

# Who Said That?

First course, First grading period, Week 3

While newspapers have been hit most with charges of plagiarism, falsification of eyewitness reports and fabrication of quotations, all media are receiving greater public scrutiny of their fairness and accuracy. This lesson focuses on wording on-air attribution and avoiding plagiarism.



## Enduring Understanding

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The goal of broadcast radio is to convey the news quickly and accurately. Giving attribution to the sources of information and to the persons in actualities gives credibility and accuracy to a report.



## Essential Questions

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What is attribution and how does one give it on air? How does the reporter avoid plagiarism?



## Objectives and Outcome

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- Students will understand what plagiarism and attribution are.
- Students will know that accuracy and honesty in reporting is expected of them.
- Students will write attribution for quotations (actualities), source of indirect quotations and paraphrases.



## Suggested Time

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One week



## Resources and Materials

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"Comments of the Radio-Television News Directors Association Before the Federal Communications Commission — Use of Video News Releases by Broadcast Licensees and Cable Operators," RTNDA (PDF available at [www.rtna.org](http://www.rtna.org))

"Reading Quotes," Radio Production, CD-ROM

"Presenting Material," Announcing, pages164-165

"Accuracy," Writing for Television, Radio and New Media, pages132-33



## Procedure

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1. Read or play examples of actualities with the attribution missing. What is needed? If students do not volunteer "the name of the speaker," ask them to tell you who made the statement. What is gained by knowing the name and credentials (experience, job and title, background) of the person providing the information? When is attribution not necessary? When is it necessary after the tape and not before you hear the actuality?

2. Define attribution and explain its necessity. Attribution is stating the source of the actuality or information. In current strict practice, according to the Poynter Institute Web discussion of attribution and sourcing, “anything the reporter does not know first-hand by way of eyewitness experience or established knowledge must be attributed to a named source.”

Why is attribution needed?

- Listeners want to know who is talking.
- The reporter wants to tell listeners where this information comes from.
- If the information is non-intuitive, reporters and editors have to make a judgment call. Will most listeners understand the source?  
Some reporters always give attribution, even if it’s “clunky” or interrupts the storytelling. Others believe listeners can fill in the empty spots through context of the whole report.
- If the reporter is not present at the scene of an event, reconstruction of a scene can be done if it is set up properly and clearly attributed.
- After fabrication of quotations and deception by reporters — among the most well known are Janet Cooke, Jason Blair, and Stephen Glass — the industry is providing more transparency as to how reporters got the story (sourcing). If the reporter did not gather the information herself, the listener has a right to know who or what agency provided the information.
- If the information is antagonistic or controversial, it is essential to identify the source. The listener can determine if the source is knowledgeable or someone with a reason (bias) to diminish an event, a project or person.
- Reporters are not to give their personal opinions. The source of statements of opinion is needed.
- Reporting of criminal involvement or potentially illegal activity should clearly be attributed.
- Unnamed sources are a “last resort, if the information is of special public importance, if there is no other way to reveal it, if the source is reliable, and if the source’s biases are revealed,” according to the Poynter site.

3. Is there a business or financial reason to give attribution as well as a professional and ethical reason? If the listener cannot trust the reporter, has the information and the radio station lost credibility — and eventually listeners? Representatives of RTNDA before the FCC stated, “Determining the content of a newscast, including when and how to identify sources, is at the very heart of the responsibilities of electronic journalists, and these decisions must remain far removed from government involvement or supervision. The government must be cautious in considering any action that could interfere with journalistic judgments or otherwise influence or prescribe news decisions or content.”

4. Provide examples of giving attribution. Attribution is often given at the beginning of a sentence in radio and television. Listeners are prepared to hear the information provided by the source in active voice. “So and so said ...,” “According to White House Press Secretary ...,” “Jessica Simpson later recalled ...” If legal issues are involved or the information has not been verified, use “according to” or “a statement released by ... states.”

5. Explain why and how to paraphrase a quotation.

6. Provide a variety of quotations and have students practice writing attributions. Vary the material from actuality (direct quotation) to second sources (according to) such as wire services, press releases and other news media. Newspapers can be sources (According to The Washington Post today ... ) of quotations and material that is paraphrased.

7. Explain plagiarism. Plagiarism is claiming that someone else's idea or work is yours. Relate plagiarism to reporting using material written by other sources; therefore, indirectly claiming material originates with your station's reporters.

If a reporter cannot be on the scene to conduct interviews, what alternatives exist? Definitely, do not lift an interview conducted by another reporter and edit it as if it were done by you. Cover the use of phone interviews (phoners). When can you accept what someone says as fact: "The transportation board says the plane crashed at 10 p.m." When do you attribute research and ideas to another media outlet?

8. Give students a copy of "Keep It Honest Vocabulary" and "Ethics of Attribution and Avoiding Plagiarism." This will serve as both a summary of the concepts covered and a review before a quiz.

9. Another area of concern related to attribution (identifying source of origin) and debated by electronic journalists is the use of third-party audio and video news releases. Citizens and the FCC questioned use of "news stories" packaged by interested parties. RTNDA's Code of Ethics is clear: If these audio and video releases are used, their sources must be appropriately identified. "FCC regulations, journalism ethics and the reinvigorated newsroom practices will adequately and properly ensure that the public is fully informed," stated RTNDA representatives before the FCC on June 22, 2005.



## Homework

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At the end of the first day, teachers will ask students to listen to news on the radio. Record (in writing or on tape) a minimum of 10 examples of attribution.

- Students should practice writing attributions.
- Students will read the pages in their textbook(s) that cover attribution.



## Assessment

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Give students a quiz. On this quiz, students listen to a tape prepared by the teacher in which they are asked to identify which examples are correctly attributed. In another portion, students take copy (5 column inches) provided by the teacher and indicate how it can be edited for radio to keep the meaning of the actuality and intro and to be no more than 45 seconds.

Expect students to give appropriate attribution in future projects.



## Academic Content Standards

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Use standard format and methodology for documenting reference sources (e.g., credits quotes and paraphrased ideas; understands the meaning and consequences of plagiarism; distinguishes own ideas from others (McRel, Language Arts, Writing, Standard 4, Grades 9-12, #9)



## Industry Standards and Expectations

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Investigate what constitutes plagiarism and invasion of privacy. (Performance Element, Pathway KS Statement: Exhibit knowledge of ethics and legal issues related to journalism and broadcasting, States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)

Electronic journalists are committed to providing accurate and credible news stories. That commitment includes appropriate identification of materials used in news stories. Credibility is the stock in trade of RTNDA's members. If viewers and listeners cannot trust the stories presented on radio and television, they will tune out — literally. ("Comments of the Radio-Television News Directors Association Before the Federal Communications Commission")

Electronic journalists should clearly disclose the origin of information and label all materials provided by outsiders (RTNDA Code of Ethics)

### **Quotations**

We must be careful about our use of the word "said." Standing alone, it should be used only when the reporter heard the source say the words quoted, either in person, on television or radio. When we quote a written statement of any kind, we should explain what we are doing accurately in our attribution [e.g. "...the White House said in a written statement."] (The Washington Post, "Policies on Sources, Quotations, Attribution, and Datelines")

When quoting people for whom English is not their first language, special care should be taken. If such quotations make the speaker look stupid or foolish, we should consider paraphrasing them (outside of quotation marks of course). When appropriate, a story should note that a source was struggling with English. (The Washington Post, "Policies on Sources, Quotations, Attribution, and Datelines")

### **Attribution**

We must be truthful about the source of our information. Facts and quotations in a story that were not produced by our own reporting must be attributed. Readers should be able to distinguish between what the reporter saw and what the reporter obtained from other sources such as wire services, pool reporters, email, websites, etc. (The Washington Post, "Policies on Sources, Quotations, Attribution, and Datelines")

We place a premium value on original reporting. We expect Washington Post reporters to see as much as they can of the story they are reporting, and to talk to as many participants as possible. Reporters should consider the advantages of reporting from the scene of events they are covering whenever that is possible. (The Washington Post, "Policies on Sources, Quotations, Attribution, and Datelines")

# Keep It Honest Vocabulary

<b>Actuality</b>	Person recorded on tape. In print journalism, this is called a quotation.
<b>Attribution</b>	Stating the source of the actuality or the information in a news story
<b>News cycle</b>	24 hours: What happens within a 24-hour period that advances a news story from the first time it is reported until the 24 hours is ended
<b>Paraphrase</b>	Restating a statement or text in one's own words
<b>Phoner</b>	A phone interview
<b>Plagiarism</b>	Passing of the ideas and words of someone else as your own; steal; use without giving credit to the creator; literary theft
<b>Rip and read</b>	The practice of allowing news coverage to become nothing more than the printing of wire service copy from the computer or fax and reading it on air – without further editing or reporting. The term comes from the days of wire service teletypes.

## Ethics of Attribution and Avoiding Plagiarism

- Give the source of direct quotations.
- If other media broke the story, give that reporter and media credit.
- Do not record without telling the individual.
- If another reporter covered the story, whether at home or abroad, do not use his words or the actualities (quotations) that he gathered in your report without giving credit to the original source.
- Do not edit the tape to distort what the person says.
- Do not ever promise confidentiality without talking with your teacher/adviser first. As your staff develops a staff and station manual, your confidentiality policy should be developed and included. If you promise confidentiality, don't reveal the source.

# Introduction to the Interview

*First course, First grading period, Week 3*

Essential to radio, the interview requires carefully crafted questions, an interest in people and curiosity about the subject discussed, and a belief that the opinions and information the interviewee will provide are relevant and important. This lesson is an introduction to interviewing.



## Enduring Understanding

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Print and electronic journalists interview people to get information —facts, reliable and insider information, reasons, explanations of processes and outcomes, opinions and stories.



## Essential Questions

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How should one prepare for an interview? What type of question elicits the strongest answers?



## Objectives and Outcome

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- Students will prepare questions before the interview that are appropriate for the focus of a story.
- Students will learn to phrase questions to get more than a yes or no response from the interviewee.
- Students will understand that asking follow-up questions is part of the radio journalist's job.



## Suggested Time

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Two to three days



## Resources and Materials

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"The Craft of Interviewing," *Announcing*, pages 239-262

"The Interview," *Writing for Television, Radio and New Media*, pages 224-229

"Interviewing," *Radio Production*, pages 80-101

"Interview with Martin Lacey," *Radio Production*, CD



## Procedure

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1. There are quite a few very good interview shows you can use to show students interview techniques. At [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) you can find audio of NPR's Talk Of The Nation, The Diane Rehm Show, Fresh Air and Morning Edition that has regular interview segments. Check out Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Rush Limbaugh or Pacifica's Democracy Now, and see what your local radio stations are doing.

2. Discuss the forming of questions. For radio, it is essential to write questions that get more than yes or no responses. Occasionally, the “Did you hit your boyfriend in the middle of the lunch room?” type of question will be asked, but even this requires a follow-up question to know why.

Ask open-ended questions that begin with “How,” “Why,” and “What.” Try starting your sentences with “Tell me about ....”

If you feel comfortable and want students to get acquainted with you, allow students to ask questions about your professional life. You might refuse to answer questions that are yes-no response questions.

3. Play several examples of interviews. Discuss the questions that were included in the broadcast. Which resulted in the most interesting responses? Have students write questions they think should have been asked. Ask students to share and discuss their new questions with the class. Discuss whether the interviewer seemed informed about the topic under discussion. Were the follow-up questions they asked jumpy and off-topic? Was the host really listening to what the guest had to say?

The teacher may want to collect several examples of poorly done interviews to play for the class. These can be helpful in illustrating failure to listen to responses, to ask meaningful follow-up questions or to reveal private agendas of the interviewer.

4. You may wish to discuss the attitude that the reporter brings to the interview. In addition to professionalism in arranging the appointment and in dress, there are other attributes that lead to successful interviews. Steve Miletich, an investigative reporter for The Seattle Times, advised: “Show the curiosity you would on a date, and don’t try to be Mike Wallace.” In a speech to Chips Quinn Fellows, he told the young reporters, “If you have passion and curiosity, you can be a good interviewer even if you’re learning and you need to get better” ([www.chipsquinn.org/skills/learning/learning.aspx?id=555](http://www.chipsquinn.org/skills/learning/learning.aspx?id=555)).

5. Tell students that the first program on WRTN (or whatever call letters you and your students want to assign this class) is to be focused on “The Students of Radio Broadcasting I.” Together, write six basic questions that get at the heart of who signed up for the class and why they are taking the course. As homework, each student is to write four more questions to ask his or her interviewee.

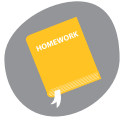
6. Pair students. Each will be reporter and interviewee in turn. Each will begin by asking the six questions written by the class. Then each will ask the four individually written questions.

- Make sure to mic both your questions and answers.
- Begin with getting the reporter’s identification (name, grade, class) on tape.
- Before asking the first question, get the interviewee’s identification (name, grade, class) on tape.
- Ask the six questions written by the class in order, but listen carefully to responses given. Be prepared to ask a follow-up question before moving to the next question.
- Ask the four questions that the student wrote for the interview.
- Change roles.



7. Three pairs of students should listen to the taped responses of their groups. Select the best response to the first six questions. Then select the three best new questions and answers. Why were these questions better than the rest?

8. The teacher could demonstrate the workstation by editing students' tapes into a show titled "Students in Radio Broadcasting I." If not used now, the tapes could be saved for use in Week 6 when the audio workstation is introduced to students.



## Homework

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Write four additional questions to ask the student you are interviewing. Be sure that these questions will elicit new information and remain focused on the theme of the class show.

Have students listen to radio that targets youth and is produced by youth. They are to listen to interviews. Have them keep a record of the program, the station and time, and write a log on the most interesting questions and answers they heard.

Three youth radio programs are suggested. Go to their Web sites to learn about their programs and webcasts:

- Youth Radio ([www.youthradio.org](http://www.youthradio.org)) is based in Berkeley, Calif. Youth Radio DC is based in the Latin American Youth Center's Art and Media House and can be heard on Washington D.C.'s WTOP 820 AM and WTOP 104.3 FM. Youth Radio DC commentaries air hourly starting at 4:53 p.m.
- Radio Rookies ([www.wnyc.org/radiorookies](http://www.wnyc.org/radiorookies)) is a "New York Public Radio initiative that provides teenagers with the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities and their world."
- Youth Voices ([www.wamu.org/youth voices](http://www.wamu.org/youth%20voices)). Students from D.C.'s Woodrow Wilson High School are trained at WAMU-FM to produce a "radio feature story about an issue that affects their lives and the larger community in which they live." Current and archived stories are available.

Check with your local radio stations to see what programming they produce for or by teens.



## Assessment

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Collect the four additional questions written by each student. Do the questions illicit more than yes or no responses? Are they focused on the assigned topic?

Give students at this early stage of the class credit for conducting the 10-question interview. Since they are getting use to the microphone and its placement, do not grade them on technical quality. Let them get acquainted with one another and have some fun with the equipment.



## Academic Content Standards

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Critique how the author interweaves personal examples and ideas with factual information to achieve the purpose of explaining, presenting a perspective, or describing a situation or an event. (DCPS English Language Arts, 12.LT.9)



Formulate open-ended research questions and apply steps for obtaining and evaluating information from a variety of sources, organizing information, and presenting research (DCPS English Language Arts, 9.R.1)



## Industry Standards and Expectations

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Knowledge: Journalism teachers understand: 7. The writing process as it relates to journalism (brainstorming, questioning, reporting, gathering and synthesizing information, writing, editing, and evaluating the final media product) (Standards for Journalism Educators, Provided by the Journalism Education Association and the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication)

Demonstrate how to obtain information to use in writing a story. (Performance Element, Pathway KS Statement: Demonstrate writing processes used for various journalism media. States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)