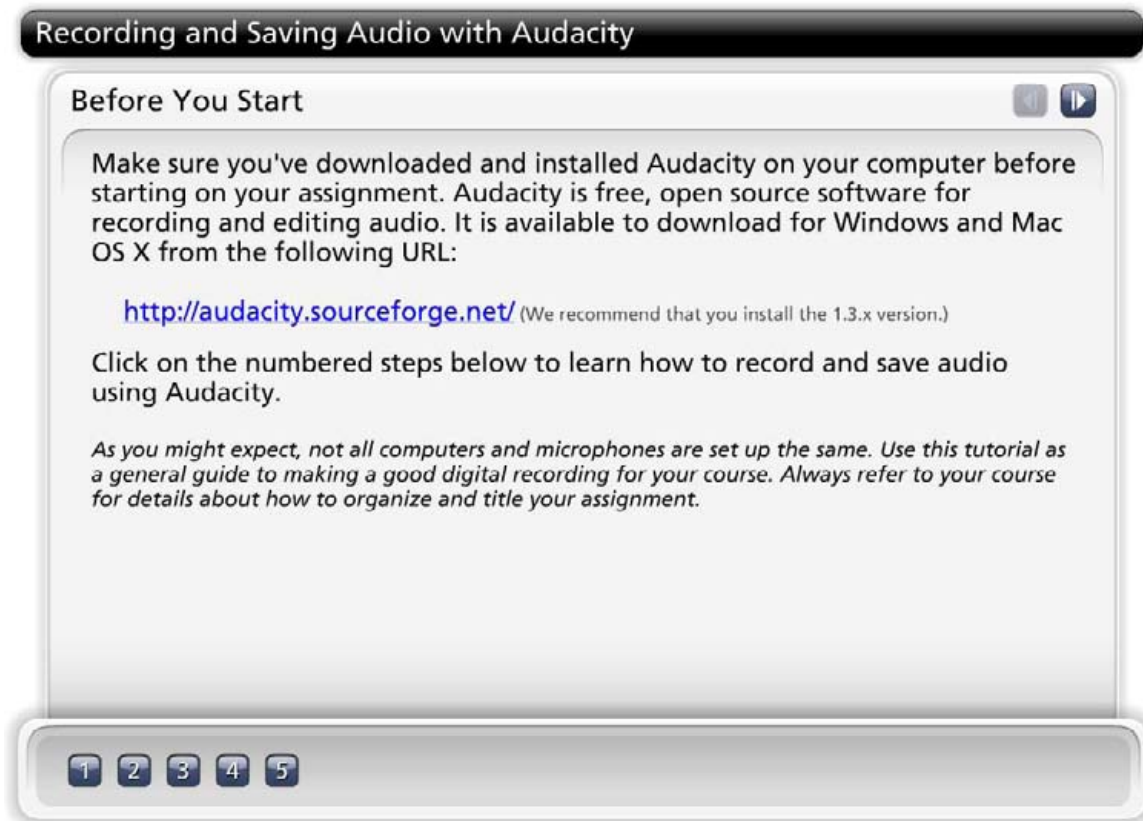


Recording and Saving Audio with Audacity

Items: 6 Steps (Including Introduction)

Introduction: Before You Start



Make sure you've downloaded and installed Audacity on your computer before starting on your assignment. Audacity is free, open source software for recording and editing audio. It is available to download for Windows and Mac OS X from the following URL:

(We recommend that you install the 1.3.x version.)

Click on the numbered steps below to learn how to record and save audio using Audacity.

As you might expect, not all computers and microphones are set up the same. Use this tutorial as a general guide to making a good digital recording for your course. Always refer to your course for details about how to organize and title your assignment.


Step 1: Plug In and Turn On Your Microphone

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Plug In and Turn On Your Microphone

Make sure your microphone is plugged in and set to "on" if it has a switch. Most computers have a microphone input on their front or back like the one pictured.

Some computers have a built-in microphone above the monitor; these should automatically be available to Audacity.



1 2 3 4 5

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Some computers have a built-in microphone above the monitor; these should automatically be available to Audacity.

Step 2: Basic Settings


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2 Basic Settings

Audacity has a lot of buttons and features, but you only need to worry about the ones **highlighted in green** in the image.

At the top left is a set of standard playback buttons like those on a DVD player or voice recorder, including play, pause, stop, skip to start, skip to end, and record. At the lower left of the Audacity window is a setting for the "Project Rate (Hz)." This controls the quality of your recording, but also the size of the file you'll need to upload. **Set this at 16000Hz.**

Notice the drop-down menu with "Microphone" selected. This sets what Audacity will use as a source to record. **Keep this set as "Microphone."**



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Step 3: Record Your Voice

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3 Record Your Voice

Click "record" from the buttons at the top of the Audacity window and speak into your microphone as directed in your assignment. As you speak, you will see a blue waveform representing your voice over time. To get a good recording, don't speak directly into the microphone but instead place it more toward the corner of your mouth. A quick test for microphone placement is to hold your palm close to your mouth; if you feel air moving (especially when you say words that start with *p* or *b*), your microphone will probably pick up a popping sound.

When you're finished with your assignment, click stop. It's okay if you click "pause" between different parts of your



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When you're finished with your assignment, click stop. It's okay if you click "pause" between different parts of your assignment; just click "pause" a second time to continue your recording. You'll need to click "stop" to finish your recording.

Step 4: Listen to Your Recording

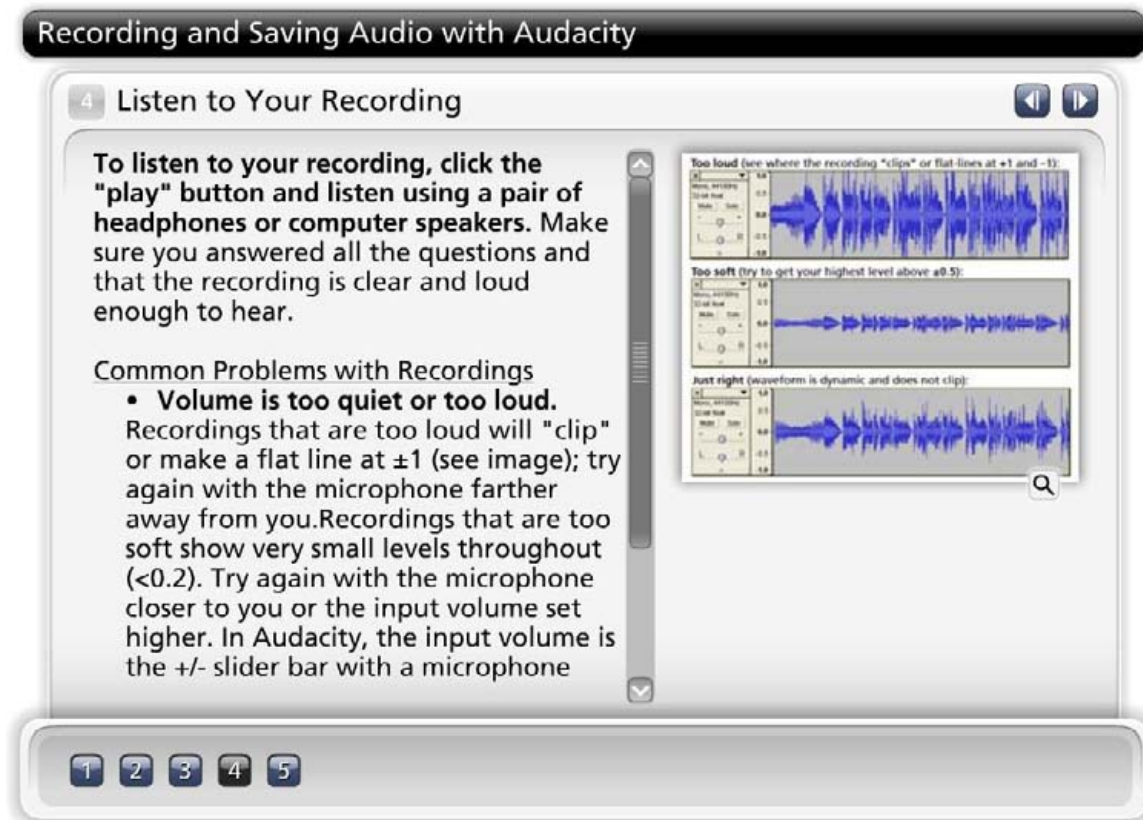
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4 Listen to Your Recording

To listen to your recording, click the "play" button and listen using a pair of headphones or computer speakers. Make sure you answered all the questions and that the recording is clear and loud enough to hear.

Common Problems with Recordings

- **Volume is too quiet or too loud.** Recordings that are too loud will "clip" or make a flat line at ± 1 (see image); try again with the microphone farther away from you. Recordings that are too soft show very small levels throughout (< 0.2). Try again with the microphone closer to you or the input volume set higher. In Audacity, the input volume is the +/- slider bar with a microphone icon



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- **Words beginning with *p* or *b* sound distorted.** These are called "pops." Change the placement of the microphone so that the air coming from your mouth doesn't directly contact the microphone.

Step 5: Export As WAV

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5 Export As WAV

On the file menu in Audacity, go to **File > Export**. Select "WAV, AIFF, and other uncompressed types" from the "Save as type" field and save your file to your desktop (or another place you can find later). If specified in your course, name your file appropriately to help your instructor find the correct recording. If asked by Audacity, you do not need to enter any "metadata" for your file.



When you're satisfied with your assignment, log on to your course and upload the sound file you exported.

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