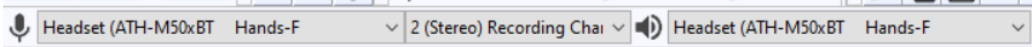


1. Check your surroundings

a) Check your input

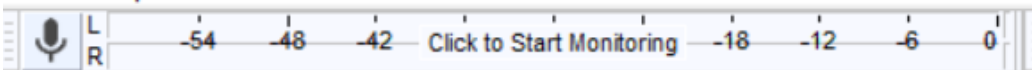
- Find the area of Audacity that shows your input and output. It should be under the record button. The input shows a symbol of a microphone. The output shows a symbol of a speaker.



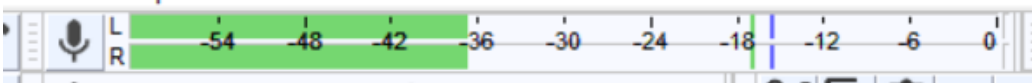
- **Make sure that the selected input is the input you want!**
- You should try to use a microphone that is made to be close to your face - whether that is a gaming headset, or a pair of Apple earbuds with a little mic in them, or another headset. This will give you better audio than talking at a distance to the mic in your laptop, for example.
- **Audacity checks for new inputs ONLY AT START UP.** If you have connected something recently and it's not showing up in your list of inputs, **SAVE your work then RESTART Audacity.**
- **Do not use Bluetooth headphones unless they are the only option you have.** Bluetooth headphones send a digital file over Bluetooth to your computer. As a result of that, the audio that you record will have digital artifacts (pops, static, crackle, hiss).

b) Check your levels

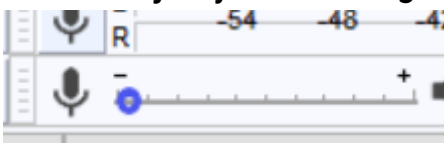
- **Remember that your audio should be hitting between -12dB and -6dB.** Quiet noises can hit around -18dB. Loud noises can hit closer to 0dB. But on average your audio should be hitting **between -12dB and -6dB.**
- You can see your audio levels by clicking the Monitor area.



- After clicking this, try reading your script into your mic. Watch the levels. Where are they hitting?



- For example, in the above image, you can see that my audio is low. **The BLUE BAR shows where my audio is peaking.**
- **You can adjust your recording input in the scale just below the Monitor bar.**

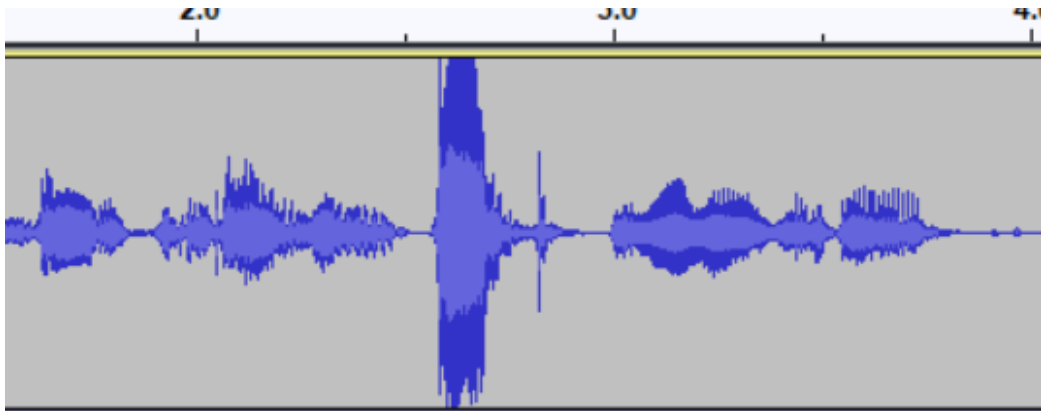


- Turning up this scale will increase the sensitivity of the computer, and increase your volume.



c) Check for pops

- **As you listen to your levels, be aware of 'pops'.** A 'pop' is when one part of a word hits louder than all the others.



- **Pops usually happen on sounds that take a lot of air to make - 'P', 'K', 'T', 'D'.**
- **If you are seeing pops in your audio, that is a sign that you need to move away from the microphone.**

d) Check for echo

- Try talking in the room you want to record in - **is your voice echoing?** Echo will muddy up your recording.
- **Blank, flat surfaces will echo.** Try to find a room that has soft surfaces in it - clothing, books, furniture, even people! **Soft surfaces absorb sound and reduce echo.** If you have a walk-in closet that is full of clothes, try recording in there. If all else fails, try making a blanket fort over you and your mic.

e) Check for background noise

- Be silent and listen to the room you are recording in. **Is there noise in the background?**
- **Your brain will tune out noises that you are used to** - the fridge humming, the air conditioner thumping, the sound of people talking from another room, etc - **but the microphone will pick them up!** Try to move away from all noise.
- Take a test recording. **Is there noise from your microphone?**
- **Some microphones will produce a hiss or buzz on their own.** Sometimes there is noise due to a loose cable or dirty jack connection. Bluetooth microphones will produce digital artifacts like static. Try to swap out tech that is making noise.

2. Record!

- The most important buttons for recording are together at the top left of the Audacity page.



- From left to right: **Pause**, **Play**, **Stop**, **Skip to Beginning**, **Skip to End**, and **Record**.
- Press **Record** to start recording.
- **Always wait a few seconds before speaking after pressing Record.** Audacity sometimes lags for a second before starting to record. You want to make sure that what you are saying is being recorded!
- Press **Pause** to pause recording. Click it again to start recording again in the same clip.
- Press **Stop** to stop recording. If you stop, you will have to press **Record** again to start recording again. You will notice that when you do this, you will begin to record a new clip.