

Critic tips/notes for Radio News Speaking

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Newscast prep: The length and number of stories is subjective, but they should be able to include several stories. They may need to do some editing. The number of words per sentence should be around 10 words or less. Shorter sentences, as opposed to wordy, run-on sentences, are easier to read out loud, and allow the reader to take a breath.

Broadcast style vs print: In broadcast writing, someone's age in a story should be written out, such as "Sixteen-year-old Jason Smith..." It's easier to read out loud as opposed to the standard style in print journalism "Jason Smith, 16,...".

Redundancies: Sometimes unnecessary words show up in news copy, such as "The house was completely destroyed." The house was either damaged or destroyed. The word "completely" could be cut. (dead body, armed gunman, tragic accident, etc).

Opinions: This event is news, students may need to be reminded that editorializing is not allowed.

Easy Microphone tip: Place microphone at a slight angle, so they are not speaking directly into the microphone. This will help them avoid popping the letter P as they read their newscasts.

Speak "to" the audience rather than "at" the audience. Students can achieve this by imagining they are explaining a story to someone, not just reading words.

Pace, pitch, tone, energy: Pace should be consistent, pitch should vary, and not be a predictable pattern. Tone should be appropriate, given the nature of the story, (not too happy-sounding if it's a story about a deadly crash). Energy & enthusiasm should be consistent.

Tough names: Add a phonetic spelling in their copy for tough names. If they still have trouble, it's better to fake it and sound confident than to stumble and/or sound unsure.

Commercial: Transitions before and after the commercial help separate news from advertising content. Sometimes even a slight pause afterward is good. They might also say "...and the news continues," or "In sports" or "and now the weather forecast."

Flash/Bulletin: I recommend students finish the current story they are reading, before attempting to read the bulletin. Read the information, and have some sort of simple transition such as, "we'll have more on this breaking story next hour." Without a transition, it can sound awkward as the student goes on to their next story

Final suggestions: Listing each story on your critique sheet as it is read may be helpful, so you get a sense of how the student organized the newscast. Include what you liked about their presentation and what they might try next time to improve.