Here are a few script-writing tips and examples of real BBC scripts which teachers might find use to models for writing TV and radio news.

The sample scripts are from BBC Radio News.

**SCRIPT-WRITING TIPS**

Decide how long your entire programme should be. A typical radio news bulletin is between two and three minutes long.

Having allocated the total length of your programme, decide on the length of each report. Most people speak at three words a second, so the script for a 30-second report contains about 90 words. This worksheet will help you.

Think about your audience and use appropriate language.

Write as you speak. You don't have to use formal language.

Keep reading your scripts out loud to check how they sound.

Avoid repeating the same word too often.

Write any words which are tricky to pronounce phonetically. Look at the Five Live script below for an example of how to do this.

Liven up your reports with lots of interviews and sound or video clips. Long sections of script, containing only the presenter's words, can become boring.

Remember to tell the audience who said what. In other words, credit your sources.

If you did not manage to record the best quote of the interview, but you did write it down, do not be tempted to read the quote out loud. It's better to paraphrase like Radio 4 have done in this example:

_Tony Blair has said remarkable progress is being made in Afghanistan and that Britain is committed to supporting the country._

Analyse as many programmes as you can. It might help students to answer these questions:

- How long was the programme?
- Were there headlines?
- Did it contain music? Remember, in order to use music in YOUR news you have to compose it yourself or obtain permission for it's use. Breaking copyright law is a form of stealing.
- How many stories did the programme contain?
- How long were each of the reports?
- What was the language like?
- Which sound and video clips were used?
- Did you find it interesting?

**EXAMPLE RADIO SCRIPTS**

Below are three BBC radio scripts, all broadcast on the same day.

It is interesting to compare the different stories and the choice of language adopted by each programme, and to discuss how this relates to audience.
It is also interesting to note that all the scripts are quite short.

THREE Cs
  • Clear
  • Correct
  • Concise

Asking students to read them out loud and time themselves encourages them to be CONCISE when writing their own scripts - one of the three key writing skills involved in journalism.

Key
Each script is written for a presenter to read out. It might help students to think of a news script like the lines of a play with an invisible PRESENTER: at the beginning.

The point at which a sound clip is played, and the presenter stops reading, is marked by Audio insert NAME:

The words at the beginning (IN WORDS) and end of each clip (OUT WORDS) and the length in minutes and seconds (DURATION) of the clip are shown so the presenter knows when to start reading again.

Radio 4

Tony Blair has said remarkable progress is being made in Afghanistan - and Britain is committed to supporting the country. He was talking after meeting the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, in the capital, Kabul. Mr Blair said the people of Afghanistan deserved to live in a proper democratic state.

Audio insert NAME: AFGHAN BLAIR
IN WORDS: Our commitment...
OUT WORDS: ...challenges with you.
DURATION: 0'11"

The Iraqi government has rejected claims from an international human rights group that the trial of Saddam Hussein was unfair. Human Rights Watch said, among other things, key evidence hadn't been disclosed to the defence in advance.

Dozens of Palestinians have converged on a house which they believe is under threat from Israeli warplanes. This is the second time in recent days civilians have been urged to act as human shields at the homes of militants in Gaza. On Saturday, Israel called off a planned air strike.

The American technical stock exchange, Nasdaq, has launched a takeover bid for the London Stock Exchange. Nasdaq is trying to challenge the dominance of its main rival, the New York Stock Exchange.

Health unions have criticised proposals for NHS hospitals to be able to advertise for patients. The Department of Health has warned trusts not to spend too much on marketing their services. Doctor Laurence Buckman, from the British Medical Association, rejected the idea.

Audio insert NAME: NHS BUCKMAN
IN WORDS: Patients want...
OUT WORDS: ...care for patients.
DURATION: 0'09"

Environmental protesters are blockading a big Shell petrol station in Birmingham. They say they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environment - and also the way they believe it treats people in third world countries.
Tony Blair has said remarkable progress is being made in Afghanistan - and Britain is committed to supporting the country. He was talking after meeting the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, in the capital, Kabul. At a news conference, Mr Blair said the people of Afghanistan deserved to live in a proper democratic state. He gave this pledge:

Audio insert NAME: AFGHAN BLAIR
IN WORDS: I want to
OUT WORDS: with you
DURATION: 0'23"

A former Russian security agent remains in a serious condition in hospital in London, where he's being treated, under police guard, for the effects of poisoning. Alexander Litvinenko, an outspoken critic of President Putin, was taken ill after meeting a contact at a sushi bar. The Sunday Times reporter, David Leppard, told Five Live Mr Litvinenko was keen to tell his story even though he was seriously ill.

Audio insert NAME: RUSSIA LEPPARD ACT
IN WORDS: I was told....
OUT WORDS: .....my interview with him.
DURATION: 0'20"

A police officer who was seriously injured when his patrol car overturned in Leeds on Saturday morning has died. The 36 year old officer was responding to a call when the accident happened.

Dozens of Palestinians have converged on a house which they believe is under threat from Israeli warplanes. This is the second time in recent days civilians have been urged to act as human shields at the homes of militants in Gaza. From the town of Beit Lahiya, here's Alan Johnston.

Audio insert NAME: GAZA JOHNSTON
IN WORDS: The owner...
OUT WORDS: ...Saturday night.
DURATION: 0'35"

Rescue teams searching for two ice climbers missing in the Cairngorms overnight say they may have been caught in an avalanche. The pair, both from the Aberdeen area, had been climbing in the Coire an t Sneachda (PRON: CORRY AN SNECHDA) area yesterday. The alarm was raised when they failed to turn up at a meeting point.

Environmental protesters are blockading one of the main Shell petrol stations in Birmingham. They say they're angry that the impact of the oil giant's work on the environment - and also the way it treats people in third world countries.

In the city, the one hundred share index is down 33 at 61-58.

A former Russian secret agent's critically ill after claims he was poisoned

An ex-Russian spy's under police guard in hospital after claims his government's tried to kill him in a London restaurant. It's thought Alexander Litvinenko's was poisoned with a chemical called thalium. He'd met a contact to try and expose who murdered a reporter who'd heavily criticised the Russian President Vladamir Putin. Alexander Goldfarb's his friend.

GOTO AUDIO NAME: r1 mon Russian Spy Goldfarb
OUT WORDS: can hardly talk
DURATION:0'11"
Tony Blair's thanked British troops in Afghanistan for the courage they've shown fighting the Taliban. He spent an hour and a half talking to soldiers at the main British camp in Helmand province.

The government's putting more money into a pupil mentoring scheme in schools to try to stop bullying. It comes as a new report says 20-thousand children are skipping classes every day because of bullying...

GOTO AUDIO NAME: 0800 bullying
OUT WORDS: their responsibility to
DURATION:0'09"

Mountain rescue teams are searching for two ice climbers who've gone missing in the Cairngorns. It's thought they may have been caught in an avalanche. Michael Mulford's from RAF Kinloss...

GOTO AUDIO NAME: 1030 climbers
OUT WORDS: sudden unanticipated avalanches
DURATION:0'07"

Blackburn and Spurs both ended up with ten men in a 1 all draw at Ewood Park. Red cards for Tugay (too-guy) and Hossam Ghaly and Martin Jol got in to an argument with the ref.

And more problems for Hearts in the SPL - after a 1-0 defeat at home to Rangers there was a fans protest calling for captain Steven Press-ly to be recalled and owner Vladimir Romanov to go.

Radio One Newsbeat..more at...11.30...

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