



Module 3

Unit 2: Technical skills

Core video transcript

Module 3

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Transcript

Slide 1

Hello. I'm Louise Fryer, from Utopian Voices. In this ADLAB PRO video I will give an overview of the technical skills you need to describe live events. This is Unit 2 in Module 3.

Slide 2

Audio description for live events is usually closed. PSL listen to the AD using a headset. No one else can hear it.

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The describer sits somewhere soundproof with a view of the stage – the view may be direct say from a technician's booth at the back of the auditorium

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or indirect (you watch the show on a monitor).

Slide 5

This photograph shows the describer in a booth with a view of the stage. On a desk in front of her is some tailor-made equipment. The describer wears dark clothes so as not to distract the actors.

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In this photo the describer wears a headset microphone plugged into a unit

that allows her to turn the mic. on or off silently using a fader. Describers should turn the mic off when they're not speaking so that users don't hear noises, such as breathing or rustling.

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This photo from VocalEyes shows a small mixing desk. Through it the describer controls the level of the show in her headphones.

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The best sort of AD headset has three channels: one for the AD, and one for the show sound (show relay) and a third channel where the two sources are mixed...

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In the UK there are AD is transmitted via infra-red or a radio frequency.

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With infra-red, this requires a clear "line of sight" between the modulator and the headset. If someone walks in front of the headset-user, the beam and therefore the sound is disrupted. The position of the modulator might affect where AD users can sit.

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To avoid these problems, some theatres use a radio system. The AD is transmitted by a radio frequency over a range of around 100m. This signal cannot be obstructed. Users do not need to be in their seats early to hear the audio introduction.

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You won't be expected to install the technical equipment but you may need to advise a venue about what to provide and to be able to help the technicians if the system isn't working.

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Approximately an hour before curtain up, carry out a Sound check. Talk into the mic. while a technician listens to you in the auditorium via a headset. Check: Are you loud enough? Or too loud causing distortion when you say words beginning with certain sounds? Do they stop hearing you when you close the microphone fader? Can you hear sound from the stage?

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You will either use a small mic. attached to your headset, or a separate mic. on a stand. Avoid a hand-held mic, You need your hands to manipulate the fader and your script.

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Ensure the mic. is close to, but not directly in front of your mouth. Test this by placing your fingers over the mic. and making some plosive sounds "PPP". If you can feel breath on your fingers, move the mic. towards your cheek or chin.

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Also test for sibilant sounds (Ss)

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and dental consonants. In English these are "t" and "d" sounds

Read some of your introductory notes.

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check the signal can be heard in all parts of the auditorium, especially when seated.

Slide 19

Wear your headphones for your soundcheck. Adjust them so you hear yourself and the show relay at a comfortable level. You will instinctively adapt to match. If your level (or show relay) is too quiet or too loud, you will speak too quietly or too loudly too.

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That was an introduction to unit 2: the technical aspects of audio describing live events. Some people find it off-putting but once you familiarise yourself with the equipment, you can almost forget it's there and concentrate on delivering the AD.



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