

# PSA Quality Checklist

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## ✓ **Establish your purpose**

What is your subject? Is your PSA intended to persuade? Inform? Something else? Identify the target audience specifically: age, location, education level, socio-economic status, etc. Decide clearly what type of people are you hoping to reach and what you want your audience to think, feel, and do after hearing your PSA.

## ✓ **Stay sharply focused**

Choose one or two main points; don't overload listeners with too many messages. List all of the possible messages and then decide on the most vital one or two. If possible, include members of your target group in the brainstorming. Try to encapsulate your message into a one-sentence topic statement.

## ✓ **Use sound to build your emotional appeal**

Make notes about the type of sounds that might enhance the voice narration of your message. At minimum, you should include theme music. Optionally, consider using sound effects. Do you want ambient sound from a restaurant or other type of location? How about sound effects, like a door closing or keys jingling?

## ✓ **Look for the hook**

Radio audiences are usually doing something else while listening, so start with a message aimed at grabbing the listener's attention - something emotional, catchy music, or a startling statistic. "Your heart could be a ticking time bomb!"

## ✓ **Keep it simple**

You only have seconds, so the language must be simple. Make every word count. For reference, in 30 seconds your characters can speak 50-75 words. The message should not be about details. Your goal is to make an impression.

## ✓ **Limit the cast of characters**

Limit the number of characters to two plus a narrator. This will help your audience focus on the message.

## ✓ **Get your story straight**

Check and verify your facts. Are they up to date? Misinformation is an unforgivable sin when creating a PSA. Do your due diligence in the research phase!

✓ **Provide a call to action**

You want listeners to do something, so finish by requesting a specific action: call a number, visit a website, donate money, sign up to volunteer, attend an event, etc. Plan to stop the narration 2 or 3 seconds before the end; radio stations sometimes stop early.

✓ **Pace Yourself**

During exposition, speak at about 150 words per minute. Slower than 120 will be a drag and faster than 180 will be hard to follow. Be particularly careful if you know that you normally have a very fast speaking voice. To check pacing, time yourself reading a passage of known length.