Contents

Content	Style / Genre	Page

Information for Teachers

This has been a difficult period in so many ways. We have had to adapt to new ways of working, living – and teaching.

In other times a group performance, while stressful for all those involved in producing it, gave the opportunity for teamwork and chances for students to shine in different ways.

At the moment we need to be different. This project aims to give you and your students the opportunity to produce collaborative radio plays.

They are not complex but have the flexibility to use whatever technical facilities you and your students have at your disposal.

You will need:

1. A way of recording sound
2. The scripts in this resource
3. Loads of things which make noises
4. Some children (these could be included in the previous category)

Every school is different and has different facilities and constraints. Therefore the suggestions below are just that – suggestions.

1. Recording

At the very least you will need a machine to record sound onto. You may need a second machine to play the sound back if the first machine does not have its own speaker. If using two machines, you will need a way to connect them.

Your first machine could be a mobile device - phone or tablet. If it doesn't already have the facility to record sound then you can download an app which will allow you to do this. There are hundreds of free ones available, either from Google Play (for Android devices) or from the App Store (for iPhones, iPads, etc.) There are also free editing apps which will let you manipulate the recorded sounds or add sounds to what has already been recorded.

You may wish to invest in an external (plug in) microphone. Built-in microphones are fine for making phone calls but have limitations when recording any sounds which are more than a few inches away. Similarly, the built-in speaker on your device won't be very good. Connect it to an external speaker using Bluetooth or a cable. If using the microphone on a phone or tablet, remember it's on the screen side so that's the side which needs to face the actor(s). Don't hold it in your hand; use a tripod or improvised holder. Try to have it roughly level with students' mouths. If you are recording onto a PC / Chromebook, or plan on transferring your recordings to one, then you could download one of many free programs which will let you edit your recording.[1] Editing isn't just chopping the mistakes out, it's also adding bits in. So sound effects

---

[1] Try Audacity / Ocenaudio / Ashampoo Music Studio 2019 / Audiotool / Acoustica 6

could be added *after* the words have been recorded. Or an echo could be put onto a character's voice. Or you could add music. But the better the **original** recording, the better the **final** sound file.

Editing in this way is a little bit 'cherry on the cake'; in most instances pressing the Pause button on the app you are using will suffice for this project. **Don't** use the Stop button – you'll automatically start a new file/recording each time you start and your project will be spread across several recordings.

If all this is beyond your expertise – or your budget – then simply use a video camera or a tablet to record video. But you won't be watching the picture so don't worry about framing or focus.

If using Zoom, there is the facility to record a "meeting" in Video mode and in Audio-only mode. Choosing Audio will produce a sound only file.

Introductory Activities

1. Teacher Story

Divide the students in to three roughly equal groups. The teacher tells a story about what s/he did yesterday which has the opportunity for many sound effects to be included. As each sound occurs in the story, the teacher points to a group who need to make it. It isn't rehearsed – it's done spontaneously. Teacher to use hand up and down to increase / decrease volume. Make the story so that it's perfectly possible to have two groups simultaneously making different noises.

The story *could* start off:

When I got up on Saturday I needed to go to the shops for some milk. I went out making sure I closed the front door *(point to group 1)* and started up my car *(group 2)*. Unfortunately the car alarm went off *(group 3)*. I started the car again *(group 2)* and drove down to the shops *(group 1)*. I turned off the engine *(point at group 1 and lower hand as a signal to stop)*. There was a man selling the Big Issue outside the supermarket *(group 3)*.

And so on. The story can get as fantastical as you like (the helicopter crash, the police sirens, your escape using a jetpack). Don't always point to the groups in sequence so that they don't ever know whose turn is next.

2. Who Is It?

A simple game, but one which is both funny and effective. It makes the students think about their own voice and how to manipulate it.

One student – Cheniece Wilson - is put at the front of the class but facing away from them. Everyone now changes seats so that the 'volunteer' does not know where anyone behind them is sitting. The teacher points to a student and says 'Number 1 please'.

Pupil Number 1 says, in a disguised voice, 'Good morning Cheniece Wilson'. Cheniece then has to guess the identity of Number 1. The teacher notes the guess and the actual student who spoke but, at this time, does not reveal to Cheniece if she was correct.

The same sentence is repeated by each student, one by one. As Cheniece works her way through the class, she may suddenly realise that a previous guess was wrong and that Number 8 is Archie, not Number 2 as she thought previously. Do you let her make retrospective changes?

Students should obviously use a voice which is as different to their own as possible – a pirate, a robot, a deep voice, a croaky voice. When everyone has spoken, run it again but this time Cheniece can be told the correct answer after each pupil speaks.

Hands up – who fooled Cheniece?

Extension Activities - Blue Skies (1)

First question – why are they called 'Soaps'?

Originally an American Commercial Radio genre, the programmes were sponsored by soap companies (in the same way that Argos now sponsors Coronation Street).

People who work on them, and the TV Awards organisations, refer to them as 'continuing dramas'.

So a soap needs:

> A set of reappearing characters;
>
> A particular place to happen;
>
> Storylines which take place over months or even years, with several storylines in each episode;
>
> Cutting back and forth between locations;
>
> A cliffhanger ending for each episode (and mini-cliffhangers in some scenes).

Why are they called cliffhangers? In early American cinemas there was no main film but rather several short films, one of which would always be a serial, such as *The Perils of Pauline*. At the end of the episode the hero would be in grave peril – hanging off a cliff or tied to a railway track – and the audience would need to come back next week to see what happened (clue: she escaped). So, it made great commercial sense. Of course, the modern soaps continue this. The EastEnders duff-duffs are linked to below.

The Archers radio soap was originally meant to be a limited-time radio programme with the intention of educating farmers after World War II. It has been on the radio since 1951 and is the world's longest running soap with over 19,000 episodes.