Audacity

This sheet highlights common tools and tasks in Audacity, a free, easy-to-use audio editor and recorder for Windows and Mac. This card was downloaded from https://www.ndsu.edu/its/training/tlmc/audio/#c167958

Audacity is available free for Mac and Windows at audacity.sourceforge.net/download

IMPORTANT

Before you begin, create a project folder. This folder should contain your project file as well as necessary data files. Keep all of these files together in your project folder along with other audio files that you are using in your project.
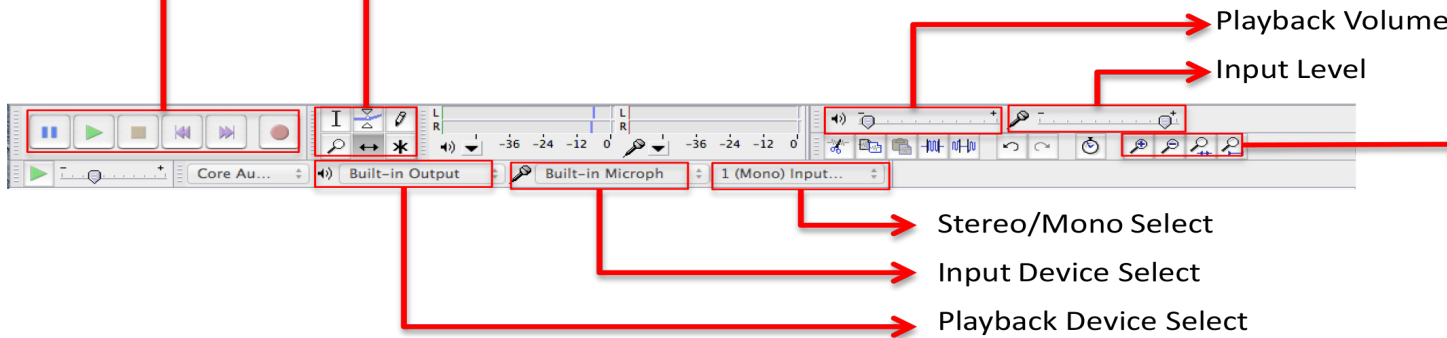
If your media or files get separated, deleted, or renamed, your project will have problems.

Transport Buttons: Pause, Play, Stop, Skip to Start, Skip to End, Record

Frequently Used Tools

Tools

Select Tool: Click and drag to select portions of your audio for cutting, pasting, deleting, applying effects, etc

Time Shift Tool: Click and drag entire clips forward or back in your timeline, or up and down to other tracks

Envelope Tool: Manually create fades or changes in volume throughout the duration of a clip or track

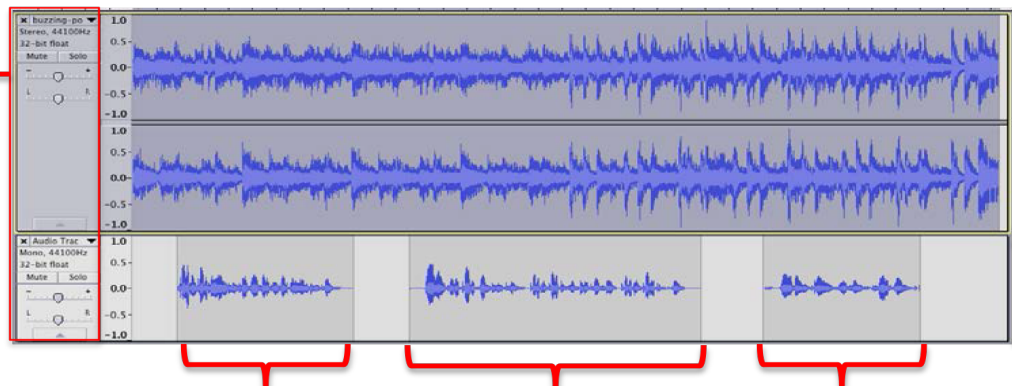Playback Volume

Input Level

Zoom Tools
Zoom in
Zoom out
Fit Selection to Screen
Fit Entire Project to Screen

Stereo/Mono Select

Input Device Select

Playback Device Select

Track Controls
Each track has its own controls and dropdown options allowing you to control overall track volume, name tracks, mute or solo track, and more.

Stereo Track: Contains separate right and left side channels in a single track. Most often used for music.

Mono Track: Single audio line in the center of stereo field. Most common for voiceover

Separate "clips" within a single track can be moved around independently of each other

To record audio:

1) Connect your audio input device (i.e. microphone) before opening Audacity. Click *Record* to begin recording.

2) If no audio is recorded, make sure the correct input device is selected and that the input level is turned up (see diagram on other side of this guide).

3) Once a recording is stopped, pressing *Record* again will start a new recording on a new track. If you wish to keep recording on the same track, holding the *Shift* key when pressing *Record* will add the new audio to the currently selected track.

To use existing audio:

1) Go to *File* > *Import* > *Audio*.

2) Browse and select the audio you wish to use. It will be placed in a new track at the current location of the playhead.
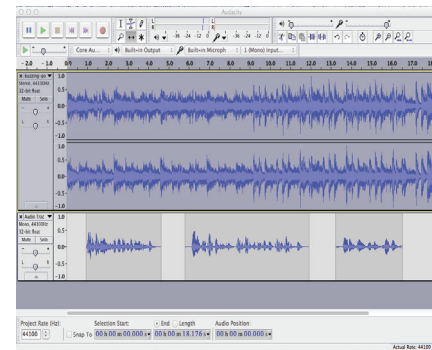
Splitting a clip:

To cut a single clip into two or more separate clips, select the clip, place playhead where you want the split to occur, and use keyboard short cut *Ctrl i* (*Command i* on Mac). Split clip portions may now be moved around independently using the *time shift* tool.
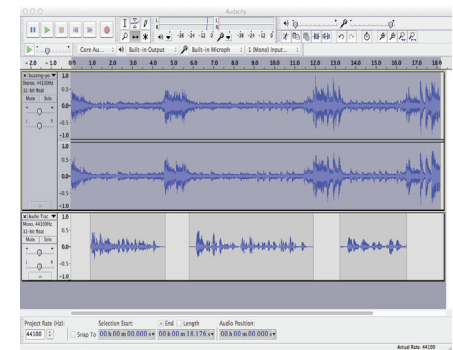
"Ducking" your music:

In voiceover recordings that feature background music, it is common to have the volume of the music decrease when the narrator is speaking and increase when he/she is not. The Auto Duck effect is one way of achieving this…

Auto Duck

1) Make sure your music track is positioned above your voiceover track. (To reorder your tracks, simply click in the gray information area to the left of the track and drag upward or downward.)

2) Use the selection tool to select the entire music track.

3) In the top menu bar, go to *Effect* and select *Auto Duck*. You may change the ducking parameters or accept the default settings.

4) Click *OK* to apply the effect.

Before Auto Duck   After Auto Duck

NOTE: Other effects are applied in a similar way, by selecting the portion of a clip and then selecting the effect you want to apply to the selected portion. If you do not like the results of an applied effect, click Undo before continuing.

IMPORTANT Exporting Audio:

Your Audacity project is a working file only. **In order to use your audio outside of Audacity (or turn it in to your instructor), you must export it.**

1) When you are happy with the way your project sounds, go to *File* > *Export*.

2) Select *Export*, specify a name for your file, a location for saving it, and file format. (We recommend the .mp3 format because of its small file size and high compatibility).