



BASIC AUDIO EDITING USING AUDACITY

INTRODUCTION

This document provides step by step instructions for a selection of some basic audio editing functions using Audacity -- a free and open source software program. Most audio projects, whether digitized or born digital, will benefit from at least minimal editing and export to multiple formats depending on preservation and access needs.

These instructions and screenshots are taken from Audacity 2.2.2 on a Windows machine, and will vary depending on version and operating system. Audacity is an easy-to-use, multi-track audio editor and recorder for Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux and other operating systems and can be downloaded here:

- <https://www.audacityteam.org/download>

For more information about audio files, view related items connected to this resource on the Sustainable Heritage Network in the “[Audio Recordings](#)” category.

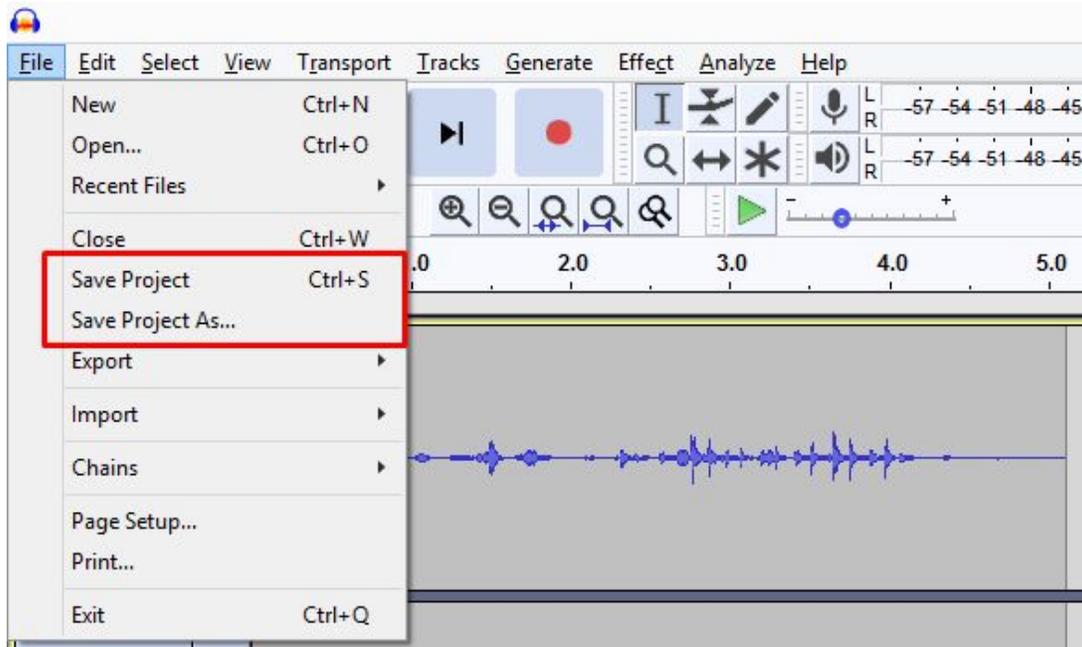
- Audio File Types for Preservation and Access: Resource Guide

SAVING AND EXPORTING

Audacity has two similar commands that can be confusing: *Save* and *Export*. Saving produces AUP files which are not sound files and are only used within Audacity to construct a project from provided sound files. These AUP files are useful if a user needs to preserve the individual edits in a project, or needs to stop a project in the middle of editing and continue at a later time. Exporting produces audio files in a range of file formats (that the user can choose) suitable for use elsewhere (eg: MP3, WAV), and is used to produce preservation and access files.

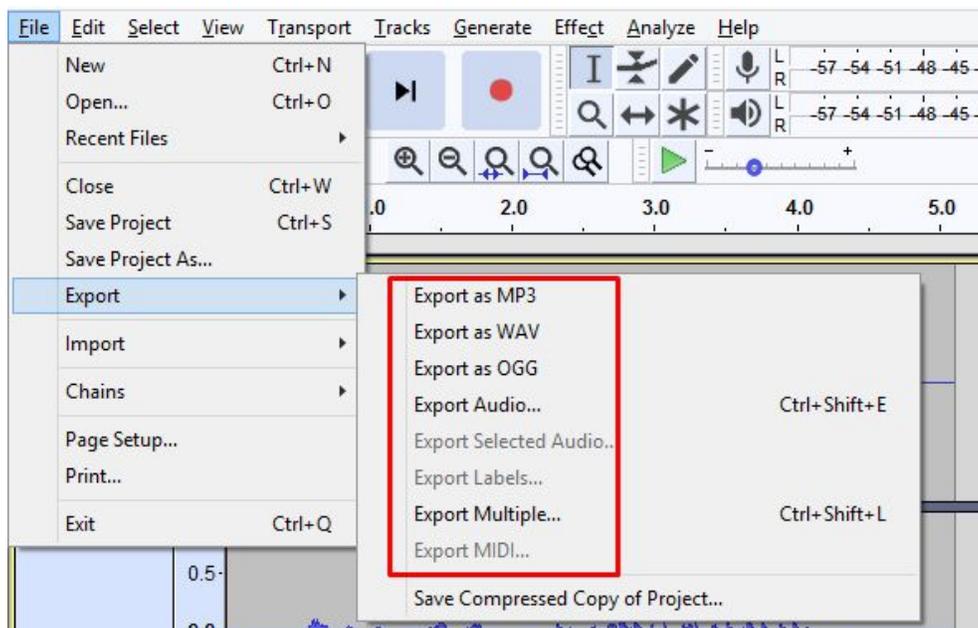
Save Audacity Project File (AUP)

- 1) From the menu, go to **File > Save Project**

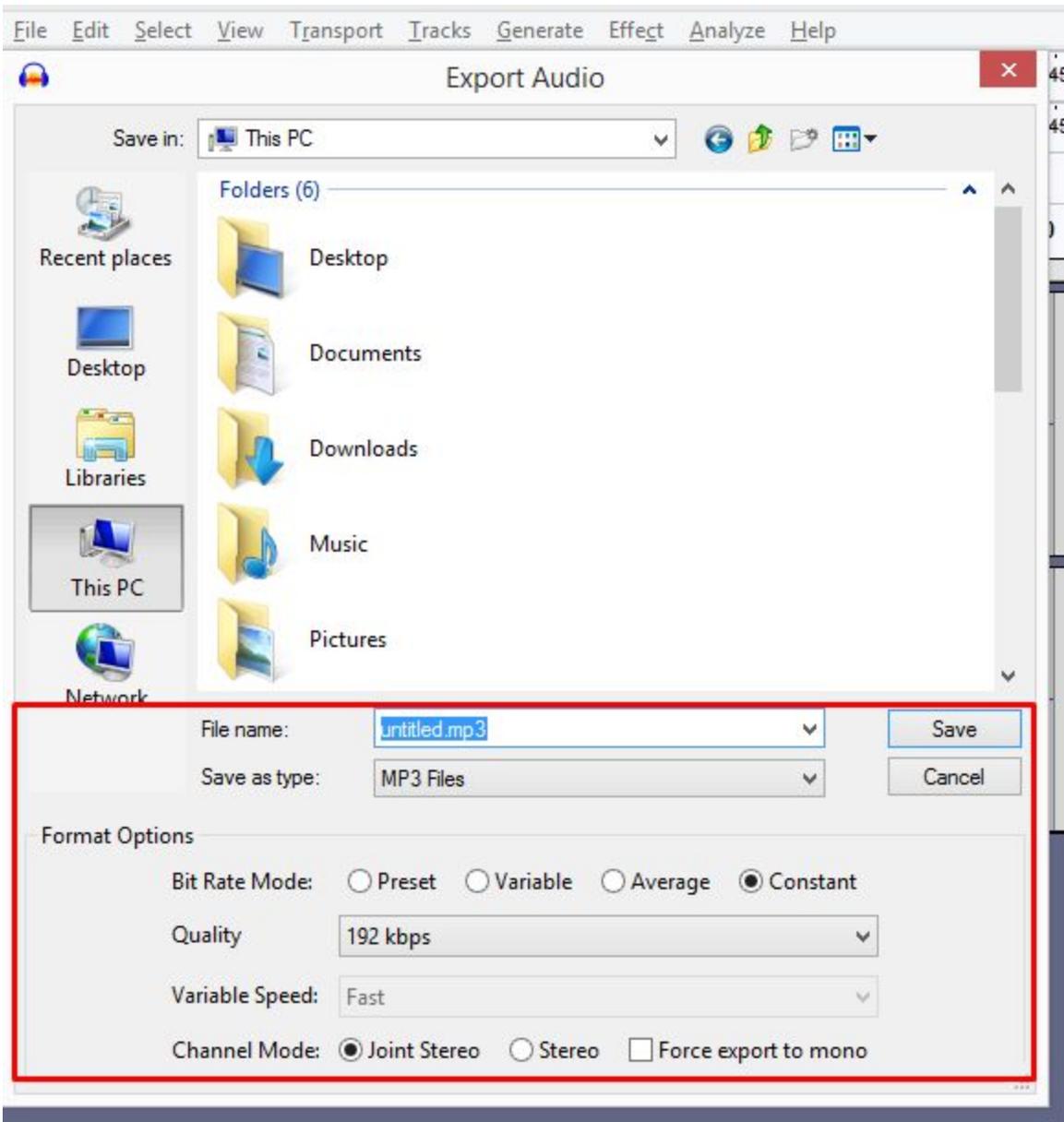


Export audio file

- 1) From the menu, go to **File > Export > Export as (filetype)**



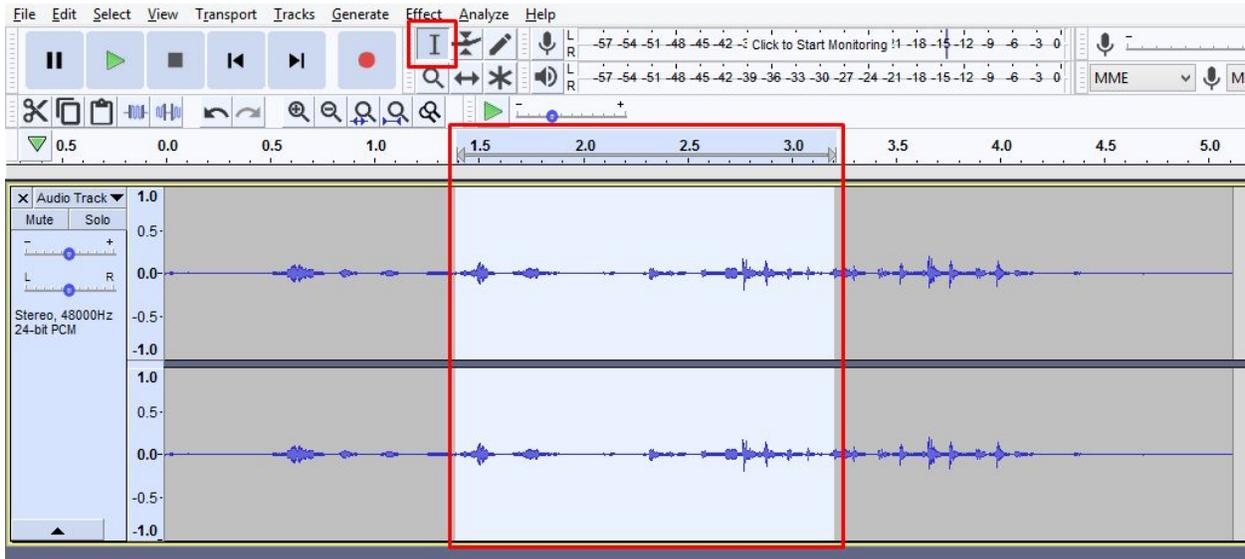
2) Refer to project documentation when selecting export format and file options.



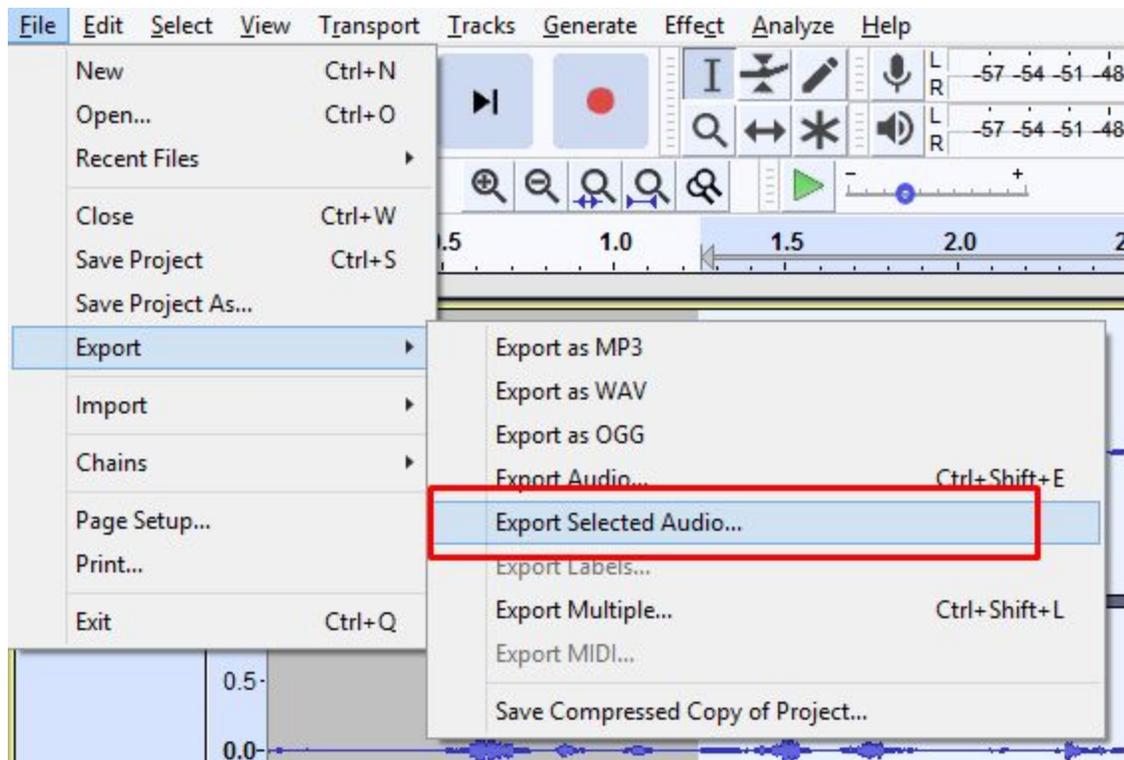
Exporting a Selection

This is useful for producing shorter clips from a longer recording.

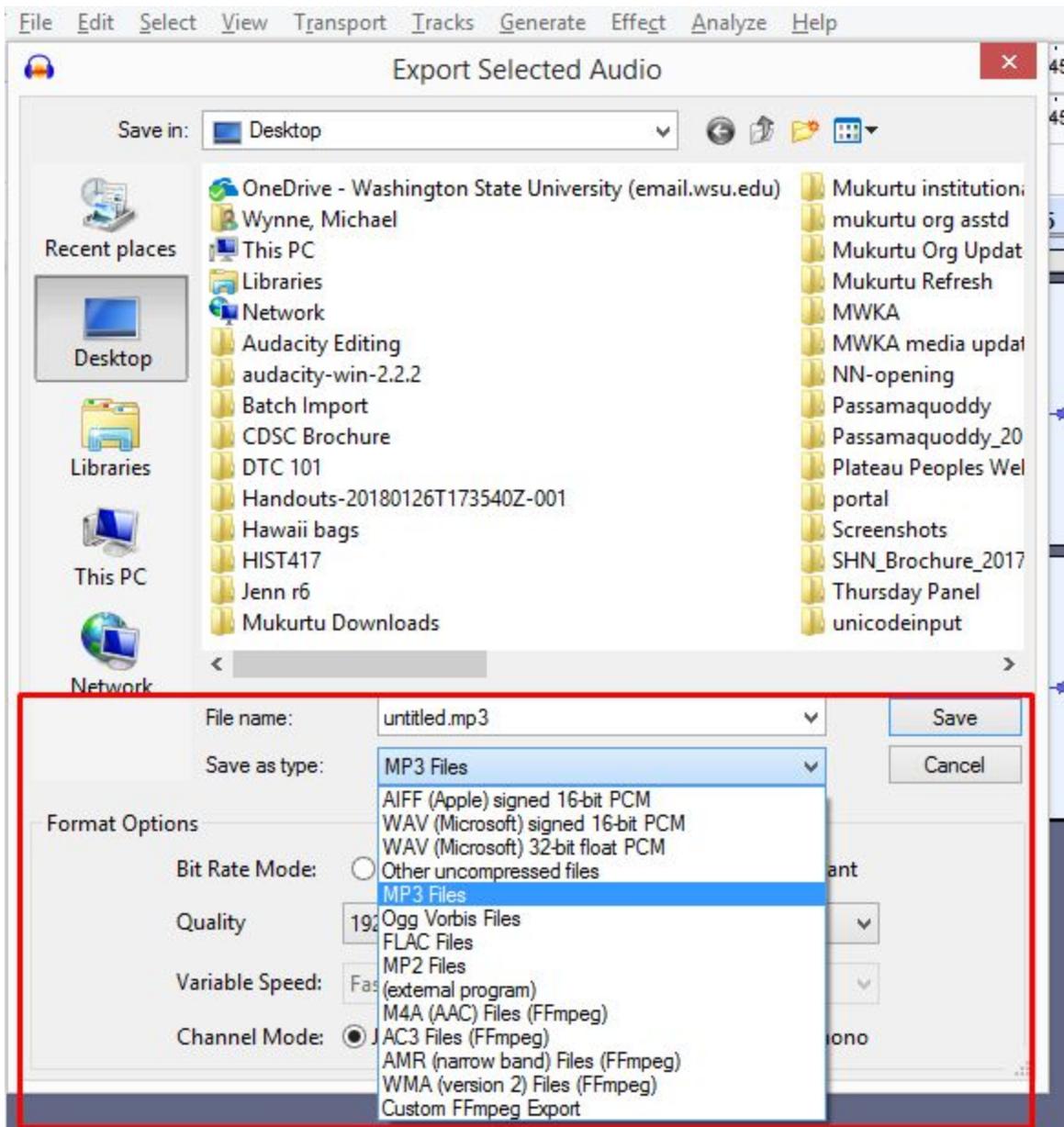
- 1) Using the Selection tool, highlight the portion of the recording to export by clicking and dragging on the waveform.



- 2) From the menu, go to **File > Export Selected Audio**.



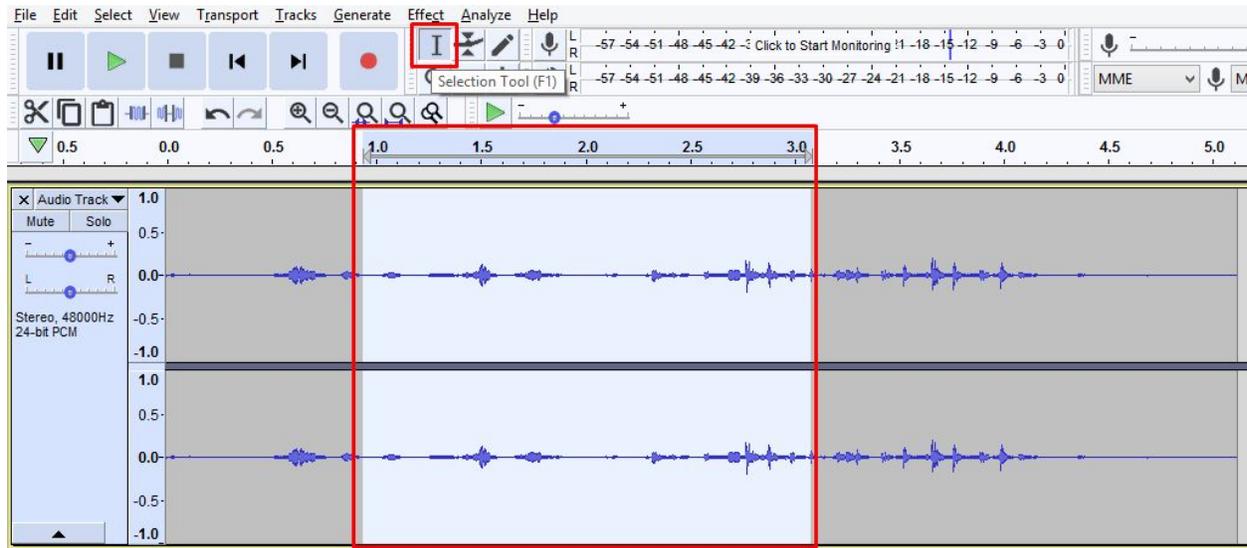
- 3) Give the selection a new filename and refer to project documentation for the appropriate file format and settings.



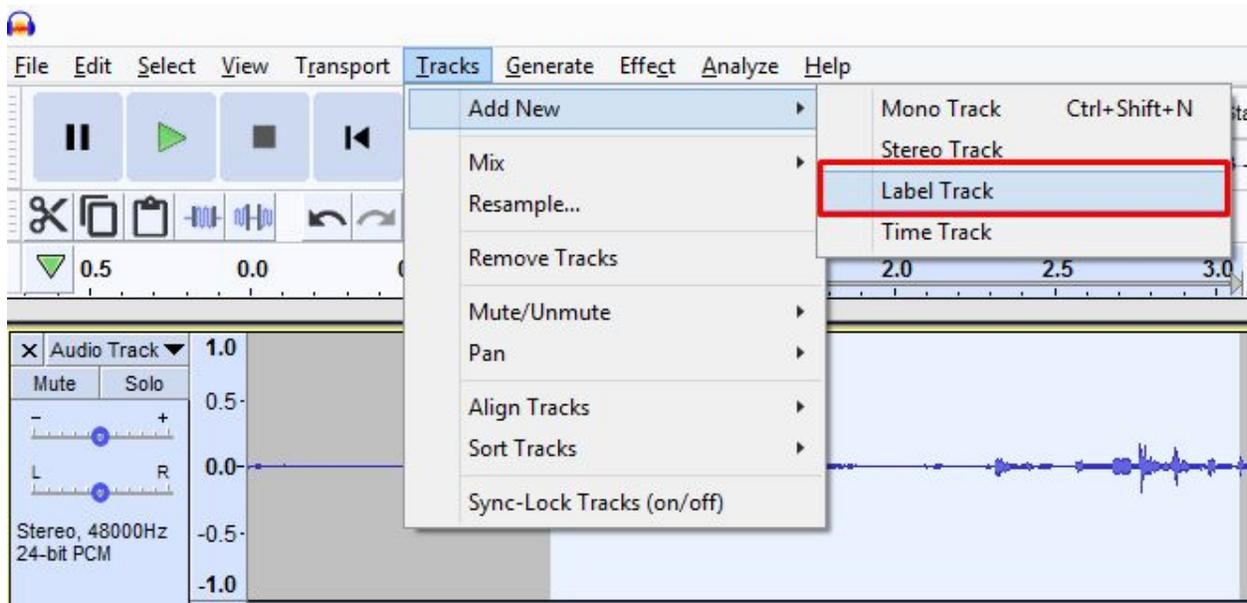
Separating One Track into Multiple Tracks

This is useful for indicating several tracks or clips to be exported from a longer recording, and then exporting them all at once, rather than one at a time.

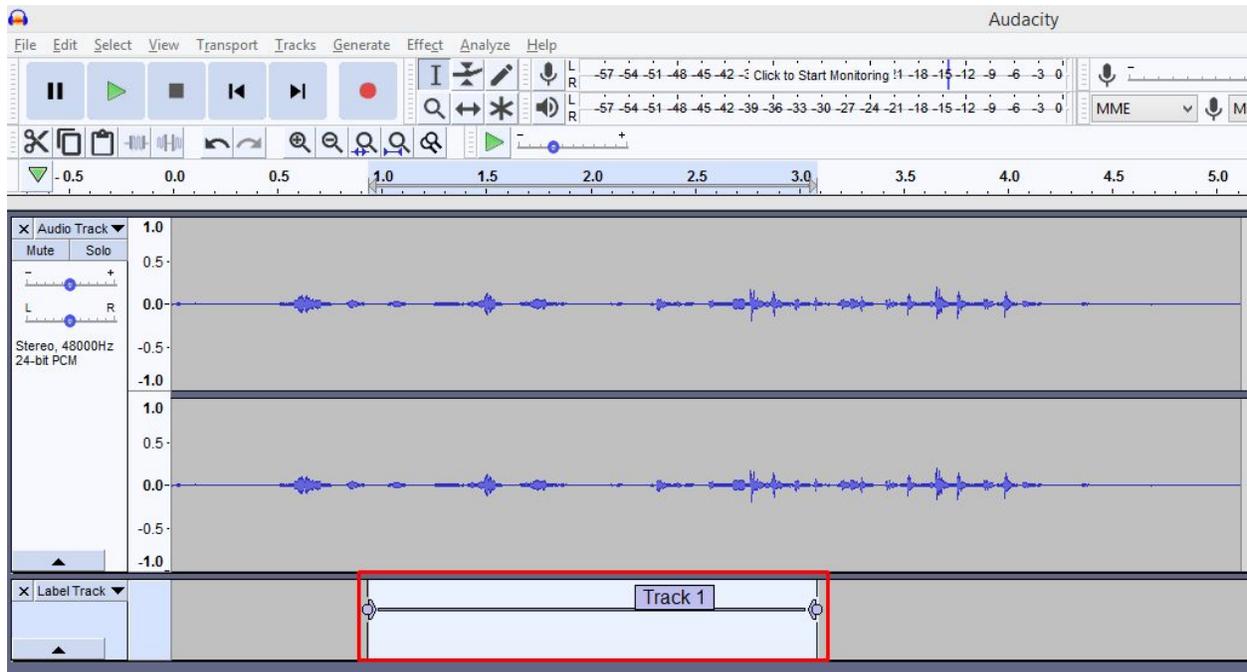
- 1) Using the Selection tool, highlight the portion of the recording to export by clicking and dragging on the waveform.



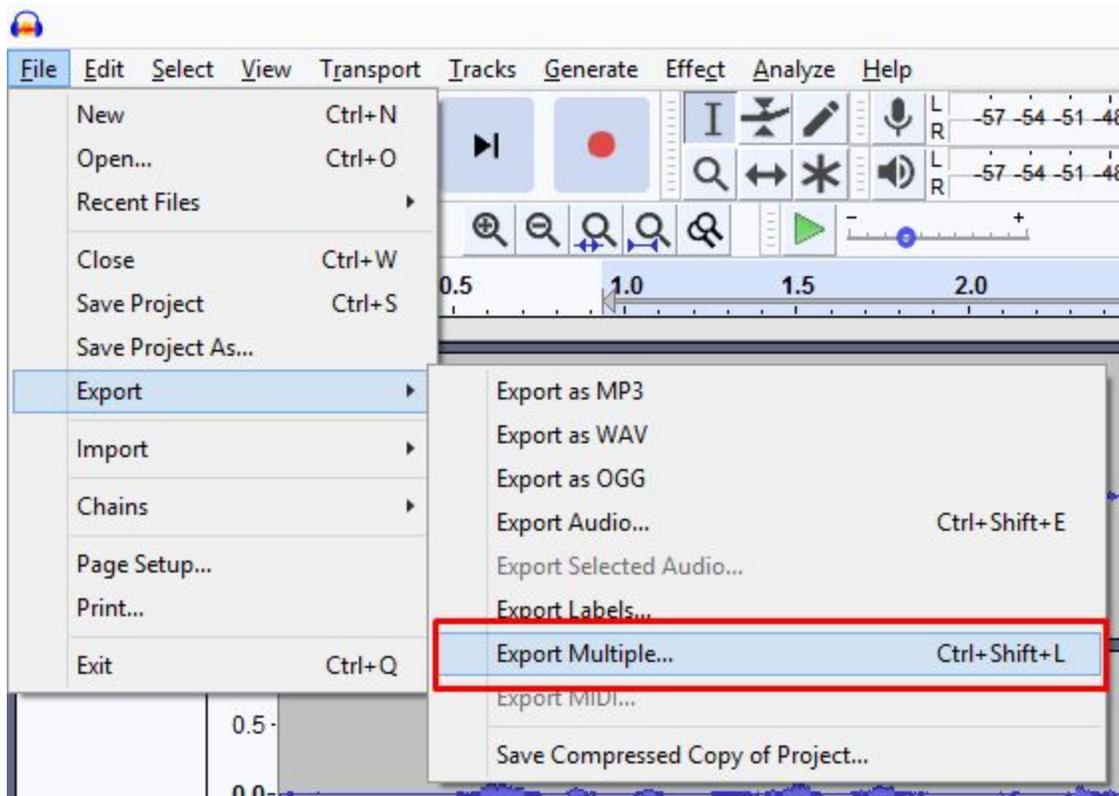
- 2) From the menu, go to **Tracks > Add New > Label Track** (or press Ctrl+B).



- 3) Type the name of the track. Once named, a track's start and end points can be adjusted by clicking and dragging. Repeat as needed.

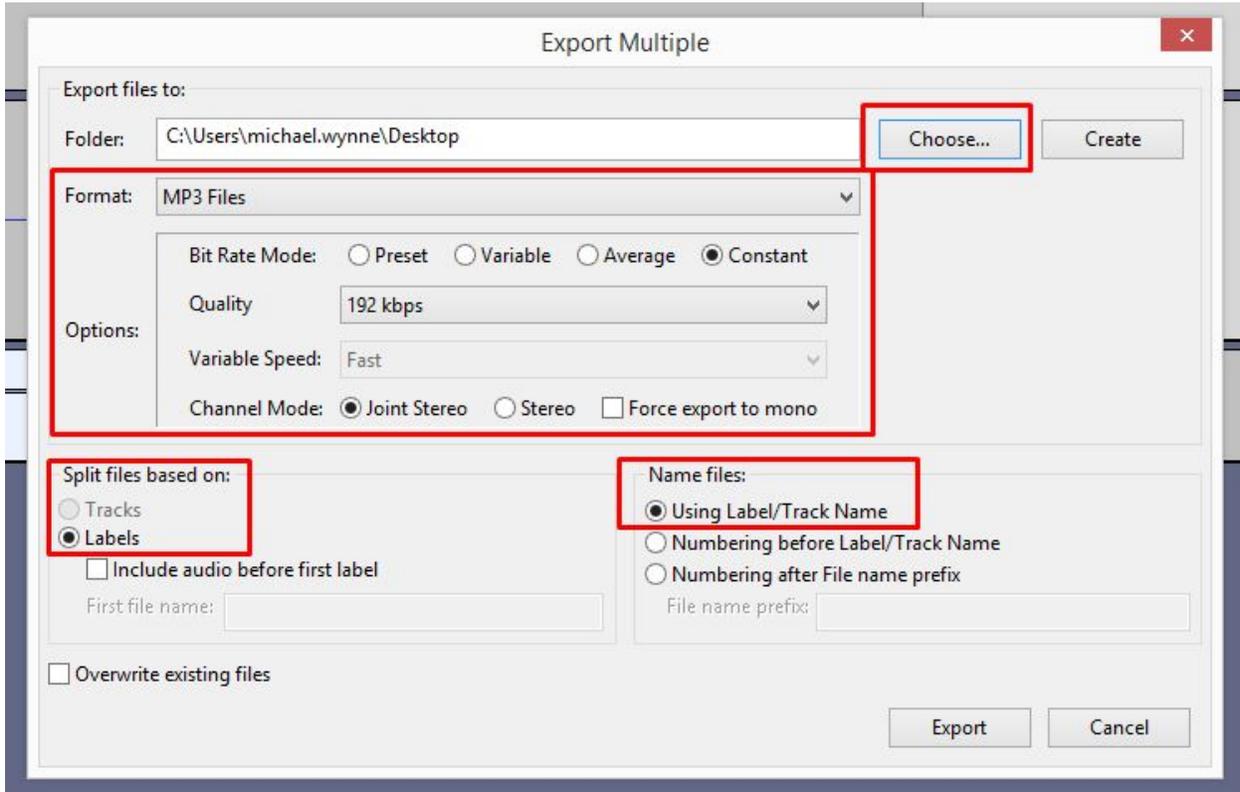


- 4) From the menu, go to **File > Export > Export Multiple**



5) Choose destination, file format, and settings as specified in project documentation.

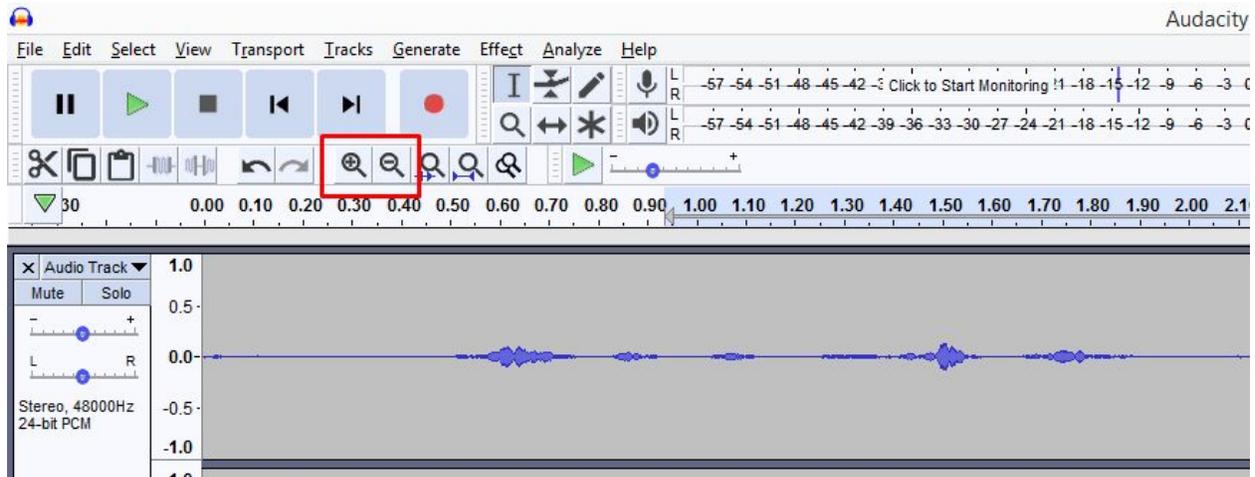
- a) Select **Split files based on: Labels**.
- b) Select **Name files: Using Label/Track Name**
- c) Click **Export**



Zooming In and Out

This is useful when more precision is needed for making selections, labels, or other edits on a recording. A zoomed out view will show the overall waveform, and a zoomed in view will show more detail.

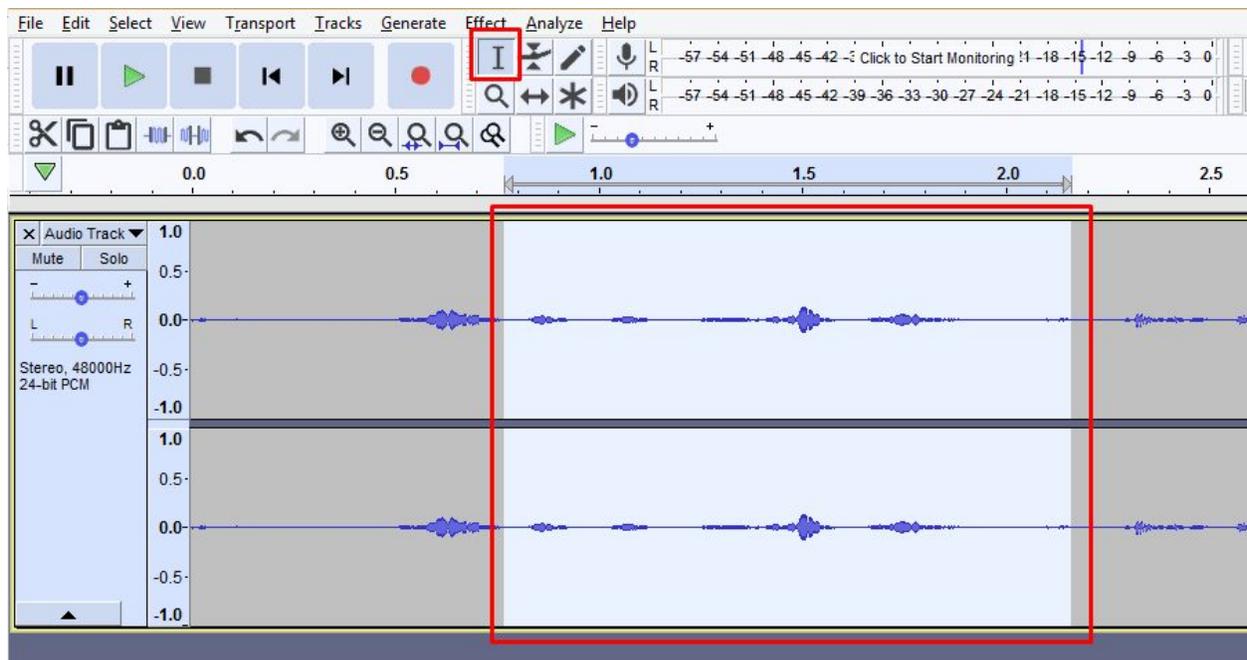
- 1) Click on the + or - magnifying glass to zoom in or out as needed.



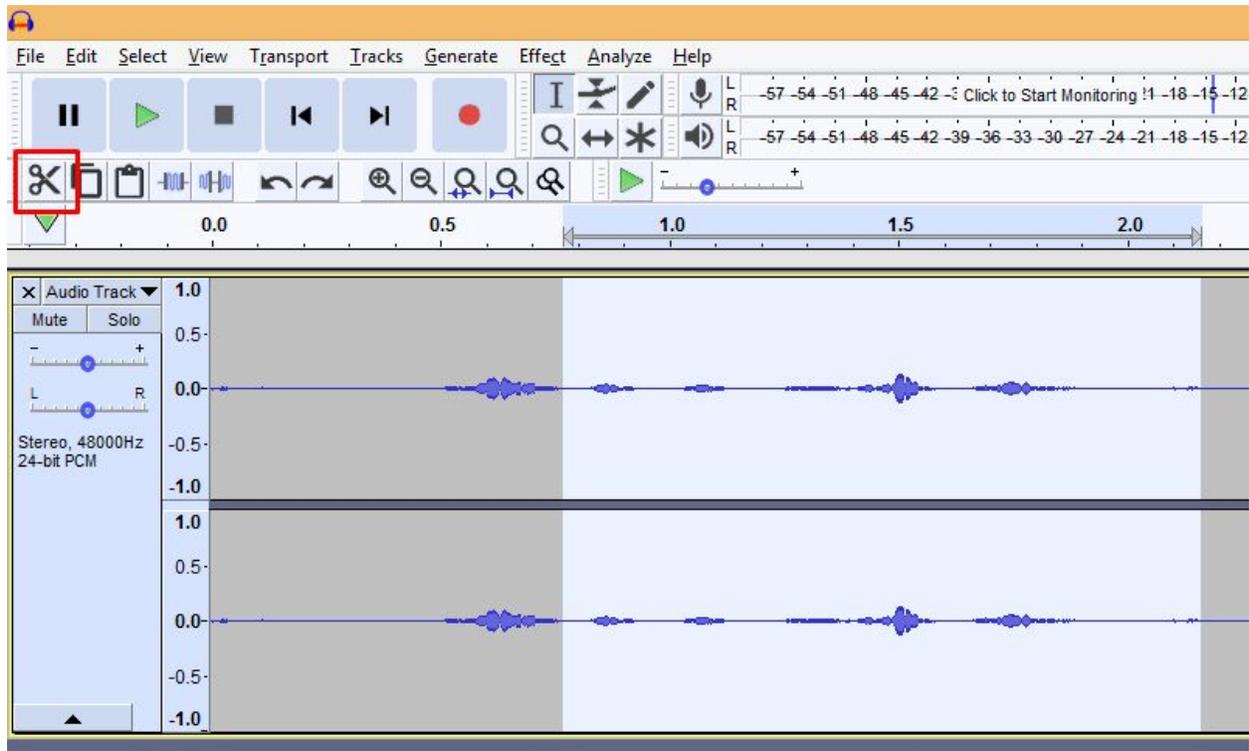
Cutting Audio

This will delete a selected portion of an audio recording.

- 1) Using the Selection tool, highlight the portion of the recording to cut by clicking and dragging on the waveform.



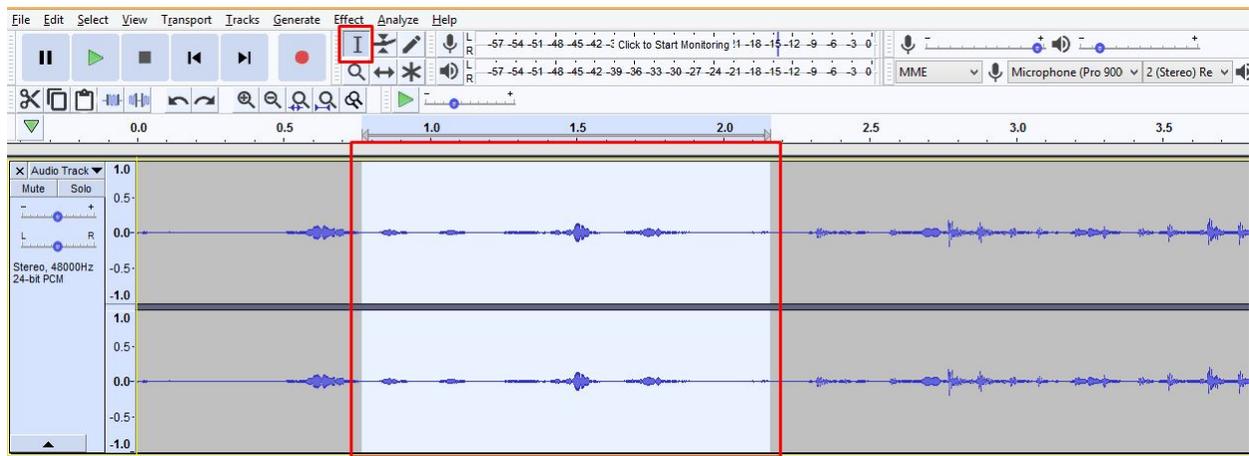
2) Press the **Cut** icon, or go to **Edit > Cut**, or press Ctrl+X.



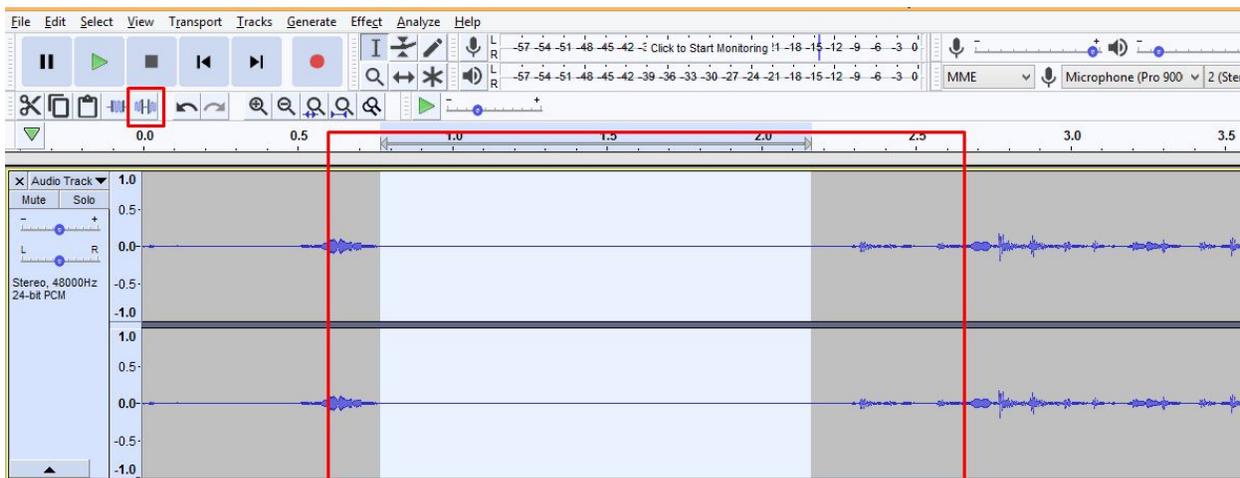
Silencing Audio

This will mute or silence a selected portion of a recording without cutting or deleting that time from the track.

1) Using the Selection tool, highlight the portion of the recording to silence by clicking and dragging on the waveform.



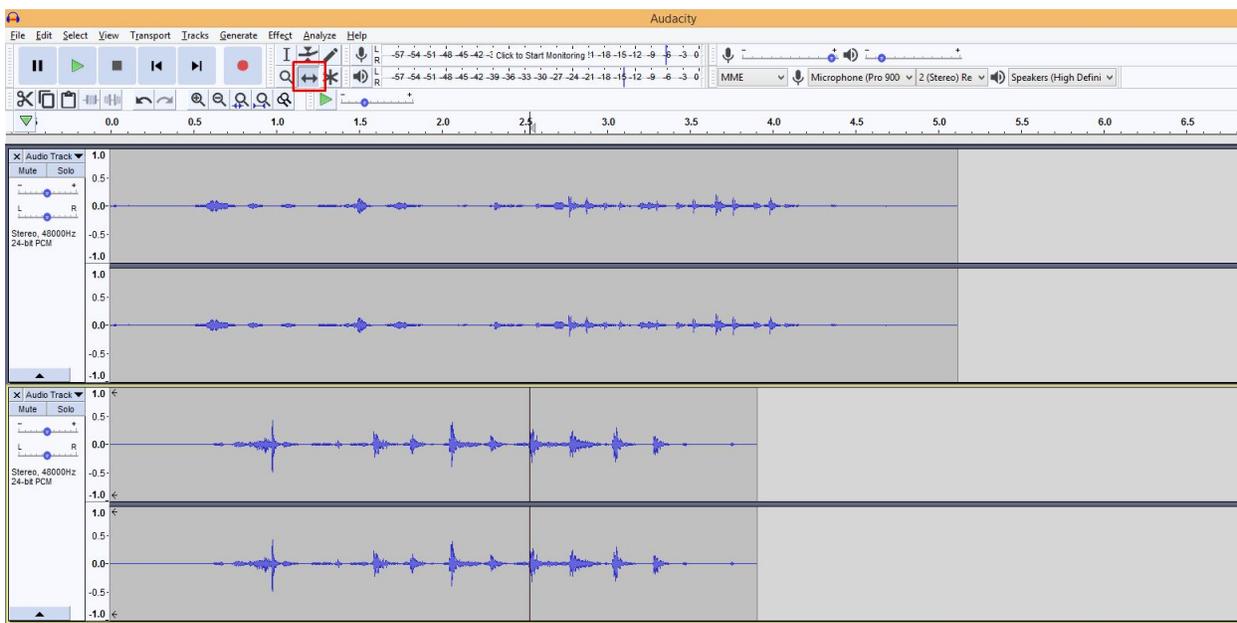
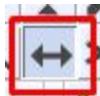
2) Press the **Silence** icon, or Ctrl+L.



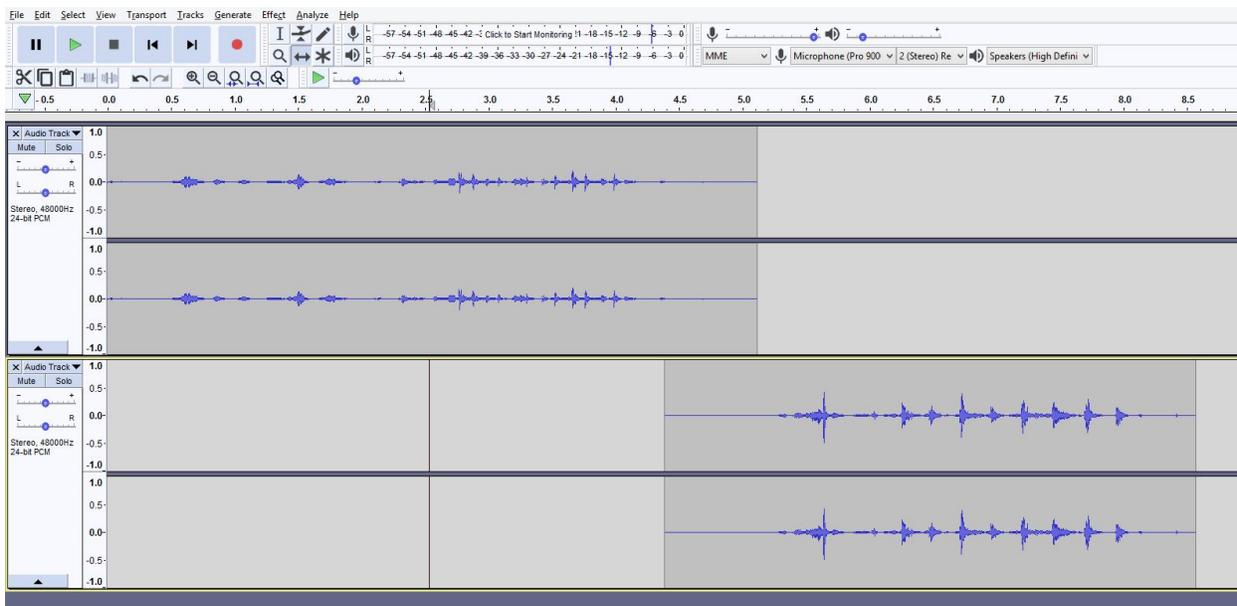
Combining Multiple Tracks

This is useful for combining multiple tracks or recording into a single recording.

- 1) Import the tracks to be combined.
 - a) Go to **File > Import > Audio**
- 2) Select the **Time Shift Tool**.



3) Click and drag the tracks to align or overlap as needed.

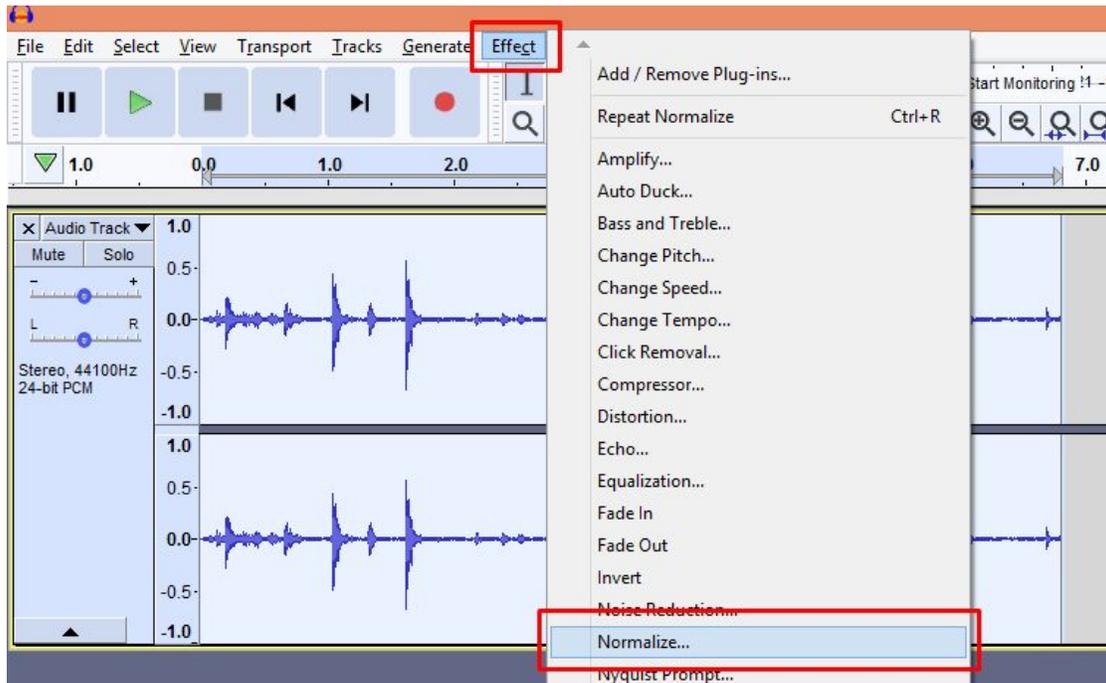


4) When finished, switch back to the **Selection Tool**.

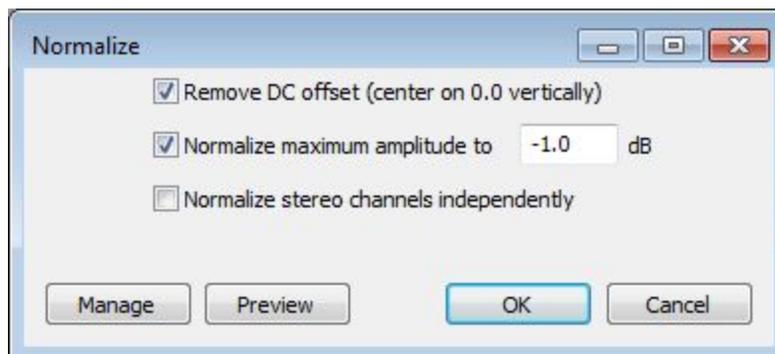
Normalizing

This is used for setting the peak amplitude (loudest volume) across all tracks and/or channels.

- 1) From the menu, go to **Effect** and select **Normalize**.



- 2) Check **Remove DC Offset**.
- 3) Set the **Maximum Amplitude to -1.0dB**.
- 4) Click **OK**.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Audacity is a well-established tool with an expansive user base and many helpful resources available online.

- Audacity User Manuals: <https://www.audacityteam.org/help/documentation/>
- Audacity Wiki: https://wiki.audacityteam.org/wiki/Audacity_Wiki_Home_Page
- Audacity Forum: <https://forum.audacityteam.org/>