

Selecting a Story to Adapt

Information Sheet

Adapting an existing piece of literature is probably the easiest way to create a radio play script. For your source, you can use a short story, a myth, a poem, a biography, a stage play, or even a novel. Try to select a story about which you can answer “YES” to as many of the following questions as possible.

- 1. Are there several sections of dialogue in the story?** The more dialogue the story contains, the easier the story will be to adapt.
- 2. Does the story contain sound effect possibilities?** As you read the story, look for possibilities for using sound effects that can help portray action and setting. Below are some common purposes for using sound effects. There are, of course any number of purposes for using SFX.
 - a. Sounds that portray action:** The opening or closing of a door, automobile engines, footsteps, etc.
 - b. Sounds that establish setting of time:** The sound of crickets, the chiming of a clock, a rooster crowing, coyotes howling, etc.
 - c. Sounds that establish setting of place:** The sound of a running brook, crashing waves, the clatter of silverware, street noises, seagulls, etc.
- 3. Are most of these “sound effects possibilities” common sounds that do not need to be synchronized with dialogue?** Too many sounds that need to be synchronized with dialogue will make the production of your play more difficult to produce. It is important to consider the sophistication of your equipment and expertise, before trying to incorporate complex sound effects into your script. Using background sound effects that establish the setting will not only make the script easier to write, but will also make the production job easier and more successful.
- 4. Can the story be told in the allotted time limit?** If you have five minutes to tell the story, be sure to pick a story that has a simple straightforward line of action. For longer stories (with your teacher's approval), you may choose to select one or two scenes to write as dialog scenes and tell the rest of the story with summarized narrative speeches. Remember also, that you will need transitions between scenes. A radio play without transitions will appear confusing to your audience.
- 5. Do you like and understand the story?** Of course a thorough understanding can only be developed with indepth study, but if there are many complicated or unclear meanings after your first reading, consider looking for another story.