



MAKING MEDIA

Producing a Public Service Announcement

One of the most engaging components of this program is the opportunity students have to “talk back” to the media by producing their own media messages.

One way to do this is by producing a Public Service Announcement (PSA)

What is a Public Service Announcement?

PSAs are short (:30 seconds or less) messages produced for radio or television. They can be elaborate and expensive, but simple less complicated messages are easier for students to accomplish and are just as effective in getting a message across. The fun of producing the media, combined with the excitement of having the work distributed to the school community as well as a wider social network is the hook that gets kids engaged in the program and allows their commitment to reach a wide audience.

A some great examples of youth produced PSAs can be found on our website at www.healthymissouri.net

How do I produce a PSA?

One of the services we offer is our Mobile Media Lab. We are available to help your students produce both radio and video public service announcements from concept through completion.

Having students write a PSA is a great extension to many of the lessons, as well as to the Project Citizen Unit.

Steps to Producing the PSA

1. Identify the audience: If students are creating a message for their peers the style will likely differ than if they are creating something for adults or parents. Have your students brainstorm about what techniques they have seen used on mainstream TV.

2. Remember that :30 seconds is not much time, so the message must be simple and clear. If producing a video message also consider what each shot will look like, and again simplicity is the key.
3. Using the provide script and storyboard forms have students work in teams to develop a script. Your class can vote on which one to produce.
4. The PSA normally should include a specific call to action. The goal would be to have the audience do something as a result of the hearing or seeing the message.

Tips for radio:

The voice is important. Choose a voice personality that is easy to understand. Again, think about the audience: and who would be best to speak to that audience.

Use short, compelling sentences aimed directly at the listener.

In radio your audience is usually doing something besides listening to your PSA, so use words or music that will grab and hold their attention.

Tips for TV

When the Mobile Lab arrives, the crew will need to know exactly what you want them to shoot. Each shot should be described in detail on the script paper

If you are using “talent” you may check with the Drama department to see if they have any students that are particularly talented. Often, many of the students want to have an “on camera” scene, but remember that it is important that the talent be able to deliver the lines.

Consider using slide/voice over spots. Here, a few shots would be used, accompanied by a voice over narration. These are easier to produce, and does not require on camera talent

Avoid special effects. Generally they are costly, and they often distract attention away from the central message.

Remember! We are here to help and can provide any assistance that you need along the way.