

J. Trapp
Oral Communication

This I Believe Speaking Assignment

This I Believe began in the 1950s as a radio broadcast program hosting by the famous Edward R. Murrow. Listen to Murrow talk about the show: <https://thisibelieve.org/essay/16844/>.

This I Believe was also a reboot on National Public Radio that lasted for four years. It “engaged listeners in a discussion of the core beliefs that guide their daily lives. We heard from people of all walks of life — the very young and the very old, the famous and the previously unknown, Nobel laureates, teachers, prison inmates, students, politicians, farmers, poets, entrepreneurs, activists and executives”

(<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103427272>).

The executive producer has this to say: “I want to stress that while the NPR series has concluded, our international essay project, and This I Believe Inc., the organization that produces it, live on. You can visit our Web site, www.thisibelieve.org, to read the tens of thousands of essays that have been submitted by the public, write one of your own, download our educational curricula, and sign up for our weekly podcast and newsletter, which will continue indefinitely” (<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103565190>).

Sadly, they are no longer accepting essays. But we can still make our own contributions to this fine tradition and speak our values to others. Values. Hopes. Thoughts. Core beliefs. This is what Aristotle called *ethos*—the word from which we get our English words, *ethics* and *ethical*. You will begin doing some thinking about this assignment and land on an idea that you can write an essay about and then make a recording of in about 3 minutes in length. On my personal website, I will create a space for us to upload our recordings there for us all to enjoy. But more than that, anyone could visit the website and listen to your recordings. So, this is PUBLIC writing, first and foremost, even while it is also personal. Interesting to think about—how does the personal inflect public spaces? Politicians use personal feelings and stories all the time as a part of their argument building.

To Do: Please look over the website and listen to several of these. Get the sound of them and the flow of them before you begin your own. We will be working on this as we go along, but for now do some listening. This is due before mid-term, so we have time to think and listen. Check out the “explore” tab for lots of options (<https://thisibelieve.org/essays/featured/>).

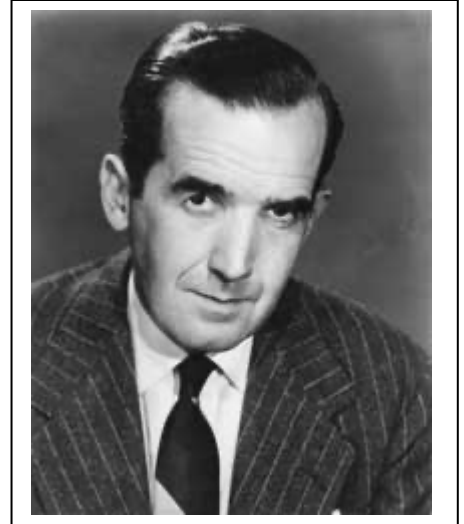


Photo from the Edward R. Murrow Estate and posted at <https://thisibelieve.org/essay/16844/>.
“Edward R. Murrow hosted *This I Believe* from 1951 to 1955. The newsman gained acclaimed for his CBS Radio broadcasts from London during World War II. His television documentaries for “See it Now” and “CBS Reports” tackled subjects ranging from Joseph McCarthy to farm worker rights. Murrow died of complications from lung cancer in 1965.”