

Fire-EdUp Communication - Pod Cast



Create a Student PodCast for AVA

Podcasting also offers yet another opportunity for your students to engage with their world digitally. Armed with a microphone and a recording device, students could be sharing their ideas and insights gained from the AVA Challenge. The content they could produce does not need to be groundbreaking it just needs to be engaging for the intended audience and motivating for your students to put together.

Benefits of student podcasting

- Podcasting is perfect for teaching students to use multimedia and build their confidence as digital natives.
- Student podcasting allows students to communicate original ideas and plan their implementation using various digital tools to a deadline (e.g. Trello).
- It's fantastic preparation for students wishing to enter science communication.
- A student podcast does not need to be just about AVA; students can showcase the great work your school does. It could become a regular feed for families to listen to each week!
- Podcasting is a fantastic medium of teaching teamwork! Some students can be the vocal talent, and others can be involved in creating each episode's artwork. Some can edit and pull together sound bites in post-production, and other students can be tasked with creating a student blog for you, to potentially share on a social media site approved by your school administration.
- Above all, many students enjoy the challenge and the audio platform to share their ideas.

Which format will suit your school?

Like the topic area, podcast format is very much dependent on what audio students are recording and your overall mission. Still, there are a few pretty common podcast formats:

A series of interviews? A great format for bringing in a subject matter expert or focussing on a particular person's achievements or perspectives. The format for this type of podcast tends to be as follows:

Introduction > Transition > Interview > Transition > Summary > Outro

A series of solo podcasts? This format suits those students who want a platform to share their ideas. The format tends to be as follows:

Introduction > Transition > Topic A > Transition > Topic B > Summary > Outro

An ongoing group discussion? Similar to a talk show, a possible format for this could be:

Introduction > Transition > Catch up > Transition > Topic A > Transition > Topic B > Summary > Outro

Mix it up! Maybe you could have a variety of different segments and have it act more like an audio magazine? You could include listener feedback from email or social comments.

No matter which format your students intend to produce, it's worth considering how often your school will produce a podcast. Pulling together your show can be quite demanding if there are many elements.

By the way, your podcast doesn't need to be 30 minutes long. It could even be a short 2-minute segment! Simply, it just needs to be as long as it needs to be.



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Which podcast equipment will you need?

This does not need to be as demanding as you might think.

The simplest and cheapest option

Use the voice recorder from a smartphone or built-in microphone on your computer or tablet. The only issue with this is that the sound quality will be poorer than dedicated microphones built for a purpose. From there, you can use free software such as Garageband (Mac) or [Audacity](#) (PC) and host your podcast files on free platforms such as [Podbean](#) or [Soundcloud](#). Unfortunately, you cannot post directly to iTunes; however, Podbean can get the files across for you via an RSS feed.



The Rode Podcaster microphone mounted on a shock mount and attached to a boom arm

No matter your equipment, record your audio files in a location where the recording will not be affected by outside noise.

Going a little further

The following list is for student podcasters wanting a better sound and more options for post-production and distribution

- A microphone such as a [Zoom H2N](#), [Rode Podcaster](#) or [Blue Yeti](#). There are plenty of other microphones suitable for podcasting, just be sure to purchase one that has a pop-filter and noise-cancelling where possible.
- [Skype](#) or Zoom web conference recording software for remote guests.
- A computer with a quiet fan.
- You can use free software such as Garageband (Mac) or Audacity (PC) or a tool such as SoundTrap
- A premium podcast hosting service such as Omny or Speaker. We use Omny, as not only is it easy to use but it also produces a handy embed code to be able to share the FizzicsEd podcast episodes easily onto our website.

Important: If you choose to use music or other sound files to support your podcast... don't use copyrighted material without permission! It is far better to create your own music or effects anyway and it also teaches your students to respect ownership.

Extra podcasting tips

- The students may want to eliminate filler words such as 'um' and 'ah', however, I prefer to keep these in as it makes your audio sound more authentic and less overly-produced.
- For your introductions, it is best to keep these to less than 3 minutes to get to the main content quickly.
- It's worth creating a 'run sheet' whereby the students note the section of the podcast and its associated mp3 file name. If they include short descriptions of each section, it'll help them write show notes and blog articles more effectively.
- Just start! Nothing is going to be perfect in your first few episodes. Please encourage students to simply create episodes that are useful for their intended listener... perfection can come later!