

## National Operator Guidance - Podcasting

### 2024/2025

This YRE (Young Reporters for the Environment) Podcasting Guide aims to help you and your educators; whether you are new or seasoned podcast listeners/ creators, to support young people to create solution focused, environmental podcasts for the YRE programme and International Competition

Learning to podcast strengthens young reporters' media and communication skills and allows them to connect on a more nuanced and personal level with people affected by environmental issues in their community as well as with people who have in-depth environmental knowledge.

#### Leadership skills developed through podcasting

- **Research, Critical Thinking and System Thinking:** Young reporters must, under Step 1 of the YRE programme gather scientific data, analyse environmental policies, and explore diverse perspectives.
- **Local Focus & Action:** Podcasts encourage young people to explore synoptic links to see how environmental issues affect their communities.
- **Connecting with Experts:** Podcasts can feature interviews with environmental scientists, activists, or policymakers. Direct interaction with these professionals offers valuable insights, firsthand experiences, and inspiration for action in their future life.
- **Science Communication:** Podcasts allow students to practice communicating scientific concepts in a clear, engaging, and accessible way.
- **Reporting for Change:** Effective reporting is key to raising awareness and inspiring action. Podcasts provide a platform for young people to develop compelling stories that connect with listeners on an emotional level and motivate them to make changes.
- **Public Speaking & Confidence:** Creating and presenting a podcast helps young people to develop confidence in discussing environmental issues with varied audiences.
- **Digital Literacy & Technology Integration:** Young reporters will learn to use editing software, recording equipment, and online platforms to create and share their podcasts under step 4 of the YRE programme. Essential skills that prepare them for a technology-driven future.
- **Project Management & Problem-Solving:** The podcast creation process itself requires planning, organisation, and critical thinking skills.



## Subject YRE Podcast Integration

- **Science:** Environmental podcasts complement science lessons by allowing students to delve deeper into specific topics like climate change, biodiversity loss, or pollution. Students could interview researchers, discuss scientific data, and explore real-world applications of scientific concepts for their YRE podcast.
- **Citizen Science:** Podcasts can be used to introduce these projects, explain their importance, and highlight the impact of citizen science on environmental research.
- **History:** Podcasts can be used to explore the historical context of environmental issues like resource management, conservation efforts, or environmental movements. Students could interview historians, research historical responses to environmental challenges, and analyse the evolution of environmental policies.
- **Social Studies:** Environmental issues often have a significant social impact. Podcasts can be used to discuss the climate justice and social justice implications of environmental challenges. As content for their YRE podcast students could interview community members affected by environmental issues and explore the socio-economic costs and benefits of environmental policies.

## Scout Group YRE Podcast Integration

- **Content Aligned with Badges:** Many Scouting programmes offer badges related to the environment, such as "Ecology," "Sustainability," and "Wildlife Conservation." Podcasts can be created to specifically explore themes and topics covered in these badges. Interviews with experts or discussions on local environmental challenges can provide valuable learning experiences that complement badge requirements.
- **Reporting for Leave No Trace:** Environmental podcasts can be a creative way to promote Leave No Trace principles. Reports about responsible camping practices, interviews with rangers on minimising environmental impact, or discussions on sustainable outdoor gear choices could be examples of podcast content.
- **Engaging Field Trip Preparation:** YRE podcasts can be used as pre-trip preparation for camping excursions or nature hikes. Content could focus on the local flora and fauna, discuss the importance of specific conservation efforts in the area, or even feature interviews with park rangers who can offer valuable safety tips and insights into the local ecosystem- covering themes such as forest fires.
- **Nature Connection:** Podcasts can be wonderful way to connect people with nature even when they are not outdoors. Sound recordings of local birdsongs, interviews describing specific landscapes, or discussions on the importance of protecting natural soundscapes can all help a wider community appreciation for the natural world.



## Podcast Basics

There are several types of podcasts

1. **Solo Podcasts:** A single host delivers the content, offering a flexible format for time management but requiring strong storytelling skills to keep the audience engaged.
2. **Multi-Host Podcasts:** Discussions between two or more students or experts create a dynamic flow of conversation and offer contrasting viewpoints.
3. **Interview Podcasts:** Students interview environmental experts, activists, or community members affected by environmental issues. This format provides valuable insights and diverse perspectives.
4. **Narrative Podcasts:** Documentaries with a non-fictional or fictional environmental theme told by a narrator. This format can be immersive but requires careful planning and scripting.

| Feature                      | Audio Podcast                                       | Visual Podcast   |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Production Difficulty</b> | Easier and less costly equipment needed.            | More complex and higher costs (camera, lighting, editing)        |
| <b>Accessibility</b>         | Highly accessible (listen while multitasking)       | Less accessible (requires focused attention)                     |
| <b>Content Suitability</b>   | Good for storytelling, interviews, discussions      | Good for demonstrations, visuals, body language                  |
| <b>Audience Connection</b>   | Requires audience to use imagination,               | Can build stronger personal connection and community engagement  |
| <b>Distribution</b>          | Easier to distribute on dedicated podcast platforms | May benefit from YouTube's reach but competes with video content |
| <b>Engagement</b>            | Relies on strong audio storytelling                 | Offers a multi-sensory experience                                |

Useful links for educators:

- [Project Audio: Teaching Students How to Produce Their Own Podcasts](#)
- [Teaching Podcasting: A Curriculum Guide for Educators](#)
- [Making a Podcast That Matters: A Guide With 21 Examples from Students](#)



## How to create environmental podcasts through the 4 Steps of the YRE programme

### Step 1: Investigate

Encourage young people to explore YRE reports from other young people, this will help them to focus on specific local environmental concerns that are important to them, their family, and friends, such as their community's vulnerability to climate change, littering around their school, repeated flooding, etc.

Young reporters should listen to existing environmental podcasts for inspiration, like "Outrage + Optimism" or "Sustainababble". Look at the [23 Best Environmental Podcasts of 2024 | Earth.Org \(asdxi.com\)](https://www.asdxi.com/2024/03/23/best-environmental-podcasts-of-2024/).

Start with a solid foundation of credible sources. Encourage young people to use scientific journals, reputable environmental organization websites and government reports. They can also use online databases for peer-reviewed research.

Facts are powerful tools. Help young people find relevant data and statistics to support their claims. Government websites, environmental reports, and research papers can be valuable resources and are more likely to have valid data.

Environmental challenges occur differently depending on location. Encourage students to explore how their chosen topic affects their community. Local news articles, environmental reports specific to their region, or data from local environmental agencies can offer valuable insights.

Encourage young people to find key players in the environmental issue they are investigating. This could include local environmental scientists, activists working on the ground, government officials responsible for policy, or business owners affected by environmental regulations. Interviews with these diverse perspectives will add depth to the podcast.

Environmental issues are rarely one sided. Help young people research different viewpoints on their environmental topic. Are there opposing perspectives or potential drawbacks to proposed solutions? Understanding these complexities will allow them to present a balanced and informative podcast and make for an interesting interview.

The people affected by the environmental issue have valuable stories to tell and will help to make their podcast more relatable. Encourage students to interview community members who are directly affected, their voices will add a powerful human element to the podcast.



## Step 2: Research a Solution

Empowering YRE podcast listeners to act is a crucial aspect of any environmental podcast.

Within the podcast, young people must propose solutions or ways listeners can get involved. This could be a call to action to contact local representatives, support a relevant organisation, or adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.

Encourage young people to draw upon their research to find practical solutions or strategies that will lessen the impact for the environmental issue they have chosen. This could involve referencing successful initiatives in other communities, other YRE reports, expert recommendations, or policy changes that could be effective.

Do not leave the solutions section of the podcast as an afterthought rushed in the last few minutes. Instead, highlight successful solutions or positive examples through the podcast (this also helps to keep the podcast positive rather than doom focused!). Then, have a clearly dedicated section at the end of the podcast with a clear call to action and solution.

Vague calls to action for a solution do not work. Young people will need to have clear, actionable steps listeners can take to carry out their proposed solution. These could include:


- Contacting local representatives (with permission - provide phone numbers or email addresses) to share their concerns or solutions.
- Supporting relevant environmental organisations within the community who are working to solve environmental issues. These could be experts who are interviewed during the podcast.
- Invite listeners to take part in an organised event, such as a beach clean and provide details on how they can take part.
- Give a simple list of actions they can practice in their daily lives.

Encourage young people to frame their solution and call to action in a way that resonates with listeners' values and inspires them to make a difference, make the listener feel like the solution will only happen with their support

## Step 3: Report

Throughout the podcast use a variety of methods to deliver your solution. This could involve the presenter directly addressing the listener, an interview with someone actively involved in the solutions, or a public announcement-style message.

Podcasts can be interviews, discussions, narratives, or a mix. Discuss episode length based on age and attention span (5-15 minutes for younger students, 15-30 minutes for older ones). If submitting their podcast to the FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education)



national offices for entry to the Global Award they will need to pick a 5-minute segment of the podcast that will be judged for the award.

For whom are your young reporters making the podcast? Understanding their audience (e.g., classmates, local community, the broader YRE audience) will help them to tailor content and tone.

Whether young people choose an audio or video podcast depends on their specific goals of the podcast, their comfort level being filmed, available resources and technology.

Do not forget at the end of the podcast to offer other resources. This could include links to websites, contact information for organisations, or social media pages where listeners can learn more about the solutions and act.

### TIPS: Recording & Production

- Simple tools work! Use free recording apps on smartphones or tablets. Consider inexpensive microphones for better sound quality. A quiet space with minimal background noise is crucial.
- Practice using the equipment beforehand. Emphasise clear and concise speaking, with good vocal variety to avoid monotony. Encourage young people to record in short segments for easier editing.
- Royalty-free sound effects and music can enhance the podcast but should be used sparingly and appropriately, do not make them too loud so that they drown out voices. Use platforms like Freesound or Free Music Archive.

### TIPS: Editing & Uploading

- Free or affordable editing software like Audacity allows young people to trim silence, add sound effects and music, and adjust volume levels.
- Young people can create short intros and outros with their podcast title and contact information (e.g., email or social media page).
- Choose a user-friendly podcast hosting platform like Anchor that allows uploading and sharing on major streaming services. Follow site specific guidelines for uploading and tagging the podcast.

## Step 4: Dissemination

Encourage young people to be creative in how they will get their podcast heard by their target audience. This could include:

- Sharing the podcast on social media platforms and environmental online communities.
- Reaching out to local radio stations or environmental organisations to see if they



would be interested in featuring the podcast.

- Connect with other podcasters to see if they could be interviewed about their YRE work during one of their episodes.
- Presenting the podcast at school assemblies, scout meetings or local environmental events.
- Hold a 'screening event' in the local community inviting family and friends to listen to the podcast and then interview the YRE students live after the show.

Young reporters should create engaging social media posts to announce their podcast launch. Using relevant hashtags (#YRE, #EnvironmentalPodcast, #MyActionsMatter) and include a soundbite of the podcast as a teaser.

If you are educator in a school or university you could encourage the young reporters to speak with the school administration to promote the podcast on the school website, newsletter, and social media pages.

Young people could expand their dissemination skills by also drafting a press release for local newspapers, or environmental news outlets to generate interest. Briefly explain the podcast's topic and YRE involvement.

Encourage young people to think beyond the initial launch of their podcast to keep momentum and impact going.

- Organise a podcast Q&A session online or in person where the young reporter can answer listeners' questions and discuss the podcast's topic further.
- Help young people find local environmental organisations or initiatives that align with their podcast's theme. This could lead to further YRE collaborations.

## **Submitting podcasts to the national YRE Competition**

Review YRE Podcast Submission Guidelines carefully with your young reporters checking national guidelines, including format requirements, deadlines, and eligibility criteria.

Together prepare a short bio or description highlighting the student team's work, their chosen environmental issue, and the impact they hope to achieve.

If (when!) the podcast is selected by your National YRE team, celebrate achievement!

## Podcasting Assessment Criteria

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Podcasts</b> are like mini documentaries and could take the form of audio or audio/ video. They are based on news, events, history, facts etc., and use elements of direct observation, research, interviews, and documentation. For the International Competition Award only a 5-minute segment of the full podcast needs to be submitted to FEE.</p> |  |
| <b>Format &amp; Structure</b>  | Link to segment of the podcast must be no longer than 5 minutes.   |
|  | Must have a title of no more than 140 characters.  |
|  | Link to the full podcast alongside 5-minute segment must be submitted to the National Operator.  |
|  | Must be technically of good quality. This includes sound quality.  |
|  | Recommended that the 5-minute segment of a podcast that is sent to the National Operator is succinct and direct. Highlighting the focus and solutions posed in the full podcast.   |
| <b>Honest &amp; Unbiased Reporting</b>   | Facts, statistics, and scientific information must be supported by credible sources.   |
|  | Any quotes used must be from real and credible sources.  |
|  | Sources used in the podcast must be cited on a separate 'References' list.   |
|  | It is recommended that approximately 70% of the final podcast segment should be made up of students' own original voice recording and audio. If additional external audio is used (music, sounds effects, soundbites), the original author or source must be cited in the 'References' list.                             |
|  | The podcast is a fair and truthful representation of reality, and the sound or recording has not been edited   |
| <b>Constructive &amp; Well-Rounded Perspective</b>   | Podcast segment should address the historical, economic, social, and/ or political implications of the chosen topic through an environmental lens.   |
|  | Podcast segment should show the link between local and global events, issues, and/ or phenomena.   |
|  | Podcast segment should identify relevant and feasible solutions to the environmental issue(s) depicted full podcast.   |
| <b>Originality &amp; Independence</b>  | The podcast is original in subject and/ or scope. The student has picked a challenging and/ or creative topic or has depicted a topic in a different and/ or creative way.   |
|  | The participant has engaged in fieldwork and conducted research and interviews (either in-person or over the phone) outside of their school grounds.   |
| <b>Dissemination</b>   | A total of 5 points may be awarded for dissemination through the following channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Sphere = 1 Point</li> <li>• School Community = 1 Point</li> <li>• National Operator Organization = 1 Point</li> <li>• National Media (Newspaper, TV, radio) = 2 Points</li> </ul> |
|  | Evidence of dissemination must be submitted with the video and published on Exposure below the video.  |
| <b>NOTES</b>   | <b>2024/2025: All national winning podcast segments submitted to FEE will each be awarded the Gosia Luszczyk International Podcasting Award.</b>   |