



**Journalism (English) 9**  
**Journalism Learning Kit**  
**Technical Rules in Radio News Writing**  
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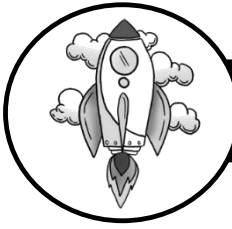
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# Technical Rules in Radio News Writing

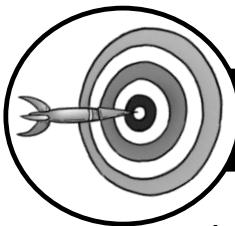


## BEGIN



Radio news writing requires a different approach than the writing you've done all your life because in radio, you're writing to be heard and not to be read. That means your listener has only one chance to hear what you're telling them and comprehend it before you move on. So, if you're not clear, you risk losing them.

Effective radio news writing requires a level of simplicity and a conversational approach that takes practice to feel natural. This module will help you become a better writer through familiarization with the technical rules in radio news writing. Let's get started!



## TARGET

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

1. observe technical rules in radio news writing. (SPJ9RSW-le-16)

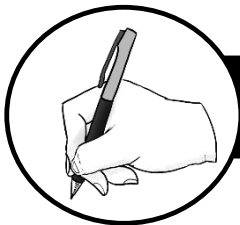


## TRY THIS

Directions: Read the questions carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.

1. When checking a sentence for passive voice, where do you put the "by zombies!"?  
A. Before the verb  
B. After the verb  
C. In place of the verb  
D. None of the above

2. Which of the following should you observe in writing a radio news story?
  - A. Split a sentence between pages
  - B. Use copyediting symbols
  - C. Type in uppercase for broadcast news stories
  - D. Split words or hyphenated phrases
3. Which of the following sentences is written in active voice?
  - A. The flames were extinguished before 9 a.m.
  - B. Mourners remembered the four-year-old boy who died.
  - C. The Buccaneers were beaten by the Eagles today.
  - D. Protests were held today by people upset by the decision.
4. Which of the following is a benefit of writing "out loud"?
  - A. It's more like "telling someone a story."
  - B. You're more likely to write as you speak.
  - C. You'll be able to hear the words you have trouble pronouncing.
  - D. All of the above
5. What verb tense is used in radio news writing?
  - A. Past
  - B. Present
  - C. Future
  - D. Perfect



## DO THIS

### ACTIVITY 1: THINK AND WRITE

Directions: Imagine yourself as a radio news writer. Try to write a news story from the scenario below using imaginary but logical details. Do this activity in your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.

It's 6:30 a.m. You're on your way to school and see this car accident. Some of the passengers are your schoolmates.



## EXPLORE

Awesome! You did a wonderful job in providing possible answers in the first activity. Now let us connect your responses to the following questions. Write your answers in your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.

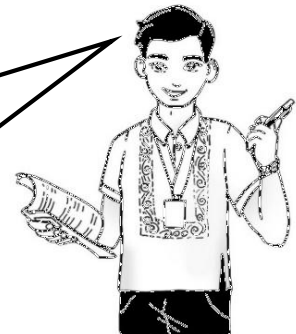


1. How do you find the first activity?
2. What verb tense did you use in writing your news?
3. Is it important to have the correct choice of words in writing your news story? Why?



## KEEP THIS IN MIND

Well done! You have successfully made a meaningful connection after answering the previous activities. Now you are all set for the discussion about the technical rules in radio news writing.



### Technical Rules in Radio News Writing

Although all journalism should be a flow of information between the journalist and the reader, listener or viewer, in the broadcast media, it is of vital importance that the reporter - through the newsreader or announcer - actually speaks to the audience.<sup>1</sup>

To effectively do this, especially in radio broadcast wherein we write for the ears, we need to follow a set of technical rules.

#### Radio News Writing Structure

**Keep it short and simple (KISS).** A news story that ranges from hundreds to thousands of words in print is the same story on radio that may have to fit into 30 to 90 seconds or 2 minutes, for important stories. Writing for radio requires you to condense a lot of information into the most important points.

**Use correct grammar.** A broadcast news script should be grammatically correct. Grammatical errors will embarrass the person reading when he stumbles over mistakes.

**Put the important information first.** Writing a broadcast news story is similar to writing a news story for print that you have to include the important information first. However, for broadcast, you have to condense the information presented.

**Write good leads.** Begin the story with information that is clear and precise. Because radio news stories have to fit into 30, 60, or 90 seconds, broadcast stories are sometimes little more than the equivalent of newspaper headlines and the lead paragraph.<sup>2</sup>

**Stick to short sentences of 20 words or less.** Radio announcers need to breathe. Long sentences make it difficult for the person voicing the script to take a breath so in writing your script, you have to write in short sentences.

<sup>1</sup> "Radio and Television Basics." <https://www.thenewsmanual.net/>. Accessed August 15, 2020. [https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%202/volume2\\_48.htm](https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%202/volume2_48.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Ricky Telg, "News Writing for Television and Radio," EDIS New Publications RSS (Agricultural Education and Communication, March 9, 2018), <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc193>.

**Write the way people talk.** Sentence fragments are acceptable as long as they make sense.

**Use contractions.** Use don't instead of do not. But be careful of contractions ending in -ve (e.g., would've, could've), because they sound like "would of" and "could of."

**Use simple subject-verb-object sentence structures.** This will make it easy for listeners to understand you.

**Use the active voice and active verbs.** It is better to say "He hit the ball" than "The ball was hit by him."

**Use present-tense verbs, except when past-tense verbs are necessary.** Present tense expresses the sense of immediacy. Use past tense when something happened long ago. For example, do not say, "There were forty people taken to the hospital following a train derailment that occurred early this morning." Instead, say, "Forty people are in the hospital as a result of an early morning train accident."

**Write with visual imagery.** Make your listeners "see" what you are saying. You have to be concrete and speak in pictures. You have to provide the listeners something to look at with their imagination instead of their eyes.

### **Radio News Writing Techniques**

**Person's name.** Use the first and last name in the first reference, then the person's last name thereafter.

**Unfamiliar words.** Use phonetic spellings for unfamiliar words and words that are difficult to pronounce.

**Obscure details.** Omit obscure names and places if they are not meaningful to the story.

**Titles.** Titles are written before the names. Avoid appositives. Do not write, "Jerry Treñas, mayor of Iloilo City, said today...." Instead, write, "Iloilo City mayor Jerry Treñas said today...." (Other examples: "City councilman Jay Treñas," not "Jay Treñas, city councilman." "Guimbal National High School student Franz Adelie Gargantiel," not "Franz Adelie Gargantiel, Guimbal National High School student,.")  
**Age.** In age reference, the age comes before the name. (Example: "The victim, 21-year-old Rob Roy...")

**Direct quotations.** If possible, avoid writing direct quotations into a news script. Let people say things in their own words during soundbites. A soundbite is the exact words spoken by someone in his or her own recorded voice. If you must use a direct quote, use phrases like "In the words of..." or "As he put it..." or try to paraphrase as much as possible. Avoid saying "quote" and "unquote" to lead into or end a direct quote.

**Attribution.** The attribution should come before a quotation, not after it. Contrary to writing for print media, the attribution of paraphrased quotations in broadcast stories should be at the beginning of the sentence, before the paraphrase. Example: “*Bill Brown said he would run for re-election.*”

**Abbreviations.** Avoid abbreviations, even on second reference, unless it is a well-known abbreviation. Write out days, months, states, and military titles each time. About the only acceptable abbreviations are Mr., Mrs., and Dr. Punctuate commonly used abbreviations using a hyphen in between. For example, write “U-S,” instead of “US” (United States), and “U-N” for “UN” (United Nations).

**Symbols.** Avoid symbols when you write. For example, the peso sign (₱) should never be used in broadcast writing. Always spell out the word “peso.”

**Punctuation.** Use correct punctuation. Do not use semicolons. Use double dash marks for longer pauses than commas. Use underlines for emphasis.

**Numbers.** Use numbers correctly. Spell out numerals through 11. Use numerals for 12 through 999. Use hyphenated combinations for numerals and words above 999. (Examples: 33-thousand; 214-million.) Round off numbers unless the exact number is significant. (Example: Use “a little more than 34 million dollars,” not “34-million, 200-thousand, 22 dollars.”) Use st, nd, th, and rd after dates, addresses, and numbers above “eleventh” to be read as ordinary numbers. (Examples: “Second Street,” “May 14th,” “Eleventh Avenue,” “12th Division”—this is different from AP Style for print.)<sup>3</sup>

### Radio News Story Format

For your news story format, take note of the following:

- Broadcast news stories are typed, double-spaced, and in uppercase/lowercase.
- Make the sentence at the bottom of a page a complete sentence. Do not split a sentence between pages.
- Never split words or hyphenated phrases from one line to the next.
- Do not use copyediting symbols. Cross out the entire word and write the corrected word above it. This is one reason why broadcast news scripts are double-spaced: so you will have room to make corrections between the lines.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ricky Telg, “News Writing for Television and Radio,” EDIS New Publications RSS (Agricultural Education and Communication, March 9, 2018), <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc193>.

<sup>4</sup> Ricky Telg, “News Writing for Television and Radio,” EDIS New Publications RSS (Agricultural Education and Communication, March 9, 2018), <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc193>.



## SUM UP

You are almost done with this module. You have familiarized yourself with the technical rules in radio news writing. Now, let's recap important things you have learned.



Writing for radio is different from writing for print for several reasons. First, you have less space and time to present news information. Therefore, you must prioritize and summarize the information carefully. Second, your listeners have to understand the information in a broadcast story as they hear it so you have to keep your writing simple and clear. And third, you are writing for “the ear”. You must paint word pictures with the words you use in your radio news story so people can “see” images just through your verbal descriptions.<sup>5</sup>

In writing for radio, you have to (a) KISS, keep it short and simple, (b) do not use quotes on scripts, (c) avoid unfamiliar words, (d) repeat important words, (e) keep punctuation simple, (f) simplify numbers, (g) avoid abbreviations and (h) show how to pronounce difficult words. Radio news story should also follow the prescribed format.



## APPLY APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE

### ACTIVITY 2: ANALYZE A SCENE!

Directions: Write a radio news story for the given scenario. Make sure to observe the technical rules in news writing and take note of the given criteria. Do this on your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.

A school bus ran off a road in Molo, narrowly missed a utility pole and came to rest in a garden. Most of the bus windows were smashed. There were more than 30 children on the bus. They were going to Iloilo National High School. It was a 36-seater bus. All the children escaped serious injury. Some of them jumped out of the bus and grazed themselves. Eye-witnesses said that as the children were helped, they were screaming and shouting and in a state of panic. This happened this morning.

*Criteria:*

*Script Structure- 5 points*

*Writing Technique-5 points*

*Script Format-5 points*

**TOTAL: 15**

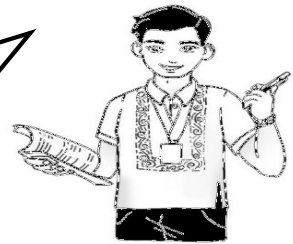
<sup>5</sup> Ricky Telg, “News Writing for Television and Radio,” EDIS New Publications RSS (Agricultural Education and Communication, March 9, 2018), <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc193>.





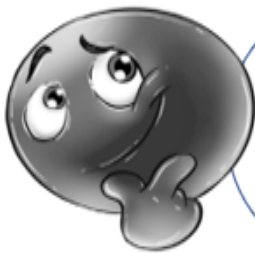
## REFLECT

Well done! You have shown great improvement after accomplishing all the tasks in the lesson. This time you will reflect on your work and rate your confidence.



### ACTIVITY 3: STOP, LOOK, GO!

Directions: Accomplish the infographic. Write your answers in your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.



1 THING I REALLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND

\_\_\_\_\_



2 THINGS I WANT TO ASK

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



3 THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

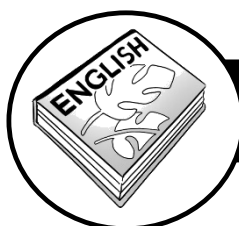


## ASSESS WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

Directions: Read the questions carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in your Journalism (English) 9 notebook.

1. Which of the following should **NOT** be followed in radio news writing?
  - A. Sentences should be between 11-15 words.
  - B. Conjunctions are acceptable.
  - C. Incomplete sentences are acceptable.
  - D. Use one idea per sentence.

2. Which of the following are the characteristics of “writing for the ear?”
  - A. Writing to be heard, not read.
  - B. Uses short sentences.
  - C. Values active voice over passive voice.
  - D. All of the above.
3. Which of the following is a rule in writing news stories?
  - A. Write in passive voice.
  - B. Use too many numbers
  - C. Write the way people talk
  - D. Begin with a quote
- 4.. Which of the following should be spelled out in radio news writing?
  - A. DEA
  - B. ISIS
  - C. ₱
  - D. 459
5. Which of the following sentences is the most well written?
  - A. Firefighters rushed to the scene of a massive blaze.
  - B. Riot police use shields to push demonstrators back.
  - C. The president was raked over the coals.
  - D. Judge Riley sentenced him to 30 years in prison.



## GLOSSARY

**Fragments-** n. a small piece or a part, especially when broken from something whole

**Hyphenated-**adj. written with a hyphen

**Obscure-** adj. not known to many people

**Precede-v.** to be or go before something or someone in time or space

**Split-v.** to (cause to) divide into two or more parts, especially along a particular line



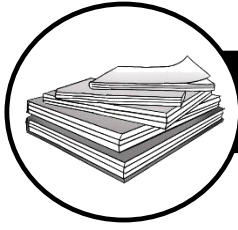
## ANSWER KEY

### Try This

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. B | 2. D | 3. B | 4. D | 5. B |
|------|------|------|------|------|

### Asses What You Have Learned

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. C | 2. D | 3. C | 4. C | 5. B |
|------|------|------|------|------|



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