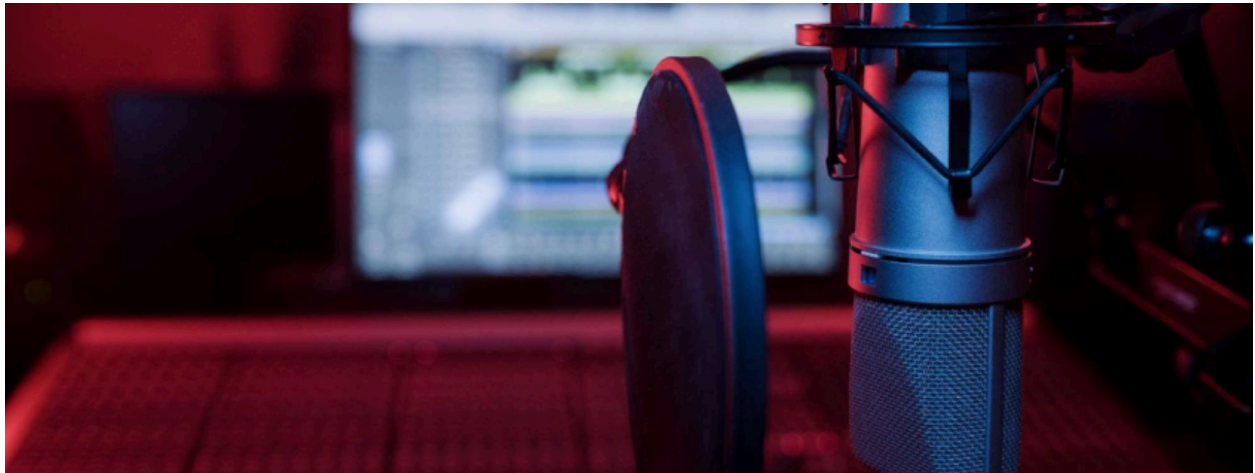


Audiobook Production Preparation



This preparation guide was developed to help our clients deliver their self-produced audiobook files for editing and mastering.

From audio recording to editing this guide will help prepare your audiobook production to get the best results during the mastering stage.

RECORDING PROCESS

Keep the Recording Rolling

One practice the narrator can do when recording is to keep reading and not stop after making a mistake. This will help the narrator keep a constant tone, speed, and cadence throughout the audiobook.

If the voice talent makes a mistake during recording, the talent should pause, leave a gap, and pick up from the previous sentence. The gap will allow the audio editor to see the mistake and fix it accordingly during the editing process. This also saves time during the recording process as the audio engineer does not have to stop the recorder.

Another tip is to use a **clicker, clap or snap** between the pauses to alert where the retake is. This will be noticeable in the audio waveform to edit.



Record Entire Sections

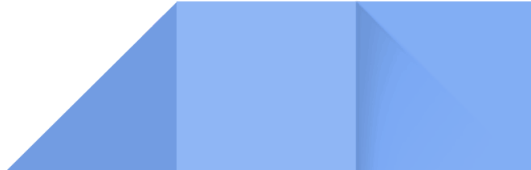
It is essential to record an entire section per sitting, for example, each chapter. If the session is 3 hours, the narrator should be able to read about 2 or 3 chapters depending on the length. This would be 3 sittings in the session with three breaks. Have the narrator record the entire chapter with retakes on the fly. Take a break in between each section or chapter.

Listen to the Previous Recordings

For larger audiobooks, the recording can span multiple days. It is important to listen to about 3 minutes of the previous recording to keep the same tone, speed, and cadence.

REDUCE ROOM ECHO AND NOISE

If you are recording the audiobook yourself, here are important things to remember:

- **Reduce room echo as much as possible.** Put up acoustic panels, sheets, or curtains where audio reflections are problematic. Refrain from having mirrors, tables, and items near the recording source as this will cause sound to reflect.
 - **Record in medium and small rooms.** Larger rooms can add unwanted room echo and noise.
 - **Close all windows and doors** to reduce background noise.
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- **Turn off all noisy equipment** such as air conditioners, and computer fans that will get in the recording.
- **Record during selected times** that are less active with coworkers, family, and outside activity.
- **Refrain from excessive page turns** and writing during the recording. If you must write or make a page turn, stop narrating and then continue after turning the page while the recording is still rolling. You can have your script on an iPad or tablet to eliminate any page-turn sounds.
- **Use a pop filter** in front of the microphone to reduce “P” pops.
- **Attach the microphone to a boom stand** and do not sit it on a desk. Any movement on the desk such as hand taps and bumps will transmit to the microphone if not on a separate stand.
- **Do not record in a corner** or face close to a wall as this will cause unwanted sound reflection and bass build-up.
- **Record positioned about 4 to 6 inches** from in front of the microphone.

REDUCING MOUTH CLICKS DURING RECORDING

When recording for a long period, the mouth can become dry and the throat irritated. Drinking a lot of water is not always the best solution because too much

moisture in the mouth causes a different type of noise such as throat and stomach sounds. Here are some tips to remedy these situations:

- **Chew sugar-free gum.** Be sure to take the gum out of your mouth before recording.
- **Take frequent breaks** while recording and sip room-temperature water during the break. Do not drink cold water or beverages during the recording session. This will constrict the vocal cords.
- **Drink room-temperature apple juice.** Green apples in particular can reduce mouth clicks and smacks.

RETAKES DURING THE PROOFING PROCESS

When doing retakes for an audiobook, it is important to keep a consistent tone and cadence as the original recording. The following are important procedures and tips to keep in mind when doing retakes.

Do not record just one word that needs to be replaced.

When doing a retake, it is best to record the entire sentence or phrase. This will give the audio engineer space to edit the retake seamlessly.

Listen to the original recording to make note of the following:

- Pitch and tonality
- Speed and cadence
- Character

Record 2 or 3 variations for a retake:

- This will give options during the editing process.

Retake Header

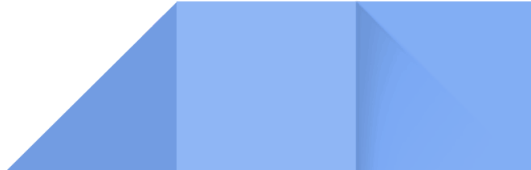
- Record a header announcement at the start of each retake (e.g., Chapter 1).

Labeling the Retake Files:

- When labeling the retake files be sure to **include the section title**, take number, and timecode location of the take. Example: CH-1_Retake-1_12.14.wav (CH= Chapter, 1= Take number, 12.14 = Timecode 12:14)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Technical guidelines for audiobook recording specs:

- Each final mastered recording must not exceed 120 minutes. If the chapter is over 120 minutes it will have to be separated during mastering.
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- **Each chapter must begin with at least a 3-second pause** and then a header announcement (e.g., Chapter 1).
- **All audio must not peak over -4db** during the recording process to reduce the chance of audio clipping.
- There should be **minimal unwanted noises and distortions** and a noise floor of -65db or lower.
- The file must be recorded at **16-bit/44.1 kHz** or above in wav format.
- The **recording settings should remain** the same during the entire audiobook production. This includes distance from the microphone, the type of mic, room, EQ, and other front-end processing.
- When sending the finished audio recordings **do not add processing** such as compression, limiters, noise gates, or noise reduction. This will be done during the mastering stage.

TIPS FOR EDITING AUDIO

If you wish to edit the audio before sending it to us for mastering follow these tips:

- Between each edit **add a crossfade**. This will eliminate pops and clicks between the edits.








- Make sure the audio sections are in the **same level range**. Joining two audio recordings that are either louder or softer than the other will result in noticeable edit points.
- **Maintain room tone** and breaths between audio edits.
- **Record room tone** to add during gaps and breaks in the narration.

These recording steps, procedures, and technical requirements should help you produce your audiobook with a more streamlined and knowledgeable understanding of the overall process.

READY TO SEND YOUR AUDIO FILES FOR MASTERING?

1. Export all audio files no lower than **16 bit/44.1k Wav files**. Both mono and stereo are accepted. No lossy formats such as mp3.
2. All exported audio should **not have extra processing** such as extensive EQ, heavy compression, limiting, noise reduction, or effects. Light compression and EQ are satisfactory as long as it is at the same settings during the recording process.
3. If the audio has already been edited, be sure it is **free of region clipping**. No head or endpoints are cut off and has some crossfades.
4. If sending unedited audio, please **include all outtakes**, voice cues, and retakes preferably all in the recorded file per section.

5. **Label all audio files** according to the table of contents of the audiobook numbered in order such as: Opening credits, 2. Introduction, 3. Chapter 1, etc. See the example below.

	01. Opening Credits.wav
	02. Forward.wav
	03. Preface.wav
	04. Introduction.wav
	05. Chapter_1.wav
	06. Chapter_2.wav
	07. Chapter_3.wav

6. **Include the final book script**, eBook, or Kindle version for reference. The print version can also be mailed.

7. **Include any notes** that may be helpful to the editing process.

8. Copy all audio files in a folder and **send them using your preferred file-sharing platform** such as Dropbox, Google Drive, WeTransfer, etc. Do not send files as email attachments, please.