

How to Make a PSA

General guidelines on how to make a clear, concise, and 100% legal PSA

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What is a PSA?

A PSA or public service announcement is a short video, radio announcement, or print campaign created by a nonprofit organization to persuade an audience to take positive action for a institution, issue, or cause.

What are you trying to do?

- Grab your audience's attention
- Send a specific, clear, and simple message
- Change their behavior

Steps to Making a PSA

(It is important to do every step, even if you have made one before)

1. Determine what your subject is, what issue are you speaking about?
 - a. Gather as a group and discuss what issues are important to you
 - b. Have you been assigned a subject?
 - c. Do you want to film people speaking about the subject? Do a skit? Or record voices to be played along with images?
2. Organize notes on your (the groups) opinion on that subject. You can use the "Endangered Species Fact Sheet" to organize notes.
3. Decide how controversial you want to be.
4. Write an outline, this will lay the groundwork for a strong script
5. Write a script
 - a. Cast your PSA, assign roles (voice or acting) to everyone.
 - i. b. Assign people to be on the crew. They will help with setting up, filming, holding/preparing any microphones, etc.
 - b. Write script
6. Go through checklist below:
 - Do you know what your subject is?
 - Have you collected notes on your subject?

- Did you write down all of your sources?
 - Do you have an organized outline?
 - Have you written a script?
 - Have you cast your PSA?
 - Do you have the rights to all of the images/videos/music that you want to use?
 - Do you have a video camera?
 - Do you have the editing software to edit your PSA?
 - Do you have a microphone (if needed)?
 - Do you have a tripod (if needed)?
 - Have you gotten permissions to film where you are filming? (Not necessary if you are filming in a private residence.)
 - Do you have time on 2-3 days set aside to work on your PSA?
7. Record your PSA: It is unlikely that this will be done in one day, so set aside a day to practice, and a day to record. Practicing will make it easier to shoot the PSA in one take and will minimize the need to edit the footage to create the final product.

Common Errors to Avoid

Do you have the rights the the music that you used?

So you want to use that super catchy new song in you PSA? Well you can't due to royalties and copy right laws. But you can utilized the 1,000's of music clips posted on Royalty-Free Music Databases. Some sources for legal music are below but feel free to look for your own. Please note that Royalty-Free Music sites have restrictions which should be read before using anything from the site, also all sources must be included in your PSA's credits.

- -Music4yourVids.co.uk [credit- Free music from: Music4yourVids.co.uk] -www.audionautix.com [credit - Music from: JasonShaw@audionautix.com]
- -Youtube offers music if you edit your PSA after uploading it to the site

One mistake is ok, right?

You're 3 days late on your deadline and you just want to get it in. Never, I repeat NEVER sacrifice quality just to get it in. If you send in a video with an error whether it is in editing or filming it will be sent back to be fixed. It is simpler to fix it before and avoid extra work later.

Missing intro/closing

Even if it is just a line of text across the screen introductions and closings/credits are important in making your PSA look professional.

Sources:

- www.wiredsafety.org/wiredlearning/psa/ www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Good-Public-Service-Announcement-Film
- www.psaresearch.com/bib4212.html

Example PSA: Sumatran Rhinos

Step 1: Subject

The subject of the PSA is Sumatran Rhinoceros and how they are an endangered species.

Leading Questions:

1. Why are they endangered?
2. What are their major threats? (Which will we address?)
3. How can people help save them?

Goal: To educate the public about the Sumatran Rhino

Plan: Since my group does not have a video camera we will be recording voices and playing them over images and text.

Step 2: Notes

Pull information from sources that addresses the leading questions. Remember to keep track of sources. This can be in short hand or use the Endangered Species Fact Sheet.

- IUCN's Red List as critically endangered
- **Habitat:** ASIA 6 substantial pop.'s: 4 on [Sumatra](#), 1 on [Borneo](#), and 1 on [peninsular Malaysia](#), "lowland and highland secondary [rainforest](#), swamps and [cloud forests](#). It inhabits hilly areas close to water, particularly steep upper valleys with a lot of undergrowth" (Wikipedia)
- **Scientific Name:** [Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni](#)

- Number in Wild: around 275
- Physical Characteristics: stand about 3.9–4.8 ft high at the shoulder, a body length of 6-9 ft and weight of 500–800 kilograms (1100–1760 lb). two horns; the larger is the nasal horn, typically 15–25 centimetres (6–10 in), while the other horn is typically a stub. Reddish-brown hair covers most of the body.
- Threats: Poaching for their horns (very valuable in Chinese medicine), worth as much as \$30,000 per kilo on black market, habitat loss (lumber and farming), conservation is difficult due to fragmented habitats and solitary nature, breeding programs failed until 2001 when a female at the Cincinnati Zoo gave birth to a male which was followed by a female and another male
- Facts:
 - Very few survive in the wild
 - 1 of 5 species of Rhinos
 - solitary animals (hard to count)
 - “It is the most vocal rhino species and also communicates through marking soil with its feet, twisting saplings into patterns, and leaving excrement” (wikipedia)
 - live 30-45 years in the wild
 - poor vision
 - fast and agile (climbs mountains, crosses streams and steep banks),
 - “The Sumatran Rhino is usually most active when eating, at dawn, and just after dusk. During the day the rhino wallows in mud baths to cool down and rest. In the rainy season they move to higher elevation areas; in the cooler months they return to lower areas in their range.[11]” (Wikipedia)
 - a browser/herbivore and has a diet of young saplings, leaves, fruits, twigs and shoots. The rhinos usually consume up to 50 kg (110 lb) of food a day.
 - Often overshadowed by better known Rhinoceros species

Sources:

- <http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/finder/borneosumatranrhinoceros/borneosumatranrhinoceros.html>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatran_Rhinoceros

Step 3: Controversial?

Who is your audience?

pre-k to elementary

What would affect your audience most?

Since they are younger it is better to show a positive hopeful message then to use scare tactics.

Step 4: Outline

Organize your notes!

Intro: Sumatran Rhinos for dummies

- ICUN Red List for Critically Endangered
- 275 thought to live in the wild
- Smallest of 5 species of Rhinos (3 ft tall, 6-9 ft long, .5-1 ton)
- Most vocal Rhino, also communicates through marking soil, leaving droppings, twisting saplings into patterns
 - Lives in area of Asia (Sumatra, Borneo, Peninsular Malaysia) in rain forests, swamps, and cloud forests
- Herbivore/Browser, 110 lbs of food per day

Body: Threats they face

- Logging and farming is shrinking/fragmenting natural habitat
- Breeding in captivity only successful in the last 10 years (minimal success)
- Poaching for their horns (very valuable in Chinese medicine), worth as much as \$30,000 per kilo on black market
- Conservation is difficult due to fragmented habitats and solitary nature

Closing: What can we do?

- Spread the word
- Avoid purchasing wood from their habitat areas (merbau, merantii, semaram)
- Do not support the sale of Rhinoceros tusks or the use of them in traditional medicine

Credits: Sources and creators

- List any sources that you have used
- End with the name of your Roots & Shoots groups name and a way for interested people to get in contact with you

Step 5: Script

Be detailed! In this PSA there is not filming, the PSA will consist of voices speaking while images are shown.

Cast:

- Voice 1 - Jane Doe
- Voice 2 - John Doe

Scene 1

Image of Sumatran Rhinoceros appear on screen along with name and scientific name

Voice 1: The Sumatran Rhinoceros is the smallest and most vocal of the five Rhinoceros species. They are solitary browsers that can eat up to 110 lbs of plants a day.

Voice 2: Today, only 275 of these extraordinary animals survive in the rainforests of Sumatra, Borneo, Peninsular Malaysia.

Map of Asia with 3 areas highlighted

Voice 1: They are on the ICUN Red List for Critically Endangered Species, but there is still time to save them.

Scene 2

Image of rainforest logging

Voice 2: Legal and illegal logging operations are shrinking and fragmenting their habitat.

Image of seized tusks

Voice 1: And Rhinoceros are often poached for their tusks which can sell for as much as \$30,000 per kilo on the black market.

Scene 3

Image of Sumatran Rhinoceros (mother with child)

Voice 2: We can rescue them from the brink .

Voice 1: By not buying woods harvested from their habitats,

Scroll names of wood (merbau, merantii, semaram) across screen slowly

Voice 1: and spreading the word we can make a difference.

Voice 2: So tell everyone you know, and we can save these beautiful animals from disappearing from our planet.

Credits

Scroll name of R&S group, contact info, and source list over black screen.

Step 6: Check List

Run through this check list to make sure everything is ready!

- Do you know what your subject is?
- Have you collected notes on your subject?
- Did you write down all of your sources?
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- Do you have the rights to all of the images/videos/music that you want to use?
- Do you have a video camera?
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- Do you have a microphone (if needed)?
- Do you have a tripod (if needed)?
- Have you gotten permissions to film where you are filming? (Not necessary if you are filming in a private residence.)
- Do you have time on 2-3 days set aside to work on your PSA?

If you checked off everything on the list then you are ready to go!

Step 7: Record your PSA!