RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHING & RECORDING YOUR PODCAST

SOURCE MATERIALS

PUBLIC DOMAIN RESOURCES

Adding sound from speeches, historical recordings, or interviews can make a podcast more vivid—but it must be done legally and respectfully. The sources listed in this section are no longer protected by copyright—often because the copyright has expired or was never claimed. You can use them freely.

1) **U.S. National Archives:** Government speeches and historical audio (archives.gov/research/audio)

2) **Library of Congress:** Massive collection of public domain recordings (loc.gov/audio)

3) **Internet Archive:** Includes news broadcasts, speeches, and historical audio (make sure you verify each item's license) (archive.org)

4) **LibriVox:** Public domain readings of historical texts (librivox.org)

5) **Public Broadcasting Archives:** Many public TV/radio programs (like American Archive of Public Broadcasting) have open educational clips.

6) U.S. Supreme Court oral arguments (oyez.org)

ROYALTY-FREE MUSIC & SOUND EFFECTS

It's important to only use royalty-free music. Suggested sources include:

1) Free Music Archive (freemusicarchive.org)

2) Pixabay Music (pixabay.com/music)

3) Incompetech (incompetech.com)

4) BBC Sound Effects Archive (sound-effects.bbcrewind.co.uk)

CREATIVE COMMONS

Creative Commons (creativecommons.org) is a nonprofit organization that provides free, standardized copyright licenses that creators can use to tell others exactly how their work can be used. It makes it easier for people to legally share, use, and build upon someone else's creative works while still giving credit to the original creator.

There are six main Creative Commons licenses, ranging from most open to most restrictive. If you are using Creative Commons materials it's imperative that you understand and follow the parameters of the license type.

- **CC BY:** Others can use, share, and modify the material, even commercially, as long as they give the original creator credit.

- **CC BY-SA**: Same as CC BY, but anyone who modifies the material must share their updated version under the same license.

- **CC BY-ND:** Others can share the material, but they cannot change it.

- **CC BY-NC:** Others can use and modify the material for non-commercial purposes only, and they must credit the original creator.

- **CC BY-NC-SA:** Noncommercial use only, and adaptations must carry the same license.

- **CC BY-NC-ND:** The most restrictive license; others can only share the material as-is, with credit, and for non-commercial purposes.

FAIR USE

- Fair use allows limited use of copyrighted material without permission for purposes such as criticism, commentary, education, or scholarship — but it has strict limits. Here's some things to keep in mind:

- Materials must be for educational purposes and not as a replacement for the original work.

- The source is from factual or historical materials.

- Always credit sources in audio or description text.

- Use only short excerpts for illustration or commentary (10–30 seconds max).

- Educational use does not mean unlimited use. Being a student doesn't automatically make everything fair use.

- When unsure, leave the material out or replace it with royalty-free audio.

RECORDING AND EDITING TOOLS

RECORDING TOOLS

Tool	Platform	Highlights
Audacity	Windows, Mac, Linux	Professional-grade open-source audio recorder and editor.
GarageBand	Mac, iPad	User-friendly interface; includes sound effects and music loops.
Anchor.fm (Spotify for Podcasters)	Web, iOS, Android	Simple, browser-based recording—no software needed.
Voice Memos	iPhone/iPad	Quick, portable option for field interviews.
Online Voice Recorder (by 123Apps)	Web (no download)	No login needed; simple and secure.

EDITING TOOLS

Tool	Platform	Highlights
Audacity	Windows, Mac, Linux	Edit multiple tracks, remove background noise, and add effects.
Soundtrap (by Spotify)	Web	Cloud-based, collaborative audio editing (great for group projects).

Tool	Platform	Highlights
TwistedWave Online	Web	Simple web editor—no install required.

WORKING WITH AUDIO CLIPS

USING INTERVIEW CLIPS

- **Import the recording** into your editing software.

- **Listen all the way through** and mark key moments or quotes.

- **Cut filler words** ("um," "like," long pauses).

- Remove background noise

- **Balance audio levels:** Adjust so voices are even in volume.

- **Keep authenticity:** Don't over-edit — natural speech makes it real.

Editing Tip: When cutting between clips, add a **small fade-in/fade-out (0.5 sec)** to avoid clicks or pops.

EXTRACTING CLIPS FROM PUBLIC SOURCES

Many public archives allow direct downloads. You can import the file, highlight the section you want, and then export it.

If a file cannot be downloaded, you can use Screen/Audio Capture (if permitted) to record the system audio. Only capture the portion you need, and cite the source clearly.

Tip: Always check if the clip is explicitly labeled "public domain," "CC BY," or "educational use." If it isn't, don't use the clip.

EDITING & INTEGRATING CLIPS

Once you have the clip:

1) Import it into your editing software.

2) Adjust volume levels to match your narration.

3) Add a brief introduction like: "Here's Dr. King speaking at the March on Washington in 1963…"

4) Fade in and out for smooth transitions.

5) Add credits in your outro or show notes: "Speech excerpt courtesy of the U.S. National Archives (Public Domain)."

SOUND QUALITY TIP FOR MIXED AUDIO

When combining interviews, narration, and external clips:

- Keep all audio levels similar — no clip should drown out the voices.

- Normalize levels using your editing software.

- Use fade transitions between your narration and the clip to make the shift smoother.

REVISING YOUR PODCAST AFTER REVIEW

Just like with your script, it's important to get another person's perspective after you've recorded your episode — a friend, mentor, parent, or even another student creator. You can also share your recording with our staff who will review it for you. Contact cshoufler@isb.idaho.gov for more information.

To help guide the review, share these questions with your reviewer, and use their feedback to edit your script.

- **Message:** How can you make your message stronger and/or more engaging?

- **Clarity:** What ways can you make the episode confusing or hard to follow?

- **Flow:** What ways can I adjust the flow of the episode so that it makes the most sense?

- **Podcast rubric:** When looking at this episode using the podcast rubric, what changes can be made to the podcast to meet the highest score for each criterion?

The good news is that you can update your podcast without re-recording everything.

VERSION CONTROL

Always keep the original version of your podcast recording safe in case you need to go back — you might want to reuse or compare them later. To save your original file as a different version open your saved project file (never start from your exported MP3) and save it under a different name.

MAKING TARGETED EDITS

You can fix most things with minor changes.

Problem	Quick Fix
You mispronounced a word or said the wrong date.	Re-record just that sentence. Record in the same space with the same mic. Match your tone and speed. Then replace the old line by cutting and pasting the new clip into place.
One section drags or repeats ideas.	Highlight and delete extra lines. Use short cross-fades to smooth transitions.
An interview answer is too long.	Cut mid-sentence breaks or filler phrases, keeping the core idea.
Volume jumps between speakers.	Use the "Amplify" or "Normalize" effect to balance volume.
Background noise or hiss.	Apply "Noise Reduction" in Audacity. Select a quiet portion, "Get Noise Profile," then apply it to the whole track.
You want to move a section.	Highlight, copy, and paste it where it fits better. Re-check transitions with short fades.
You forgot to credit someone.	Record a short new outro line ("Special thanks to…"), and add it at the end.

RE-RECORD SHORT "PICKUPS"

Sometimes it's faster to re-record one or two short parts instead of the whole narration.
These quick replacements are called pickups. Here's some tips for Recording Pickups:

- Use the same mic and setup as before.

- Match your distance, tone, and energy.

- Record multiple takes so you can choose the smoothest one.

- When editing, use a fade-in/fade-out (0.5 seconds) so it blends naturally.

UPDATE MUSIC OR TRANSITIONS

If the music is too loud or distracting you can lower the track's volume in your editing software or swap the music for a softer background from a royalty-free music site. Make sure to use fade in/out so new transitions sound natural.

FINAL CHECK

After you've made all your revisions, listen to the episode all the way through. Use headphones (they reveal small audio glitches). Check for any awkward pauses, sharp cuts, or mismatched audio levels. Make sure to note time stamps if you need another round of fixes.