

IAT 202 | Reference material for recording live sound & editing

Once you have learned how to operate your handheld audio recorders it is now time to record your sound effects.

A lot of the sound effects that are used in Hollywood are created using a combination of sound effects from various sources. It is always good to try capturing audio in different environments and use various objects.

For example:

Capture street noise in various locations to add ambience as part of your background audio in your film.

Find objects that make interesting sounds when you roll them, drop them, or when you tap on them.

It is good to record sounds of actual objects as well, like pouring water in a glass cup.

To get unusual sounds such as bone breaking, you will have to get creative. Break a piece of celery or crush an egg and record the sound.

*Make sure you set your audio levels correctly before you record your sound. If you set your gain level too low, you will end up with more noise than signal. If you increase the gain too much then you will record distortion. Take your time and set your levels correctly. Remember you want a hot signal without hitting distortion.

*Once you have your sounds, import them into your audio editing software. Clean them up by trimming the start and end points, EQ and finalize your levels. **Save the file and make sure you properly name the file.**

For example: dooropening1_16bit_44kHz_SM57.wav

The file name indicates the following:

-dooropening1 (type of sound and take number)

-16bit_44kHz (audio bit & sample rate, in this case being CD quality)

-SM57 (microphone type)

By using this naming convention you can categorize your sounds and access them easily for your projects.

Editing Audio:

When editing audio, you want to be able to end up with a clean signal that has the least amount of noise and no distortion.

In the digital world, 0dB means distortion; if you go above this level you will hear distortion.

An audio signal can have a frequency from 20Hz to 20 kHz (and beyond). Our hearing range is between this bandwidth. When you have multiple audio signals, you want to make sure that you can hear each sound.

To achieve this you will need to “mix” your audio. This is a term used when you have to set volume levels, pan, EQ, and compress.

At this point, try to achieve a good mix by setting proper volume levels, panning, and possibly EQ.

When you have recorded your sounds, try cutting them up so that you have a mix of short and long sound effects. If you end up with a click or pop noise at the beginning or end of your file, apply a really short fade in or fade out to remove any unwanted noise.

Try adding effects such as reverb, delay, pitch shift to your sounds to make them sound more unique.