Presenter, radio and television

Job description

Radio and television presenters entertain and inform programme audiences on national and regional stations, and satellite and cable channels. They act as the public face (or voice) on various types of programmes, including sports-based, current affairs and entertainment shows. They are also the centre point for programmes, responsible for keeping it flowing at the appropriate pace, introducing and interviewing guests, and for providing links between segments that hold the programme together.

The presenter’s look, personality and presenting style are all important parts of their trade. Presenters will develop their own unique styles of delivery throughout their careers, but will always be required to work according to the image, manner and tone dictated by the producer of the programme. They will often be hired for a programme, or series of programmes, based on their stylistic reputation. An understanding of the target audience, and what they expect, is a vital part of the role.

Presenters work on all kinds of live or recorded programmes, including: news and current affairs, sport, music shows, chat shows, children’s entertainment, game shows, and specialist programmes such as travel, gardening, history and DIY.

The majority of shows on television are pre-recorded, although live work is not uncommon, and in radio it is often the rule. Continuity announcers are usually live on the air to provide the vocal link between programmes, informing the audience of what is coming on in the future. They describe changes to programmes and sometimes interrupt broadcasts with urgent news or apologies for faults.

Presenters will sometimes also be newsreaders, delivering bulletins and rolling news segments by reading from a script or autocue system. However newsreaders proper are typically journalists as well, who are also involved in the news gathering process.

Work activities

• Planning, researching and writing their own scripts before filming or broadcast.
• Acting as the host, introduce and interview guests and interact with the audience.
• Delivering information to the audience in a manner appropriate to the programme.
• Following detailed instructions from the production team in order to keep everything to plan whilst on air.
• Reading from auto-cues, learning a script or sometimes performing without formal preparation.
• Reacting quickly and positively to any problems or changes.

Work conditions

Travel: can be a regular feature of the working day but mush depends on whether the programme is studio based or not.

Working hours: regular unsocial hours including evening, nights, weekends and public holidays.

Location: exist mainly in towns or cities throughout the country.

(continued overleaf)
Opportunities for self-employment: it is possible to work on a freelance basis.

**Typical employers**
- Radio and television stations
- Independent film companies.

**Entry requirements and training**

**Specific degree subjects required**
Open to non-graduates and graduates of any discipline.

**Postgraduate study**
A pre-entry postgraduate qualification is not a requirement.

**Specific entry requirements**
Specialist knowledge of particular topics may also be required.

**Tips for applications**
Many presenters start off as researchers and production assistants before moving in front of the camera.

**Skills and qualities**
- Ability to ‘think on your feet’ and ad-lib or deviate from the script when necessary.
- Research and interviewing skills.
- High levels of concentration and multi-tasking ability.
- Outgoing and confident, with a likeable personality.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Calmness under pressure and the ability to work to strict deadlines.
- Good memory, for recalling facts, figures and scripts.
- An excellent command of English and a clear speaking voice.
- Ability to work well with others in the production team and participants in the programme.
- Comfortable and natural in front of the camera and microphone.
- Ability to get on and connect with people, young and old, from a wide variety of backgrounds.