About the Genre: Public Service Announcements

What is it?
Public service announcements are called PSAs for short. They are brief announcements on the radio or TV. PSAs can also be found online. They give listeners information and advice on topics such as education, health, and safety. For example, a PSA may encourage people to wear a helmet when they ride bikes.

The words of a public service announcement are written in a script. Scripts are usually written for movies or plays. They describe the words actors say. They also describe the actions the actors make. A PSA uses speakers or actors on radio or TV to present the information.

What is the purpose?
The main purpose of a public service announcement is to present important information about health, safety, or education. A PSA is designed to help the general public. In the end, the goal of a PSA is to persuade people to change their behavior.

What is the structure?
PSAs are quite short. When the script is recorded, it is usually less than 60 seconds long. The script is often one or two paragraphs long, but it may be as short as a few sentences. Sentences in a PSA are short and simple so that the meaning is clear.

A good PSA begins with a **hook**, an introduction that gets the attention of the listener. It is often the first sentence of the script. A hook may be a funny joke or surprising fact. A hook may also be an interesting question that the audience wants to know the answer to.

The body of a PSA gives advice in short and clear sentences. A PSA stays focused on one topic and gives only one piece of advice. Here are some other types of information that may be included in a PSA:
- benefits of following the advice
- effects of not following the advice
- specific suggestions on how to put the information into action
- concluding statement
- phone number or email to get further information

Comprehension Questions
1. Which of the following might be a topic of a PSA?
   a. a new TV show
   b. wearing a bike helmet
   c. fashion
2. The purpose of a PSA is to do which of the following?
   a. to get the attention of the public with a funny joke or interesting question
   b. to provide actors with jobs in TV and radio
   c. to present important information about health, education, or safety
3. Where would you see or hear a PSA?