

# How to Edit An Audio Interview

*Second course, First grading period, Week 6*

By now, students should have developed listening skills and learned to restate questions if they misspoke. They do not hesitate to ask the guest to state their comments more clearly if he misspeaks or is not clear. This means that, having done these things, students now have too much usable tape and will have to edit the audio interview down for time to fit it into a given on-air slot. This is a valuable skill.



## Enduring Understanding

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Conducting an interview requires that students have learned to ask questions that will elicit full responses, to compose follow-up questions on the spot, and to get substantial tape from a technical and intellectual stand point. The reality of on-air time requires that students learn to edit for the ear and for substance.



## Essential Question

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How do you take an audio interview and make it sound better and shorter?



## Objectives and Outcome

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- Students will be able to assess an interview for its content and quality.
- Students will be able to shorten an audio interview for broadcast.



## Time

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One week



## Resources and Materials

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An interview of 15 minutes in length. This can be from a previous lesson or taping, or can be a tape the teacher supplies. The tape should be substantive, complex, and interesting in parts, boring or obtuse in others.

An edited version of the 15-minute interview that has been cut heavily to reduce it to five minutes.

An invited guest

“Editing Principles,” Radio Production, pages 31-32

“Eliciting Responsive Answers,” Announcing, pages 251-255.



## Procedure

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1. Discuss with students the importance and benefits of getting more tape than one can use on air. Review use of ambience and actualities. When should the listener hear the question asked? When is a lead-in by the host or reporter better?
2. Give students “Listening and Logging the Interview.” Tell them whom the guest is, the show’s name and broadcast date of the tape so they have context before they hear the recording.

Play the 15-minute pre-selected interview. Ask students to take notes on the questions and answers as the tape plays. Use an overhead of the audio in the digital workstation so students can write down times that questions and answers appear in the tape, or have students use stopwatches. Start timing with the first word of audio. Discuss the points the students have noted and prioritize them for importance in the overall interview.

3. Discuss students’ answers to these questions and play a slimmed down version of the longer tape played in class. If there is time to discuss it further after hearing the shorter example, do so. This gives students insight into the editing process. When listeners hear a shorter version of a longer interview, they become acutely aware of what the main ideas are and what had to be edited. It leads to questions about what is missing and how the decision was made to make cuts.
4. Tell students about the invited guest and provide background information. In addition to the guest’s name, title and work experience, discuss the topic or focus on the presentation.
5. On the following day, proceed to discuss editing an interview to fit an allotted time. This is the time to stress ethics and standard procedure in editing an audio interview: Audio can be moved around as to subject matter if it also improves the flow of the conversation but does not change the meaning or violate ethical standards. If the interviewee’s responses are going to change order in the edited program, what must be true of the responses? Why is the lead-in written after the order of the actualities is determined?
6. Review the questions the students prepared for the interview to be conducted on the following day. Prioritize the list of questions and put them in order with the class.

Select two people to conduct the interview and two people to record it. Two people should be prepared to use stopwatches and log the interview in progress using the method they learned on Day One of this lesson. This is a time to pick your best people for their strengths in various areas of on-air, engineering, and listening/logging skills. You want to get tape for the entire class to use.

7. Before the guest arrives, have students set up the microphones. The two students selected record the interview, watching levels and taking turns as needed to make sure everything is recording smoothly. They should wear headphones and get room tone or ambience.
8. Conduct a 17- to 18-minute interview with the invited guest. For the first 10 minutes each of the two students selected asks half the list of questions in the pre-determined order. Make sure to get the invited guest’s name and identification on tape. Restate questions if they sound clunky and restate answers as needed.

For the next five minutes the class gets to ask any questions as follow-up. Mic everything using the two students assigned to do the recording. Finally ask the guest if there is anything else he or she wants to add. The final interview should be no more than 17 to 18 minutes. Have other students dub the interview into workstations.

9. Log the interview. Review the logs taken by students and discuss the interview with the class. Refine the logs as needed on the computer, adding points and times if necessary and distribute (or e-mail) copies to the class.

10. In the class after the guest interview, students should be prepared to cut their 17-minute interviews to between seven and eight minutes. Work in groups on the workstations to edit the interviews. Allow 30 minutes of class time. For the class time remaining, whether it's 15 minutes or an hour, spot check and play various edits and pieces, then discuss the progress that is being made with students. Be sure to discuss both content and technical editing issues.

11. In the next class, play the best edited interview (selected ahead of time by the teacher). Have the group collectively cut it down to about five minutes. Do this on an overhead so all can see and hear the results easily.

Pull a tease. Have students write a three- to four-line introduction.



## Homework

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Students may need to complete the handout “Listening to and Logging the Interview” as homework. They should think about cutting the interview by half. What can go?

Students should read “Eliciting Responsive Answers,” *Announcing*, pages 251-255.

Students should each prepare five questions to ask the guest speaker after doing research on the subject about to be discussed.

Students refine their intros, write a back announce that ends the interview, and write a summary – three to four lines of what this piece is about in its final shortened version.



## Assessment

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Assess all handouts and homework.

Expect students to use the vocabulary terms. You may wish to include some of the terms on the current events quiz.

Involvement in the guest speaker interview, completion of assigned duties and participation in the editing process should receive participation credit. If students are absent the day of the guest speaker, they must do a make-up activity or receive no credit (Job training would not allow for make-up assignments, but an excused absence may require it).



## Academic Content Standards

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Journalism teachers understand: 10. Value of and skills needed to package media products effectively, using various forms of journalistic design utilizing a range of visual, auditory and interactive methods for a variety of media (Standard #1A — Knowledge of Curriculum and Content/Classroom, Provided by the Journalism Education Association and the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication)

### **National**

Understand the principles, processes, and products associated with arts and communication media (McREL, Standard 1, Arts & Communication Career)



## Industry Standards and Expectations

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Apply knowledge of equipment and skills related to audio production. (Pathway KS Statement: Audio and Video Technology and Film, States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)

Identify the basic functions and resources for editing. (Performance Element, Pathway KS Statement: Exhibit knowledge of editing audio and video productions, States' Career Clusters, National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium)

Understand content, technical concepts and vocabulary to analyze information and follow directions. (F02.1.2, Comprehend and use reading strategies to learn meaning, technical concepts and vocabulary, Career Cluster Project: Communications Skills)

# Listening to and Logging the Interview

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

If you have done your job well as a reporter, you have too much usable tape. You will have to edit the audio interview down for time to fit it into a given on-air slot. This activity focuses on listening to locate the best response and logging to edit. With this information you will be prepared to organize the tape to improve the flow of the conversation while retaining the meaning of what the person interviewed has said.

Show and date of broadcast: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who is the guest? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is this interview's main focus? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the main points made by the interviewee? Where in running time do they occur on the tape? List them with time indicated: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are there spots in the audio where concepts are restated more clearly? Indicate the running times of these spots on the tape: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the order or flow of the interview making sense? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is there any exciting tape you could use for a tease or promo? What and where is that tape? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the total time of the interview? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Does the interview feel too long? \_\_\_\_\_

9. If you had to keep only three main points what would they be? \_\_\_\_\_

# Audio Interview Vocabulary

<b>Actuality</b>	Recording of speaker
<b>Back announce</b>	Information that is needed after the piece or interview that either explains what the listener needs to know and gives an attribution; information related to the piece that the listener has just heard and leading the listener to more knowledge.
<b>Cut</b>	A piece of tape (noun); to edit (verb)
<b>Dub</b>	To copy material already recorded
<b>Edit</b>	The rearrangement of recorded material to form a preferred order
<b>Interview</b>	Discussion between a host or reporter and a person who is a source of information
<b>Intro</b>	Standard material used to introduce every program or designated segments within a show or series
<b>Lead</b>	Intro, headline
<b>Log</b>	Written record of station output
<b>Summary</b>	Brief (three to four lines) synopsis of a piece