Sound Editing

Sound editing is an important part of filmmaking, but it is also a valuable art in and of itself. Creating and editing sound and music will allow for a different creative exploration and can activate subtle learning with deep impact on emotional development. Sound editing place importance on the tone and feeling made possible through sound. The main areas of sound editing are dialogue, effects, and music. Students can use scripts to record dialogue for short films, create sound effects for specific actions in the films, and make soundtracks to accompany the film.

Fun exercises can include sound hunting, where students armed with a recording device search for relevant and interesting sounds or getting background soundscapes for use in the film. Examples include crinkling a bag of chips to simulate a fire or rustling a ball of tape to mimic footsteps in the grass.
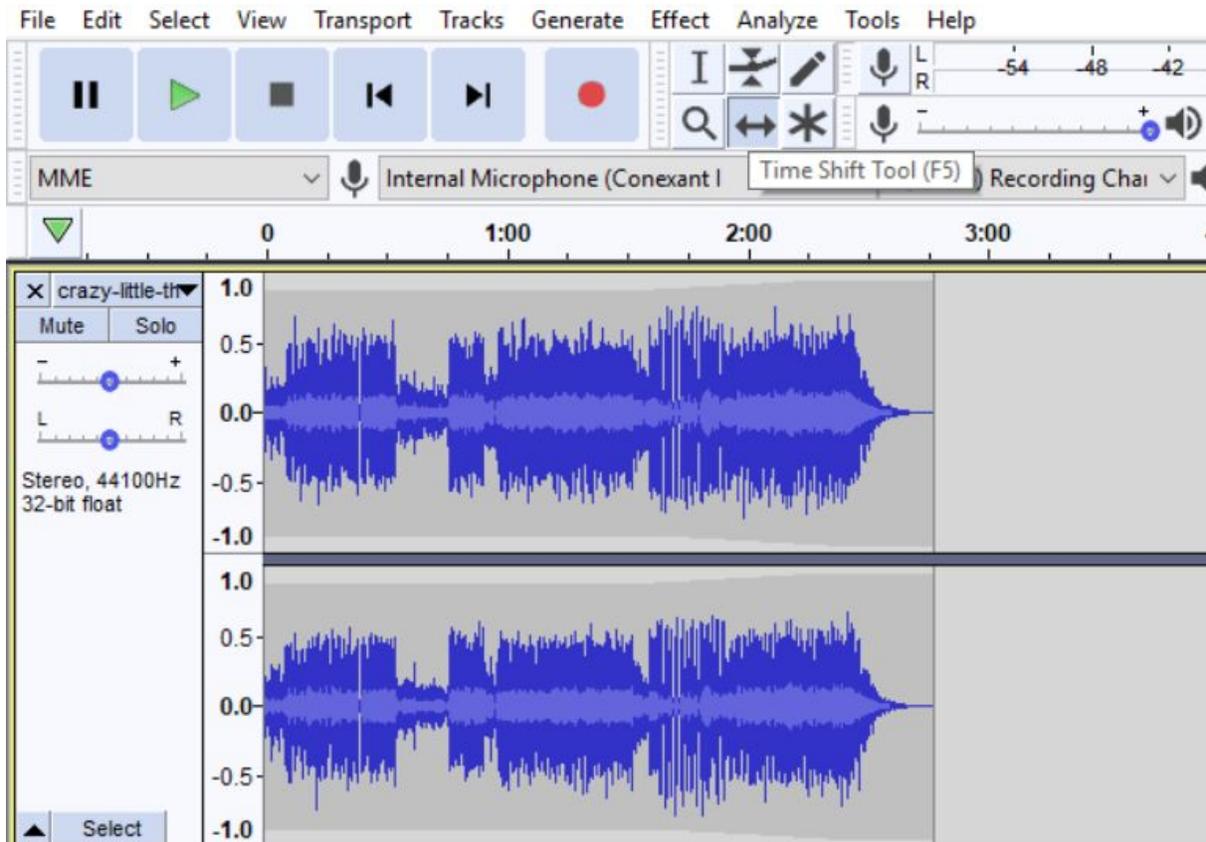
Audacity

Audacity is a simple audio editing software available for download on Mac, Windows and Linux systems. The steps to using it are as follows.

Step 1. Load Media

You can simply drag and drop audio files into Audacity in order to start a new project, or you can click on File >> Open (or Ctrl + O) to add new files to your timeline. You can create several tracks to work on by adding extra files.

Step 2. Record additional sound

Audacity also allows you to record sound directly through the program. Just press the red recording button in the top left corner and it will start adding your newly recorded sound to the timeline as you go.
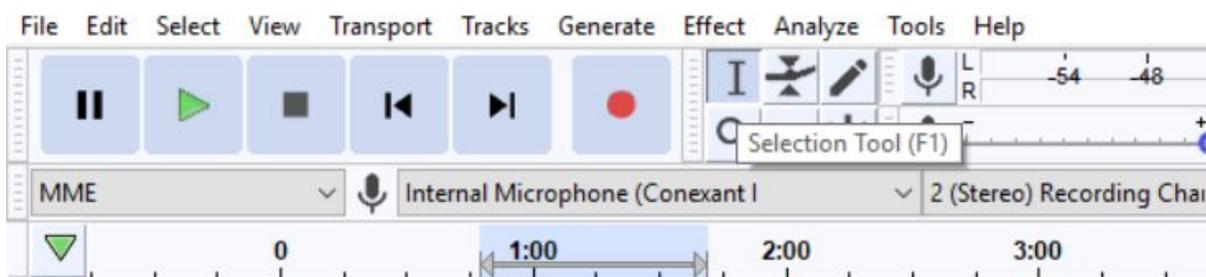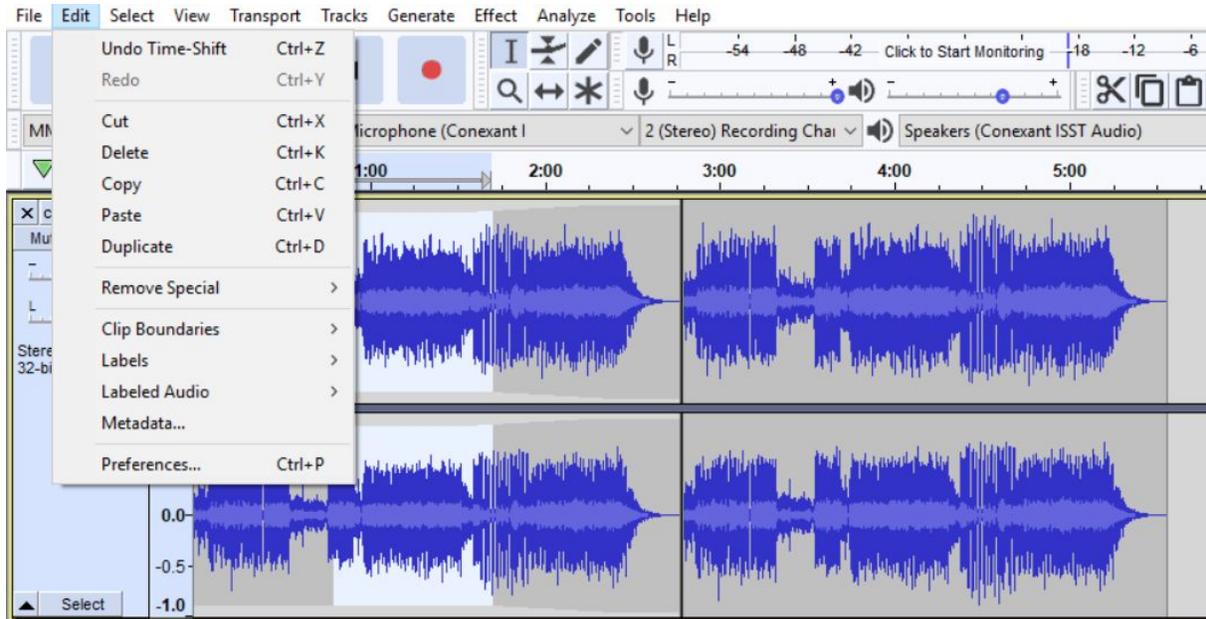
Step 3. Move and Trim Audio

If you want to rearrange your clips on the timeline, you should select the Time Shift Tool (F5) as shown in the previous screenshot, then hold, and drag the desired clip.

When it comes to trimming, Audacity gives you several options. You can select clips to trim by choosing the Selection Tool (F1). Click on any point in the clip, then hold, and drag to select a portion of the clip. For better precision, you can choose the Zoom tool (F4, right below the selection tool) to Zoom In (Left click) and Zoom Out (Shift + Left click) on the timeline.

Afterwards you can either Cut (Ctrl + X), Delete (Ctrl + K) or Duplicate (Ctrl + D) your selection.

Step 4. Add Effects

There are many effects you can add to your edit under the "Effect" dropdown menu. Some of the more notable ones are: Normalise, Noise Reduction, Fade In/Out, Crossfade and Speed.

With Normalise you can make sure your sound does not exceed a certain limit. Normally your sound should peak between -6 and -12 dB. Under -12 dB is generally fine but if your audio ever goes above -6 dB and maybe even reaches 0 dB, the audio starts to get distorted.

With Noise Reduction you can make your recording more clear by selecting a section of pure noise and based on that Noise Profile, Audacity will automatically remove all noise from your clip.
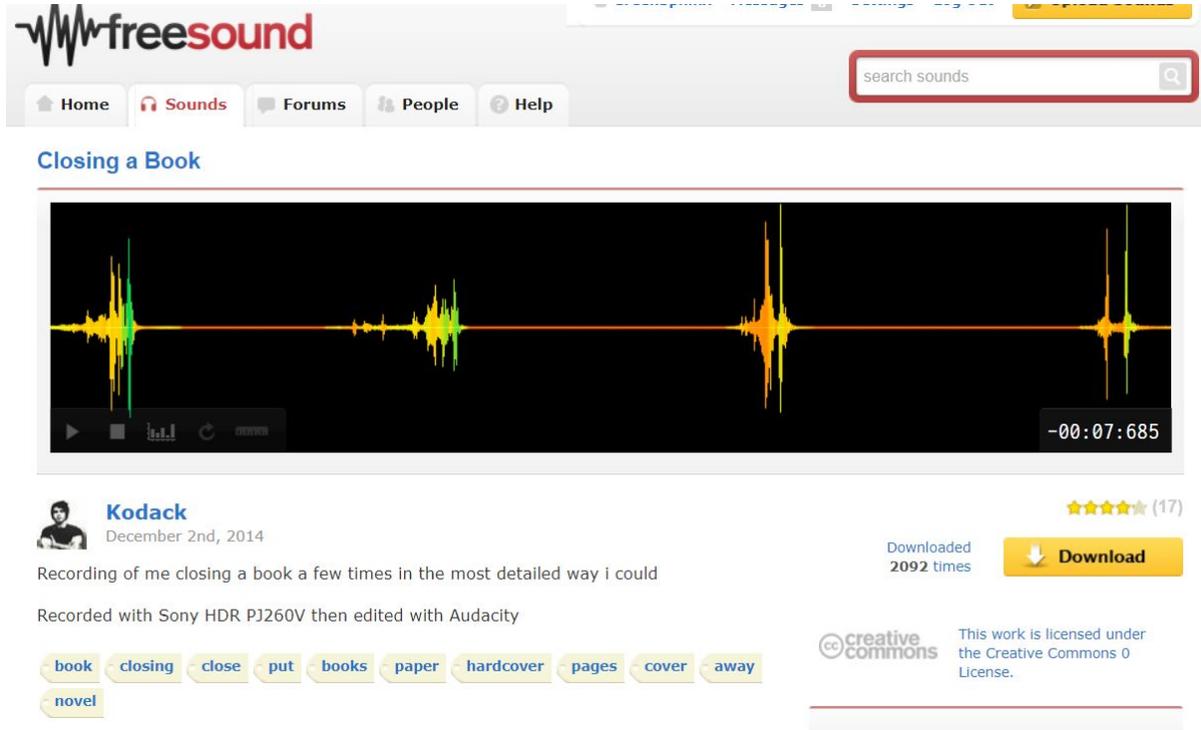
Step 5. Export

Once you are finished with your edit, you can export your work through File >> Export >> Export Audio… (or Ctrl + Shift + E). You may choose from several audio formats while exporting, but wav is usually recommended over mp3 for better quality.

Sound Libraries

Besides the option of recording your own sound effects, you can also look for free-to-use sound libraries on the internet. One such library is Freesound (https://freesound.org/). You can look for any kind of sound effect using the toolbar in the top right corner, including bird sounds, ambient music, the sound

of a book being closed shut etc. You can listen to each sound in your browser and easily download them once you have made a free account.