



MA IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM BROADCAST PATHWAY

VOX POPS

Vox Pops are a great way of getting a range of “ordinary” voices and opinions into your packages. They are suitable for lots of stories, if treated in the right way, but are generally less useful if the subject matter is sensitive (religion is definitely one to avoid) or complicated. Some advice:

Is the subject matter right? You want to ask people questions that the **average** member of the public will have an opinion about.

Ask everybody the **same** question.

Make sure it's **simple** and **open**.

Don't turn the vox pop into a long **interview** with the people you speak to. But if somebody is brilliant, a quick extra question is fine – e.g. “Why do you think that?”

Aim to get **four or five** strong clips – you want the vox pop to end up being around 20-30 seconds long. **You will probably need to speak to lots of people to get this many good clips!**

Try to get a wide range of opinions and **voices**: male/female, old/young, if appropriate.

Answers in the same **location** will avoid harsh differences in background sound.

Background sound should be just that: background. Don't let it get in the way. **Music** and **other voices** pose particular problems. **Use your headphones!**

EDITING

When you're editing, think carefully about the **order** you put the answers in. You should try to start and end your vox pop sequence with your strongest clips. Assuming the subject matter is appropriate, vox pops are a great way of injecting humour into your items. People often say interesting and amusing things. If appropriate, end on a clip that raises a smile.

When you write the script that leads into your vox pop, remember it is an **unscientific snapshot** of public opinion – not a huge survey. Don't make grand claims for the opinions – e.g. “People in Wales are totally opposed to a ban on smoking in public places” just because most of your vox pop contributors say so.

TV

Remember to shoot alternate contributors on different sides of the frame. This will help you to edit them together more easily.

Don't forget to change shot, by spinning the camera on its tripod after each answer. This will mean the background is different for each contributor. Once you've moved around the clock – 12/3/6/9 – move the tripod.