



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 7 to 10
About the Author:	Adapted from lessons created by Rosalind Ross, David Halliday and John Crocker of the Durham Board of Education in The AML Anthology (1990), produced by the Association for Media Literacy.

Radio News

Overview

This lesson is part of a unit that explores news journalism across the media. In this lesson, students learn the differences between print and non-print journalism by looking at how news is reported on radio and then comparing it to newspaper and television news. Students begin with an analysis of their radio-listening habits and an introduction to the terms and vocabulary associated with radio and television. As a group, they will analyze, contrast and compare news broadcasts from a variety of radio stations, as well as compare radio journalism to print journalism. As a final assignment, students will compare the strengths and weakness of both television and radio as sources of news.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the terminology associated with radio and television
- an appreciation of the strengths and the weaknesses of a variety of mediums as sources of information
- an appreciation of the role that target audience plays in the creation and content of a news broadcast on radio or on television
- an awareness of the way in which news is "packaged" for a particular target audience
- an awareness of their radio-listening habits and attitudes
- an understanding of how different mediums approach news reporting

Preparation and Materials

Photocopy student handouts:

- *Radio News Questionnaire*
- *Radio and Television Vocabulary*
- *Radio News Information Chart*



Procedure

- Begin the class with a general discussion of the place radio occupies in the lives of our students. (In order to facilitate this investigation, give students time to complete the *Radio News Questionnaire* prior to the class discussion.)
- Distribute and discuss *Radio and TV Vocabulary*.

Activity One: Radio News Comparison

- Divide the class into groups of three students.
- Within each group, each student will listen to a radio news broadcast and, using a column from the *Radio News Information Chart*, make notes about content, style, length of program, advertisers, etc. (In order to ensure a wide cross-section, students should be encouraged to choose from a variety of stations - am, fm, public radio, easy listening, university-based, etc. - and not just teen-oriented stations.)
- When students return to their groups the next day, have them share, compare and contrast their findings with group members.
- Have each group summarize their findings and present them to class.

Class Discussion:

Ask students:

- What are the key similarities and differences between radio news journalism and newspaper journalism?
- How is a radio news broadcast similar to the front page of a newspaper?
- Compared to newspapers, what are the limitations of radio when it comes to sharing news?
- What advantages does radio news broadcasting have over newspapers?

Activity Two: Comparing Radio News and Television News

- Using the criteria from the *Radio News Information Chart* as a guide, have students listen to and make notes on a radio news program and a television news program from the same night.
- In class the next day, have students return to their groups to discuss the different ways in which TV and radio each handle the news.
- As a class, discuss the key differences and similarities between radio news and television news.

Evaluation

Completed *Radio News Information Charts* for both radio and for television and radio.



Radio News Questionnaire

How much do you know about radio news?

1. What stations do you listen to?
2. Why do you listen to the radio?
3. What stations do other members of your family listen to?
4. How many hours per day do you listen to the radio?
5. What are call numbers?
6. What is the target audience of your station?
7. Would there be a difference in approach between different stations?
8. Name some products advertised on the station you listen to during the news broadcast.
9. In what order is the following information presented
 - local news
 - national news
 - international news
 - weather - sports
10. Where would you expect to get the most detailed analysis of the news:
 - radio
 - television
 - newspaper
 - newsmagazine
11. When would the majority of people listen to the radio news: morning, afternoon, night? Why?



Radio and Television Vocabulary

Call sign: the letters assigned to identify the radio or television station (CHUM, CFTR, CBLT)

Frequency: the numbers on the dial identify the length of energy wave transmitting the program signal

Network: a chain of many stations owned and operated by a parent company (CTV) or government agency (CBC)

Affiliate: a local station owned by the parent company, or an independent station, both subscribing to some network programming and producing their own local content

Cable: much like a telephone company, cables link customers to programming rather than using the airwaves

Anchor: the person who provides the studio focus for the news but calls upon others for weather, sports, local and on-the-scene reports

Correspondent: a news writer/reporter, based in another area or country, who gives regular reports on a developing story

Clip/footage: a segment produced outside the studio or a satellite

Insert: transmission tape inserted into the studio broadcast to add immediacy and scope to the news presentation

Ratings: information solicited by survey companies indicating to the advertisers the size of the audience for a particular program, including news broadcasts



Radio News Information Chart

	Station #1	Station #2	Station #3
Call letters, AM/FM			
Age and occupation of target audience			
What is the lead story? Details?			
Other stories			
On-the-scene reports? Why were they used?			
How long was spent on: (in minutes) 1. international 2. national 3. local 4. sports 5. weather 6. commercials			
Products advertised			
Total length of news broadcast, including commercials			
Tone of broadcaster			

