



WRITING FOR RADIO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Who are you talking to?
- What do you want to say?
- The storage of talk
- Words
- Structure and signposting
- Pictures and stories
- Double meanings
- The script

MEANING

Writing words to be heard by the ear is quite different from words to be read by the eye. The layout of sentences, their order construction has to be thought through in order to be totally clear and unambiguous at their first hearing. The listener does not have the possibility of re-hearing something.

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

- The listener comes first.
- Decide who it is you are talking to.
- Is this for a specialist audience - like children, doctors or farmers- or is it for the general, unspecified listener?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY?

- Having decided who you are talking to, what do you want to leave with him or her?
- It may be that the script is simply to entertain- a light-hearted afternoon noon show.
- It is important to have a strong opening- get the listener's attention at the start.

THE STORAGE OF TALK

- You are talking, and writing a script is essentially the storage of that talk on paper or in a computer.
- The sentences are generally shorter and simpler.
- The best script is a fairly crude and imperfect form of storage
- Some people stress underline words to help with where the stress should go, but the danger here is that when reading it you concentrate so much on the underlining that the end result is artificial
- Much better to communicate meaning by first understanding it.

WORDS

- These are the building blocks of our meaning and need to be used with a little care if that meaning is to be recreated in the mind of the listener.
- In any language there are many such homophones and we have to beware of them.
- We can not rely on the context to make their meaning clear, and our purpose is to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity, especially for the preoccupied, half-hearing listener.

STRUCTURE AND SIGNPOSTING

- After your strong opening, it's still true in a talk to say what you're going to say, say it, and then tell me what you said.
- Be logical in the order you put things.
- Be Interesting.
- Be relevant

PICTURES AND STORIES

- Remember the visual nature of radio and illustrate what you are saying with pictorial colour.
- Appeal to the sense of smell and touch too if you can.

DOUBLE MEANING

- In the same way that word sounds can have more than one meaning.
- Example “The union said the Report was wrong.” “The union, said the Report, was wrong.
- Many times a double meaning is avoided because ‘as soon as I said it, I knew it was wrong’.

THE SCRIPT

- We speak about 180 words a minute- three words a second is a good guide for a bulletin or scripted talk.
- A single types line is 3-4 seconds, making a double-spaced page of A4 - 27 lines or 270 words- about one and a half minutes.
- Be clear
- Easy to read
- Clear paragraphs should be used to separate distinct thoughts.

REFERENCES

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- *Self notes*
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Mcliesh*
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THANKYOU