

# Personal Podcast Rubric

Instructional rubric defining standards for planning, craft, voice, production, and attribution.

## LEARNING GOALS

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This assignment sits at the intersection of podcast genre literacy and personal brand communication. Before production begins, students need a clear picture of what each goal actually requires in practice.

### 1. Understand Podcast Structure

A podcast is not a recorded essay. It has shape: **hook** → **story** → **turning point** → **meaning** → **callback**. Students demonstrate genre fluency by building that structure intentionally. (Turning point and callback will be modeled in class before this assignment.)

### 2. Reveal Meaning, Not Just Events

This is first-person narrative, not biography. Students show understanding by explaining **what changed and why it mattered** — not just recounting what happened.

### 3. Project an Intentional Voice

Strong podcasters make deliberate choices about tone, pacing, and audience. By the end, **2–3 personal qualities should be clearly legible** — not declared, but revealed through the choices made throughout the episode.

### 4. Demonstrate Production Care

Clean audio, intentional sound, thoughtful editing, and appropriate length are not cosmetic — they are arguments about care and respect for listeners.

### 5. Work Ethically with AI and Sources

AI use, prompts, sound attribution, and copyright compliance must be documented transparently in the pre-production folder, consistent with the **4D Framework**.

## THE RUBRIC

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### PRE-PRODUCTION & PLANNING

| CRITERION    | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING   | INCOMPLETE   |
|--------------|---|--|--|
| Episode Plan | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Title, one-sentence purpose, specific audience, full story arc, draft opening & closing lines, production notes on tone and sound. Clear forethought evident. | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Most elements present but vague in places — unclear turning point, broad audience, or missing production notes. Effort shows, but needed refinement before recording. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Skeletal or missing key elements. Little evidence of intentional pre-production thinking. |

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## STORY STRUCTURE & ARC

| CRITERION                      | EXEMPLARY  | DEVELOPING   | INCOMPLETE  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Hook</b><br>First 10–20 sec | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Opens with stakes, tension, or a compelling moment. Earns the listener's attention before providing context.                                     | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Opens with introduction or context summary before creating interest. Listener stays, but isn't pulled in.                           | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>No hook. No tension, no compelling line. Listener has no clear reason to continue. |
| <b>Narrative Arc</b>           | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Clear beginning, middle, turning point, and meaningful ending. The turning point reveals genuine internal change, not just a sequence of events. | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Arc is present but one element is weak — typically the turning point is vague, or the ending summarizes without reflecting meaning. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Events are recounted without clear movement toward change or meaning.              |
| <b>Closing &amp; Callback</b>  | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>The ending deliberately returns to an image, phrase, or idea from the opening — now carrying new meaning. The episode <i>lands</i> .             | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Episode ends clearly but does not reconnect to the opening. It wraps up rather than pays off.                                       | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Ends abruptly or trails off. No deliberate closure.                                |

## PERSONAL VOICE & IDENTITY

| CRITERION                         | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING   | INCOMPLETE  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Authenticity &amp; Meaning</b> | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Voice feels genuine and specific. Host explains what the experience <i>meant</i> — what changed, what was learned — not just what happened.   | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Personal perspective is present but leans toward recounting events over insight and reflection. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Sounds scripted, distant, or surface-level. Reads like a summary. Little meaning-making.                 |
| <b>Personal Brand Clarity</b>     | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>A listener can name 2–3 distinct qualities about the host. These emerge through choices made in the episode — not through stated slogans. Audience and message are consistent throughout. | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>One quality comes through clearly; others are hinted at but underdeveloped.                     | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>No clear identity, message, or audience. A listener could not describe what makes this host distinctive. |

## DELIVERY

| CRITERION                             | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING  | INCOMPLETE   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Vocal Performance &amp; Pacing</b> | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Natural, varied delivery with clear enunciation. Pacing serves the story — slowing for emotional moments, moving efficiently through context. At least one intentional pause used for emphasis. | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Generally clear, but pacing is uneven or key moments are rushed. Enunciation mostly good but inconsistent. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Flat, choppy, monotone, or sounds unrehearsed. Enunciation problems affect comprehension. |

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## AUDIO PRODUCTION

| CRITERION                    | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING   | INCOMPLETE  |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Recording Quality</b>     | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Clean, consistent audio throughout. No distracting background noise. Volume is steady.  | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Minor inconsistencies in volume or background noise present but do not significantly distract.                              | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Distorted, muffled, or noisy audio that affects comprehension.                     |
| <b>Sound Design</b>          | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Music, ambient sound, or effects are used sparingly and intentionally. Sound supports the emotional arc without overpowering narration. Levels are well-balanced. | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Sound is generally appropriate but occasionally too loud, mistimed, or only loosely connected to the moment it accompanies. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Sound overwhelms narration, substitutes for emotional meaning, or is poorly mixed. |
| <b>Editing &amp; Economy</b> | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>Smooth transitions. Every segment earns its place. 5–15 min total; any length beyond 10 min adds something specific and justified.                                | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Functional edit with minor rough patches, lingering tangents, or slightly uneven pacing. Within time range.                 | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Rambling, abrupt cuts, or well outside the time range without clear purpose.       |

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## ATTRIBUTION & DOCUMENTATION

| CRITERION                             | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING  | INCOMPLETE  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Credits &amp; AI Documentation</b> | <b>EXEMPLARY</b><br>All sounds, music, and resources credited at end of episode and in a works- | <b>DEVELOPING</b><br>Minor gaps in attribution or AI documentation. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b><br>Credits absent or significantly incomplete. AI |

| CRITERION | EXEMPLARY   | DEVELOPING                     | INCOMPLETE  |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------|---|
|           | cited document. Copyright and fair-use standards followed. AI use, prompts, and decisions documented clearly in pre-production folder, aligned with the 4D Framework. | Copyright generally respected. | use undisclosed. Copyright issues may be present. |

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## HOW THIS IS GRADED

MB351 uses labor-based contract grading. This rubric is a **formative tool** — it describes what quality looks like at each level, not a formula for calculating a score. Your contracted grade is based on completing the labor with genuine effort and sustained engagement. The podcast contract specifically requires *"a polished, high-quality podcast."* This rubric defines what polished and high-quality means in practice.

Private formative feedback will be provided in your individual Box folder. **The rubric tells you what was observed; the feedback tells you why it matters and what revision would look like.** Students aiming for an A should be able to point to Exemplary performance across most or all criteria and articulate — in their final presentation — the choices they made and what they learned from the process.

|                  |   |                   |   |                   |  |
|------------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| <b>EXEMPLARY</b> | Ready to publish.<br>Demonstrates understanding of the podcast genre applied with craft and intentionality. | <b>DEVELOPING</b> | Foundation is there, but the episode needs revision before it fully delivers on its promise.<br>Useful feedback, not a penalty. | <b>INCOMPLETE</b> | Significant gaps in execution or effort. Labor expectations were not met at the agreed-upon level. |
|------------------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|--|