) (1 min, 30 sec)

Our next Short List example comes from producer Whitney Jones. This is the story of Whitney's first love and the many other firsts that came along with it. In this example, we know what the list is about from the beginning. **Content note:** This story acknowledges the existence of sex, but contains no indecent or obscene language.

> [LISTEN: Questions for Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) (2 min, 20 sec)

Our final Short List is another one from [Third Grade Audio](#), and it's one of our favorite audio stories of all time. If given the chance to interview Dr. King, this is what a group of third graders would have asked him. This is another example of a short list where we know what the list is about from the beginning.

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## MAKE YOUR OWN SHORT LIST

Short Lists are a combination of a list poem and a riddle, says [Third Grade Audio](#). Short Lists can be true (These are all things we have lost) or absurd (These are all bad replacements for an umbrella) or whimsical (These are all games that we made up) or whatever you want them to be. No matter the type, listening to these tiny audio pieces — as your brain ponders and then discovers the “mystery” — is always satisfying.

To make your own Short List, simply choose a topic, write a list, reveal the topic of the list at the end, and record yourself reading your list.

**Recording with a smartphone:** *If you're recording with an iPhone, use the Voice Memos app. On Android, there are many free recording apps you can download. Hold the bottom of your phone (that's where the microphone is) a few inches away from your mouth. For more info on smartphone recording, see [SoundBites Activity #2](#). And for audio editing, see [Activity #10](#).*

## SHARE YOUR RECORDING WITH US

We would love to hear your short lists! If you share your audio recording with us, we may feature it on [kuow.org](#). To share your audio recording, email it to us at [radioactive@kuow.org](mailto:radioactive@kuow.org) with the subject line “**SoundBites Activity #11 - Short Lists.**”

## MORE AUDIO SHORT LISTS

*These examples come from the [Audio Playground](#) newsletter by Sarah Geis.*

- [10 Things That Scare Me](#) (3-7 min each)  
In each episode of this podcast, one person lists the 10 things that scare them. If you need help choosing an episode, try [this one](#) by college student Amelia Madarang.
- [All You Need is a \[Separation Barrier\]](#) (3 min)  
An alphabetic listing of the world's prominent separation barriers.
- [What Happened When You Caught a Toadfish?](#) (3 min)  
Liam tells Sam about his adventures on a trip to Bali and Sri Lanka.
- [Highlights of Police Logs from Central Vermont](#) (3 min)  
A list of recent reports made to local police.
- [The Last Morning was a Sweet One](#) (3 min)  
A short story in sounds of our food's start to finish.