**Writing and Recording a Radio News Feature**

Most radio news stories rely on three kinds of audio: voice-over or narration, interview clips, and ambient sound.

* **The voice-over or voice track** includes any scripted narration that’s recorded in the studio to push a storyline forward and identify the content of interview clips / ambient sounds.
* **Interview clips** are recordings of a story’s subject(s), typically recorded on location or over the phone. Interview sound bites help bring the characters in our stories to life.
* **Ambient sounds** are the “sound effects” that we record on location; the background noises that create a sense of place. These are very nice additions to stories, but can be scrapped in a pinch.

1. The first step is to **get good interviews**. A longer news story will have more than one interview subject. Try to get the best sound possible, by using a mic, holding it close to the speaker (especially if there is a lot of ambient noise), finding a quiet space if necessary.

Check out the link to “basic guidelines on interviewing” on pacificanetwork.org/news-up

*Do you need to get quotes from both sides*? Try to think outside of the binary box. Instead of “pro” and “con”, think of the wide range of people who are affected by an event in different ways.

2. **Select the pieces of the interviews that say the most** in the fewest words: the dramatic highlights, the places where the subject’s emotions come through. The listener will naturally “tune in” more closely to interview clips than to narration, so choose wisely.

3. **Write and record the narration**. This is the most important part. Think of your narration as the “thread” and the interview clips and ambient sounds as the “beads” on that thread. Who/what/when/where/why is still a good thumbnail to use. Remember that the first piece of narration is your HOST LEDE, so don’t repeat that. You can start with a concrete introduction of a person, a place, or an event. Explain what is happening now. Expand to provide background as to why this person, place, or event is significant. Look forward to what might happen next. By the end of the story, return to where you started: the single subject’s point of view. Above all, *consider your audience*. For instance, what local listeners know and assume may not be what a national audience knows and assumes.

4. **Put the pieces together and export audio file as mp3**. Double check the audio (Audacity) file visually, to ensure that there is no overlap or gaps.

5. **After exporting**, reimport mp3 file into Audacity to check for sound levels and gaps.