



Student-Created Podcasting

Uses any two of the Vote Worthy segments [Listen here](#)

Background Reading

The informational podcasts in the Vote Worthy series were produced in 2020 and early 2021, a time when national attention was focused on the general election. The intent was not to advocate for a party or candidate but to help a broad audience understand the complex issues of voting rights and processes.

Podcasting is a unique combination of both technology and the creative arts. It enables us to utilize new technologies to broadcast, edit, and publish, while reaching out to an unlimited audience. There is great potential for personal and community learning by creating and disseminating authentic, real time, historical artifacts.

Discussion Questions

1. What podcasts have you listened to? What would you say is the purpose of the podcast? Who is the intended audience?
2. Have you created a podcast yourself? What was the purpose? Who was your audience?
3. Have you recorded interviews, readings, or discussions using digital equipment? What was the experience like?
4. Have you done any editing of audio? What was the experience like?

Key Vocabulary

copyright: the exclusive legal right, given to a creator, to publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material, and to authorize others to do the same.

copyright free: not protected by copyright

credits: a list of acknowledgements of those who contributed to the creation of a media work

podcast: a digital audio file made available on the Internet for streaming or downloading to a computer or mobile device

Teaching Tips

Getting Started

- Before you and your students begin creating your own podcasts, listen to several podcasts of different genres, formats, and lengths. The Vote Worthy series is an excellent example of an informational series. Other quality podcasts can be found at sites such as National Public Radio, StoryCorps, or The Moth.
- Encourage students to use critical listening skills, noting the length, format, purpose, topic, tone, and intended audience of the podcast. Ask them to notice: Is there music or other sound effects? Are credits included?
- When you are ready to engage your students in creating podcasts, begin with the equipment you have on hand – iPods, Chromebooks, or smartphones. Probably the most important piece of equipment to add is headphones. Even an inexpensive set allows students to hear not only their own voices but also any background noise.
- Editing, recording, and mixing can be done using GarageBand for Apple or Audacity for PCs. The Anchor.fm app allows you to record, edit, and publish. If you want to publish for a more restricted audience, you can use your teacher or school website.
- Be aware of students who do not have full media releases and give them important roles like researchers, producers, mixers, or sound engineers.

Using Podcasting in the Social Studies Classroom

By Teresa Brewer, Buckhorn High School

My students have found podcasting to be an exciting opportunity for student-driven research as well as a creative outlet. Students can design and create a product to share, rather than use a textbook or Internet text for learning. This hands-on approach encourages personal interaction through interviews and recordings. Students take that material back to their studio for a final mix-down and edit. The learning gained from the edit and production process can be used in a variety of settings outside the studio and even in the work force. I feel like everything we learn inside or outside the classroom should help prepare students for life's next steps, whether that is college, a vocational setting, or work.

A couple of years ago my students wanted to focus on our culture and heritage. They developed an after-school program, which was student designed and led. They wrote for a grant they called "Heritage in the Arts." Once they received the grant, they hosted a series of after-school classes on activities such as basket-weaving, writing, painting, cooking and canning, and quilting, to name a few.

As these classes were in progress, students used iPads and simple lapel microphones to conduct a series of interviews with participants, who told us their personal stories of how these activities used to be a part of everyday life. One family had three generations present for the basket class. Entire families joined us for the cooking and canning class. We even decided to publish a local cookbook for the whole community. We enjoyed hearing about our local history and traditions from people who lived it. What an excellent opportunity to glean our local history from the young and old alike!

Once the stories were recorded, the students began to cut and edit. Questions from the interviewer can be edited out. Background noise can be cleaned up or a track of background music can be added to set the stage for the story the listener is about to hear. Students may even choose to add sound effects to make the podcast better or more exciting to listen to.

My students enjoyed the process so much that, in that same year, we built a small in-school studio to go along with our portable studio. We are still growing and have partnered with our local college to offer even more technology and recording opportunities for our students.

I am so glad that my students have an opportunity to master 21st century learning skills while creating something to be shared and enjoyed by all. History is not all in the past, we live it out each and every day. Podcasting is a fun way to get community buy-in, explore your local history and heritage and share it out in a versatile way. My students have enjoyed integrating local history, technology, and creativity in developing podcasts.

Suggested Activity

Step 1: Critical Listening

Begin by having students listen to at least two of the segments in the Vote Worthy series. Including at least part of Program 2 (the program with questions from various Kentuckians) is a good idea since it has a different format than the segments in Program 1. Ask students to analyze Vote Worthy by noting these elements:

- length
- format
- purpose
- topic
- tone
- audience
- music or other sound effects
- credits

Also ask them to listen for content that provides information that is new or of particular interest to them or that they do not fully understand.

Discuss what they noted about the format. Was it the same in both segments, or was there a difference? If different formats, which did they find more engaging?

What did they notice about the music? Was the selection appropriate? Did it add to the flow of the story? Did it make the podcast more appealing?

Step 2: Brainstorming

If you have done one of the other Vote Worthy lessons, you could use that as a springboard for determining a topic for your podcast. Or you could divide students into small groups and have them identify a topic they would like to use for an original podcast. You can work as a class to create a single podcast or have students work in groups to create podcasts.

Have students consider and define their podcast's purpose and intended audience. This is a good time to discuss the difference between facts and opinions and have them consider how they will distinguish between these in the podcast.

As a class, consider the format you will use. Do you want to have a host moderating a discussion with experts or answering questions? Do you want to record an interviews with local elected officials or community leaders and include excerpts from the interviews? Do you want to use a narrative approach? What are advantages and drawbacks of each approach?

If you are creating more than one podcast, will you use a common intro and outro? What credits should be included?

Will you use music to add to the flow? This is a good time to discuss copyright and resources for copyright free music. (E.g., <https://www.bensound.com/>, Pond5, Freesound, Creative Commons and Incompetech)

You can determine these parameters yourself or engage students in the decisions. You might have small groups pitch proposals for podcasts and discuss which are feasible and appropriate for your purpose and audience. If possible, select several or combine ideas from several proposals.

Step 3: Creating the Podcast(s)

Determine the roles of the students in the process (researchers, interviewers, narrators, experts, editors, sound mixers, etc.) You could have them complete job applications for their positions including any qualifications or past experience they have related to the position.

Have students work in teams to:

- research the topic
- create storyboards, outlines, or scripts for each segment
- conduct and record interviews if you are using them
- identify and download music
- create a script for the intro and outro (including credits) and record these
- record any narration or discussion
- select clips and combine them into segments
- edit
- review as a class and make any final edits
- publish!

Additional Resources

- [Creating Podcasts](https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/media_arts_classroom7/creating-podcasts/) (KET Media Arts Toolkit) at https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/media_arts_classroom7/creating-podcasts/

- [KQED Teach's Podcasting with Youth Radio](https://teach.kqed.org) at <https://teach.kqed.org>
- [Audio Recording Tips](https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tips_how_to2/audio-recording-media-arts-toolkit/) (KET Media Arts Toolkit at https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tips_how_to2/audio-recording-media-arts-toolkit/)

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.I.CC.1 Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3 Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices

- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Employ, develop, and refine schema to understand and create text.
- View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary, and transformative.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others, and the world.
- Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.
- Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
- Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.
- Engage in specialized literacy practices.

Reading and Composing Guiding Principles

- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.
- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.
- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.
- Students will conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Students will gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source and integrate the information for the purposes of analysis, reflection and research while avoiding plagiarism.

Media Arts

- Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic technique and work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

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