



Powerful PSA's

"This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?"

"A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

"Friends don't let friends drive drunk."

"You can learn a lot from a dummy."

How many of these phrases ring a bell? These widely recognized slogans from national public service announcement campaigns by the Ad Council have become a part of our culture.

While the above examples are all big-budget campaigns, your own public service announcement - even if it is a small, locally produced campaign - can be a great way to get your message out to the public.

What is a PSA?

Public service announcements, or PSAs, are programs that remind people of something that the public needs to know. PSAs can create awareness, show the importance of a problem or issue, convey information, or promote a behavioral change. PSAs are 30-60 seconds long, so careful researching and planning must be done to craft an impactful announcement with a short length.

Step 1: Find Your Purpose

When finding a purpose for your PSA, ask yourself, what do you want the world to know? What topic do you want to bring attention to, or what do you want to change about a topic? Pick a topic that is important to you, or that should be important to your community. You should cover only one subject per PSA. Topics may include health, safety, literacy, or available government or volunteer services.

Step 2: Research

Research the subject you have chosen and make sure you have the latest facts and information. Let's say you want to convince people to get a flu shot. What facts or statistics will show how important it is? Remember to gather the most up-to-date information; you want to be convincing, but also accurate.

Step 3: The Hook

The hook goes at the beginning of your PSA. A hook serves to reel the audience in and get their attention. What is going to get someone interested in what you are telling them? Is humor appropriate? Do you start with a question? Do you open with a startling but true statistic? How will you convince them to listen to what you have to say?

Step 4: The Facts

After the hook, come the facts you collected in Step 2: Research. Be precise and be selective in what you say. Saying too little may leave someone unconvinced. Saying too much may bore them.

Step 5: The Call to Action

What can the listener do now that they are aware of the situation? Should they get a flu shot? Call their congressman? Check the batteries in their smoke detector? This will be an outcome of Step 1: Find Your Purpose.

Step 6: Record and Edit

Make sure you are close enough to your recorder for your voice to sound strong. Your pronunciation should be clear, and you should talk at a steady pace. After recording, edit out any mistakes. Your final recording should be 30-60 seconds. A PSA that isn't within this time frame is a sign that your script should be edited, and then re-recorded. If your PSA is shorter than 30 seconds, add more relevant information to your script. If your PSA is longer than 60 seconds, review your script and cut out any information that isn't needed, or reword sentences to make them shorter. No matter how you edit your script, make sure that the main message and facts are still included, so that the announcement is short, but powerful. You may choose to open and close your PSA with a short snippet of free-to-use instrumental music. Choose this carefully so that it matches the overall tone of the PSA.

PSA ASSIGNMENT

For you PSA, your media outlet will be CRAB Radio, 104.7. CRAB Radio stands for Creative Radio for Arts and the Bay. The listening area includes the cities of Annapolis, Arnold, Crownsville, Edgewater, Severna Park, and much of Pasadena, Maryland. The programming for the station will be focused on arts and environmental issues related to the mighty Chesapeake Bay. While the geographic area residents are important, we believe there will be listeners from far and wide who find the topics we cover of interest to them; those living outside the region will be able to listen via the Internet.

If you have a passion for arts and the bay, you may want to choose a topic in that area, but you are not limited to issues related to arts and the bay. Take some time with your group to go over the list of approved topics. If you would like to do something on another topic, you must share it with your teacher.

POSSIBLE TOPICS:

Environment: Pollution, Acid Rain, Chemical Contamination, Overdevelopment, Climate Change, Invasive Species, Overharvesting, Stormwater Runoff

Arts: Importance of Arts in our Schools

Non-Profits in the Area: Walk the Walk, Building Better People, American Heart Association, Anne Arundel County Food Bank, Kindness Grows Here, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, SPCA, Rise for Autism

AVID, Music in Schools, Art in Schools, Highlight a Club, Going to College

Team Topic Possibility #1:

Team Topic Possibility #2

Team Topic Possibility #3

We will be going to the computer lab to start to research some information for your PSA. Sign into Google Classroom for a list of resources to use, an organizer, and the rubric for the assignment.