**Radio Speaking Tips**

You achieve a plain and simple structure in a radio text by concentrating on the essential informati­on. Too much information, images, facts and thoughts confuse the audience. Extra information that is interesting but distracts from the topic must be rejected. In written texts you can put this kind of information in subordinated clauses or brackets – in radio texts they need to be cut out. This means that when writing one needs to reduce the material that one has at one’s disposal and make a choice.

**The “W- questions”**

To structure and select using the “w-questions” is helpful:

***Who*** *is speaking/acting etc.?* ***What*** *is happening?* ***Where****?* ***Why****?* ***When*** *was that?* ***How many****?*

To provide information it is always useful to go through the “w-questions”, to answer them and on this basis to put them in order

**Structuring a radio text**

A radio text’s structure should be organized plainly and simply. This structure should also be communicated orally so that the listener is able to relate to it. In doing so the introduction functions as a headline telling the listener what it is all about.

In the course of the text the ideas should follow each other in logical order and should be well connected. The longer a text is the more important it is to structure it according to logic units, and for example to give subheadings. For longer texts acoustic signals like pauses, changes in voice or music should be used.

**The opening**

The first sentences decide whether the listeners will “stay tuned” and keep on listening or not. Their purpose is to create an interest in the topic and to arouse curiosity. So it is worthwhile to carefully think about how to open. For all news texts the rule is: most important information first – that is in the first sentence. For all other genres you can deal with the opening a bit more creatively and playfully to arouse curiosity, to create an atmosphere or suspense. However, the audience should not be kept in the dark for too long as to what the following radio text is about.

**Repetitions are allowed and beneficial on the radio**

The audience cannot remember everything that has been said over the course of time. Also, they cannot, unlike to reading a newspaper recapture a subheading with their eyes. Therefore, it helps the listener when central ideas are repeated and when the topic that is being talked about is mentioned once more. In doing so the same words can be used again, unlike in written language – this also helps the listener to understand the subject. Central ideas, theses and fundamental trains of thought should be repeated. It is also highly beneficial for the audience to get small summaries of what has been said, in particular before a new aspect is introduced.

Texts on the radio are solely supported by oral language. In contrast to television texts, newspaper texts or conversations in person there is no visual aid for what is being said. No pictures, but also no gestures or facial expressions. Instead there is the vocal expression that supports the contents.

So that the listener can develop images to what is said it is necessary to speak a very concrete language which describes closely and that evokes associations, understanding and images in the mind’s eye.

**Avoid fillers**

Fillers disturb the listening. When we speak without being prepared we use them to fill the pauses that we need to think and to hide any uncertainties. On the radio they should be strictly avoided.

***Example:***

*e.g. so, basically, and, as I said, just, like, I’d say, yeah…*

A presenter is the person who guides through a radio show. The texts that he speaks are called

“presentations.” This means the presenter has two central tasks at the same time:

• to structure the show in a plain and simple language

• to intrigue the audience, to entertain and to whet an appetite for the subjects

This is where creativity is called for!

The following is part of the individual tasks of a presenter:

**Presentation technique: keyword script**

In presentations it is even more important to speak freely and not to sound like it is being “read off” than in all other radio texts. However, not everything is what it seems: good presentations are only in the rarest cases spontaneous improvisations. Quite the contrary: presentations need to be well prepared to be the way they were supposed to be and to avoid unnecessary fillers and flowery phrases. You can write down a whole text and highlight the most important words with a highlighter.

**Grading/Judging Criteria:**

a. **Voice**: Was the voice, including quality, pitch, volume, and rate, used to good advantage? Was the voice well modulated?

b. **Phrasing**: Did the phrasing bring out the meaning of the news? Did it allow for the proper breathing? Did it provide smooth continuity to the material

read? Were the inflections varied, flexible, and meaningful? Did they fit the context of the material read?

c. **Reading**: Was the reading clearly articulated? Was pronunciation accurate and was enunciation distinct and appropriate to the speaker?

d. **Microphone Technique**: Did the speaker maintain proper distance from the microphone? Was breathing inaudible? Did the speaker eliminate script

noise?

e. **Composition**: Was material well arranged? Were proper transitions made? Was excessive filler used? Were stories well developed and interesting?

f. **Timing**: Did the speaker effectively utilize the full 5 minutes with a minimum of "dead air" or overtime?