



Create Your Own Wildlife Podcast Episode

Lesson Duration: Approximately 6 class periods (1 hour each)
Suggested Grade Level: Middle and High School (Grades 7-12)
Lesson Objective: Students will create their own wildlife podcast episode to communicate how wildlife interact within their ecosystem.
NGSS Covered: <i>MS-LS2, HS-LS2, HS-ETS2</i>

Background: Science Communication is the process of educating, raising awareness, and distilling technical science information into stories, graphics, and presentations. Communicating science is important for scientists to get their findings to the general public and is critical for developing science policies.

In this lesson, students will create their own wildlife podcast episode. There are many different types of podcasts: storytelling and Q&A podcasts are two popular types. In this lesson, students will focus on the storytelling type. For more podcasting lessons, check out NPR's "Teaching Podcasting: A Curriculum Guide for Educators" (<https://www.npr.org/2018/11/15/662116901/teaching-podcasting-a-curriculum-guide-for-educators>).

Another great resource for learning about recording audio is YR Media: <https://yr.media>. Before you begin, find out if your school already uses recording and sound editing software such as ProTools and Adobe Audition. Audacity also has a free audio editing software version: <https://www.audacityteam.org/>

Materials Needed: Computer and internet access, audio recording and editing software

Activity:

1. Have students go to: <https://nhfishgame.com/series/otnt-nhfg/> and listen to *On the Nature Trail* podcast episodes and/or go to <https://www.nhpr.org/show/something-wild> to listen to *Something Wild* podcast episodes. Students might also want to explore other nature and wildlife podcasts. As a class or in small groups, discuss the following:
 - How long was the podcast episode and did it hold your attention?
 - What is the general topic or theme?
 - Besides the narrator, what other sounds are in the episode?
 - What did you learn? List 2 interesting facts from the episode.
2. Explain to students that they are going to create their own wildlife podcast episode that explains how wildlife interact within their ecosystem. As a class or in groups, have students brainstorm ideas for their podcast episode theme. A story of an experience can be particularly interesting and facts about wildlife can be researched and added into the story. To get some ideas, take a walk around the school yard or community, observing wildlife that you encounter.



3. Draft a script. The *On the Nature Trail* podcast episodes are approximately 350 words in length and 5 minutes recorded. Students should practice reading the script aloud, editing as needed.
4. Record the script. Students should do multiple takes and name/organize saved files as they go.
5. Brainstorm 3-5 sounds that would enhance the story. Identify where they go in the script.
6. Record these sounds or search online for free audio clips.
7. Use audio recording software to mix and edit the podcast episode. This can be the hardest and longest part of the process. Students may need to re-record parts or sounds.
8. Listen and share your podcast episode!

Extension: Use this podcast creation process throughout the school year to reinforce and communicate science-learning themes or science field trip experiences.

Assessment: Students can break down the steps of creating a podcast episode and understand how story telling is an important part of science communication.