

## Handout 1: What Do You Hear?

Your teacher will play a series of recorded sounds. Listen to each sound and note your reactions.

What sound do you hear?	What words or images come to mind when you hear this sound?	What feelings or emotions (if any) come to mind when you hear this sound?	Describe a story that this sound could be a part of.

## Handout 2: Unit 1 Overview

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*Telling stories is what humans do. We tell stories to our friends, write stories in our journals, watch stories on TV and in the movies, and hear stories on the radio. Stories are told in different ways. A writer tells stories through words. An animator uses visual images and, perhaps, words, sounds, and music. A mime uses facial expressions, movement, and props without any words at all. In this unit, you will tell a story through sound you record. You'll use voice, music, and other kinds of sounds to establish your story's setting, to convey events or ideas, and to evoke emotion in your listeners.*

Your work in this unit will revolve around the following questions:

- *How can voice, music, sound effects, and other sounds be used to evoke emotion and tell a story?*
- *What story do you want to tell? How can you tell your story using only sound?*
- *What are the different tasks involved in developing a media product from idea to completion?*

### Unit Project

You will create a short audio story. Your story might be based on a team member's personal experience. It might be an exploration of a theme or issue or a profile of a person or place in your community. You'll choose a story idea that you think other teens would find interesting, provocative, or entertaining.

You'll take your audio story from conception to completion, going through the same production stages and using the same skills that professionals use. In the *pre-production* stage, you'll choose ideas, do research, develop the story, and plan your recordings. During *production*, you'll record and log interviews and other sounds. Finally, in *post-production*, you'll choose audio clips to include in your story, write a script, and edit your recording to create the finished piece.

### What You Will Do in This Unit

**Identify the qualities and effects of recorded sounds.** Listen to different sounds and identify the images or emotions they evoke. Discuss how sound can be used to enhance or tell a story.

**Identify compelling storytelling elements.** Listen to and analyze audio documentaries to learn effective storytelling techniques.

**Develop a story concept.** With your team, choose a story to tell through sound. Describe the sounds you will use to tell your story and the reactions you want to evoke in your listening audience.

**Critique audio stories.** Listen to, describe, analyze, and critique an audio story on your own each week.

**Conduct interviews.** Learn interview strategies, practice interviewing techniques, and plan and conduct interviews.

**Record sound.** Learn and apply creative and technical skills to record sound and to solve challenges in recording sound.

**Use basic sound editing skills.** Apply editing skills to mix clips of interviews, ambient sounds, narration, music, and sound effects to produce a documentary audio story.

**Profile an AME professional.** Begin research on a project in which you'll choose an AME professional you admire, research his or her education and career path, and critique one of his or her projects.

**Keep a journal.** Keep a journal with your assignments, notes, and sketches on the development of your ideas, research, and reflections.

## Vocabulary Used in This Unit

**Acoustics:** The characteristics of a physical space that determine the effect of sound transmitted there, such as clarity or volume. (Also, the branch of physics dealing with sound.)

**Ambient sound:** Background sounds in a scene or location, such as wind, water, office noises, traffic, birds, and crowds.

**Anecdote:** A short narrative of an interesting, amusing, or biographical incident.

**Audio slate:** Identifying information at the start of a recording. It can include the date, series title, episode number, director, planned air date, subject, and take.

**Found sound:** Sound that would occur regardless of whether it's being recorded, as opposed to sound that is created or manufactured. (*Ambient* sound is a type of found sound.)

**Log:** A list of all the contents of a recording, including subjects, shots, scenes, time code, time of day, takes, and notes of particularly good takes or sound bites ("gem" moments).

**Post-production:** The stage after all recording is done. Post-production tasks include logging recorded material, choosing clips, and *mixing*—arranging and layering the audio clips.

**Pre-production:** The stage in which a program is conceived, developed, and planned before recording begins. Pre-production tasks include story development and logistics, such as budgeting, scheduling, and selecting locations and sounds.

**Production:** The stage in which all scenes, interviews, sounds, and events are recorded.

**Room tone:** The sound present in a room when nothing identifiable is happening. Every location has a distinct mix of subtle sounds and reverberations, so a microphone placed in two different empty rooms will produce different room tones. Room tone is recorded to provide a consistent sound background, smooth out edit points, and bring a feeling of life to a story.

**Transcribe:** To put spoken words and sounds into written or printed form.

**Transcript:** A written account of spoken or recorded material, such as an interview.

## Handout 3: Sound Scavenger Hunt

Work with your team to come up with ideas for different kinds of sounds. Think of a specific sound for each item in the list below:

- The sound of an *activity* that students do in school (for example, students going from one class to another or eating lunch)
- A sound related to a *place* that is familiar to students
- The sound of an *object* that you use in school
- A sound that captures an *emotion or mood* (for example, the excitement of a sports team winning a game, the nervousness of preparing for exams, or the calmness of the school yard before the day begins)

Write your sounds in the chart below. Be specific. (For example, "A basketball being dribbled.")

Go on a scavenger hunt to find the sounds you identified. Record each sound. Each recording should be no longer than 60 seconds.

Each sound recording should convey information without using any explanation or narration. Your recordings might include people's voices in the background, but you should not interview anyone or record narration.

Kind of Sound	Specific Sound
Sound of an activity	
Sound related to a place	
Sound of an object	
Sound that captures a mood or emotion	

## Handout 4: Recording Techniques and Tips

Sound is an essential component of radio, TV, film, animations, and video games. Whatever media you create, you want to capture sound that is clear, audible, and realistic. This handout describes principles of audio recording and techniques for recording good sound.

### Pre-Production: What to Do Before You Record

#### Familiarize Yourself with Your Equipment

##### *Microphones*

Microphones are a key component of sound recording. An external microphone helps you isolate the sound that you want to record. The list below explains the types of microphones that are commonly used for documentary production similar to what you will do for your audio story.

##### **Boom mics**



These microphones are mounted on a pole. They are designed to pick up sound only in the direction in which they are pointed and to minimize sounds at the sides and rear of the mic. Boom mics are ideal for isolating a subject's voice in a noisy or crowded environment.

##### **Lavalier mics**



Lavalier mics are tiny mics that can be attached to a person's shirt. They are often used in documentary film because they are easily hidden from the camera and they do an excellent job of picking up the speaker's voice. This is because the mic is worn near the throat and chest (where sound is generated).

### Handheld mics



These mics are passed around the audience on TV talk shows and are also used for person-on-the-street interviews.

### Windscreens



These coverings slip over any type of mic and reduce the sound of moving air, whether from the wind or particularly breathy voices. Some camcorders have an electronic windscreen that automatically removes certain sound frequencies.

### Headphones

Headphones help you focus on the sound you're recording without being distracted by background sounds. If you use headphones with volume control, you might want to adjust the volume slightly higher than you normally would so that you can hear everything that you record.

## Make an Equipment List

List all your equipment—such as the recorder, batteries, microphone, tapes (if any), labels, and markers.

### Check Your Equipment

Check that your equipment is operating correctly. Do a 30-second test recording and play back the sound while you listen with headphones.

### Label Your Recordings

If your recording device uses tapes, label the tapes before you start. This will help you keep track of where and when you made your recordings. It also helps to prevent accidental re-recording over an existing recording.

### Assign Roles

Your team members will take turns assuming four different roles:

- **Production manager:** Oversees the logistics of production and acts as the main contact person for interviewees and others involved with the recording (for example, if you need to make arrangements with the owner of a building where you're recording).
- **Sound engineer:** Is in charge of operating the recording equipment, including setting up the space and equipment to maximize sound quality and listening with headphones during interviews to ensure high-quality sound.
- **Logger:** Keeps track of sound while it is recorded. During interviews, the logger lists the topics discussed and the approximate time span of each topic.
- **Interviewer:** Conducts an in-person interview.

Decide as a team which role each member will play for each recording session. For some sessions, you may not need the role of interviewer—for example, when you are recording background sounds.

## Production: What to Do During a Recording Session

### Be Aware of Your Environment

Listen for any extra sounds that drown out the main sound you want to record. Microphones pick up all sorts of extra noises. If possible, record in quiet locations, especially if you're recording a person's voice.

### Experiment with Different Microphone Positions

Keep the microphone pointed toward and close to the sound you're recording, especially when you're recording a person's voice.

If the microphone is too close to the speaker's mouth, you may hear a popping sound when the person speaks words that start with "p" or "b." To prevent this, hold the microphone at a slight angle and position it near one side of the speaker's mouth.

Listen with headphones throughout the recording. If the sound doesn't come through well, try a different microphone position and re-record.

## Stay Still

Maintain your chosen microphone distance and position for the entire recording so that the sound quality is consistent throughout. Moving the microphone creates noise that is difficult to remove in editing.

If your mic is connected to your recording device with a cable, make sure that there isn't too much slack in the cable. A moving cable can create extra noise as well.

## Adjust Audio Input Levels

Some recording devices allow you to manually adjust the sound level for your microphone. Look at the meter that shows the volume level. Be careful about setting the level too high or too low. Set it high enough to get a good recording, but not so high that the sound gets distorted.

It's important to achieve good sound levels while you're recording because it's difficult to fix low-level sounds later when you edit the recording. Editing to make the sound louder distorts the dialogue and increases the volume of the background noise.

## Recording Challenges and Techniques

Keep track of the challenges you face in making sound recordings and the strategies you use to meet those challenges. Make a chart like the one below. Keep it in a notebook so that you can take it with you when you record. Add to the chart as you make recordings throughout the unit.

Recording Challenges	Recording Tips and Techniques

## Handout 5: Unit 1 Journal Assignments

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Complete the following journal assignments when you are instructed to do so by your teacher.

### Journal 1

Choose a location that you go to regularly. Sit there and just listen for five minutes. Write down all the sounds that you hear.

What, if anything, surprises you about the sounds? For example, did you hear sounds that you never noticed before?

Choose one sound that you hear. Describe how you would make a recording of this sound. What recording techniques would you use? What challenges might you face in trying to capture this sound?

### Journal 2

Choose an audio story that you listened to in class and liked. Answer the questions below:

- What did you find compelling about this story?
- What techniques did the producer use to tell the story or to make the story interesting?

Now think of a story that you want to tell for your team's audio story. (You can refer to the ideas on **Handout 9: Story Ideas** for inspiration, if you like.) Write a paragraph about the story you want to tell. Describe what your story is about and who the people in the story are. Describe at least three different sounds that you could use to help tell or enhance your story. You'll share this paragraph with your team members later.

### Journal 3

- How well did your team members do in listening to everyone's ideas before making a decision about what story idea to choose?
- What aspects of teamwork will your team need to work on throughout this project?
- What specific actions can you take to help your team members work together during this project?

### Journal 4

- Which production roles did you play on your team? Which production role are you most interested in learning more about? Why?
- What was most challenging about recording interviews?
- What recording tips and techniques would you add to the list that you came up with earlier?

## Journal 5

Write a list of three to five rules that you try to live by. For example, do you try to be honest? Do you try to be loyal?

Choose one of your rules and answer the following questions:

- What benefits do you and those around you gain when you live by this rule?
- What sacrifices have you made in order to live by this rule? Is it ever a difficult rule to live by?
- How does or could this rule relate to your work as a media producer? For example, if your rule is to always be honest, how would you follow that rule when producing your audio story?
- Do you think that all people should try to live by your rule? Why or why not?

## Journal 6

- Think of one example where your teammates worked well together to meet a challenge or resolve a conflict during pre-production or production. Describe the situation and the strategies used by your team.
- Think of one example where your teammates could have worked better together. Describe what happened. What could you personally have done differently? What could the whole team have done differently?

## Journal 7

Look through the cleaned-up log sheet for the interview or the portion of an interview that you were responsible for. Choose one clip to include in your audio story. Describe why you want to include this clip. For example, does it contain emotion? Does it tell about a particularly funny or poignant moment? Does it provide an opinion? A first-hand account of something that happened? A vivid description?

Write a paragraph explaining why you want to include this clip. You'll share this paragraph with your team.

## Journal 8

Imagine that you want to tell a story about what you did yesterday. Describe what your day was like. What did you do? How did you feel?

What would the music soundtrack for your story sound like? Describe the kind of music you would use to enhance the story and why you would choose it.

Now think about your team's audio story. What is this story's mood, or moods? How can music enhance this story? Write a paragraph telling what kind of music you want to use and where in the story to place the music. You'll share this paragraph with your team.

## Journal 9

- What did you learn about the power of sound as a medium for evoking emotion and telling a story?
- How did your team's story idea change or evolve throughout the production process?
- What do you think are the most important "ingredients" of a powerful audio story?
- What did you learn about the importance of distinguishing between the pre-production, production, and post-production phases?
- What else did you learn while doing the unit project?
- What would you do differently if you were to do this project again?

## Handout 6:

# Unit Project Description

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How do you turn a story idea into an engaging audio story that holds listeners' interest? You begin by thinking about voices and other sounds that you can use to tell your story. Then you record words and sounds and weave them together to create your story.

For the unit project, you'll work in a team to create an audio story targeted at a teenage audience. At the end of the unit, you'll play your audio story for your classmates and consider ways that your story might be broadcast on a radio show or as a podcast.

## Audio Story Requirements

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Your audio story should:

- be less than 10 minutes long
- concern something real (avoid telling a fictional story)
- focus on a topic or issue that is relevant to teenagers
- have a beginning, middle, and end
- include the following kinds of recorded sounds:
  - interview clips
  - "found sound"
  - narration
  - music and/or sound effects

## Story Topic, Format, and Style

You and your team choose the topic, style, and format of your audio story. Your story might be:

- a personal anecdote
- an exploration of a theme or issue (for example, the college application process or the loss of jobs in your community)
- a profile of a person or place in your community

Whatever topic and format you choose, make sure that your story has a "takeaway"—a message or conclusion that you want listeners to take from the story.

## Developing the Project

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You will complete your project in three stages: pre-production, production, and post-production.

## Pre-Production

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In the *pre-production* stage, you prepare all the elements needed to create your audio story, choose and research your story idea, and plan and schedule your recordings.

### Step 1: Choose a Story Idea

Brainstorm a list of story ideas. Start with what's familiar to you. Is your sister running for class president? Is your mom changing careers and going on her first job interview in 20 years? Has the prom gotten so expensive that students aren't going anymore?

A story idea may seem simple at first, but you can often find something in the story that other people will find interesting, relevant, funny, uplifting, informative, or touching.

Write a paragraph describing one story you want to tell.

With your team members, read one another's paragraphs and choose one idea to use as your audio story. Keep in mind the following questions when choosing your story:

- Will other teenagers care about this story? The story doesn't have to be about a teenager, but it should be something that teenagers can relate to.
- Will you be able to record interviews and other sounds relevant to this story? Stick to ideas for which you can easily find and record sounds.

### Step 2: Develop Your Story Idea

With your team, add details to your story idea and plan how to tell the story with sound. Ask yourselves:

- What is your story about?
- Who are the characters?
- What do you want the listener to come away from this story knowing, thinking, or feeling?
- Whom do you want to interview for the story?
- What sounds might you use to tell the story?
- What recordings do you need to make in order to acquire those sounds?
- What will happen in the beginning, middle, and end of your audio story? Map out a rough arc.

### Step 3: Plan Production

Before you start recording, make sure that you are organized and prepared. Plan and schedule each recording and prepare interview questions in advance.

For each recording session, assign a production manager, a sound engineer, a logger, and an interviewer. Use a production planning sheet to keep track of the logistical needs for each recording session. List all your equipment and check to make sure that everything works properly.

## Production

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In the *production* phase, you record all the material to use for your audio story.

### Step 4: Record Sound

Complete the interviews and other recordings you planned. While you're recording interviews, keep a log sheet of what's being recorded. Put stars next to really great moments ("gem" moments) as they happen so your team can easily remember and find them during post-production.

## Post-Production

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In the *post-production* stage, you put your sound recordings together to make a complete audio story, choose and edit your sound clips, and layer in sound effects, music, and narration.

### Step 5: Organize Your Sound Recordings

Arrange your sound recordings so that you can choose specific clips to include in your story. Create a master folder on the computer for your original audio files and make sub-folders to organize them as you wish—by date, topic, or a combination of the two.

Listen to your recorded interviews and clean up the log sheets by fixing or adding anything that the logger missed. You want to have a rough transcription of each interview. You don't need to transcribe every single word, but you do need enough information to capture the ideas stated. You'll refer to this log sheet when you choose clips to include in your story.

### Step 6: Create a Script

You know what your story is—now it's time to figure out *how* you are going to tell it. Go through your interview log sheets and your other recordings and choose the clips you like best. These clips might contain emotion, vivid descriptions, or dramatic accounts. Or maybe the clips show different people's opinions or first-hand experiences. What makes a clip great depends on what your story is and how you want to tell it.

Create a script for your audio story that includes the following:

- Sound clips you've selected in the order in which you want them to appear in the story
- Narration, or recorded speech that you write from scratch that connects the interview clips and found sounds into an engaging story for listeners
- Music and/or sound effects you want to incorporate

## Step 7: Edit Your Story

Once your script is final, record the narration and record (or find pre-recorded) music and/or sound effects. Then use sound editing software to mix your clips and create your audio story.

## Step 8: Share Your Finished Story

Play your audio story for your classmates. Think about how the class might share all the audio stories with a wider audience—either by posting them to a Web site or submitting them to a radio station or competition.

## Assessment Checklist 1: Unit Project—Audio Story

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the requirements for the different components of the project. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Technical Knowledge and Skills		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
All recorded sound is audible.	5%		
There are no extraneous sounds, such as hisses or distracting background noise.	5%		
There are no extraneous pauses.	5%		
Transitions between clips are smooth.	5%		
Audio levels of different tracks are effectively balanced—for example, background music is audible but does not drown out dialogue.	5%		

**Content**

Story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.	5%		
Story has a clear message or "take away" for the listener.	10%		
Completed work includes a balance of interview clips, narration, found sound, and music to tell the story; it does not rely on narration alone to explain what's going on.	10%		
Narration is written clearly and simply and uses natural-sounding language and phrasing.	5%		

**Creative Expression**

Sound is used effectively to draw in the listener at the beginning of the story.	5%		
A variety of clips are used to help pace the story—for example, the story neither drags nor is rushed.	5%		
Ambient and other found sounds are used in an interesting way to bring the story to life.	10%		
Music is used effectively to establish a setting, enhance a mood, or evoke emotion, without being overpowering.	5%		

**Project Management and Organization**

Production planning sheets are complete for each recording session.	5%		
Recording equipment was used properly and returned in the condition in which it was found.	5%		
All recorded audio files are digitized, labeled, and loaded onto the team's Master Source Audio folder.	5%		
The Master Source Audio folder is clearly organized into sub-folders; all original files are copied into the team's Edit Project folder.	5%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Assessment Checklist 2: Teamwork Self-Assessment

Use this checklist to help you assess and improve your teamwork skills.

Criteria	Comments
<b>My Individual Teamwork Skills: As a team member, I . . .</b>	
Listen to my teammates' ideas	
Ask questions of my teammates, in order to help them clarify their ideas	
Actively participate in team discussions	
Contribute my own ideas and/or piggyback or build on my teammates' ideas	
Help my team evaluate information, and propose creative solutions	
Communicate my thoughts clearly and use specific evidence to back up my ideas and opinions	
Respect my teammates and their opinions	
Compromise, when necessary, in order to resolve any conflicts	
Help and offer assistance to other team members	
Do my share of the work	

## Criteria

## Comments

**Our Team's Teamwork Skills: As a team, we . . .**

Understood our team's goal

Identified the tasks that we needed to accomplish

Assigned tasks to different team members

Were all clear about what each person's role and tasks were

Communicated clearly, listened to one another, and resolved disagreements in a non-confrontational manner

Planned, scheduled, and set deadlines for our tasks

Met our deadlines

## Handout 7: What Makes a Good Audio Story?

Imagine that you are a radio show producer. You broadcast shows about topics and issues that are of interest to teenagers.

With your team, listen to the three audio stories that your teacher assigns. Answer the questions in the table below for each story.

After your team has listened to all three stories, discuss the following questions:

- Which story would other teenagers be most interested in listening to? Why?
- What aspects of the story topic make the story compelling?
- What aspects of how the story is told make the story compelling?
- If you could broadcast only one of these stories on your show, which story would you broadcast? Why?

Be prepared to explain your choice to your classmates.

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3
What is the story about?			
What types of sounds are used to tell the story?			
What do you like about this piece?			
What do you dislike about this piece?			

## Handout 8: Weekly Critique

Choose one audio story each week to listen to, analyze, and critique on your own.

### Choose a Story

Your teacher will give you suggestions on where you can find stories. Make sure that by the end of the unit you have chosen at least one of each of the following types of stories:

- A fictional story, such as a radio drama
- A story produced before 1970
- A story told from the perspective of a culture different from your own

### Describe, Analyze, Critique

Fill out the charts below for each audio story you choose.

THE STORY	
Story title	
Source (Web site address, radio station call letters, or CD title)	
Date and time you listened to the story	
Date the story was produced	
Producer of the story	
Duration of the story (length in minutes and seconds)	

DESCRIPTION	
What is the story about?	
What type of story is it (e.g., fiction, news analysis, personal essay)?	
What feelings did the story initially evoke as you listened to it?	
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
What types of sounds are used to tell the story?	
What is the tone or mood of the story?	
What is the "take away" or message of the story, if any?	

How does the story reflect the time period and/or culture in which the story is told?	
<b>CRITIQUE</b>	
Was the story engaging? Why or why not?	
Describe one thing you liked about the story.	
Describe one thing you would change about the story and why.	

## Assessment Checklist 3: Weekly Critique

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess each of your written audio story critiques. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Description		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Clearly and thoughtfully describes the story and the initial feelings and thoughts evoked by the story.	15%		
<b>Analysis and Interpretation</b>			
Identifies different types of sounds used to tell the story.	10%		
Identifies a message or "takeaway" of the story, as well as the story's mood and pace.	15%		
Describes how the story reflects the time or culture in which it takes place.	20%		
Demonstrates an understanding of the elements of an audio story.	20%		
<b>Critique</b>			
Identifies specific elements and techniques that make the story engaging.	10%		
Describes how different types of sounds are used to draw in the listener and establish the setting, mood, and point of view.	10%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Handout 9: Story Ideas

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Below are some different approaches that you can use to create your audio story.

### Tell an anecdote.

Have someone you know or someone in your community complete one of these starters:

- The most embarrassing moment of my life was . . .
- The hardest thing I ever did was . . .
- I laughed so hard when . . .
- I was very sad when . . .
- The scariest thing that ever happened to me was . . .
- I was so proud of myself when I . . .
- Something that I hope never happens to me again is . . .

Make sure that you find out the whole story, so you can tell the beginning, middle, and end. Think about what would make the story appeal to other people. What message or lesson learned in the story might benefit others?

### Explore a theme or an issue.

Create an audio montage of people's ideas on the same topic or question, for example:

- What's the best and worst thing about having a dress code at school?
- How have social networking Web sites affected the way that teenagers socialize?
- What are the qualities of a good friend?
- What is one issue that you are passionate about?
- What are the high points and low points of applying to college?
- What do we need to improve in our community?
- If you could change five things about the world, what would they be?
- What are your pet peeves?

Make sure to have a conclusion or analysis of the responses, so that your final story has a message or "takeaway."

### "Paint a picture" of a place.

- Use sounds to tell the story of an interesting place in your community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has become *the* place to be on Saturday nights—want to know why?
- What does "a day in the life" of a local skateboard park sound like?
- A place that many people don't know about in our community is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favorite place to go to relax is \_\_\_\_\_.

### Create a profile of a person or a relationship.

Use sounds to tell a story about someone you know who:

- has a unique talent, hobby, or interest
- faces a particular challenge, such as adjusting to a new school or having a chronic illness
- has an interesting relationship with someone or something (e.g., has a twin sister or owns a pet bat)

## Handout 10:

# Audio Story Planning Document

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Use this document to develop your team's audio story and to plan production for the story. It's okay if you can't answer all of the questions right now. Your story is likely to change as you work on it. You can return to and revise this document as you continue to work on your story throughout the unit.

## Sample Analysis of Audio Story

### "Grad Student Discos for Dollars"

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#### Part 1: Overview of Your Story

What is your story about?

What is the setting of your story?

Who are the characters?

Describe the mood, or moods, of your story.

Why will other teenagers care about this story?

What messages, thoughts, or feelings do you want listeners to take away from the story?

What aspects of *how* this story is told make it exciting, interesting, or compelling?

## Part 2: Map Out the Story

Describe the arc of your story. What information or feelings will you convey in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of your story? Include sounds you'll use to tell each part of the story.

<b>Beginning</b>	
<b>Middle</b>	
<b>End</b>	

### Part 3: Create an Asset List

Use your story arc to make a list of specific sounds you need to record—people you will interview and ambient and other found sounds. Don't include music, narration, or sound effects—you will describe those elements later in the unit.

Type of Sound	Specific Sounds
<b>Interview</b> (People's names, along with key questions to ask them)	
<b>Found sounds</b>	

## Assessment Checklist 4: Unit Project—Planning Document

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the requirements for the different components of the project. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Content		Student Comments	Teacher Comments
Clearly describes the audio story idea, setting, mood, and characters.	20%		
Describes what will happen in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.	20%		
Identifies the sounds that will be recorded to tell the story.	20%		
<b>Creative Expression</b>			
Presents a compelling argument for why this story will interest and engage teenagers.	20%		
Proposes an interesting use of sound to engage listeners.	20%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Handout 11: Recording Interviews

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Use the following guidelines to help your team conduct successful interviews.

### Before the Interview

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#### Schedule the Interview

Set a time and place with your interview subject. Allow enough time to set up your recording equipment and to conduct the interview.

#### Write Questions

Make a short list of questions. Be mindful of your subject's available time. Some tips:

- Avoid "yes or no" questions.
- Begin with simple questions to make your subject feel comfortable.
- Ask opinion questions, such as "What do you like or dislike about . . . ?" or "How do you feel about . . . ?"
- End with an open-ended question.

### During the Interview

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#### Brief Your Subject

- Describe your project, the goal of the interview, and the duration of the interview.
- Ask your subject to wait until a question is completely asked before answering.
- Ask your subject to answer in complete sentences.
- Tell your subject not to worry about mistakes—the interview will be edited.
- Offer to give your subject a copy of the recorded interview, as well as a copy of the finished audio story.

#### Get Permission

At the beginning of the recording session, ask your subject to state his or her full name, along with the statement "I give permission to [your names or your school's name] to use this interview for [working title of your audio story]."

#### Be a Good Listener

- Be polite and friendly. Put your subject at ease.
- Keep as much eye contact as possible with your subject.
- Be prepared to go off script when necessary.
- Wait quietly during pauses and silences. Allow your subject time to think.

## Log the Interview

Have your team's logger use **Handout 12: Interview Log Sheet** during the interview. The logger should do the following:

- Listen carefully.
- Write the topics or major points in the order that they are discussed.
- Watch the time code on the recorder and write the approximate time that each topic or point is introduced.
- Put stars next to any "gem" moments to remember.

### Sample Log Sheet

Date and time of recording: November 7

Location of recording: Jefferson High School cafeteria

Name of interview subject: Michael

Production manager: Sarah

Interviewer: Jason

Sound engineer: Maria

Logger: Nick

Name of audio file: \_\_\_\_\_ (you'll fill this in during post-production)

Time Code	Topic
00:00	<i>Intro</i>
00:20	<i>Still chit-chatting</i>
00:45	<i>Getting started in music</i>
01:10	<i>Parents played a lot of music</i> <i>**Funny anecdote about kind of music listened to as a kid</i>
01:45	<i>How the band started</i>
02:00	<i>Why the drummer quit</i>

## After the Interview

### Say "Thank You!"

Make sure to thank your subject for his or her participation in your audio story. Let your subject know how to contact you and when you'll send a copy of the finished audio story.



## Handout 13: Production Planning Sheet

Complete this sheet for each recording session.

Date and time of recording: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of recording: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interview subject: \_\_\_\_\_

### Production Team

Production manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Sound engineer: \_\_\_\_\_

Logger: \_\_\_\_\_

Equipment List	Equipment Check (test that each component works)	Equipment Return (check off each piece of equipment after you return it)

**Additional sounds:** List any other sounds that you plan to record during this session:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Room tone:** Record at least 60 seconds of room tone at each location.

- Location 1 room tone       Location 3 room tone  
 Location 2 room tone       Location 4 room tone

## Handout 14: Where Do You Stand?

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Imagine that you are the producer for each audio story in the scenarios given below. Choose the response that most closely matches your initial reaction to each statement.

1. I'm having trouble getting my interview subjects to feel comfortable talking. It's okay to tell them that I've turned off the recorder but to then keep recording them anyway.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

2. I'm doing a story about the job of a bike messenger. I interviewed a bike messenger, and he talked about getting hit by a car. It's okay for me to add sound effects to make the crash sound dramatic.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

3. I'm doing a story about how teenagers are discriminated against in high-end retail stores. I interviewed someone who was accused of shoplifting. It seems clear to me that he was falsely accused, so I don't think I need to interview the store owner to get her side of the story.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

4. It's okay to record my phone conversations with friends without telling them, as long as I ask permission afterward about whether I can use the recording in my audio story.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

5. I should have the creative freedom to create the best possible soundtrack for my audio story, even if it means using copyrighted music. Strict copyright laws stifle creativity and prevent ordinary people like me from expressing themselves.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

6. I'm doing a story about our letter carrier. In the interview, he stated, "I hate dogs," and then he laughed. I edited the story so it repeats the clip of him saying "I hate dogs" several times, even though he only said it once. Since he gave me permission to record, I think it's okay for me to use the clip in any way I want.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

7. I'm working on a story about a woman's experience while being treated for cancer. A week after recording an interview with her, she left me a message saying that she had changed her mind and didn't want to be in the story at all. I have already started editing the piece, so I'm planning on telling her that I'm sorry but it's too late to change her mind, since she has already given me permission.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

## Handout 15:

# Copyright and Fair Use Guidelines

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## What Is Copyright?

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*Copyright* is the legal right of creative artists or publishers to control the use and reproduction of their original works. Copyright law prohibits the unauthorized duplication, adaptation, or distribution of a creative work.

For your audio story project, copyright laws will come into play when you add music created by others to your story. If you plan on broadcasting your audio story publicly, you need to get permission from and pay royalties to the copyright owner of any copyrighted music you use.

## What Is Fair Use?

---

The “fair use” doctrine of U.S. copyright laws allows for some exceptions in which it is considered legally acceptable to use other authors’ or artists’ works or ideas.

Ultimately, whether a use is legally considered “fair” is up to the courts. By law, the courts consider the following factors when deciding whether a particular use is fair:

- **The intentions of the use of the new work.** This includes looking at whether the use will be for profit. If the use is for nonprofit or educational purposes, it is more likely to be seen as “fair use.” However, nonprofit uses are by no means always considered fair use.
- **The character of the original copyrighted work.** Borrowing from a creative work, such as a fictional play or a musical composition, is less likely to be considered fair use than using or adapting a factual work.
- **How much of the original work is involved in the use.** Judges might not only look at the total amount of the original work used, but may also consider whether the portion used is particularly significant. The use will more likely be considered fair if it involves reproducing only smaller or non-essential portions of a work.
- **The degree to which the economic or commercial value of the original is harmed.** A court might consider whether the use causes significant economic harm to the original owner. If the use will have little impact on the market value of the original work, it is more likely to be considered fair use.

These guidelines, however, leave a lot of interpretation up to the judges. When in doubt, err on the conservative side and do not use copyrighted material in your projects.

## Handout 16:

# Unit 1 Career Information

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## Range of Careers Related to Unit 1

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Below are some of the AME careers that make use of the skills you're learning in Unit 1:

- Audio equipment technician
- Audio field technician or production sound mixer
- Audio production supervisor or post-production supervisor
- Broadcast technician
- Music mixer
- **Sound assistant**
- **Sound designer**
- Sound editor
- **Sound engineering technician**
- Sound mixer or re-recording mixer

## Key Careers

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Three key AME careers that make use of the skills that you are learning in Unit 1 are *sound assistant*, *sound engineering technician*, and *sound designer*.

### Sound Assistant

Sound assistants support audio teams by keeping track of microphones, batteries, headphones, and cables. They unpack, set up, break down, and clean equipment. They also help to create digital and manual sound effects. Sound assistants do a lot of physical work. They need to have excellent hearing. Musical knowledge is helpful, too.

Although sound assistants perform some menial tasks, their jobs are highly sought after. Sound assistants shadow members of the audio team and learn valuable skills. They work with production mixers to mix audio, with boom operators to operate boom microphones, and with sound supervisors to set up systems and prepare for recordings. Sound assistants may be given opportunities to record and mix audio independently.

*Pathway:* Sound assistants typically require little education or experience, though they are expected to have shown interest in the field by participating in electronics classes and audio activities, such as community radio programs or high school audio clubs.

Many organizations offer part-time sound assistant internships for students who attend two- or four-year college audio programs. Sound assistants often move on to become boom operators, audio equipment technicians, or sound mixers in television and recording studios.

## Sound Engineering Technician

Sound engineering technicians mix, synchronize, record, reproduce, and edit audio. Traditionally, sound engineering technicians have been responsible for operating and maintaining recording and mixing equipment.

Sound engineering technicians today must understand digital technology and computer recording software. They work in movies, television shows, music or voice recordings, radio programs, and live events, such as musical concerts and theater productions.

Sound engineering technicians have specialized tasks in different AME industries:

- For films, motion pictures, and television shows, they operate recording and sound processing equipment, mix and edit dialogue and sound effects, and add voice-overs and soundtracks.
- At live events, they set up and operate audio consoles (mixing boards), and record sounds and music.
- In recording studios, they mix and edit music tracks to create audio files.

*Pathway:* Sound engineering technicians may attend a vocational or community college, taking classes in math, physics, and/or electronics. Some technicians may attend four-year college programs in audio engineering, recording, or production.

Sound engineering technicians can gain experience by participating in high school audio activities and/or college internships. For example, some technicians begin working with audio equipment by volunteering to mix sound for high school performances.

Sound engineering technicians often break in to AME industries by working as audio assistants, production assistants, runners, or “gofers.”

Many successful sound engineers are musicians. Some work in music or sound studios to gain experience in recording techniques. Sound engineering technicians may eventually become managers, technical supervisors, producers, or creative directors.

## Sound Designer

Sound designers create the plan for sound in media such as games, movies, television, live theater, and Web sites. They record, manipulate, and create audio that goes along with visual content. Sound designers need a great deal of audio experience, as well as technical skills and a good understanding of acoustics.

Sound designers create these types of audio:

- *Hard or spot effects*, such as the click of a lock in a door or the sound of a cannon firing
- *Background or atmosphere effects*, such as wind through trees or traffic noise
- *Sound design effects*, such as noises made by an imaginary creature—sounds that don’t occur naturally and must be imagined by the designer

Sound designers need to be creative and must be excellent problem-solvers. They create, record, and import sounds. They also use digital audio libraries as they manipulate audio tracks to fit an overall mood and feel.

*Pathway:* Sound designers are generally expected to have a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in sound design. Sound designers are also likely to have a specialized degree in the media of their interest (such as film or television).

Sound designers often start out as audio or production assistants and gain experience as sound editors and mixers. Sound designers may freelance, particularly in the film and television industries, or they may work for audio studios.

## Handout 17:

# Career Profile Project

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What is it really like to work in the arts, media, and entertainment (AME) industry? What education and training do you need? What does the work of a talented AME professional look like?

For this project, you'll answer these questions by focusing on a successful professional who works in audio, video, animation, or gaming. You'll research the professional's career, education, and training, and analyze a clip from a production that she or he has worked on. When you've completed your research, you'll present what you've learned to your classmates.

### Step 1: Choose an AME professional.

Pick an AME field that you are interested in, such as audio, video, animation, or gaming. Select a professional working in the field, for example:

- Someone who worked on a media production (e.g., a movie or game) that you like—a director, animator, lead artist, cinematographer, level designer, or producer
- A professional whose work you admire (be sure to choose someone who works on media *production*, rather than a performer)
- Someone you know personally or someone in the community who works in this field

Start with two or three professionals and conduct research to see how much information you can find—such as work samples, education and career paths, and interviews. Check to see if there are Web sites with clips of their work. (This is especially important for gaming and animation, since it can be hard to pick out an individual's contribution to finished games and animated movies.)

Narrow your choice to one professional by asking yourself:

- Does this professional work on media productions that I admire and want to watch, play, or listen to?
- Is there enough information available about this professional's career for me to complete the project?
- Has the professional had an interesting or instructive career path?

### Step 2: Find out about the professional's education and training.

Look online or in books or magazines to find out the following:

- What college did this person attend?
- What other training has this person pursued (e.g., technical training)?

Write a short paragraph about your professional's education and training.

### Step 3: Find out about the professional's career path.

Conduct research to learn about the path your professional has taken:

- How did your professional begin his or her career?
- What jobs or education did your professional take or complete to get to the professional's current position? Does he or she have further work or career goals?
- What media productions has the professional worked on, and what role did he or she play on each? List them in chronological order.
- Has your professional been interviewed or written about what it's like to work in his or her field? If so, what has your professional said?

Write a paragraph describing your professional's career path. Include a timeline, making sure to note the following:

- Major career milestones
- Media productions worked on

### Step 4: Analyze a clip from a media production.

Choose a successful media production that your professional has worked on. Try to find a good example of your professional's contribution—for example, an animator or gaming professional's reel or a scene with a character designed by your professional.

Prepare to analyze a short (10-minute or less) clip from the production by answering the following:

- What makes this production successful? What visual and/or audio elements work well? What principles (such as the principles of animation or cinematography) are used effectively?
- How does the production make effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design? (Disregard this question if you are analyzing an audio production.)
- What role did your professional play in contributing to the success of the production?
- Is there a particular style that can be attributed to your professional? (Some animators, for example, have a clearly identifiable style.) How is that style expressed in this work?

Write a one-paragraph analysis of your selected clip.

### Step 5: Share your profile with classmates.

Share what you've learned with your classmates and learn about the professionals they profiled.

## Assessment Checklist 5: Career Profile Project

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the required components. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
<b>Written Career Profile</b>		<b>Student Comments</b>	<b>Teacher Comments</b>
Describes AME professional's education and training background.	20%		
Describes how the professional's career began and the career path that led to the current position.	20%		
Lists the media productions the professional has worked on and the role that she or he played on each.	10%		
Includes a timeline of major career milestones and media productions.	15%		
Includes an analysis of a clip from one of the professional's media productions, pointing to visual and/or audio elements that contribute to the work's success.	20%		
Describes the role the professional played in making the media production successful.	15%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
Career Profile Presentation	Student Comments	Teacher Comments	
Clearly outlines the AME professional's education and training.	30%		
Succinctly describes the professional's career path.	30%		
Describes and analyzes a media production and explains the professional's role in its creation.	30%		
Successfully addresses the audience's questions.	10%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Handout 18:

# Post-Production Tasks

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During post-production, your team will complete your audio story. You and your teammates will use your organizational, creative, and technical skills to turn your sound recordings into a finished audio story, complete with narration, music, and sound effects.

Place a checkmark next to tasks that you are interested in leading. Then share your list with your team and decide together who will be in charge of each task.

- Organize material.** Create a digital sound library of all your sound recordings.
- Select “gems.”** Choose the most compelling clips from interview recordings to include in the audio story.
- Create a script.** Compile and organize the chosen interview clips and write narration for the story.
- Sound design.** Choose music and sound effects for the story and insert them into the script.
- Sound engineering.** Set up the equipment (computer, audio editing program, microphone) to record the narration.
- Narrate the story.** Record your voice reading aloud the narration.
- Editing.** Use the audio editing program to do the following:
  - Trim off excess audio at the beginning and end of each clip
  - Compile a rough edit of all the voice, including narration and interview clips
  - Cut out unwanted stutters, repeats, and unnecessary pauses from interview material
  - Remove unwanted sound from recordings and replace with room tone
  - Add sound effects; layer in ambient sounds where needed
  - Import music file(s), edit file to the desired length, and add music track to the story
  - Edit and smooth music transitions, fade-ins and fade-outs
  - Adjust the audio levels of the different tracks so that all speech is about the same volume and so that background sounds and music are soft enough to not drown out the spoken words

## Handout 19:

# Organizing Your Sounds

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You've probably recorded more sounds than are needed for your audio story. Organizing your sound recordings will help you and your teammates choose specific clips to include in your story.

### Step 1: Create Folders

Create two main folders on your team's computer:

- **Master Source Audio:** This folder will hold digital audio files of all the sounds you recorded.
- **Editing Project:** This folder will hold copies of all your digital audio files.

### Step 2: Load Your Sound

Load your sound recordings into your Master Source Audio folder.

### Step 3: Rename Your Files

Your recording device may have automatically named your audio files with numbers and letters (such as STE-005.WAV). Rename each file with a descriptive name so you know what the file contains—for example, Interview Maria.WAV. If you recorded ambient sounds or sound effects, make sure to create a separate audio file for each sound.

### Step 4: Organize Your Master Source Audio Folder

Create sub-folders within your Master Source Audio folder and organize your audio files. Label the sub-folders by date, category, subject, or a combination. For example, you might create a sub-folder for each interview you recorded and a sub-folder for ambient sounds or sound effects.

### Step 5: Copy Your Files

Copy all of your audio files from your Master Source Audio folder to your Editing Project folder. When you are ready to edit, you'll import files from your Editing Project folder into your project.

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**Note:** Because most audio editing programs are capable of modifying or deleting your original audio files, you'll want to keep your original files safe in your Master Source Audio folder.

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## Handout 20: Piecing Together Your Audio Story Script

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It's time to create a script for your team's audio story. You'll use interview clips, other sound recordings, and narration that your team writes. After you script the story, you'll choose music and sound effects to enhance it.

Your team will use this script as a guide when you work with the audio editing software later to create your audio story. Remember that your audience will *listen* to your audio story—they won't *read* it! So don't worry about making your script perfect—you may decide to change it once you start editing.

### Step 1: Review and Revise Your Planning Document

Review your copy of **Handout 10: Audio Story Planning Document**, which you completed during the pre-production phase. Discuss with your team how, if at all, you want to revise it now that you have made your sound recordings.

For example, perhaps you'd planned to tell a sad story, but then you discovered some funny moments in your interview clips. Or maybe you found a slightly different angle of the story to tell. Revise Handout 10 based on any changes you want to make.

### Step 2: Choose Clips to Include

Go through your team's cleaned-up log sheets and choose individual clips to use in your story. Look for clips that contain emotion, vivid descriptions, or dramatic accounts, or clips that showcase different opinions or first-hand experiences.

### Step 3: Decide How to Start the Story

A story's beginning draws listeners in. Here are some ideas:

- **Start with the central idea or problem.** For example, "Fewer than half the seniors at Central High School will be at their prom this year." Or, "My mother was trying to prepare for her first job interview in 20 years."
- **Start with the ending.** If your story has a powerful ending, begin there and use the rest of the story to tell listeners how you got there. For example, "I never thought I'd spend Super Bowl Sunday at a fashion show. Here's how it happened."
- **Start with a compelling quotation from the middle of the story.** This leaves listeners wanting to know more. For example, "Suddenly I realized I had clicked on 'Reply All.'"
- **Start with a self-introduction.** If your story is about an individual, start with the person introducing him- or herself. For example, "I'm Sarah, and I've been playing the piano since I was three years old."

## Step 4: Write Narration and Integrate Clips Into the Story

Your story will be a combination of sound clips and narration. The narration connects the clips and fills in gaps. As you put together your script, keep in mind the following tips:

- Write for the ear. Writing that looks good on paper doesn't always sound good to people listening. Some guidelines to keep in mind:
  - Write as you speak naturally. If you wouldn't say the words aloud, don't write them in the script.
  - Write simply. Sentences with many clauses are hard for listeners to follow.
  - Avoid strings of adjectives.
  - Watch out for words that sound alike. Listeners won't know whether you mean "two" or "too" unless the meaning is clear from the context.
  - In the narration, repeat words that speakers used in the interview clips. This draws your story together and helps listeners make connections.
- Use clips to pace your story:
  - Clips should flow naturally and advance the story.
  - Shifting among clips with different voices can indicate to listeners that the story is moving along.

## Assessment Checklist 6: Unit Project—Audio Story Script

Use this checklist to help you plan and assess your project. Make sure that you include all the requirements for the different components of the project. Your teacher will use this checklist to help evaluate your work.

Requirements	Percentage of Total Grade	Comments	
<b>Content</b>		<b>Student Comments</b>	<b>Teacher Comments</b>
Script incorporates interview clips, written narration, and at least one found sound.	20%		
Clips are sequenced to construct a coherent and clear story arc—there is a clear beginning, middle, and end to the story.	20%		
A message, conclusion, or “takeaway” is expressed in the story.	20%		
Narration is written clearly and simply and uses natural-sounding language and phrasing.	15%		
<b>Creative Expression</b>			
Interview clips chosen convey a first-hand perspective, evoke emotion, or otherwise enhance or propel the story.	15%		
Clips are sequenced in a way that provides variety and helps pace the story.	10%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		

## Handout 21: Sample Script

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The portion of script below is from the radio story *Young Poets* by Alicia Zuckerman. Note the instructions given for the audio mixer.

**AZ [Alicia Zuckerman/Narration]:** In other creative career paths, like music and theater, there's hope that if you make it, you'll be able to support yourself with your art. You might even become a very, very rich person . . . But poetry?

**TAPE [Scott Cunningham]:** Even in the highest reaches of poetry, there's really no money to be made.

*[AMBI (ambience) is with soft jazz, so please include some ambi with music: You can find it at: Track 27 (MZ000027.wav) in the folder called "Miami Poetry Raw 1"]*

**Keep ambi (ambience) running under narration.**

**AZ:** That was Scott Cunningham. Back in November, Scott and some other young poets were sitting around drinking beer with Campbell McGrath at Zeke's on Lincoln Road in South Beach. That night, they founded the Miami Poetry Collective.

**TAPE:** If the first line of the poem is also the title of the poem, what's the right way to like . . . ? Oh, you mean with the period? Maybe I should leave the period, right?

*[SFX: After previous sentence, fade conversation down to run softly under the next chunk of narration; if that sounds too distracting, you can find more general more ambi at Tracks 31 and/or 32 from the "Raw 1" folder.]*

**AZ:** Tonight the collective is putting together an anthology of poems by Miami poets called the *Three-Cent Journal*. Each time, it goes up a penny. They say their goal is to make it to 50 cents.

**TAPE [Cunningham]:** It's ready to go, we'll start printing it out, those of you have printers on laptops.

*[SFX: Fade down on the conversation after that sentence, keep low under narration.]*

**AZ:** Four printers are set up in Scott Cunningham's living room. They print 200 copies of the anthology and bind the booklets with colorful rubber bands.

*[AMBI Sound of printers printing—use Printer 00:23–00:53 in Track 39 in folder "SFX Poetry 1"]*

## Handout 22: Music and Mood

Your teacher will play a series of music soundtracks. Listen to each soundtrack and write down your reaction.

What words or images come to mind when you hear this music?	What mood or emotion comes to mind when you hear this music?	What characteristics of the music make it evoke this mood or emotion?

## Handout 23: Transforming a Story with Music

---

How does music establish a mood, evoke emotion, and transform a story?

Create a music soundtrack for the story below and observe how your choice of music affects the way that listeners perceive the story.

### The Story

*I was walking home from the park. I saw a black car driving slowly up ahead. The car stopped at the red light. Who was that sitting in the driver's seat? I thought I had seen him before. He looked so familiar. There was something next to him in the passenger seat. I wanted to see what it was. I tried peering into the passenger window without the driver seeing me. What was it? The light turned green. As the car started to pull away, I realized what it was I saw. I knew it.*

Complete the steps below with your team.

### Step 1: Write the "Backstory"

Decide what's going on in the story. Who is telling the story? What does he or she think is in the car? Who is driving the car? What is the story's mood?

The backstory will help you decide what kind of background music to use.

### Step 2: Choose Background Music

Find music to use as the soundtrack for this story. Load the music files onto your computer. Estimate the length of time it will take to narrate the story, and match the length of the music to the length of the narration.

### Step 3: Assign Roles

- **Narrator:** Reads the story aloud
- **Sound engineer:** Sets up the recording equipment, records the narration, and imports the narration and music files into the computer
- **Sound editor:** Layers the music soundtrack onto the narration track, editing the timing of the tracks
- **Audio mixer:** Adjusts the audio levels of the narration track and the music track to achieve the right contrast throughout

### Step 4: Record Narration

Have the narrator practice reading the story aloud before you record. The narrator should read the words in the story exactly as they are written. However, the narrator can use voice inflections and vary the pace and volume to establish an emotion or tone.

Listen to the recorded narration and make sure that the sound quality and the tone of the speech is what you intended. Re-record if necessary.

### Step 5: Layer the Music Track

Import the music file or files for your story. Edit them to the proper length. If you remove part of the middle of a song, be sure to listen to the transition between the two parts of the music so that it sounds smooth.

Layer together the narration and music soundtracks. Control the position and volume of each track so that the sounds complement one another. This is the art of “mixing” sounds.

Decide where the music starts in relation to the narration. Decide whether to have the music fade in and fade out or whether to use a more abrupt beginning and ending.

### Step 6: Adjust Audio Levels

Listen to the narration with the music added. Does the music sound too loud? Too soft? Adjust the volume of the audio tracks as needed.

## Handout 24: The Critical Response Process

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There are many different ways of giving and receiving feedback. One method that artists, performers, and other creators sometimes use is the Critical Response Process, which creates a safe and supportive environment in which to receive feedback on completed work or work in progress. You will use this process throughout the course with your classmates.

### Steps in the Critical Response Process

---

The following are the steps in the Critical Response Process:

- The audience members comment on something interesting they notice in the work. These comments should not judge or criticize the work. (For example, what was stimulating, surprising, memorable, touching, or meaningful for you?)
- The creator(s) asks the audience open-ended questions about something specific in the work. (For example, a creator wouldn't ask, "Did you like how I spoke slowly to build dramatic tension?" but would ask instead, "What mood did my tone of voice set for the story?")
- The audience asks neutral (i.e., judgment-free) questions of the creator. (For example, the audience doesn't ask, "Why did you pick such upbeat music?" but rather, "What were you trying to achieve with your choice of music?")
- As you provide feedback, try to start sentences with phrases such as the following:
  - I notice . . .
  - I'm curious about . . .
  - I'm interested in . . .
  - I wonder . . .

## Handout 25:

# Editing and Mixing Your Sounds

---

With your team, complete the following steps to edit and mix your audio story.

### Step 1: Record Narration

Choose a narrator and a sound engineer. The narrator should minimize the emotional inflections in his or her voice. Let the emotions of the story be shaped by the characters or people involved.

Experiment with different microphone positions and distances. Make sure that the narrator maintains the same position throughout the recording so the sound is consistent.

### Step 2: Compile a Rough Edit

Use your script to guide you as you piece together your narration and recorded clips. Listen to your rough edit as you work. Remember to do the following:

- **Pace your clips.** Listen to the spaces between the spoken words as well as the words themselves.
  - Allow silence to linger after a serious statement, so listeners can process what was said.
  - Edit out pauses, repetitions, and stammers to help the story flow.
- **Use room tone to smooth transitions.** Replace unwanted sounds, such as a dog barking, with room tone. Even out inconsistencies at the beginning or end of interview clips with room tone.
  - For example, let's say you have an interview clip with loud background sounds that cuts off abruptly, while the next clip has noticeably quieter background sounds. Fix this by putting a few seconds of room tone at the end of the first clip so that the loud background sounds fade out and are less noticeable.

### Step 3: Layer Additional Tracks

Add the music and sound effects that you specified in your script. Listen to how the pieces all sound together. Be ready to deviate from your script to try new ideas. Think creatively and spontaneously. You can change the tone from happy to sad with the swap of a music cue, or from serious to funny with the addition of a sound effect.

### Step 4: Adjust Audio Levels

Listen to your entire audio story. Is the music too loud? Too soft? Adjust the volume of the different audio tracks until the sounds complement one another well.