

Teaching Scenario

- Using *Audacity* to Edit and Record Audio Files -

- Podcast Listening Diary -

Main Goals:	Training students' media literacy: the skill to record and edit their own audio files. Students individually improve their listening comprehension by listening to a different podcast each week and keeping a listening diary.
Time:	45 minutes Listening diary as a weekly assignment to do at home.
Learning Focus:	Listening for gist and details
Preparation:	Download <i>Audacity</i> and make yourself familiar with the software. Download one podcast as an example (e.g. "Friends" from BBC UK, see worksheet). Familiarize yourself with the recommended websites for podcasts and make photocopies of the <i>Listening Diary</i> to hand out.
Technical Requirements:	A computer room, or class set of laptops/tablets with internet connection

Recommended Applications/Tools:

Audacity: <https://www.audacityteam.org/>

Audacity is a free, open source audio software, which allows editing and recording audio files. It is popular in (foreign) language learning as it makes it possible for students and teachers to cut audio files, explore sound effects, vary the speech speed, and to easily record audio files in the form of podcasts and interviews.

Audacity runs on Linux, Windows and Mac OS X and it has an extensive online manual (<https://manual.audacityteam.org/>).

For further instructions and ideas on how to use *Audacity* in the EFL classroom see: Steinbach, Andrea. 2018. "Methodenspicker für Lehrkräfte. Programme zur Bearbeitung von Audiodateien." *Praxis Englisch* 3/2018. 47-48.

Voice of America Learning English: <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/>

This website contains podcasts about world news, business, science, U.S. life, popular culture and other topics read in simple and clear English. The audio programs are written

using vocabulary at the intermediate and upper-beginner level and read one-third slower than normal English speed. The podcasts and the transcripts can be downloaded for free.

BBC UK Podcasts: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts>

BBC podcasts is one of the largest collection of authentic podcasts on the web. The website offers different categories such as music, sport, documentaries, news and science & nature with new podcasts released regularly. Each podcast and transcript can be downloaded.

This American Life: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>

This American Life is a weekly public radio program and podcast. Each week, a theme is chosen and different kinds of stories are put together on that theme. The podcasts are mostly journalistic, however, always built around a plot. The program has existed since 1995 and won many broadcasting awards with over 600 different episodes produced so far. All podcasts come with transcripts and can be downloaded.

Story Corps: <https://storycorps.org/>

Story Corps offers a range of interviews from everyday to extraordinary personal topics. It consists of more than 50.000 interviews since 2003. Their self-proclaimed mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and to create an archive for future generations. The interviews can be used as writing prompts, discussion topics or as examples to record your own interviews. Transcripts are available for all podcasts. However, the podcasts can only be listened to online.

Year 7-9

Intention:

Listening to podcasts can help learners to become more effective autonomous language learners. On the web they have easy access to numerous authentic oral texts and can choose topics they are interested in.

1. **General Introduction:**

Introduce the concept of podcasts and the different websites to choose from.

2. **Podcast Listening Diary:**

Present the podcast listening diary and explain that as part of the students' homework in the following weeks they will have to choose one podcast to listen to each week and fill out a listening diary. The students can either choose podcasts from the recommended websites or suggest podcasts from other websites. In the case of the latter the quality should be checked by the teacher.

3. **Audacity:**

Introduce *Audacity* as a software to edit and record audio files.

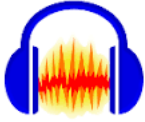
4. **Working on the worksheet:**

Ask the students to follow the instructions on the worksheet so they can explore the basic functions of the software. E.g., on the worksheet the students are instructed on how to slow down the speed of a podcast using *Audacity*.

5. **Own recordings:**

Ask the students to present their recordings in small groups.

Finally, collect the main points the students recorded on the blackboard.



USING AUDACITY TO EDIT AND RECORD AUDIO FILES

You are going to download a podcast and edit it using the free software *Audacity*.

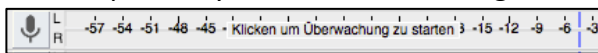
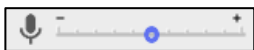
▪ Tasks:

1. Download *Audacity* and install it on your computer:
<https://www.audacityteam.org/>
2. Download the episode *Friends* of the podcast *The Big Idea* from BBC UK podcasts and save it on your desktop:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p067kd03>
3. Open *Audacity* and drag the podcast file icon into the open *Audacity* window.
4. Listen to the first 2:06 minutes and list three points the speaker talks about:

5. Select a section of about 30 seconds with your mouse cursor and press **Space** to listen to the selection. Then, navigate to **Effekt** and choose the option **Tempo ändern** to slow down the speed; press **ok** and listen to the adjusted selection.
6. For further information on editing audio files explore the *Audacity* manual:
<https://manual.audacityteam.org/>

Now, you are going to record your own audio file.

▪ Tasks:

1. Click on the microphone symbol in the recording meter and select **Überwachung starten**. 
2. Talk at a normal volume and watch the recording meter. Adjust the recording volume. 
3. Test your recording: click on the record button **●** and record for a few seconds while speaking, then click the stop button **■**. Listen to your recording and adjust the recording volume if necessary.
4. Now record yourself talking about the three main points you listed above.

PODCAST LISTENING DIARY

Listening is fun! You are going to listen to a different podcast each week.
You can choose any podcast you like from the recommended websites (see info box).
After you listened to the podcast, please fill out the grid.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts>

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/>

<https://storycorps.org/>



Week	Name of the podcast Why did you choose it?	List at least four main points the speaker talks about.	Shortly illustrate the two most interesting points.	How easy or difficult was it to understand? Scale: 1-6*
1				
2				
3				
4				

* 1 = very easy; 6 = too difficult