

# Step-by-step guide for vox pops

## 1: Recording your vox pops

▶ The first step is to decide on an issue, then come up with two to three standard questions to ask each person interviewed.

- ◆ Ask everyone the same few questions.
- ◆ Make sure your main question is open ended, and not a question that will elicit a “yes” or “no” answer.  
Instead of: DO YOU LIKE ICE CREAM?  
Ask: WHY DO YOU LIKE ICE CREAM?
- ◆ Ask a follow up question to an answer if you feel one is needed.

▶ Select a place where there is a lot of activity, but people are not busy or in a rush. Bored people are more willing to talk. Try to do all of the interviews inside or all of them outside. If you mix the locations, the background audio may sound distractingly different. You can also use remote recording.

▶ Begin each interview by having the person say their name and an identifier that makes sense to the topic of the vox pop. You might want to use these introductions in your final piece.

Example 1: My name is David Woo and I live in Los Angeles.

Example 2: My name is Betty Blue and I’m a school teacher.

Example 3: My name is Barack Obama and I used to be president.

If the identifier is not important to your podcast, just have them say “My name is \_\_\_\_\_.”

▶ Keep each raw interview to no more than five minutes. Mic your questions, moving the mic or recorder quickly and smoothly from you to them. You might want your questions as a transition in your vox pop.

### Tips

**Smile.** People won’t talk to you if you don’t look welcoming.

**Accept rejection.** Don't be offended if someone turns you down, or many people turn you down. They might be in a rush or not comfortable speaking into a mic. It's not personal. Keep asking; there are plenty of people out there who like to give their opinion.

**Re-ask.** If someone gives a good answer and has a strong opinion, but answered inartfully, ask them to say it again. Practice makes perfect!

**Get variety.** Don't just interview people who look like you. Get diversity to ensure varied perspectives.

## Step 2: Transcribing your audio and selecting answers

✍️ Transcribe your interviews, even ones you think you won't select. Refer to the [sample log and tips](#). On the transcript, highlight the responses you think are best.

✍️ Copy and paste the selected responses from the transcript and organize them into a flow on a separate document.

✍️ Note the timecodes incues and outcues for the selected responses to prepare for editing.

## Step 3: Editing

▶ The clips should be edited back-to-back (known as butting). Make sure there is about a breath's length between each clip; don't edit too tightly together or leave too much space between.

▶ Decide if you want each person to say their name before their comment OR if you want to identify them after the vox pop. If you do the latter, identify them in the order they spoke, saying something like: WE HEARD FROM \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, etc.

### Editing tips

**Choose the best.** You will most likely only use SOME of the people you interviewed. Choose only the best responses for your edited vox pop.

**Start and end strong.** Use a compelling and well-stated comment as your first clip to draw in listeners and as your last clip to leave listeners with a strong impression.

**Short and snappy.** Keep it moving with **short** clips from each person. Think about how they flow together; maybe sometimes they reinforce each other and other times they contradict each other. See how each voice sounds next to another; are the tone and pitch of the voice similar or very different? Try to get a rhythm going in the vox pop. Consider using fragments of sentences, or whether you want one of your questions to break up the vox pop.

**Delete the extraneous.** Do not start your actualities with "um," "well" or other extraneous words. Don't make listeners wait for the good stuff.

**Reflect different viewpoints:** Hopefully, you will get a diversity of opinion in your interviews. If everyone or most people have essentially the same opinion, try to present different points or angles from each person.

**When to use your questions:** You can include one of your questions to help with a transition, if there was a nice exchange between you and the interviewee, or any other reason. However, *don't use your questions for every answer* you use in the vox pop.

**It's not a scientific poll.** If you stop 20 people and 18 of them say they have no problem with eating plant-based meat, do not conclude that the majority of people in the world are ok with it. You may have collected lopsided answers because of where you conducted the interviews. Instead, you can set up your vox pop by saying, "Most of the 20 people we asked said they have no problem eating plant-based meat."