

Creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) Guide

Creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) can help you bring your community together around a subject that is important to you. In this guide, you will learn how to create a PSA to help you spread your message and save the environment.

GETTING STARTED

- 1 Think.** When it comes to energy conservation and saving the environment, what issue or topic is most important to you? (For example: turning off lights, unplugging devices, increasing the use of wind power, creating regulations to make corporations more energy efficient?) In Module 4, you chose an issue or topic that matters to you most, and in Module 5, you decided whether you will focus on a specific issue or an organization that addresses that issue for your PSA.

Write the focus of your PSA here (issue or organization):

TIP Keep your focus narrow and to the point. More than one idea confuses your audience.

- 2 Audience.** Determine who you are trying to reach with your message - parents, students, teachers, etc. Be clear about who you want your PSA to connect with.

TIP When it comes to your messaging, short and sweet is key!

- 3 Research.** You have completed research about your topic (the issue and/or the organization), and you can always learn more. Take time to observe how people in your life interact with the topic you chose. (For example, does a family member leave the lights on when leaving a room? Are there companies near you that use renewable energy sources?) Find a way to incorporate real-life examples in your PSA. This can have a strong impact on the audience.

TIP Include statistics from credible sources to grab the attention of your audience; especially data that directly relates to them on a personal level.

You can turn to Google for statistics which will help strengthen your PSA. Simply type in your "Topic + how much energy is wasted." Example, "AC + how much energy is wasted" or "How much energy does the AC use?"

- 4 Content.** Before you start filming your PSA you will want to think about your content. For example, you could write out on paper your PSA and have someone hold it up while you film. You could film the action taking place (For example, your family member walking out of a room and leaving the light on.) You could do a combination of things to help you get your message across to your audience.

TIP Don't make this too complicated. Pick something you can easily do and just do it.

- 5 Script.** You can create a script with a few key points to help you as you film, which highlights the points you want to make. Confirm that all information you present is accurate, up-to-date, research and/or data.

TIP Use a 3x5 index card and to write up to three (3) talking points that you want to cover. Refer back to the information you included throughout the modules to help you write these cards.

- 6 Get camera ready.** Before filming your PSA you want to make sure you are "camera ready." This means you will need to make sure you:
- Comb your hair.
 - Plan out what you will wear.
 - Stop by the location where you plan to film a day or two before the day you are scheduled to film. Try to go at the same time of day that you plan to film in order to have a sense about the lighting and what goes on in that area at that time.
 - Check all of your equipment. Be sure your smartphone is fully charged and has storage space, your headphones and microphone are working and your camera lens is clean from a soft cloth.
 - Determine whether you will be sitting or standing when you are filming. Will you need a stand to hold the camera or phone still? Practice your stance, posture and weight balance.

7 Filming day.

- a. Grab your camera (this can be a smartphone if you like)
- b. Find a quiet place to film so there are no interruptions.
- c. Review your notes
- d. Prop your camera up Use a tripod for your camera or have one person film the people in the PSA to avoid shaky videos.
- e. Do a test video to make sure everything is working and that your sound is good. Remember, you can use headphones that have a built-in mic so that you can get good audio – audio and video are so important for your PSA.
- f. Speak slowly, clearly and loudly with positive energy. You want to get people excited and passionate about your message. Be your authentic self!

HOT TIPS

- Keep the PSA video short. Aim for 30 seconds; do not go over 45 seconds.
- Make sure you are filming in a location that does not have a lot of background noise.
- Have a clear call to action. Tell people exactly what they need to do after they hear your message in your PSA. (For example, “Turn off the lights when you leave a room.”)
- Make direct eye contact with the camera so that your audience feels like you are speaking directly to them.
- Remember to hit the record button. Lights - Camera - Action!

Once you have recorded your PSA, review it to make sure you covered all of the information you intended to share BEFORE you pack up. You may need to film one more time. Also, if you do need to edit the recording, use your favorite editing program. (Need a suggestion? Use Windows Movie Maker for PC products and iMovie for Apple products.) Once your PSA is ready, share it with your teacher.