

Introduction to Audacity

In this activity, you will develop basic knowledge of how to import audio files into Audacity, edit them, and export them as a stand-alone audio project. In addition to exploring Audacity, your goal for this activity is to create a 15-30 second soundscape.

Step 1: Open the Audacity program and import your prepared files.

- A. Open Audacity by holding the Command key, tapping the spacebar, typing “Audacity” into the Spotlight search box, and then clicking the Audacity icon.
- B. Import your audio files into Audacity by dragging and dropping them into the Audacity window or by clicking File > Import > Audio.

Step 2: Explore the following tools in Audacity as you create your soundscape.

- A. Press play and listen to all of the tracks at once. Then, use the “mute” button to listen to each track individually and then to listen to a select set of tracks.
- B. Use the time shift tool to adjust the “location” of tracks as you work to build a soundscape.
- C. Explore the effects of the Fade In and Fade Out tool when you locate tracks in suitable locations. (On the toolbar, click Effect > Fade In/Out.)
- D. Adjust the gain (volume) of tracks with the envelope tool.
- E. Finally, when you have a file that you like, use the Mix and Render tool to combine all files into one file. (On the toolbar, click Tracks > Mix and Render.)
- F. Export the file as an mp3 and save it to your desktop or jumpdrive.

Step 3: Export your soundscape project as a stand-alone mp3 file.

- A. Export your soundscape as an mp3 by clicking File > Export > Format > mp3.

Audacity Tips

Tip #1: When you are ready to export your Audacity project, choose “save as” and save it under a new name before you mix and render your work to prepare for export. This way, if you accidentally alter the Audacity file in a way you don’t want to during the exporting process, you can go back to the original. When you begin work on your major projects it is good practice to start each work session by doing a “save as” for all audio projects you intend to alter. This way, if something goes wrong you won’t have to start over from scratch—at worst you will lose only a few hours of work.

Tip #2: Mp3 is the best file format for most online spaces because it creates a smaller file that loads faster. So, “export” your file from Audacity as an Mp3 and check the file size. If

it's too large, go to the "Preferences" option in Audacity, choose the "Quality" tab and lower the "bit rate." Now, export again; the file should be smaller this time. Continue to lower the bit rate and export until the file is the appropriate size. Lowering the bit rate also lowers the quality of the audio file, so only lower it as much as necessary.