



Effective March 2025

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# MP3 Recording Guidelines

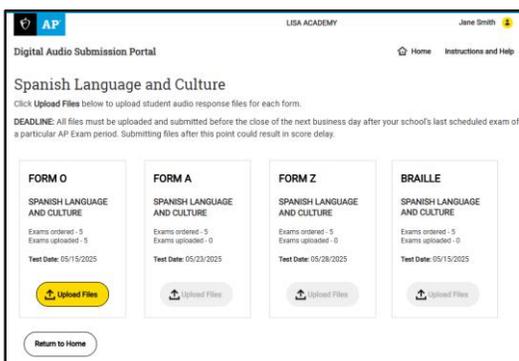
Using Audacity<sup>®</sup> on a Computer

# Contents

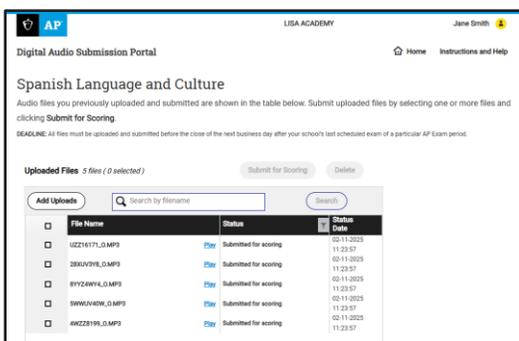
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## Exam Day Overview

1. Students record their responses using Audacity MP3 software.
2. After students are dismissed, the proctor (or other authorized staff) saves and names the students’ MP3 files.
3. Authorized staff at the school uploads the MP3 files to the Digital Audio Submission (DAS) portal.



4. Authorized staff at the school submits the MP3 files to the AP Program, using the DAS portal.



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# Introduction

Audacity® is a free software product\* for Windows® or Mac® that can be used to record audio to your computer in MP3 file format. Schools may use Audacity to record student responses for the AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture Exams, and the AP Music Theory Exam.

The information in this document is supplemental to the detailed exam instructions and proctor scripts in the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#) book; it is not a replacement for those instructions. Be sure to follow the directions in the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#) book for administering AP Exams.

In this document, you will learn how to:

1. Before exam day: Download and install Audacity on each computer that will be used to record student audio responses. Be sure to involve your school's technical consultant.
2. Use the Audacity functions that students will need to know on exam day:
  - Start recording
  - Pause recording
  - Resume recording from a paused state
  - Stop recording
  - Delete a recording
3. Save and name students' MP3 files.

It is **very important** that you hold several practice sessions well in advance of the exam administration. Include in these sessions the school's technical consultant, AP coordinator, AP teacher(s), proctor(s), and students. Practice using Audacity to ensure everyone understands the recording process. It is also essential before exam day that you know how to save and name MP3 files.

Students can practice recording Audacity MP3 files using:

- sample free-response questions available in the course and exam descriptions on AP Central,
- free-response questions from previous years' exams, available on the [AP Central](#) exam site for each course

**IMPORTANT:** As stated in **Part 2** of the [2024-25 AP Coordinator's Manual](#), because AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture teachers and AP Music Theory teachers **cannot** have any access to student recordings, these teachers are **not permitted** to have DAS portal accounts or any access to the DAS portal.

*\*This is not an AP Program or ETS endorsement of this product.*

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## About Audacity



**Audacity software is available for download** under general public license (free).

Refer to the [next page](#) of this document for **download and installation instructions**.

Audacity is designed for recording audio from the computer sound card to hard disk in MP3 format.

Audacity is currently tested compatible with the following operating systems; check the [Audacity website](#) for the latest updates.

- Windows 10 & 11, with Vista, 7 and 8.1
- MacOS 12 & 13, with OS X versions since 10.9

**NOTE:** Do not click on any banner ads that look like these. These may be malware disguised as banner ads.



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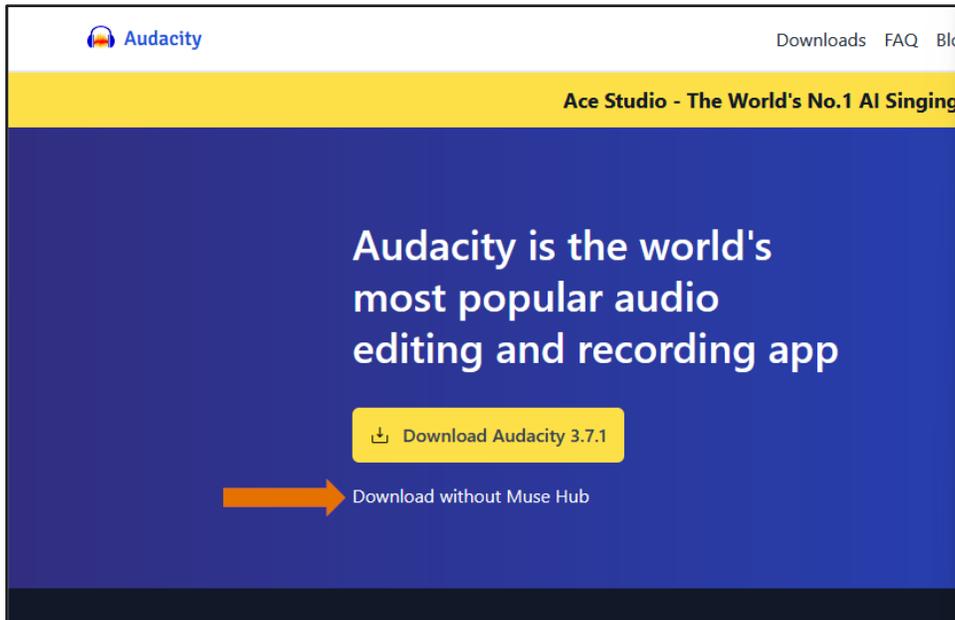
## Involving Your School's Technical Consultant

We strongly recommend that your school's technical consultant be involved in the following:

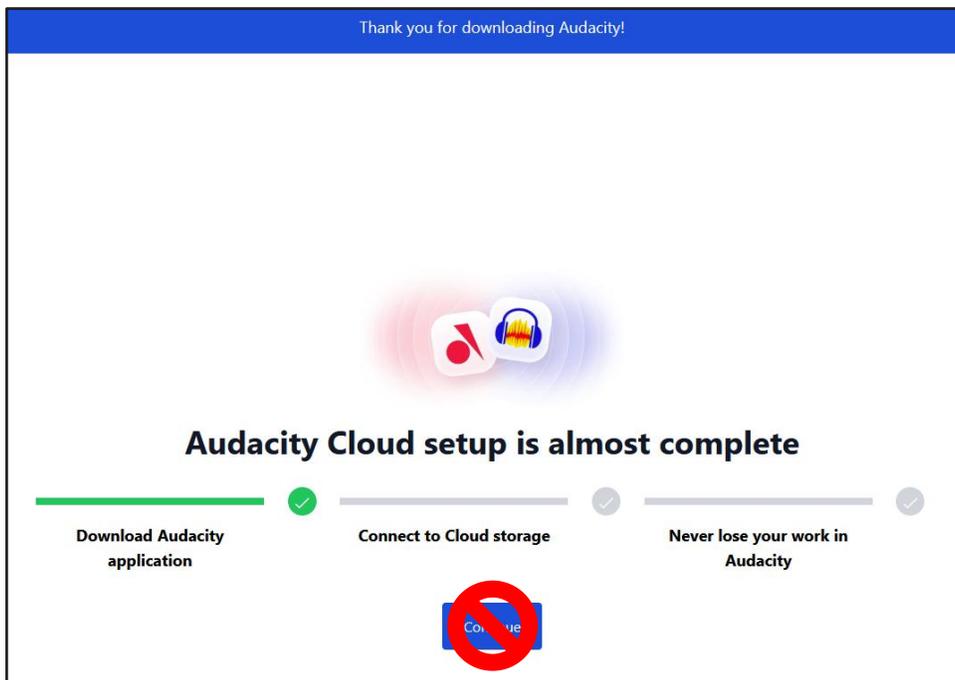
1. Determining if the Audacity software program is right for your school. (Use of Audacity is not required.)
2. Downloading Audacity and setting it up for each computer on which students will practice and take the exam.
3. Saving and naming MP3 files and uploading and submitting them using the DAS portal. Be certain to follow the detailed instructions in the "Saving, Naming, Uploading, and Submitting Student-Response MP3 Files" section on page 10 of this document and in the appropriate subject in the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#) book.

# Downloading and Installing Audacity

1. Download and install the [Audacity](http://www.audacityteam.org) software for your operating system (Windows or Mac) by following the steps below:
  - For Windows and Mac: <http://www.audacityteam.org>  
Click on “Download without Muse Hub” as indicated by the arrow in the image below. The correct file will automatically be downloaded, depending on whether you are using Windows or a Mac.



- After the download is complete, the web page shown below will appear. Close this window. **DO NOT** click on the blue Continue button.

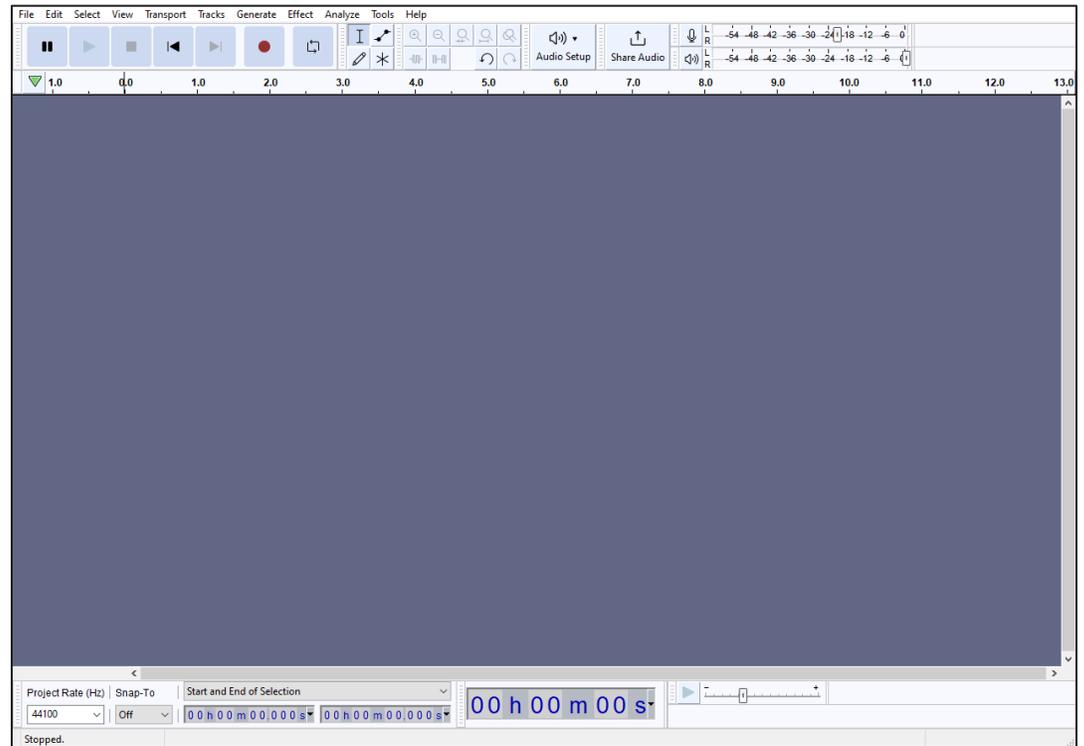


- Windows:  
To install, double-click the downloaded .exe file or right-click on the .zip file and extract the file to your desired location. (Use the recommended folder to install Audacity.) Once the installation is complete, click “FINISH.” Audacity will launch unless the “Launch Audacity” box was unchecked.
  - Mac:  
To install, double-click the downloaded .dmg file to mount it. Then drag the “Audacity” folder to Applications or any other location of your choosing to install Audacity. **Do not** double-click the “Audacity” icon in the .dmg file to launch Audacity from there. Eject the .dmg file at bottom left of Finder, then launch Audacity from Applications or from your chosen location.
2. Repeat these steps for each computer that will be used for testing.
  3. To save recorded files on a shared location, the user must have adequate file access permissions (read/write/change/modify) on the destination folder. It is highly recommended that you create a network drive with appropriate disk space for the purpose of saving audio recordings. Then connect to the drive you created from each recording workstation. Assign necessary file permissions to each user establishing the connection so they can read/write files on the shared location. Please seek assistance from your IT staff, if necessary.
  4. Be sure to configure your computers’ audio devices (headsets or microphones) as appropriate; seek technical assistance, if necessary.
  5. The Audacity website hosts a variety of helpful information and tutorials. The following link will take you to Documentation and Support, where you will find links to manuals, tutorials, and FAQs: [www.audacityteam.org/help/](http://www.audacityteam.org/help/)

# Launching Audacity

When you first launch Audacity, the dashboard opens. In the top left panel you will see the following functions that will be used during the recording process\*:

- Pause 
- Play 
- Stop 
- Record 



\*Your screens may look different depending on your version of Audacity.

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## Subject-Specific Information

### **NOTES ABOUT THE AP MUSIC THEORY EXAM:**

- When students record the sight-singing part of the AP Music Theory Exam, they must **not** use “sound activated recording,” as this will alter the rhythmic values of the sight-singing response. You can locate this in your Audacity preferences under Recording.
- Students must **not** wear headsets during the sight-singing part of the AP Music Theory Exam.
- The AP Music Theory Exam sight-singing part contains two tasks. Students will be instructed by the master CD to pause their recordings between tasks. Students **must click** “PAUSE.” Files may not record properly if students use the “STOP” button before the end.

### **NOTE ABOUT AP FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN, AND SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXAMS:**

- The speaking part of these exams contains two speaking tasks. Students will be instructed by the master CD to pause their recordings between tasks. Students **must click** “PAUSE.” Files may not record properly if students use the “STOP” button before the end.

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## Important Preparations for Exam Day

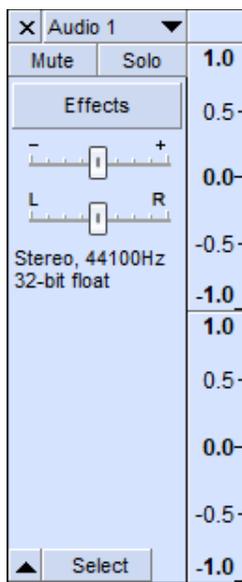
Before exam day, it is extremely important that students and proctors know how to use Audacity to **Record, Stop, Pause, Play, and Delete**.

Before the exam:

- **Have students practice using Audacity:** It is important that students practice recording MP3 files with Audacity before the exam administration. Students should practice with Audacity on the same computers that they will use when taking the exam.
- **Ensure that students know to press the "PAUSE" button to pause recording and resume recording:** Remind students that once they have begun to record, and then paused their recording, Audacity will require them to press the "PAUSE" button again to resume their recording. Students should follow the narrator's instructions on the master CD.
- **Remind students that once they begin recording their responses, they should NOT press the "STOP" button until the recording is completed:** The “STOP” button should **not** be pressed until the student has completed both tasks and is instructed by the master CD to press “STOP.” Pressing “STOP” before both tasks have been recorded can create two separate audio tracks layered (superimposed) on top of each other. **Students should only press the “STOP” button at the end, when the instructions on the master CD tell them to do so.**

During practice sessions, refer to the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#) book for the appropriate subject so students and proctors can practice using Audacity in exactly the way they will use it on exam day. On exam day, students will first be asked to record a test version of their AP ID to ensure that the recording equipment is working correctly:

- When instructed by the proctor to record their AP ID as a test, students should click the “RECORD” button  and say their AP ID.
- When they are done, students click the “STOP” button  to stop the test recording.
- When instructed by the proctor to replay their test recording, students click the “PLAY” button .
- If their AP ID recorded properly, students are instructed to delete their test recording. To delete, students must click “x” on the left side of the audio track window:



After students have successfully recorded, checked, and deleted their test AP IDs, the proctor will continue with the instructions for recording the responses. If there were any issues recording, please refer to the troubleshooting tips on page 14.

# Saving, Naming, Uploading, and Submitting Student-Response Files

**IMPORTANT: AP coordinators and proctors should work with their schools' technical consultants to practice saving students' MP3 files.**

Do **not** save the content of the master CDs to your school's computer network server, the recording workstation's hard drive, or any other file storage device.

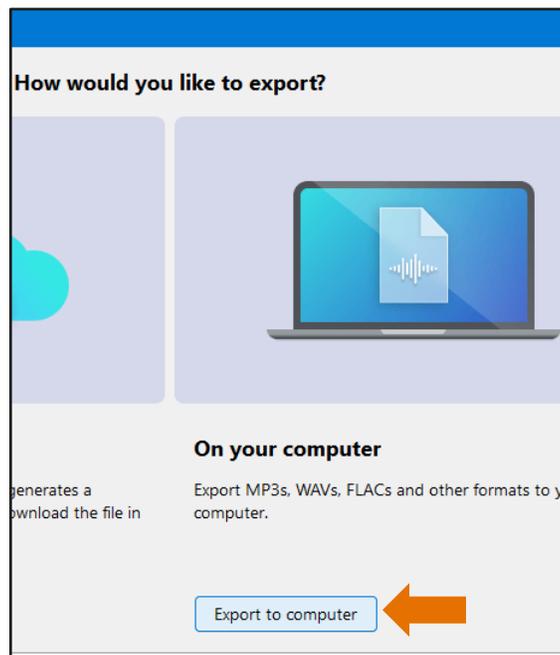
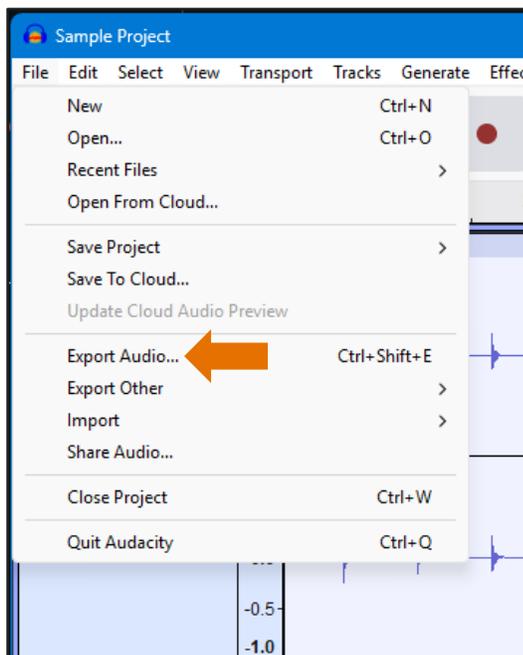
## Saving the Files in MP3 Format

When students have been dismissed, begin the process of saving the files in preparation for submission to the AP Program.

You need to export each student's responses in MP3 format. **Do not** save responses to individual questions as separate files. **Save the student's recorded AP ID and both recorded responses as a single file.**

Click "File" and then "Export Audio..." from the menu. Then click "Export to computer" in the new window.

**Windows:** Please note that your screen may look different depending on your version of Windows.



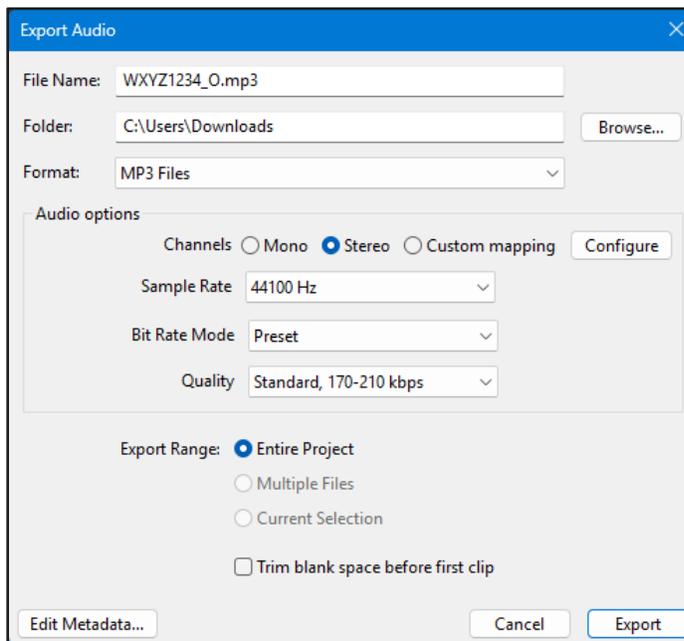
**Windows:** (continued)

Save files in MP3 file format. (The file extension .mp3 is automatically added to the file when you select the MP3 format. Do not type .mp3 into the file name. If you do, your file will be incorrect and you will get an upload error when trying to upload to the DAS portal.)

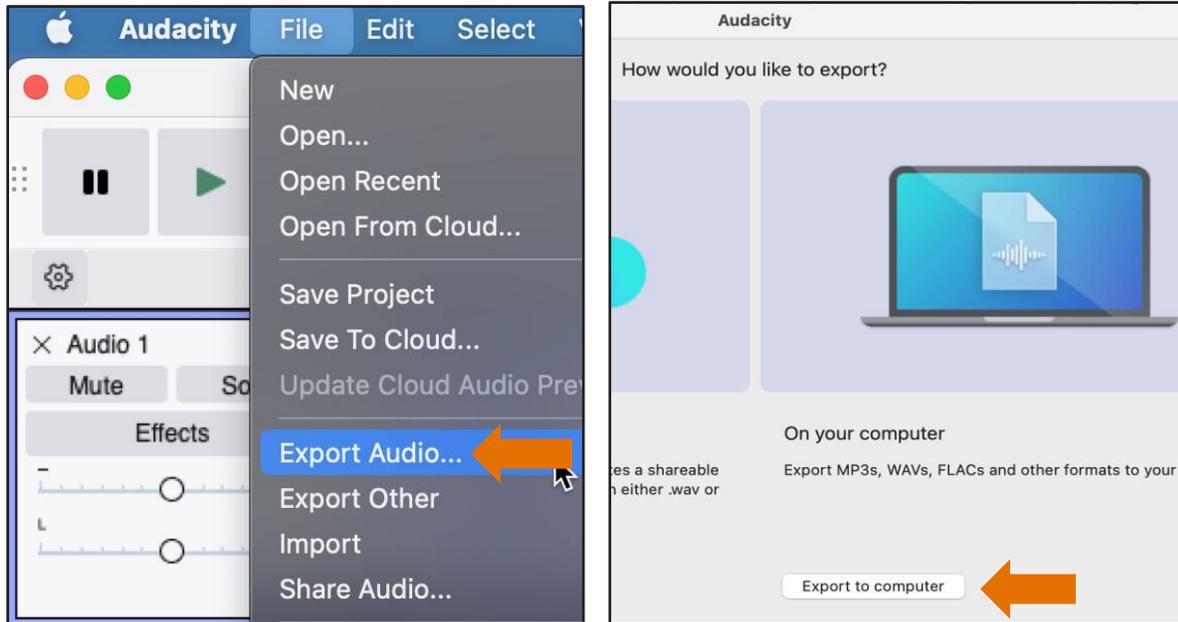
Name files with the student's eight-character AP ID, underscore, and exam form letter. The form letter is listed on the bottom right corner of students' orange booklets. An example of a correctly named file is **WXYZ1234\_O**.

Type the student's AP ID, an underscore, and the form in the "File name" box. Make sure "MP3 files" is selected in the "Format" box. Click Export to save the file to your shared location, USB drive or computer hard drive.

**Do not include any additional information on the student's file or in the file name.**



**Mac:** Please note that your screen may look different depending on your version of Mac OS.

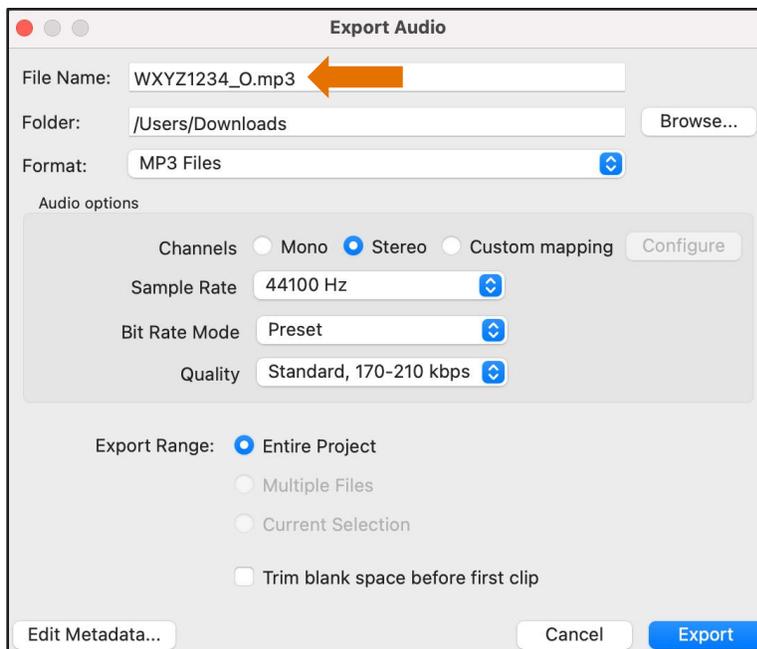


Save files in MP3 file format. (The file extension .mp3 is automatically added to the file when you select the MP3 format. Do not type .mp3 into the file name. If you do, your file will be incorrect and you will get an upload error when trying to upload to the DAS portal.)

Name files with the student's eight-character AP ID, underscore, and exam form letter. The form letter is listed on the bottom right corner of students' orange booklets. An example of a correctly named file is **WXYZ1234\_O**.

Type the student's AP ID, an underscore, and the form in the "File name" box. Make sure "MP3 files" is selected in the "Format" box. Click Export to save the file to your shared location, USB drive or computer hard drive.

**Do not include any additional information on the student's file or in the file name.**



## Checking the Files

At this time, check to be sure each file is saved correctly. **There should be only one file per student. To save each student's file you must:**

1. Save each file in MP3 format, and
2. Name each file with the student's eight-character AP ID, underscore, and exam form letter. An example of a correctly named file is **WXYZ1234\_O**.

On a Windows computer, click "File" on the menu and select "Quit Audacity" to exit the recorder. It will display a pop-up box. Respond "No" to this pop-up box.

On a Mac, click "Audacity" on the menu and select "Quit" to exit the recorder. It will display a pop-up box. Respond "No" to this pop-up box.

**IMPORTANT: This next section details the generic process for uploading a student's recorded responses, and is not specific for responses recorded in Audacity. It is the same information that appears in the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#).**

## Uploading and Submitting the Files

**IMPORTANT:** AP coordinators and any additional staff designated to upload and submit files must have a DAS portal account. All accounts on the DAS portal are school specific and controlled by the school AP coordinator. When the DAS portal is available for 2025, the AP coordinator at the school will be notified and instructed on how to locate the necessary information to access the portal. Once the AP coordinator establishes access, the coordinator will receive a confirmation email that includes a school-specific code for creating additional accounts at the school. With this code and the six-digit school code, school staff can create individual accounts on the system tied to their school by going to [apaudio.ets.org](http://apaudio.ets.org).

**NOTE:** Because AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture teachers and AP Music Theory teachers **cannot** have any access to student recordings, these teachers are **not permitted** to have DAS portal accounts or any access to the DAS portal. Teachers can still serve as proctors for exams in a subject area other than the one in which they teach or have taught.

For detailed, step-by-step instructions on using the DAS portal and a list of frequently asked questions, please reference the "Help" document on the DAS portal: [apaudio.ets.org](http://apaudio.ets.org).

**You are ready to begin the online upload and submission process once you have:**

1. Each student's response (spoken AP ID and both spoken responses) saved as a **single file** in the **MP3 format** and named as the student's AP ID (in capital letters), an underscore, and the form (e.g., WXYZ1234\_O).
2. A computer with access to the folder where the student response files are saved (e.g., hard drive of the computer or a network folder) and with a reliable connection to the internet.
3. An account on the DAS portal.

**To begin the upload and submission process:**

1. Access the DAS portal ([apaudio.ets.org](http://apaudio.ets.org)) using a computer with internet connectivity, and log in with the username and password you created earlier.
2. Select the appropriate exam name and click "Add Uploads" to begin the process.
3. The system will prompt you to select the correct form (based on your school's exam order, i.e., O, A, or Z) to upload. Open the folder on the computer where the students' MP3 files are saved. Select the files, and upload.

4. Once you've confirmed that all files are accounted for, select the files and click "Submit for Scoring" to submit the files for scoring. Once you've successfully submitted you'll see a confirmation message.

**If any student testing chose not to record audio responses, indicate this in the "No Audio Response" box in the DAS portal, in addition to submitting an online IR form. See the "Help" document on the DAS portal for details.**

**Deadline:** You must upload and submit speaking responses as soon as possible, preferably directly following the exam, but no later than the close of the next business day after your school's last scheduled exam of a particular AP Exam administration period (i.e., regular or late). **Submitting files after this point could result in score delays.**

Return all exam materials to secure storage until they are shipped back to the AP Program. (See "Storing Exam Materials" in **Part 2** of the [2024-25 AP Coordinator's Manual](#) for more information about secure storage.) Refer to "After Exam Tasks" in the subject's proctor script in the [2024-25 AP Exam Instructions](#) for the tasks you need to complete before storing materials.

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## Troubleshooting Tips

1. If you are unable to hear the recording properly, follow these troubleshooting tips:
  - a. Click **Edit** and then **Preferences** from the drop-down menu.
  - b. Under *Devices*, ensure that the correct device is selected in **Playback** and **Recording**. For example, if you are using a headset, be sure that the headset is selected in both the "Playback" and "Recording" drop downs.
2. If any student's recording is inaudible or either of their responses did not record, the student must re-record both tasks. Instruct any students with inaudible recordings to wait quietly while the students whose recordings were audible are dismissed. If you discover a problem with any student's file and they have already been dismissed, call AP Services for Educators for instructions.

Contact AP Services for Educators (Monday–Friday) at 877-274-6474 (toll free in the U.S. and Canada) or 212-632-1781.

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## Technical Assistance

If you experience any problems during the installation or configuration of **the Audacity software product only**, technical assistance is available between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. Your school staff may email [AP-MP3Recordertech@ets.org](mailto:AP-MP3Recordertech@ets.org) or call **609-406-5677** for assistance during these hours.

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