

Podcast Resources

So, you're thinking about making a podcast for your class project? Before you dive in, here are some helpful resources to get you started in planning, recording, and editing your podcast.

General Resources

Since 2018, NPR has sponsored a Student Podcast Challenge competition, first for 5th through 12th grade students, and recently a college competition as well. While you don't need to enter your podcast in NPR's competition, you can certainly take advantage of the resources they provide:

[NPR: Starting Your Podcast: A Guide for Students](#)

(If you only follow one link on this page, this is the one to use!)

Planning your Podcast

Before you begin recording, or worrying about technical details, the most important first step in any podcast project is to plan and script.

Fortunately there are a ton of great resources available to help you in crafting a compelling and engaging podcast.

Before you do any recording, you need to determine what your podcast is about--choosing a topic that will enable you to fulfill your class's project requirements, but that also explores a key driving question. How do you choose a subject that is neither too broad nor too specific? The following resources can be helpful in crafting your ideas:

[NPR Training: What Should You Ask Before Starting a Story?](#)

[NPR Training: Want Razor-Sharp Focus in Your Stories? This Group Activity Can Help](#)

[NPR Training: How Do You Tell a Story in Three Acts?](#)

Another key decision to make is your primary format: will most of your podcast be your own voice narration, with sounds, quotes, or other voices to help tell the story? Or will your podcast be primarily a recording of an interview with one or more people? Knowing the answer to this will be key to planning how you record the sounds that will go into your podcast.

Recording Your Podcast

You don't need to go out and spend money on fancy equipment or software in order to create a podcast for this class project. For most cases, you can get all of the audio you need using a smartphone or your computer. However, taking a few extra steps of care when collecting your

audio can make the difference between an almost-professional sounding podcast and one that will be a very difficult listen for anyone, including your instructor. For tips on how to best record your podcast, be sure to check out the following resources:

YouTube: How To Record a Podcast for Beginners (11:57)

(A helpful video showing several ways to record audio. The first method here shows ways to use your smartphone. If you would like to use more professional equipment like the kinds later described here, contact Josh Gaestel, Instructional Media Specialist, at gaestelj@gcc.mass.edu, who can set you up with a time to use the professional recording equipment available in GCC's television studio in S308. Please make sure to allow plenty of time for scheduling in advance with this option, however!)

NPR's Guide to Sending Audio

(If you were to be interviewed by NPR for a story, they would ask you to submit the audio of your voice to them using these directions. You can use these same steps to record quality audio for your own project using your smartphone!)

Editing and Producing Your Podcast

Now that you have your audio, make sure to leave plenty of time for this key final step: editing and producing your podcast. There is a technical aspect to this, using some basic audio editing software to trim, connect, and overlap the sounds you've collected into a smooth final product. But editing isn't just a technical process, it will also require you to make careful decisions about what to include--and what not to include--in your final production. The best podcasts require a good deal of editing, so be sure to begin this process well before the final deadline for your project! For some tips on editing and producing your podcast, take a look at the following links and resources:

Article: Best Free Podcast Editing Software in 2021

(The above link explains how to use free audio editing tools such as Audacity, Garageband, and even Zoom to collect and mix audio to produce your podcast.)

Audacity: Main Site with Download Link

(Audacity is a free, open-source software for audio mixing that you can use on any computer.)

YouTube: How to Edit a Podcast for Beginners

(This video shows how to use Audacity to splice together audio clips, and how to fade in and out from one source to another. You don't have to create a separate intro or outro file as she describes here, but you certainly can!)

Article: 7 Best Places to Get Free Music for Your Podcast

(Even though you likely don't intend to produce or earn money from this podcast, you still need to be careful not to use music for which you do not hold the copyright. This article explains and links to several sources for free music that you can use as part of your podcast.)