

Audio Productions – Codes and Conventions

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As with other media forms, audio production codes and conventions can differ from genre to genre. A radio drama will be very different to a sport podcast.

Codes

Sound – there would be a lot of different sounds, like ambience sounds which would help give the audience an 3D environment, this could be helped with special **sound effects** (sfx). all of this could help tell the audience where they are. Foley sound is recording your own sound effects. Aural Signposting (set the scene via noise, sounds and voices).

- **Speech** – The manner in which words are spoken, Enunciation, pitch, accent, timbre, clarity, prevent ‘popping’, ‘fillers’ etc.
- **Narration & Direct Speech** – With no visual, the audience is effectively blind. A narrator (or presenter) breaks the “Fourth Wall” and talks directly to the audience acting as a guide for the listener. They can pass on information to the audience that might have be done visually in a film
- **Music** – This can help set the mood, tone and **setting** of a scene. Works the same as analysing non-diegetic music in a film.
- **Silence** – you wouldn’t want sound all the time, silence can bring dramatic effect when you’re telling a story. silence would be best used when there is a end of a section or scene. Silence could also break down the dialogue which can help the audience think and help giving a breathing break.

Sound design - audio logo aural mix used on its own to identify a product/service. intro – musical welcome/ initial credits. outro – musical farewell (shorter) – end. jingle/bumper -slogan or vocal line set to an engaging melody.

Foley – incidental or natural sounds added to create ambience.

Instrumental – music track without vocals.

Loop – music track being seamlessly repeated infinitely.

Bumpers, Jingles and stingers – sound techniques to break up an audio production and add more audience engagement.

Editing – How has the audio been cut and reassembled?

Setting - As in film, does the setting of an audio play/production relay any information to the audience?

Conventions

Aural Signposting – This is where the setting of a scene is established with audio cues (accents, vehicle sounds, background noise etc).

General structure – Differs from audio genre to genre. If an audio drama, is it a classic 3 act structure? If a podcast, is there an introduction, topics, interviews, Conclusion/Goodbye etc.

Opening, progression to a close – The introduction of characters, narrative questions that need to be answered, Cliff-hanger endings – Used in both audio and film narratives – a way of keeping the audience interested

Structuring of Time – Same as narrative film. Does this audio production span days, years etc. Also, are there flashbacks or forwards and how is this achieved with sound?

Titles and credits – This includes names of cast and/or presenters and people involved with production. Credits are usually spoken at the end of a production such as a radio play.

Visual 'logo' for distribution – Most radio shows/podcasts have a visual that is used to identify on the distribution platform (e.g. iTunes). What design features help the audience to understand the genre of the podcast?

Point of View – Same as a narrative film – whose point of view is the audio play from?

Character and Story arcs - in an audio play this is the same as a narrative film

Cause and effect - in an audio play this is the same as a narrative film (a chain of events).

Storylines - in an audio play this is the same as a narrative film

Interviews - these are a big feature in Podcasts and documentaries. Gives an audience an expert's opinions or point of view.