# Lesson 2**:** Recording sound

## Introduction

In this lesson, learners will record their own sounds and play back the recorded audio. They will also listen to a range of podcasts and identify the features of a podcast.

## Learning objectives

To use a digital device to record sound

* I can use a device to record audio and play back sound
* I can suggest how to improve my recording
* I can discuss what other people include when recording sound for a podcast

## Key vocabulary

Audio, sound, record, playback, start, pause, stop, podcast

## Preparation

**Subject knowledge:**

You will need to be familiar with using Audacity to record audio, including how to delete individual tracks.

You need to consider how learners can record sound with minimal interference from other learners, and how this can be managed in the classroom. Possible options include:

* Using additional rooms or areas within the school
* Working outside
* Having an allocated time slot for each group to record their sound
* Turning learners’ tables on their sides and placing them close to a wall, with learners sitting between the table and the wall, which helps reduce sound interference

Whatever options are chosen, appropriate safeguarding policies, along with health and safety guidance, should be followed carefully to ensure the well-being of learners.

**You will need:**

* [Slides](http://ncce.io/cm4a-2-s) (ncce.io/cm4a-2-s)
* A device capable of recording sound and playing back audio; this could be a laptop using the Audacity software, or a voice memo recorder on a tablet
* Individual whiteboards, pens, and erasers
* [Features of podcasts handout](http://ncce.io/cm4a-2-a1-h) (ncce.io/cm4a-2-a1-h)
* Optional: Headphones for each device, to enable individual playback of recordings
* Optional: A section of text for pupils to read out when recording their voice
* Optional: A selection of musical instruments for pupils to play and record
* The following videos need to be accessible:
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H56oewP63t8>
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD2fRpP6Hhg&list=PLJ5GVOXc8N97XH83kJhy95MA8Krpl8zt3&index=6>
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvENIdEuf0A>

## Assessment opportunities

**Activity 1:** Learners can demonstrate their ability to make a good audio recording based on the previous lesson’s criteria.

## Outline plan

Please note that the slide deck labels the activities in the top right-hand corner to help you navigate the lesson.

*\*Timings are rough guides*

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| **Introduction**  (Slides 1–2)  2 mins | Share the learning objectives with the learners. |
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| **Activity 1**  (Slides 3–7)  25 mins | **Introduction to Audacity**  Explain to learners that in this session they are going to begin recording their own voice using Audacity. Explain that Audacity allows us to record sound, and to both play and edit audio.  Show slide 3. Demonstrate how to open Audacity and explain the functionality of the following icons: **Pause**, **Play**, **Stop**, **Skip** **to Start**, **Skip to End**, **Record**. Demonstrate how to begin, end, and play back a recording.  Emphasise to learners the importance of ensuring that the recording is of high quality and ask them to discuss the ideas shared in the previous session. Show slide 4 and discuss the features of a good audio recording.  Show slide 5. Explain to learners that if they press record again once they have pressed stop, Audacity will add their recording to the end of their existing recording. Explain that for this task, you don’t need to keep the recording, so it can be deleted after each person has spoken. Show learners how to delete an audio track once it’s someone else’s turn to speak, and explain that only the person who made the recording should delete their own audio track.  In pairs or small groups, ask learners to begin recording their own voice using Audacity, which could be on a topic of their choice, a subject recently studied in class, or a section of text prepared before the lesson. Support learners as required and ensure that all pupils get an opportunity to record their voice. Ensure that time is spent with each group listening to their recordings and offering feedback as appropriate, as their recordings will not be saved.  When you ask learners to stop, tell them not to delete their last recording.  **Note:** Depending on the time and number of devices available, learners may also wish to record themselves playing musical instruments.  Show slide 6. Ask a group of learners to share their last recording with the class, along with what went well during the recording and what they found challenging. Ask other learners to offer possible solutions as required. Common pitfalls include:   * Missing the start of the recording (solution: pause for a second after pressing record before speaking) * Interference with the microphone (solution: no hands on the device whilst recording) * Voice muffled (solution: speak close to the microphone with your hands and clothing away from your mouth) * Buzzing noise during playback (solution: check that the microphone, speakers, and/or headphones are connected to the device properly)   Show slide 7. Explain that Audacity displays our recorded sound as a waveform. Discuss what peaks and flat lines on the waveform mean (loud sounds and silence). Explain that this helps us to identify where people are speaking, and where the recording is silent or too quiet. Explain that the waveform should ideally be around +0.5/-0.5 when recording voice. |
| **Activity 2**  (Slides 8–10)  20 mins | **First steps with podcasts**  Show slide 8. Explain to learners that we are going to produce a podcast, which could be on a subject studied in class or a topic of interest to the learners. Explain to learners that a podcast is a digital audio recording that is made available over the internet and can be downloaded and played on a digital device. Show learners images from a number of popular podcasts and ask them to share any podcasts they are aware of, such as those listened to by a parent or carer, or those they have heard advertised.  Show slide 9. Play learners sections of a number of podcasts and ask them to note down any sounds they hear, such as jingles, background music, and sound effects, along with what information is included in the podcast, such as the names of the presenters, the name of the podcast, and an introduction. Ask learners to share their features and note them down on the slides, which should be saved for a subsequent session. Show learners the possible responses on slide 10.  **Note:** The links provided offer access to age-appropriate podcast content via YouTube, which avoids the need to subscribe to a podcasting platform. Where feasible, only the audio of podcasts should be played, to help avoid learners confusing streaming video with podcasts. |
| **Next time**  (Slides 11–12)  3 mins | **This lesson, next lesson**  Review the assessment and summary slides. |

This resource is available online at [ncce.io/cm4a-2-p](http://ncce.io/cm4a-2-p). Resources are updated regularly — please check that you are using the latest version.

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