

Radio – Introduction

These activities are geared towards giving students a brief introduction to radio and finding out what they already know.

Activity 1

Students should be encouraged to discuss what they already know starting with a simple activity to get them thinking of as many radio stations as they know. Once a list has been gathered, students should then be pushed to start thinking about how they could group these stations – this could be by target audience for example, or by content and style of delivery, but teachers should push for students to consider different funding models (BBC licence fee and Independent and commercial stations), which will be explained further in the next activity.

Activity 2

Students need to begin considering the different radio forms – BBC radio, Independent & Commercial and regional radio. They will do this by deciding if each of the named stations or programmes is: BBC radio, Independent & Commercial or regional.

They should then begin to consider the differences between BBC radio, Independent & Commercial or Regional radio.

Activity 3

The final introductory activity encourages students to think about where and how people listen to the radio. Students should begin to consider how technology has changed radio access and there should be some discussion around how different settings and mobile technology influences people's listening habits.

Generic Codes and Conventions

Activity 1

The first activity is a way of finding out what students already know about radio music programmes' codes and conventions. Remind them that they are focusing on radio **music** programmes.

Activity 2

The second activity requires time to listen to a range of extracts from a range of radio music programmes. Teachers can provide their own links or they can use the ones supplied but please note that the included links take you to either a webpage where you can download and listen to a podcast or a webpage where you can listen live. This will take some forward planning as listening live may mean that much of the broadcast may be back to back music and students need to be looking for codes and conventions.

Students should be coming up with the following codes and conventions: music chat, guest interviews, audience phone-ins and competitions.

BBC Radio One remit

Students should be encouraged to think about the BBC as an institution as part of the radio industry. They should be aware of their remit, how they work hard to maintain their PSB remit and how they're funded.

Activity 1

The Radio One remit is given with some words omitted. Students need to select the correct words from the drop down menus to re-create the remit. The link will take you to the website where they can find the remit in full.

Activity 2

It's helpful if students can come up with examples of their own to understand how BBC Radio One aims to meet their remit as much as possible. In order to do this, a link is provided for students to browse some of the Radio One podcasts and they have to complete the table, finding examples of how Radio One meets its remit.

Some examples of the kinds of things that students might be aiming for:

Remit	Example of how it fulfils this
Entertain and engage a broad range of young listeners	Combination of current music and older songs – for example, on the Scott Mills show, he and Chris do a feature called Bangers which allows listeners to decide who made the best choice of a 'banging tune' that day. Often this is a pairing of one older song and one more contemporary song. They may stipulate a specific episode and songs.
Distinctive mix of contemporary music and speech.	DJs often invite artists onto their show and interview them before playing their recent release, this provides a good balance of contemporary music and speech. They may stipulate a specific episode and song.
Reflect the lives and interests of 15-29 year olds.	There is currently a feature running on the Greg James show where listeners are able to call up for advice about stress around exams and revision. This obviously targets school age listeners but some of the people who have called up are doing Masters or PhDs. They may stipulate a specific episode.
Offer a range of new music and support emerging artists	Radio One runs a 'Track of the Day' feature which showcases a brand new track, often from a less well known artist. They may stipulate a specific episode and songs.

Provide a platform for live music.	There are weekly live lounge sessions which allow artists to come and showcase their music. They may stipulate a specific episode and artist.
News, documentaries and advice campaigns should cover areas of relevance to young adults	Newsbeat often run one-off longer special reports that focus on topics that would be relevant to young adults. They may stipulate a specific episode.

Case Study: Nick Grimshaw on Radio One Breakfast

These activities relate specifically to the case study but the template for the activities could be just as easily applied to another station too by encouraging students to do some background research themselves.

Activity 1

This is designed to encourage students to understand how a station's identity, remit and choice of presenters contributes to a programme's style and content.

They need to listen to some extract from Nick Grimshaw's show and consider his delivery style. They should spot that he is comical and lively, they may also note that he sounds relaxed and/or knowledgeable about music.

Activity 2

This is just information for the students to read, some background if they didn't already know it and encourages the students to consider some of the features he includes as a way in to think about specific ways of targeting audiences.

Activity 3

After listening to some more extracts, students need to begin analysing the show a little to understand what it does to targeting its chosen audience (15-29 year olds). They should consider: **media language** such as codes, conventions, mode of address and content.

Responses they may come up with might include:

- Encouraging listeners to get in touch with the show through social media, phoning or texting which allows the audience some interaction and to feel a part of the show instead of just passive listeners.
- Comedy to make the audience laugh at/with the hosts.
- Banter between presenters makes the audience feel they are hearing more about their lives and getting to know them.

- Contemporary music and musical chat linked to current songs and artists gives the listeners information and entertains them.
- Discussion of topics specific to younger audiences – acne, exam stress etc.

Activity 4

Students should now consider what the BBC is doing as an industry to target a younger audience.

Responses they may come up with might include:

- Replacing the older Breakfast show host Chris Moyles with Nick Grimshaw in September 2012
- Younger presenters such as Greg James and Jameela Jamil were also given high-profile slots over 'older' predecessors
- Installing cameras in studios so listeners can watch shows or parts of them
- Launching a YouTube channel where viewers can watch humorous stunts filmed by presenters
- Increased publicity surrounding festivals such as The Big Weekend and the Ibiza Weekend
- Mobile technology – iPlayer app, podcasts, downloads
- Television shown live on BBC iPlayer

Activity 5

Students need to be aware of the difference between a target audience who the station hopes is listening and are actively targeting and the actual audience profile of who is listening.

They might draw out some of the following features as examples of why these audience groups are tuning in:

Under 15s	Contemporary music and easy to access on mobile technology.
Age 30+	Throwback Thursday or similar features where they play songs from a decade or two ago for listeners to reminisce.
Females	Interviews, music chat and banter between presenters. Typically women like conversation.
ABC1	Regular listeners who tune in and have always tuned in at a set time – maybe on the way to work for example.
White people	The all white cast of Radio One's Breakfast show means that white people are better represented and may arguably feel, subconsciously, connected to the show a little more than a non-white.

Finally, students will consider the Uses and Gratification model and may consider entertainment, interaction, identification or education as the reason specific groups tune in.

Activity 6

Students should understand how the BBC is different to Commercial radio in terms of its regulation. They should do some research into OfCom and how its role in regulation of the BBC is now changing. This may lead into a discussion of funding and teachers should encourage students to consider how OfCom might have a problem with the fact that they do not fulfil their remit successfully enough, which was to target 15-29 year olds. The BBC Trust has not been too bothered by this but OfCom might be. This would be a good area for stronger students to research.