Public Service Announcements

**Day 1: Assign partners and discuss psa’s**

**What is a public service announcement?**

Public service announcements, or PSA's, are short messages produced on film, videotape, DVD, CD, audiotape, or as a computer file and given to radio and television stations. Generally, PSA's are sent as ready-to-air audio or video tapes, although radio stations (especially community or public stations, such as campus radio or National Public Radio affiliates) sometimes prefer a script that their announcers can read live on the air. They can be done very simply with a single actor reading or performing a message, or they can be elaborate, slickly-produced messages with music, dramatic story-lines, and sound or visual effects.

Broadcast media -- radio and television -- are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to serve "in the public interest." Most stations use PSA's as one of the ways they meet this requirement. While they aren't required to donate a fixed percentage of air time per day to PSA's, stations do have to state in their licensing and renewal applications how much air time they plan to devote to PSA's. Most stations donate about a third of their commercial spots to non-commercial causes; in other words, if a station has 18 minutes of commercials in a given hour, six minutes of that will probably be devoted to PSA's.

**Advantages of PSA's**

* PSA's are generally inexpensive. Since the airtime is donated, your only cost is production. If you keep to a tight budget, you can make PSA's very cheaply.
* Most stations will allow you to include a telephone number for more information in your PSA.
* PSA's tend to be really effective at encouraging the audience to do something -- for example, call a phone number for more information or have your pet spayed or neutered.
* PSA's can raise awareness of your issue.

Ideas for psa’s:

Adopt a class

Animal Abuse

Cell Phones and Driving

Dangers on the Internet

Drugs

Water Conservation

Wrestling Dangers

Football Dangers

Gum at School

Smoking

Sportsmanship

Steroids

Stranger Alert

Suicide Prevention

Helmet Safety

Littering

Earth Day

Saving Energy

Bullying

Examples:

[Bullying Prevention](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2lKP4KLNGk)

[**Emergency Preparedness - Kids**](http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Work/Current-Work/Safety/Emergency-Preparedness-Kids)

[**Saving Energy**](http://www.schooltube.com/video/d5db13ef7a55410c83b0/Lights%20Out)

[**Words Hurt**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO59wbAC9h0)

[**Recycling**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHIG5MLEGe0)

[**Read to Succeed**](http://www.franklin.k12.ky.us/PSAVideo22015.aspx)

**Day 2:**

**Getting ready to write your PSA: 28-32 seconds.**

**Consider using the green screen.**

**Choose points to focus on***.* Don't overload the viewer or listener with too many different messages. List all the possible messages you'd like to get into the public mind, and then decide on the one or two most vital points. For example, if your group educates people about asthma, you might narrow it **down to a simple focus point like, "If you have asthma, you shouldn't smoke."**

**Brainstorm.** This is also a good time to look at the PSA's that others have done for ideas. Get together with your colleagues to toss around ideas about ways you can illustrate the main point(s) you've chosen. If possible, include members of your target group in this process. If you're aiming your PSA at African-American youth, for example, be sure to invite some African-American youth to take part in brainstorming.

**Check your facts.** It's extremely important for your PSA to be accurate. Any facts should be checked and verified before sending the PSA in. Is the information up to date? If there are any demonstrations included in the PSA, are they done clearly and correctly?

**Identify a "hook".** A hook is whatever you use to grab the listener or viewer's attention. How are you going to keep them from changing the channel or leaving the room or letting their attention drift when your PSA comes on? A hook can be something funny, it can be catchy music, it can be a shocking statistic, it can be an emotional appeal -- whatever makes the listener or viewer interested enough to watch or listen to the rest of your PSA. For example, if you're aiming for Hispanic listeners, your hook might be to have your PSA use Tejano or salsa background music.

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.

1. "This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?"
2. "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."
3. "Friends don't let friends drive drunk."
4. "You could learn a lot from a dummy."

**Key points to remember about the writing:**

* Because you've only got a few seconds to reach your audience (often 30 seconds or less), the language should be simple and vivid. Take your time and make every word count. Make your message crystal clear.
* The content of the writing should have the right "hooks" -- words or phrases that grab attention -- to attract your audience (again, you need to know who your audience is). For example, starting your PSA off with something like, "If you're between the ages of 25 and 44, you're more likely to die from AIDS than from any other disease."
* The PSA should usually (though maybe not 100% of the time) request a specific action, such as calling a specific number to get more information. You ordinarily want listeners to do something as a result of having heard the PSA.

Plan your psa using one of these forms:

Scripts and Storyboard on other download.

### ****Day 3:****

### ****Using music, text and other copyright stuff in your PSA****

A great PSA will not only have a striking message, but it might also have a great soundtrack that stays with it's viewers. Kind of like a song on a TV commercial. If the song is catchy, you might start to think about that product more everytime you hear the song from the TV ad.

Having music in your video is a great option, and if you decide to have some in your PSA, it's important to the writers & owners of the music that they know where their music is being used. For the Rise Against Homophobia Youth Video Contest, we recommend making your own awesome music, or looking for "free" music, on places like [Creative Commons](http://creativecommons.org/" \t "_blank). Sometimes it's important to ask for permission, and recognize the music on your PSA's credits too.

Here are some great places to find music (and even fonts!) for your PSA:

* Free Music Archive - Music for Video: [http://freemusicarchive.org/curator/Video](http://freemusicarchive.org/curator/Video/" \t "_blank)
* Creative Commons - Legal Music for Videos: [http://creativecommons.org/legalmusicforvideos](http://creativecommons.org/legalmusicforvideos" \t "_blank)
* Open Font Library: [http://openfontlibrary.org](http://openfontlibrary.org/" \t "_blank)

If you're still interested in copyright, here are some important websites to learn more about copyright, intellectual property and free content on the internet:

* Creative Commons: [http://creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org/" \t "_blank)
* Electronic Frontier Foundation: [www.eff.org](https://www.eff.org/" \t "_blank)
* Students for Free Culture: [http://freeculture.org](http://freeculture.org/" \t "_blank)
* Future of Music Coalition: [http://futureofmusic.org](http://futureofmusic.org/" \t "_blank)

[Green Screen How To Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yb3bikCspPE)