

WHAT IS A NARRATIVE PODCAST ?



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Narration is the use of spoken word to convey a story to an audience.

A narrator is like a guide through the story – they tell us messages – they identify the important aspects to the story – or people – or places. They can sometimes fill the gaps in the story that no-one else may have told you. In short, narration can be a vital aspect to creative radio – or any media.

To give a concrete example of how we hear narration on a daily basis. Almost every piece of news is narrated i.e a reporter is on site – speaking to other people, we see images, we hear things – but the news reporter guides us through it all. This is what narration is about.

Two important aspects of great narration are a good script – and the speaker's ability to deliver it.

A narrator is the voice that we trust – the one we rely on when we're unsure what other people are telling us. And with that comes a certain expectation that the chosen narrator can deliver on that promise.

- A voice that we trust.
- A good script.
- The speaker's ability to deliver it.



TWO CLEAR TYPES OF NARRATION

1/ Stories with narration

2/ Stories without narration

So how do you know when your creative piece doesn't need narration? The simple answer is if you're telling a story – and the people you've recorded have told you every single aspect to the story, and their interviewees allow you to piece together the audio in such a way that the listener always knows who's speaking, where you are, what the story is – and what's the happening....

The truth is this only happens on very rare occasions – and we almost always have to rely on narration and scripting in some way to help us tell our stories and piece together our creative radio pieces.

NARRATORS CAN BE DIFFERENT THINGS...

- Sometimes the narrator is the story
- A character is the narrator
- The producer/author is the narrator

Sometimes the narrator is the story. An example might be if your creative audio piece tells the story of a pregnant woman who wants to eat her placenta after childbirth – as it's reported to have great medicinal benefits – in this case, that woman is the narrator i.e. she is the story

A character is the narrator. In any given creative audio piece or story, you're likely to have a number of characters. For instance, you might be telling the story of a local soccer team and their journey to the cup final. The person you choose to narrate the could be a lifelong supporter – or the team trainer – or the groundsman at their soccer stadium. The person who narrates your creative radio piece or podcast has a relationship to the story – and a viewpoint – but they are not the story.

The producer/author is the narrator. This is sometimes an obvious choice – the person who is making/recording the creative audio story is the narrator. And sometimes this is the best choice for the narrator – but be aware that sometimes it is not the best choice for the narrator. Just because you found the story, made all the recordings – and know everything about the creative radio piece, that's still not a good enough reason to be the narrator. You need to bring something extra like a great voice – or a unique insight etc. This is what you call a unique insight. Narration can help you address the weaknesses in your story – so use it as best you can.