Lesson 2 – Pre-Visit
Game Day on the Radio

Objective: Students will be able to:

• Discuss the significance of radio and television broadcasting.
• Use descriptive writing to illustrate a sporting event they experienced.

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Materials Needed:
- Computer with sound
- Radio broadcast of a baseball game (http://www.archive.org/details/HankAaron-715thHomeRun-ThreeDifferentCalls)
- A copy of the “Writing about Game Day” worksheet for each student (included)
- Woody Allen’s Radio Days film (rated PG) and television/DVD player
  - OR
- Reading about radio, such as Judith Waller’s account of the early years of radio (http://www.richsamuels.com/nbcmm/wmaq/waller/waller2.html)

Vocabulary:
Audio Theater – a dramatic performance written and performed to be listened to, especially popular during the golden age of radio.

Broadcast – to transmit programs or signals from a radio station, or the radio program itself.

Radio – A device used to transmit and receive sound through electromagnetic waves.

Special Effects – On the radio, sound effects designed to mimic a noise for dramatic effect, such as a creaking door or thunder storm.
Relevant National Learning Standards
(Based on Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)


Historical Understanding. Standard 1. Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.

Language Arts. Standard 1. Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Language Arts. Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Language Arts. Standard 10. Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

Technology. Standard 3. Understands the relationships among science, technology, society, and the individual.

Arts and Communication. Standard 1. Understands the principles, processes, and products associated with arts and communication media.

Arts and Communication. Standard 4. Understands ways in which the human experience is transmitted and reflected in the arts and communication.
1. Ask students, “What does your family do in the evening? Are there any television shows your family watches together? What do you think families did before the invention of television?”

2. Discuss the popularity of radio, which was most popular from the 1920s to the late 1950s. Various types of programs were presented on the radio, including variety shows, talk shows, news programs, sporting events, and lots of “audio theater” or dramas. Families often settled by the radio in the evening and tuned in to their favorite programs, much like we do with TV shows. Special effects were included in the productions and artists who specialized in creating these effects vocally and with props were a big part of them.

3. Screen a scene from Woody Allen’s Radio Days (PG) to illustrate the golden age of radio and its popularity amongst all age groups.

   OR

   Have students read about the golden age of radio, through a source such as Judith Waller’s account of the early years of WMAQ radio. (http://www.richsamuels.com/nbcmm/wmaq/waller/waller2.html)

4. Discuss the film or book with the class. Ask students what they have learned about the radio and radio broadcasting? How was radio used for news? How was it used for entertainment?

5. Discuss that starting in 1921, baseball was broadcast on the radio. When radio coverage of baseball started, owners were quick to protest that play-by-play coverage would reduce ticket sales. From 1924 to 1939, radio commentary was banned in New York. Other teams banned home game broadcasts. But by the close of the 1940s, every major league team provided play-by-play radio calls for home games.

6. Listen to a broadcast of a baseball game, such as the radio calls of Hank Aaron’s 715th homerun (http://www.archive.org/details/HankAaron-715thHomeRun-ThreeDifferentCalls). How is listening to a sports broadcast different than watching it on television?
1. The fact that baseball games were broadcast live on the radio made them exciting, memorable events for millions of Americans. Ask students to think about a sporting event that they remember watching on television or listening to on the radio.

2. Pass out the “Writing about Game Day” worksheet to each student. Each student should follow the prompt and write about a particular sports event they remember. Encourage students to use as much descriptive language as possible to allow the reader to feel like they were also there.

3. Encourage students to follow the writing process. Have scrap paper available.

4. Once they have finished their descriptive writing, provide class time for the students to exchange stories. Students should evaluate one another's work and provide constructive, written feedback.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude this lesson, discuss that sports broadcasts on radio, television, and now the internet allow many more people to experience the game than just those who can get tickets and watch it in person. As a result, many people remember watching or listening to sports games – especially very exciting or important ones – even if they could not see it in person. What are some important sporting events that a lot of people watch or listen to? Why are they so important? Would they be as important if people could not watch them on television or listen to them on the radio? Why?

To check for understanding, students should turn in the first drafts of their stories, the written feedback received from their partner, and their final drafts.
Writing about Game Day
Do you remember watching a sporting event on television or listening to it on the radio? Describe the event to a friend. Where were you? What were you doing? Did you plan to watch the event or was it a surprise? How did you feel? Be as specific as possible in your writing.