

# Audacity tutorial 1

## What does Audacity do ?

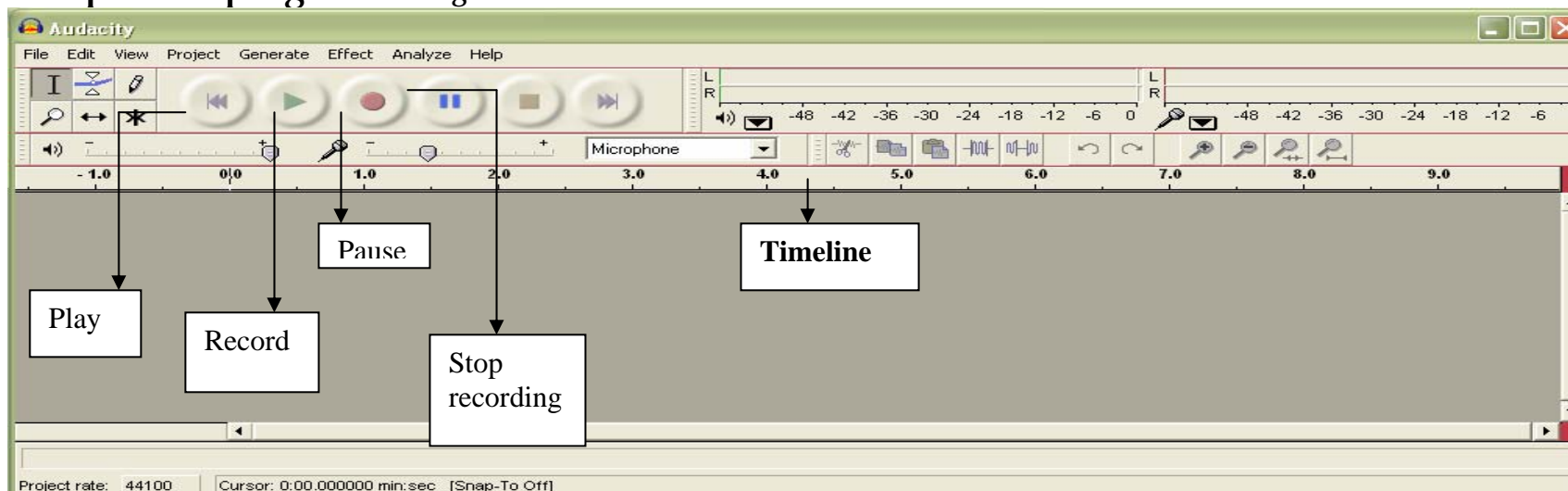
It helps you record and edit audio files.

You can record an oral presentation through a microphone into your computer, into the Audacity program, then fix up the bits that are faulty, get rid of 'ums', coughs, speed up slow bits, slow down fast bits, cut up the sound track into smaller sections to fit with slides on a powerpoint or insert into Windows Movie Maker etc.

It can be used to create sound files for podcasts etc. You can also alter music to make it fit a time frame, or fade it in and out. It is very easy to use at a simple level and very easy to teach kids to use it. Basically it operates in a similar way to word processing programs. Best of all, it's a freeware program, available on the internet at Sourceforge.

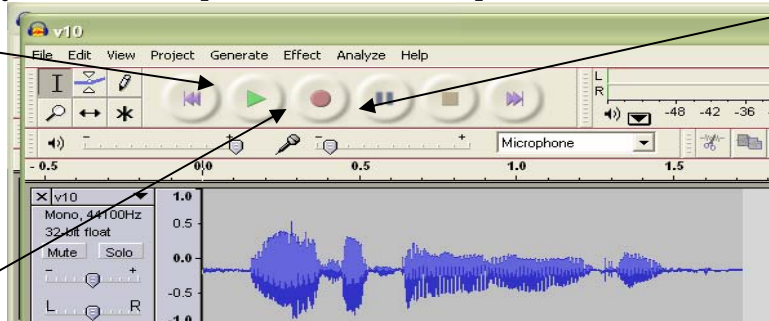
**1. Install Audacity on your computer.** When prompted about the language to use, click on English. (My computer – Material on PSC data (W drive) – Audacity.)

**2. Open the program.** You get the basic screen.



**3. Plug in a microphone** (red jack on side or back of laptop), red plug on microphone/headphone set. If you don't have a mike, you can use the built in microphone on your computer, but it is usually not as good as a plug-in microphone.

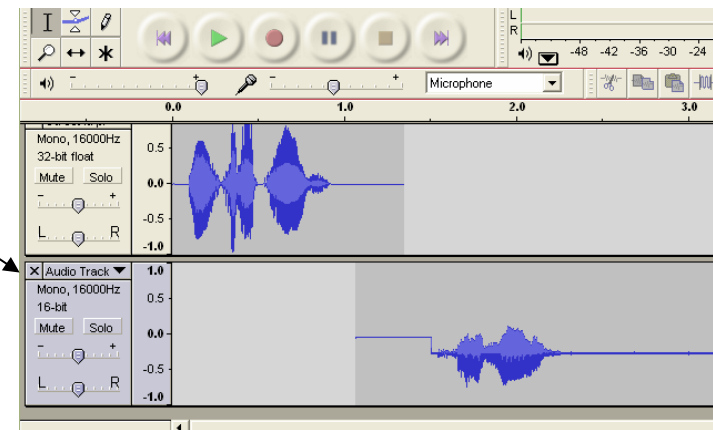
**4. Record.** Click on the Record button on your screen. Speak into the microphone then click on the Stop button when you have finished.



If you haven't finished, hit the Pause button.

Otherwise the program will insert a new track below the one you have recorded. It's easy to get the entire wave onto one track though. Just select the new track by dragging your cursor over it. Press CTRL+ C to copy it. Insert the cursor at the end of the first wave and press CTRL+V to paste it in on the first track.

To get rid of the accidental second track, simply turn it off by clicking on the x.

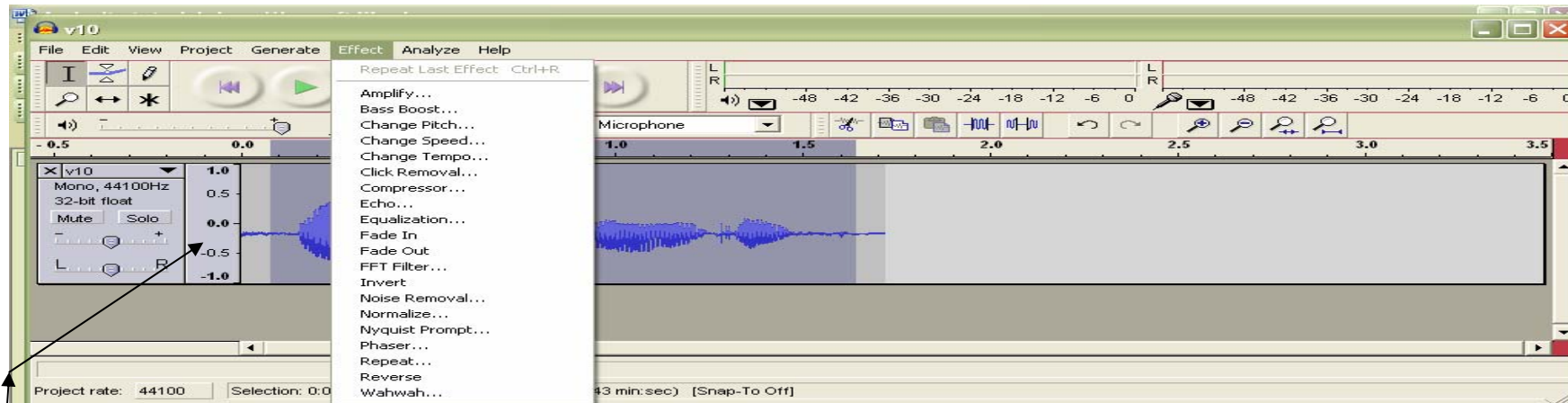


**5. Select the wave** Click on the beginning of the wave and drag across the sound wave to the end to select it.



**6.** Once the sound wave is selected you can do various things to it.

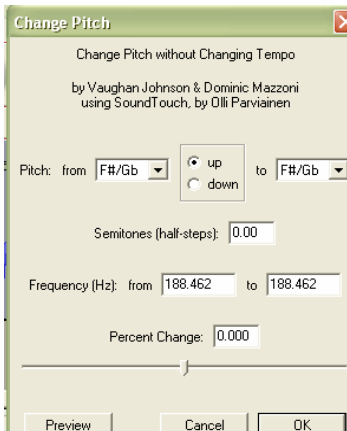
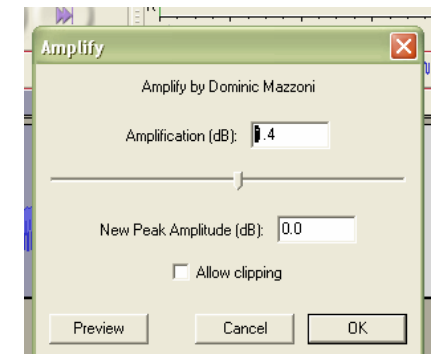
## A. Increase or decrease the volume of a sound wave.



- **Select the whole wave or the part you want to work on.**
- **Open Effect in the menus at the top of the screen.**
- **Choose Amplify.**
- The program will suggest a new peak amplitude for you. This one will avoid 'clipping' which is where the highest and lowest points of the sound wave are clipped off. This can distort the sound and reduce its quality.
- **Preview** and if it's ok, click on **OK**.

If it's not loud enough, select Allow clipping and increase to a new peak amplitude. Preview it before accepting it.

Note that if the wave hits the top or bottom of the panel you will get distortion and crackle etc. It's best to keep it within the range of 1.0 to -1.0.



## B. Change Pitch

This is pretty handy for creating new voices in a presentation.

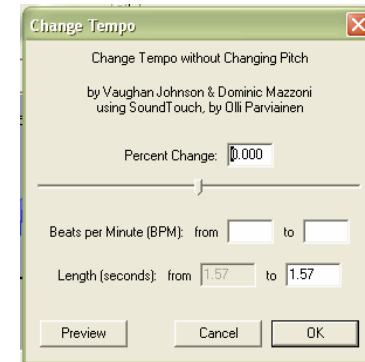
- **Select the wave or part of it.**
- **Open Effect.**
- **Choose Change Pitch.**
- Hint: Keep a note of the percentage change, so you can repeat it on other files if necessary.
- **Preview until you get what you want.**
- **Click on OK.**

If you have made a mistake, CTRL+ Z will undo any action.

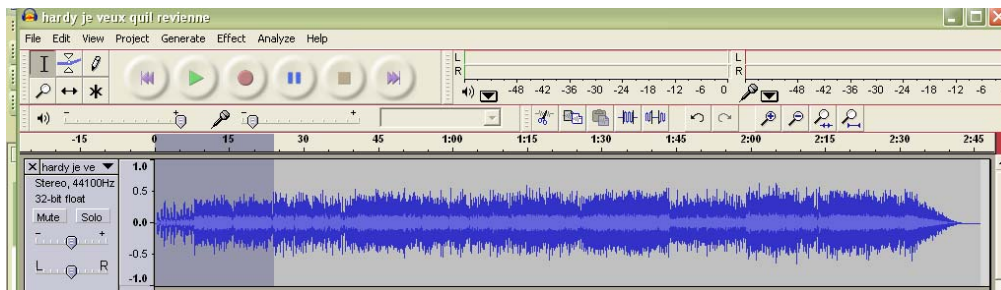
## C. Change Tempo

- **Select wave or part of it.**
- **Open Effect.**
- **Select Change Tempo.**
- **Have a play and preview it until you get what you want.**

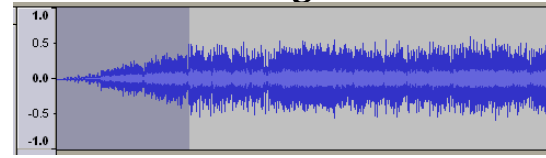
This is useful for compressing or stretching a wave to make it fit the time constraints of a piece of film.



## D. Fade in/out



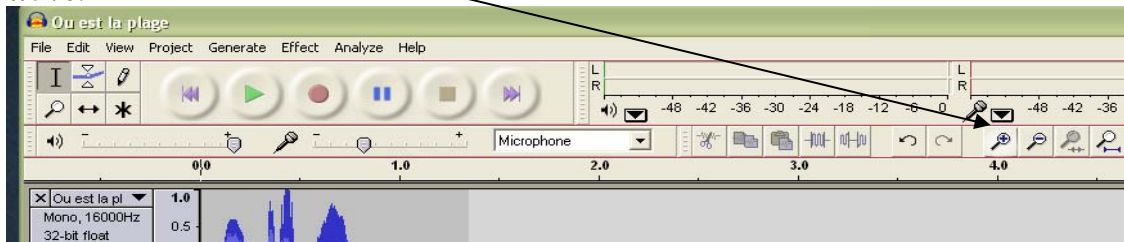
1. **Select the part of the track that you want to fade in on.**
2. **Open Effect.**
3. **Select Fade In.**
4. **The program will automatically complete the action.**
5. **If it's not right, hit CTRL+Z to undo it.**



Repeat for Fade out – selecting the end of the track, or the part of the track that you want to fade the volume down to a much lower level.

## 7. Zoom tools

There is a zoom tool on the sub-menu bar. Use this to zoom in or out if you want to work with a small section or find just one sound in a wave.



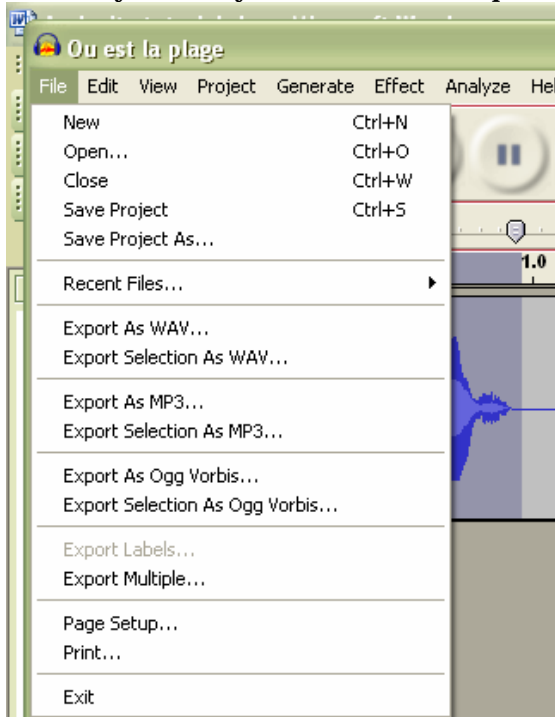
Play with the rest of the Effects menu and listen to the previews to see what each thing does. Just use CTRL+Z to undo any changes you have made that you don't like.

## 8. Deleting parts of the wave you don't want.

Select the sections you don't want (e.g. the accidental swearing) and hit BACKSPACE. Trim the wave both ends so that the sound starts within a tenth of a second from the beginning and finishes at the end of the sound itself. This will make the wave useful for inserting into Powerpoint and other programs.

## 9. Saving/Exporting the file

Audacity allows you a number of options for saving the file.



1. Save project – saves the file as a work in progress – you can open it again with Audacity and continue to work on it later. You cannot use this format in other programs.
2. Export as WAV... You can export the **whole** file as a WAV file that Microsoft programs and others can read.
3. Export Selection as WAV... This is available to you if you have some of the wave selected. It is useful if you are cutting up a long wave into short sections. Simply select the part you want and export it, giving it its file name. Repeat on the next section, being careful to give it a different file name.

### Where do you export these files to?

Into any folder, as you do with ordinary documents and images.

4. Export as MP3 – to do this you might need a special patch from the Audacity people. It's free and a dialogue box will come up and help you navigate to the site and download the patch. From memory, it was easy to install.

That's all folks. Once you have recorded, doctored and exported the wave, it is ready to use in other programs.