

Unit 40: Speech Package Production

Unit code:	R/600/6673
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to develop learners' understanding of opportunities for speech package production for contemporary radio stations in the UK. Learners will then be enabled to generate their own ideas for specific speech packages and record and edit a speech package for a specified programme type appropriate to a particular audience.

● Unit introduction

The pre-recorded speech package is a fundamental component of many radio programmes. Its purpose is to provide listeners with more detailed information about a specific topic. Speech packages may be found in a variety of radio programmes, including the type of news bulletin that is typical of music stations, in news and current affairs discussions and in magazine programmes of different types. The length, duration and scheduling of a speech package is dictated by a combination of its content, the station house style and the duration of the programme in which it is included.

While a speech package would normally include interview material, other components might consist of actuality, sound effects, music beds and vox pops. Essentially, though, the speech package is factual rather than fictional and it should convey within its structure the essential elements of a true story, perhaps explaining a topical issue or presenting both sides of a current controversy.

Speech package producers need to be able to originate appropriate ideas that the target audience will find interesting and to fully research and produce them ready for broadcast. Usually they will be reporters or producers based at a radio station or a national network, but sometimes freelance producers propose packages for topical magazine programmes and, if commissioned, go on to produce them for a fee.

In this unit, learners will develop their understanding and skills relating to speech package production, moving from the identification and generation of initial ideas for speech packages, through the research stage to the production of the finished product. Speech packages individually produced by learners in fulfilment of this unit may be included in programmes produced for related units in the qualification.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to identify opportunities for producing speech-based packages for factual and news radio programmes
- 2 Be able to generate ideas for speech-based packages for specific contexts and target audiences
- 3 Be able to research factual content for a speech-based package
- 4 Be able to prepare and produce a speech package with studio link and cue material.

Unit content

1 Be able to identify opportunities for producing speech-based packages for factual and news radio programmes

Factual programmes: programme genre (discussion, magazine, music sequence, documentary, investigative); subjects, eg consumer, business, lifestyle, sport; pre-recorded; audience (national, regional, local)

News programmes: information and current affairs programmes; context (bulletins, longer news programmes, current affairs); purpose (in-depth reporting, obituary, billboard)

Contributors: eg interviewees, reporters, correspondents, experts, politicians; vox pops; recording (face-to-face, location, studio-based, telephone)

Ethics and regulation: representation, eg stereotyping; balance and impartiality; objectivity and subjectivity; confidentiality; privacy; libel; copyright, clearances and permissions; fact checking; editorial guidelines

2 Be able to generate ideas for speech-based packages for specific contexts and target audiences

Treatment: pace; delivery; language register; style (formal, casual, serious, informational, confrontational, emotional, entertaining, educational)

Contexts: news bulletins; factual programmes (news, discussion, magazine, music sequence, documentary, investigative); national stations; regional stations; local stations; BBC; commercial radio; station house style

Target audiences: profiles; demographics (age, gender, social class, ethnicity); interests; psychographics

3 Be able to research factual content for a speech-based package

Secondary research: internet; television; press releases; other radio programmes; books; newspapers; magazines; archive; referencing sources

Primary research: check calls; contact book; first-hand accounts (eye witness, survivor, expert testimony, emergency services, vox pops); interviews; atmosphere; actuality

4 Be able to prepare and produce a speech package with studio link and cue material

Content: structural elements (script, questions, reporter links, interviewees, contributors, vox pops); location (studio-based, remote); factual; based on research; additional material (background atmosphere, actuality)

Presentation: pre-recorded (in introduction, in links, in conclusion); as-live (avoiding 'I asked' in links); pace (for mood, expression, understanding); delivery (over music bed, dry)

Cue material: use of cue sheets; written cues (studio links into and out of package); content information (indicating 'in' words and 'out' words, duration); teasers; background information; technical information

Technical quality: location sound quality; audio levels; normalisation; consideration of production values (use of portable recorder, landline, mobile phone links)

Health and safety: eg on location, in studio, at workstation

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe opportunities for producing speech-based packages for factual and news radio programmes	M1 explain opportunities for producing speech-based packages for factual and news-based radio programmes with reference to detailed illustrative examples	D1 critically evaluate opportunities for producing speech-based packages for factual and news radio programmes with supporting arguments and elucidated examples
P2 generate suitable ideas for speech-based packages for specific contexts and target audiences working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance [CT]	M2 generate detailed ideas for speech-based packages for specific contexts and target audiences showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance	D2 generate thoroughly thought-through ideas for speech-based packages for specific contexts and target audiences showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations
P3 research appropriate material for a speech package [IE]	M3 research detailed illustrative material for a speech package with explanations for choices made	D3 research precisely focused material for a speech package with full justification for choices made
P4 produce a speech package with studio link and cue material working within appropriate conventions and with some assistance. [SM]	M4 produce a speech package with relevant studio link and cue material to a good technical standard, showing some imagination and with only occasional assistance.	D4 produce a speech package with relevant studio link and cue material to near-professional technical standards, showing creativity and flair and working independently to professional expectations.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

The key to success in this unit is the provision of a wide range of opportunities to hear speech packages in the initial stages. Material collected from a range of radio stations targeting different audiences will provide the range of examples that learners need in order to identify for learning outcome 1 the variety of treatments and structures that can apply to this type of product. National and local radio stations use speech packages, but uses differ in treatment, pace, content, language register and delivery. Learners should be encouraged to listen in class to either live broadcasts or recordings of packages from a range of these stations. Learners should identify the radio station, the purpose and the audience at which each package was targeted. The degree to which learners identify the respective differences in delivery, pace, language register, vocabulary, speech form, suitability for identified audience and the declared target audience of each radio station will contribute to the grade achieved. References to audience profiles, which will provide some of the material for learning outcome 2, may be found on relevant websites.

Increased familiarity with broadcast examples from this variety of sources should then inform learners when they are preparing material that addresses learning outcome 3. Learners should also be supported in class through lectures and seminars, with research skills development, techniques of drafting and refining content and structuring speech packages. Reference should be made throughout the development process to the target audience for which the package is being produced. Emphasis should be placed on the need to pre-time and rehearse read scripted material, using appropriate language and at an appropriate level of understanding for the target audience.

Opportunities for recording, editing, mixing and balancing the package will form the basis of work for learning outcome 4. Learners should be given the opportunity to become familiar with portable recorders, for which appropriate practical workshops and training sessions with recording exercises will need to be scheduled.

The finished package should have a pre-recorded studio link in a different voice, relevant written cue material that includes the name of the programme for which the package was produced, appropriate 'in' and 'out' words and the duration or running time. Learners should be aware that consideration will be given in assessment to the fitness for purpose of the voice piece, the appropriateness of the recorded dialogue for the station and target audience, and the recorded technical quality.

It is common for learners to produce speech packages that reflect their own listening habits and levels of radio listening, which in general will involve mixing fast-paced speech over music beds. This will mean developing the ability to use a workstation-based, multi-channel speech editor and mixing application as a prerequisite to the successful production of the finished package. Again, rehearsal and practice in classroom exercises will produce the necessary level of competence to complete this part of the unit. Not all package production requires this, however.

The speech package, because it is a small component or element of another much longer programme, does not need to be encumbered by a programme introduction or menu. However, it will need a studio link to introduce the interviewer, reporter or contributor delivering the voice piece (the learner) and a link back to the studio at the end of the package. Any other contributor can be briefly introduced and contextualised within the package.

The production of the speech package will provide opportunities for the learner to use location sound recording equipment to gather content from their own voice and other contributors. The pre-recorded material can then be edited, mixed and balanced on a digital editing workstation.

Where editing resources are confined to a single track, and there is no studio mixer, the nature of the packages created will generally consist of speech with any original background atmosphere mixed at the location recording stage. This will allow only for butt-editing sound bites. However, the vox pop is normally created in this way and would present an appropriate component part of a speech package created in this manner.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of planning the teaching and assessment of this unit.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and unit assessment.
Introduction to speech packages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech packages in factual non-news radio programmes and their audiences speech packages in news-based radio programmes and their audiences.
Lectures on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech packages for audiences of music sequence programmes speech packages for audiences of news magazine programmes speech packages for audiences in consumer programmes speech packages for audiences in lifestyle/wellbeing programmes interview techniques audio recording and editing health and safety in production scripting introductions questions, wraps and handovers.
Workshop: sourcing and analysing structure and content of speech packages.
Visiting speaker: news or current affairs presenter or journalist from a radio station.
Assignment 1 – Speech Packages Today Learners have been commissioned to research, analyse and write an illustrated guide to making speech packages for specific radio programme types and defined audiences. Learners will analyse a number of speech packages and then write the guide, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> purposes of speech packages styles of speech packages structures of speech packages.
Tutorial to evaluate producer's guide.
Workshop (working in groups): ideas generation for speech packages referring to producer's guide completed in Assignment 1.
Simulation exercise in scriptwriting.
Learners will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepare draft scripts and treatments for a speech package.

Topics and suggested assignments and activities

Assignment 2 – Generating Ideas

In their role as trainee radio employees, learners have been charged with researching ideas for a range of speech packages to be included in a specific radio programme with a defined audience.

Learners will:

- prepare draft ideas in the form of treatments, interview questions and/or scripts accordingly for a diverse range of speech packages.

Tutorial to evaluate ideas for speech packages.

Workshops:

- recording interviews, discussions, vox pops
- editing pre-recorded speech material
- editing recordings.

Simulation exercise in recording and editing a speech package.

Learners will:

- source contributors
- record speech packages
- edit speech packages.

Assignment 3 – Planning and Pre-production

In their role as trainee radio employees, learners have been charged with researching content for a speech package to be included in a specific radio programme with a defined audience.

Learners will:

- research a single specific speech package on a specific topic targeting a defined audience of an identified radio programme
- plan and prepare pre-production documentation for a single speech package.

Tutorial to evaluate planning.

Assignment 4 – Production

In their role as trainee radio employees and using relevant pre-production and planning documentation, learners have been tasked with producing the speech package they researched in Assignment 3.

Learners will:

- produce a working script
- record and edit their speech package targeting a defined audience of an identified radio programme
- complete 'in' and 'out' cue sheet.

Tutorial to evaluate speech package and assessment.

Assessment

Evidence for assessment

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 1 could take the form of a series of found examples of speech packages, sourced from a range of radio stations recorded in some permanent way by the learner and with a commentary in some appropriate format. Written case studies and oral presentations would be equally valid. Oral presentations must be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification.

For some learners, a formal viva voce assessment might be appropriate. When more than one learner in a cohort is assessed in this way, care must be taken to ensure that all learners are asked equivalent questions, and that all are given equal opportunities to expand or clarify their answers. Interviewers must also ensure that questions are not phrased in such a way as to provide or suggest an answer. Formal vivas should be recorded for the purposes of internal and external verification and at least 50 per cent of such assessments must be internally verified.

Evidence for achievement of learning outcome 2 requires each learner to produce a portfolio or blog comprising a range of ideas for speech packages for insertion in different types of radio programme

To create the evidence for achievement of learning outcome 3 the learner will research a specific idea that will provide an opportunity for realisation into a speech package and source the detailed content that will develop into a final scripted piece for production. Evidence could be in the form of a research log and treatment.

Achievement of learning outcome 4 will be evidenced by the production, from the material produced for Assignment 3, of a completed individual speech package, including script and questions asked. The package should be between two and four minutes in duration, according to the running time of the programme in which it is inserted and the station house style.

Application of grading criteria

When applying the grading criteria, tutors should follow the advice given below. Please note that any examples of evidence given here are indicative only. This advice is not exhaustive and the examples need not specifically be included in a learner's work in order for that learner to achieve the exemplified grade.

Pass

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve all the criteria at pass level. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

P1: the learner will have found and commented on only a small number of speech packages from a limited number of radio stations of a similar type – for example, from news programmes and factual programmes of personal interest, or music sequences. The descriptions of the differences will be elementary and probably content based, rather than offering an explanation of the range of formats and structures. Reference to style and audience will be descriptive rather than analytical, with identification of only a small range of different target audiences which may be closely related to the demographic of the individual learner. There will be limited comparison drawn between items. Evidence will show a basic understanding of technical terminology but learners will generally be unsure about this vocabulary and will make fairly frequent mistakes when they do use it.

P2: generation of ideas will be predictable and conventional, descriptive and set within limited contexts which are likely to be in the learner's own immediate experience. Suggested treatments will be basic and might be of material within the learner's own sphere of interests, while references to audiences may be limited to the learner's peers. Evidence will be basic and lacking in sophistication, and may be presented as a portfolio of ideas in the form of individual brainstorm or spidergrams that suggest topics for speech packages for identified radio stations with some reference to a target audience.

P3: written evidence will be predominantly secondary in nature and focused on internet searches. Primary research will probably be confined to one or two sources. Referencing will also be minimal, and content may well be based around the learner's own interests. Material submitted for assessment may not offer very clear evidence of detailed research or conclusions reached. The treatment should be referenced back to original sources, annotated and in the learner's own words.

P4: the recorded speech package will be simple in structure, probably confined to a basic interview question and answer format, with errors in sound quality and balance. The linking material might be lacking stylistically and the voice quality inappropriate. The script will be basic and possibly in bullet point form, and may not accurately reflect the content of the speech package. The cue sheet will be complete but basic in informational content.

P2 and P4: in terms of the aesthetic or imaginative qualities of their work, learners will not move beyond the conventional, but the conventions applied will be appropriate to the form or genre within which they are working. Learners will need frequent assistance and support, though they will take note of and make use of this help when it is given. If they are in frequent need of such help but fail to make positive use of it, they should not be considered for a pass grade for this unit.

Merit

To achieve a merit grade, learners must achieve all the pass and all the merit grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

M1: the learner will have found a number of speech packages from factual and news radio programmes on a range of stations of different types and will have provided detailed comments on the nature of the contributors and ethical issues relating to the content of them. There will be relevant examples given to support what is said, but the learner will not elucidate these examples to show how they illustrate the point they support. They will refer to structure, style, formats and treatment. Learners will have moved out of their own target audience. Learners will use technical vocabulary for the most part correctly, but may make mistakes or be unsure about usages at times.

M2: some examples will be outside the learner's own field of interest. The contexts will be explained in greater detail. Learners will apply appropriate treatments to well-developed ideas and provide more in-depth application and explanation of audience in terms of the targeted demographic.

M3: secondary research will be more focused and there will be evidence of validation and confirmation of research by reference back to primary sources. Primary research will typically include a range of sources. Referencing will also be structured and follow accepted guidelines. Learners will be able to explain in their treatment why choices were made and decisions taken, though they will not take the next step of justifying them.

M4: there will be few errors in sound quality and balance. The package will be appropriately structured with studio links in a well-developed style. The script will follow appropriate conventions and will accurately reflect the content and structure of the package. The cue sheet will be complete and detailed.

M2 and M4: the ideas generated and the produced speech package will be imaginative and more adventurous, and appropriate codes and conventions will be employed with some inventiveness. Learners will need little assistance, though typically they will still need some support when dealing with more complex technology or trying to apply more sophisticated techniques. Like the pass grade learner, they will respond positively to any help given.

Distinction

To achieve a distinction grade, learners must achieve all the pass, all the merit and all the distinction grade criteria. For each of the criteria learners must present evidence that addresses each italicised sub-heading of the content for the learning outcome.

D1: the evidence will contain a wide range of different speech packages which go well beyond the learner's own age group and interests, from a variety of news and factual radio programmes on a range of stations of different types. Analysis will be clear and accurate, showing depth of critical analysis and referring in detail to structure, style, formats, treatment, ethics and regulatory implications. Learners will justify points made using supporting arguments or evidence, develop ideas critically (that is, compare, assess and discriminate) and draw out of an example precisely what it is about it that exemplifies the point it illustrates. Technical vocabulary will be secure and used correctly and confidently at all times.

D2: a range of near-professional speech package ideas will have been generated and elucidated. The contexts will be appropriately analysed in great detail and clearly relate to a detailed analysis of audience data in terms of demographics and likely interest.

D3: secondary research will be detailed and focused and there will be full justification and validation of the material by reference back to primary sources in the prepared treatment. Primary research will include a range of sources, applying different and often contrasting perspectives to the content. Referencing will also be structured, detailed and follow academic guidelines.

D4: the produced speech package will be of near-professional quality, producing a range of recorded material with no significant errors in sound quality and balance. Script will be accurately reproduced and studio links will be appropriately structured, with voice quality and delivery highly appropriate to the target audience and the station format. The cue sheet will be complete, detailed and correctly formatted for the targeted radio station.

D2 and D4: learners will display creativity with codes and conventions being used with occasionally surprising results and relating content that is outside the learner's own field of interest. Learners will be capable of working autonomously and effectively. The term 'working independently' means that they are able to work on their own initiative, do not need constant support or supervision, give the work their full commitment, work positively and cooperatively with others, and meet deadlines. In other words, they have the kind of self-management skills that would be expected of them in a professional context. Note also that this criterion should not be taken to mean that learners do not seek advice or that they work without discussing things with their tutor, but rather that they are not dependent upon the support of others and that when they take advice they weigh it carefully for themselves.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Assignment 1 – Speech Packages Today	Learners have been commissioned to research, analyse and write an illustrated guide to making speech packages for specific radio programme types and audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Portfolio of research notes.Written guide.
P2, M2, D2	Assignment 2 – Generating Ideas	As trainee radio employees, learners have been charged with researching a range of speech packages with a view to creating a new speech package programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Portfolio of ideas with preparatory notes and evaluative comments.
P3, M3, D3	Assignment 3 – Planning and Pre-production	As above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Portfolio of research data.Treatment for single speech package.
P4, M4, D4	Assignment 4 – Production	As above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completed speech package.Script.Cue sheet.

Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Creative Media Production suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Creative Media Production suite:

Level 2	Level 3
	Factual Programme Production Techniques for Radio
	Interview Techniques for Creative Media Production
	Presentation Techniques for Broadcasting
	Scriptwriting for Radio

Essential resources

A facility to listen to radio either live or on demand via the internet using headphones should be available. Hard disc recorders equipped with omnidirectional reporter microphones could form the basis of the location recording kit. PC or MAC workstations are both acceptable platforms for digital audio editing and mixing software.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Learners will benefit greatly from contact with industry practitioners with recent experience in interviewing contributors and producing speech packages.

A visiting speaker such as a radio journalist, presenter or producer will also be very helpful as will an opportunity to study documentation used in producing speech packages.

SceenSkills, the Sector Skills Council for the creative media sector, has a substantial section of its website dedicated to careers, including job descriptions.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research, appreciating the consequences of decisions when investigating requirements for speech package production in the radio industry identifying questions to answer and problems to resolve when identifying resources required for a speech package production
Creative thinkers	generating ideas and exploring possibilities when finding creative solutions to identifying and sourcing requirements
Self-managers	organising time and resources, prioritising actions when taking responsibility for implementing a production schedule for a speech package working towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance when taking responsibility for tasks which are crucial to the success of a group project.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Reflective learners	reviewing progress, acting on the outcomes when evaluating the success of the pre-production process for a speech package
Team workers	taking responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution when applying pre-production planning to a group-based speech package reaching agreements, managing discussions to achieve results when taking a role within a group speech package production
Effective participators	presenting a persuasive case for action when taking part in a speech package production which responds to issues relating to the community.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching materials and resources for speech package pre-production
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	presenting reports on speech package pre-production techniques
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	using spreadsheets within production management
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	presenting speech package production proposals and undertaking progress review of pre-production work
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	preparing reports on speech package pre-production techniques
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	producing schedules, budgets and call sheets for a speech package production
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	planning schedules and budgets that fall within the resources available and analysing costs for materials and resources
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	taking part in meetings and presenting speech package pre-production information to others
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching the techniques and conventions of speech package pre-production work
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing treatments, scripts, schedules and reports on speech package pre-production techniques.