

# Ask-a-Biologist co-Host Contest

Ask-a-Biologist web site has launched podcasts and they are rapidly becoming a hit. Now Dr. Biology is scouting the Phoenix area for student co-hosts. Something that has never before been done in Phoenix!



**Students!** If you have an interest in science, biology, or broadcast media and live in the Phoenix metropolitan area, this could be your opportunity to guest-host and interview one of the leading researchers in the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University.

**Teachers and Parents,** we will need your help with the competition. The guidelines for the competition are listed below and include a short PDF guide and entry form. We are counting on you to help us locate the best students possible for this exciting new broadcast.

## How it works...

Each year, we will have twelve students that will co-host the Ask-a-Biologist podcast.

Students will be selected on the basis of a podcast audition. Schools can submit up to three students' recordings for consideration.

Submissions will be accepted twice each year. **Your Submission must reach us by these deadlines: October 1, and March 1.** We are now accepting submissions for October 1, 2009.

During each submission cycle, we will select up to six students (and two alternates) to come to ASU to participate in the production of the Ask-a-Biologist podcast. Each student co-host will interview a guest biologist. Depending on the number of submissions, and the quality of the auditions, we may select additional students and/or reduce the total number of students selected.

**Students must have a teacher or parent (or both) accompany them to ASU on the day of the broadcast recording.** Transportation to and from ASU will need to be provided by the school or parent of the student. Parking, lunch, and a tour of ASU will be provided by Ask-a-Biologist and the School of Life Sciences.

This packet contains all the information that you need to submit your entry. Inside you will find the following information.

- Podcast Audition Requirements
- How we will judge the submission
- What will students win?
- How to submit your entry to Ask-a-Biologist
- Suggestions for running your local star search
- Technology and tools used to make podcasts
- Entry form and model release form

## Podcast Audition Requirements

Please read this section carefully. Each submission must follow these rules to be considered.

**Podcast length** - Four to five minutes.

**Podcast content must include** - An introduction, interview (questions and answers), sign-off (conclusion)

**Podcast topic** - Any topic is acceptable, but we recommend a science theme. **We suggest that students pick an adult to interview.** This will more closely match the type of interview that will be done if they are selected.



## How we will judge the submission

We are looking for **students that speak clearly** and are **relaxed when using a microphone**. Of special interest are students who have a natural sounding voice and whose personality comes through in the tone of their voice as they ask questions. **Well crafted and thought-provoking questions** are what we are looking for, along with questions that approach biology from a kid's perspective. We will also look for interviews that follow basic communication skills to tell a story (who, what, when, where, how, and why). It is also important that each student takes time in preparation of the questions they will ask if chosen so that we will know that they understand the interview process and how questions should be crafted.

To help prepare materials for submission, we have created some special podcasts about broadcasting and journalism with actual working broadcasters. Students should listen to these programs to learn some of the tips and tricks that they use to prepare podcasts.

Listen to podcast Vol. 9 to hear real life broadcasters talk about the interview process.  
Listen to podcast Vol. 10 to hear what it has been like for two new podcasting show hosts.

## Judges

We have a panel of judges with media, broadcast, and journalism background that will select the winning students.

## What will students win?

All student submissions (maximum of 3 per school) will receive an Ask-a-Biologist T-shirt. They will also receive a certificate and letter from Dr. Biology. Selected winning students will come to the ASU Tempe Campus to record an episode of *Ask a Biologist* with Dr. Biology in the Grass Roots Studio. Selected winning students will also receive an iPod Shuffle and both students and chaperones will tour the campus and have lunch on the day of the recording session.

## How to submit your entry to Ask-a-Biologist

Each submission must contain a podcast in **MP3 format**, a completed and signed entry form, Please only send copies of your MP3 files. Materials submitted cannot be returned. We accept the recordings on CD or DVD media.

Ask-a-Biologist - Podcast Competition  
School of Life Sciences  
Arizona State University  
LSE 218  
Tempe AZ 85287-4501



### Any questions?

Please use the Ask-a-Biologist questions submission form ... or phone (480) 965-0803

### Suggestions for running your local star search

Yes, this process can run very much like the popular star search shows, such as American Idol. The key is to have students prepare and deliver a podcast that you will judge. If there are more than three students interested, you can then decide which of the three will be forwarded to Ask-a-Biologist. Be sure the students review the podcast audition requirements. We suggest creating a panel of judges that includes at least one student on the panel. After the audition recordings are made, the panel will then listen and judge the final three entries that will be forwarded to Ask-a-Biologist. We suggest using the criteria we will use when reviewing recordings. Please see the section “How we will judge the submission” for more details.

### Technology and tools used to make podcasts

The following material will help you put together your podcast. Depending on the resources in your school, there is a good chance that there will be little to no cost to prepare submissions. We also have a companion web page that deals with the technology side of podcasting.

[http://askabiologist.asu.edu/podcasts/podcast\\_tools.html](http://askabiologist.asu.edu/podcasts/podcast_tools.html)



### Computer

Just about any computer since 2002 can be used to record and edit podcasts. The key features you will need to look for are:

- Hard drive storage space (at least 1GB of free storage beyond the system requirements)
- Sound input and output (if you plan to record directly into the computer)
- Headphone jack (for editing podcasts)
- Headphone jack splitter (if you want two people to listen while editing with headphones)
- Built in microphone or a input for microphone.
- Portable recorders

If you are going to head out on to the streets to do your interviews, you may not want to take a computer. Here are some other options for recording interviews in the field. The most important features are the files are recorded digitally, and that they be in a non-compressed format such as uncompressed WAV. This will give you the best quality file to work from.

#### Inexpensive or free

If you cannot afford the more expensive recorders, just plan to use your computer and work inside where it is easy to access power and if you want you can connect an inexpensive microphone to the system to record.

#### Medium

Zoom H2 Handy Digital Recorder from Samson.

(under \$200.00)

<http://www.samsontech.com/products/productpage.cfm?prodID=1916>

#### Medium- high

Zoom H4 Handy Digital Recorder from Samson

(over \$250.00) Best when matched with the Audio Technica ATM 8033 Mic

<http://www.samsontech.com/products/productpage.cfm?prodID=1901>

#### High-end

M-Audio, from Avid (Under \$500.00)

[http://www.m-audio.com/products/en\\_us/MicroTrack2496-main.html](http://www.m-audio.com/products/en_us/MicroTrack2496-main.html)

Marantz PMD660 Solid State Portable Recorder

<http://www.d-mpro.com/users/folder.asp?FolderID=3629&CatID=19&SubCatID=188>

### **Editing Software**

There are some free software options that work well for someone beginning to produce audio files. In some cases the fee-based software may have more file format conversions and output options. They also include sound effects and short music clips you can use to liven up your broadcast.

#### Free software

Audacity (PC/Windows - Mac - Linux)

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

#### Software with a cost

Adobe Audition (educational discount available - PC/Windows)

<http://www.adobe.com/products/audition/>

Garage Band (Mac)

<http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/>

Sound Forge

<http://www.sonymediasoftware.com/Products/>



## **Microphone**

One of the most important things for producing quality podcasts is the microphone. You cannot fix poor quality recordings that often result from low quality microphones. Do not skimp in this area. Also be sure to pick up a compatible microphone cord!

Inexpensive or free

If your computer comes with a microphone, you might find this to be the least expensive, but not the best option for quality recording.

Medium (\$50 - \$100)

Audio-Technica PRO 41 Cardioid Dynamic

Shure SM58

High-end (over \$150)

Audio Technica ATM 8033 Mic

## **Headphones**

Just as with microphones, a good quality set of headphones will make editing your podcasts much easier and also improve the final quality of the podcast. You will see that you do not have to spend a lot of money even for the higher quality headphones. The key is to get studio monitor type headphones. These are the over the ear headphones and not ear buds.

Inexpensive (under \$20)

Sony MDR-V150

JVC HA-G101

Medium (\$20 - \$100)

Sennheiser HD201

Sennheiser HD-280

High-end (over \$100)

Bose QuietComfort 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling

# Ask-a-Biologist co-Host Contest Entry Form

This entry form must be completed and **signed by both a teacher/sponsor and the student's parent/legal guardian**. Each entry submission requires the original completed entry form and the audition recording (MP3 format files) on a CD or DVD to be sent to the address at the bottom of this form. Please see the section on "How to submit your entry to Ask-a-Biologist" for more information.

Student Entry Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Sponsor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Sponsor Contact: Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Each entrant certifies that their work is original and that no copyrighted materials have been used to make the podcast audition recording. In addition, each entrant grants a non-exclusive, perpetual license to use any and all audio, video, and photographic media produced as a result of winning this competition to be used in any format or publication by Ask-a-Biologist and ASU.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Teacher/Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Please only send copies of your MP3 files to the following address. Materials submitted cannot be returned. All winning contestants will need to provide transportation to and from the ASU Tempe Campus. Mail entries to the following address.

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