**WHAT DO RADIO BROADCASTERS NEED TO KNOW?**

**Radio is relatively easy to produce and distribute (compared to television or even newspapers), but it requires special skills beyond print journalism:**

**How to write in a special way that recognizes the advantages and disadvantages of the medium**

**How to record sound so that words, music and sounds are clear to listeners How to edit sound so that radio stories are clear, concise and easy to understand.**

**How to speak into a microphone so that your words are clear and your voice sounds natural and appealing to listeners.**

**How to do interviews for radio so that you elicit important, interesting or entertaining information.**

**RADIO IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM NEWSPAPERS!**

**Turn on the radio.**

**If a song is playing, you cannot go back to the beginning. If a news report is confusing, you cannot rewind and re-read the story. If you are bored by one part of the broadcast, you cannot skip forward to the next segment or song.**

**In other words, reading a newspaper is like eating a traditional Afghan meal. All the food is laid out for you to try, in any order you choose. The cook presents all the food, you eat what you want.**

**Listening to radio is like eating in a Western restaurant, where each dish is served in order. You eat each course as it is presented. If you do not like a dish, you must**

**wait for the next course to be served.**

**THEREFORE, THERE ARE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS WHEN WRITING FOR RADIO**

**SIMPLICITY – Words and sentences must be clear and simple. If a listener does not understand, he cannot go back to hear it again.**

**BREVITY – In most cases, radio stories are much shorter than their newspaper counterparts. Remember, your audience will have to sit through every word of your story before the next segment begins.**

**RELEVANCE – With your first words, help your listeners understand why this story will be relevant or interesting to them.**

**CLARITY – Ideas must be stated so that they can be immediately understood. Again, listeners cannot re-read the words.**

**STRUCTURE – Radio scripts do not need to include all the important facts in the first paragraph. In fact, radio scripts often begin with the information that is most likely to engage the listener’s interest.**

**STORYTELLING – Good radio journalists tell good stories. They create narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.**

**HOWEVER, THERE ARE ALSO MANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PRINT AND RADIO JOURNALISM.**

**The single most important, common attribute for all journalists is ACCURACY.**

**It is essential that all facts be confirmed before reporting.**

**OBJECTIVITY is another key to successful reporting in all forms of media. For many new journalists, this is the greatest challenge. A reporter needs to learn how to set aside his or her own opinions, beliefs and presuppositions.**

**Every major fact in a story requires ATTRIBUTION, no matter what the news medium. In other words, the listener needs to know where the important information is coming from. It could be a government official, an eyewitness, an independent expert or an interested party. Obviously, they may all have different perspectives on a story. As a reporter, it is essential that you point out to the listener *who* provided the various facts opinions that are used in the story.**

**FAIRNESS AND BALANCE are among the most challenging aspects in any reporting. It means being able to take a step back, separate yourself from your opinions, and be sure that you have reported all aspects of the story fairly.**

**DEADLINES are common to all news media. Reporters must do the best job they can within a specified time.**

**FLUENCY, of course. Good journalists are good writers.**

**WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW. All journalists must be as thorough as the medium allows.**

**RESEARCH skills are also necessary for all journalists. This means the ability to find facts, confirm their accuracy and accurately present those facts in an**

**understandable fashion. Your research tools might include the Internet, interviews (in person and by telephone), and public documents.**

**Obviously, another skill that all journalists need is the ability to accurately and fairly analyze the information that they have discovered or that has been presented to them.**

**Finally, it is essential that all journalists have great respect for their audiences. This means recognizing that, regardless of their education and background, they deserve accurate and useful information.**

**There are many kinds of radio news stories and programs. We will discuss**

### BULLETINS, NEWS FLASH, BREAKING NEWS, READERS, WRAPS and

**PACKAGES. This terminology may vary from station to station, country to country, and even reporter to reporter. However, it is essential that everyone working together has a common vocabulary with which to describe stories.**

**A NEWS FLASH is the very first report of an important news story. For the most important NEWS FLASHES, an announcer may interrupt a program to announce the information. A NEWS FLASH may come from sources like:**

* + - **Your own reporters may call in with a story they have seen or heard about.**
    - **Members of the public may contact you.**
    - **A NEWS SERVICE (for example, AFP or Reuters) may report the information.**
    - **An official announcement may be made.**
    - **Another radio or television station may report the information.**
    - **Be very careful with Internet/social media sources like Twitter or Facebook. Never use such information without confirming through reputable sources (and even then, be careful that your “reputable sources” have not gotten their information from the internet).**

**A NEWS FLASH (like all news stories) should never be broadcast until you have confirmed that all the information is correct. Accuracy is much, much more important than speed. Never broadcast a NEWS FLASH unless you are sure of all the facts. Always report the source of your information. This is the “attribution” that we discussed earlier in the lesson.**

**Example: *“We interrupt this program for a NEWS FLASH. There has been an airplane crash at the ABC airport, according to several witnesses on the scene. It’s not yet known if there have been any fatalities. Airport officials confirm that a plane has crashed, but no other details are available at this time. We will provide more information as it becomes available.”***

**Like every news story, a NEWS FLASH must be judged based on your station, location and audience. For example, a terrorist attack in your city would probably justify a NEWS FLASH. A terrorist attack in the Philippines probably would not.**

**BREAKING NEWS is a story that is still developing. Not all of the facts are yet know, but enough information has been carefully confirmed so that you can report partial information. Be sure to inform your audience that information is still incomplete. Your report MAY include PHONERS with reporters or witnesses on the scene.**

**Here is an example. Do you remember that plane crash we reported earlier in the lesson?**

**Now it is time for the regular news. The program might begin like this:**

***“We have a developing story. As we reported earlier, an airplane has crashed at the ABC airport, according to witnesses. Airport officials say that the plane is burning, but we still don’t know the cause of the crash or whether there have been injuries or fatalities. We have on the phone Mr. (NAME), the manager at ABC airport. Can you tell us what happened?***

**We have just a few additional kinds of radio news segments and programs.**

**A READER is the simplest kind of radio news story. It is a story read by an announcer in the studio. It might be a BREAKING NEWS story or, more often, any other live news report that does not include pre-recorded sound or interview. For example:**

***ANNOUNCER: An airplane crashed earlier today at the ABC airport, killing at least five people. Reports from the scene say that the plane was trying to land in poor weather, and skidded off the runway.***

**A WRAP is a story read by an announcer that also includes some pre-recorded sound or interviews. For example:**

***ANNOUNCER: As we reported earlier, an airplane has crashed at the ABC airport. We spoke to the manager Mr. (NAME) of the airport who explained what happened.***

***ANNOUNCER: Our reporter on the scene tells us that the plane apparently broke apart on landing. We will have more details as they become available.***

**The term PACKAGE refers to a report that is entirely pre-recorded and self- contained. For example, a reporter at the airport might record and combine his own words with SOUNDBITES from eyewitnesses and the airport manager. The reporter or a technician would combine the reporter’s narration with the soundbites to create a self-contained report that can be played back at the radio station.**

**We will devote future lessons to learning how to news packages can be assembled.**