Information Technology Services
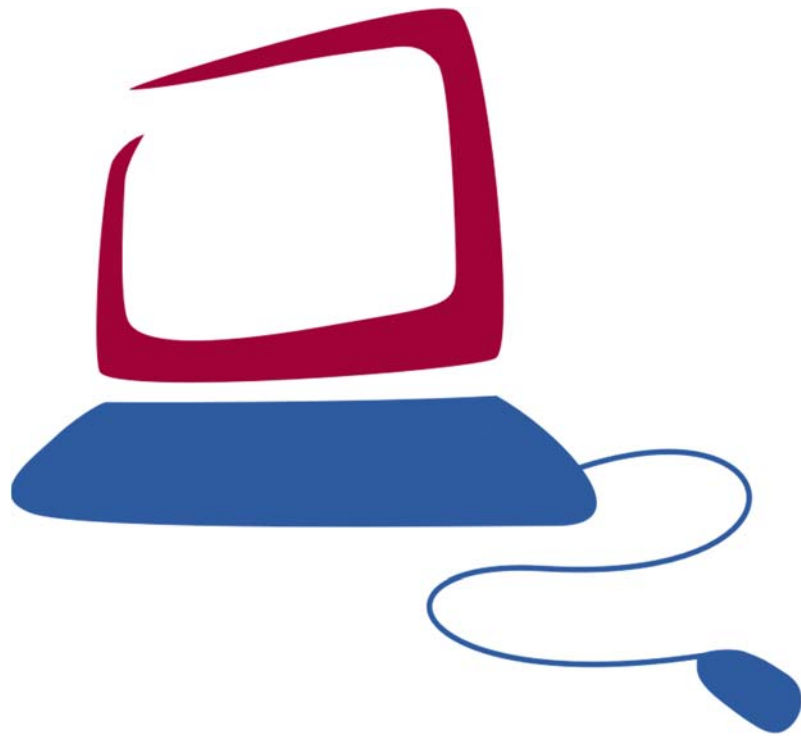
Quick Start Guide for Audacity

Quick Start Guide Sections:

What is Audacity?

- Audacity is a free, totally free, audio editing program. Download it here: http://audacity.sourceforge.net

Installing Audacity

1. **Download** Audacity to your own computer.
2. Run installation file.
3. **Download** the LAME encoder file. Follow these instructions to do so: http://lame.buanzo.org
4. Unzip or uncompress the downloaded LAME file.
5. It is very important that you know exactly where you saved the lame_enc.dll or LameLib file. Reason: The very first time you try to export an MP3 file from Audacity, it will ask you: **Where is the LAME encoder file?** You must *show Audacity where the file is*. You will do this only *once*.

If you don't follow steps 3 - 5, you will not be able to export MP3 files from Audacity. However, you will not have a chance to do **Step 5** until you have some audio to export.

So, make a note for yourself: The first time you export an MP3 file, you must remember where you put that LAME file *after* you unzipped it.

Opening an Audio File

How do you open any file in any program? **File** menu > **Open**.

Note: Audacity *cannot open* WMA files. If you have WMA files, you must convert them first (convert to the WAV format, for example). Conversion can be done with **Switch** (Mac and Win) or **EasyWMA** (Mac only)

- Switch: www.nch.com.au/switch/index.html
- EasyWMA: www.easywma.com

Recording Your Own Voice

1. Connect a microphone.
   a. If your computer has a **Mic In** port, plug in a microphone.
   b. If your computer has a **Line In** port, get a USB microphone or an audio adapter such as the iMic: www.griffintechnology.com/products/imic
   c. Please note: If you have a built-in mic, the quality won't be the best quality.
2. Open Audacity.

3. Click the red button. Start talking.


4. When you've finished, click the Stop button.

Saving Your File

Like many audio editing programs, Audacity wants you to **save a "project"** and not a file—until you are completely finished with your editing. When you are finished, you will **export** a new file. But until then, you will just go on saving your project as many times as necessary to avoid losing your work.
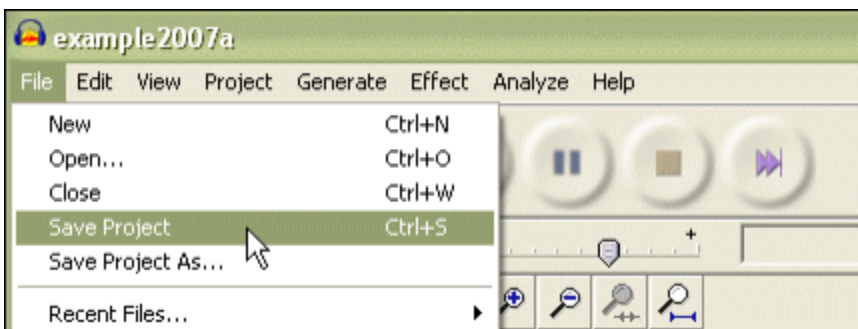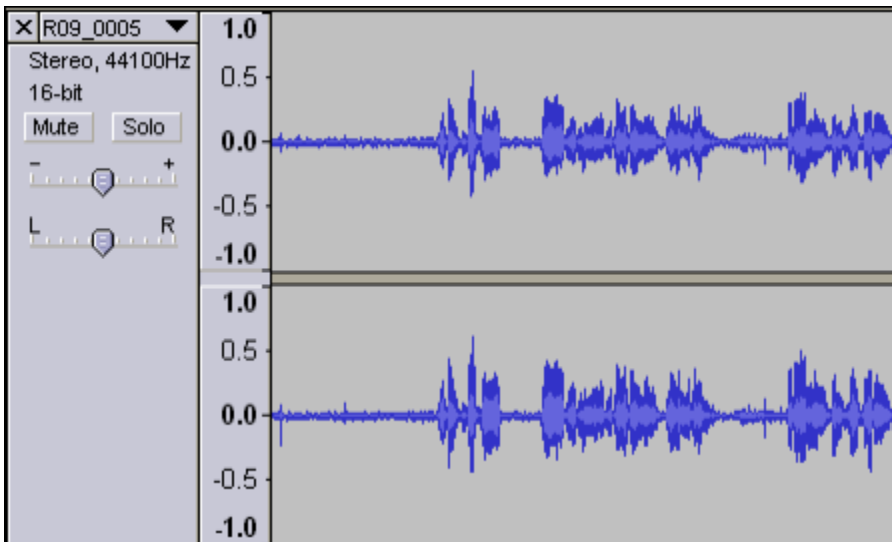
Editing Audio

To delete something, first you will click, hold and drag to select the section:
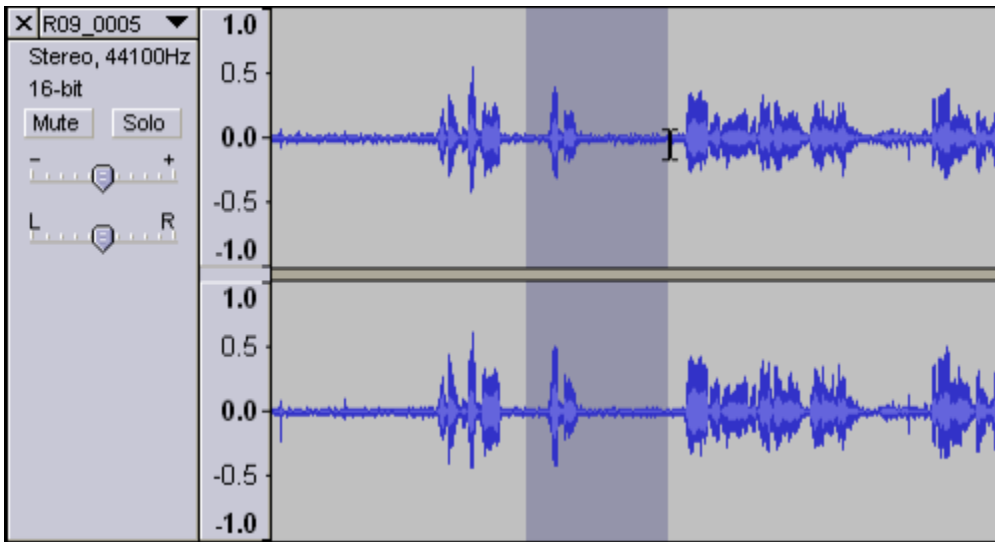

Then press the **Delete** key on your keyboard. (**Note**: The player must be **stopped**, not paused.)


If you make a mistake, hold Ctrl (Win) or Cmd (Mac) and press **z**.

To move a section from one place to another, first select it (as shown above), but hold Ctrl (Win) or Cmd (Mac) and press **x** (for *cut*). This is exactly the same as Microsoft Word. **Cut, copy** and **paste** all work in your audio editor.

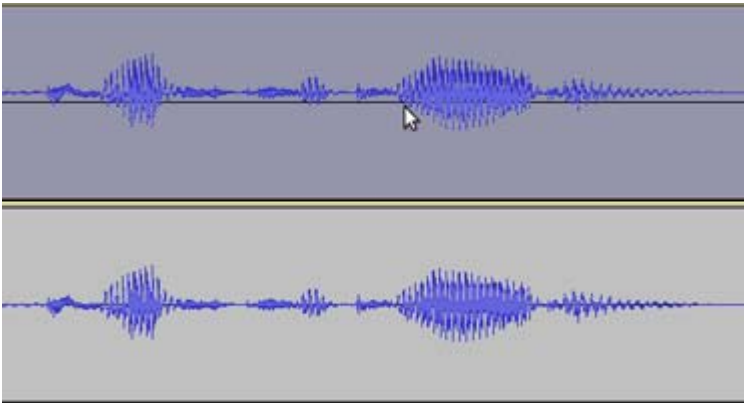Move the cursor to where you want to add the cut section, and click once:
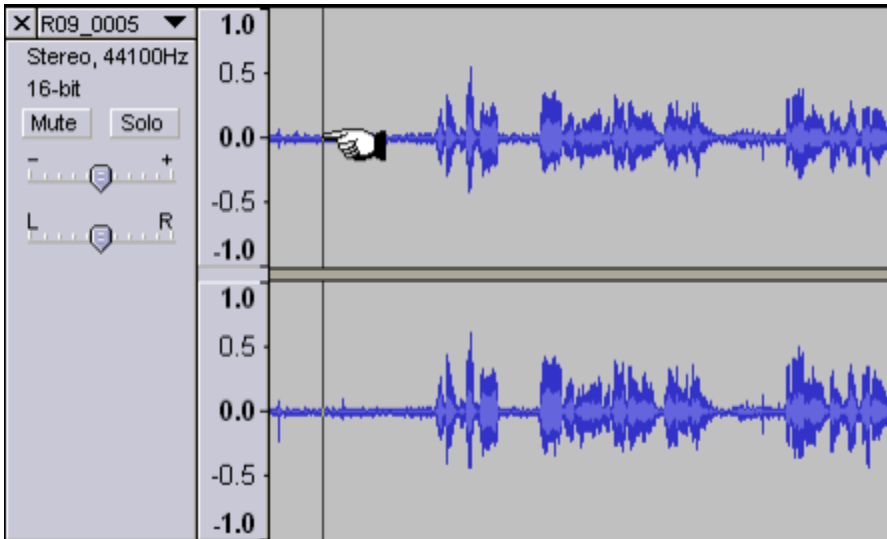
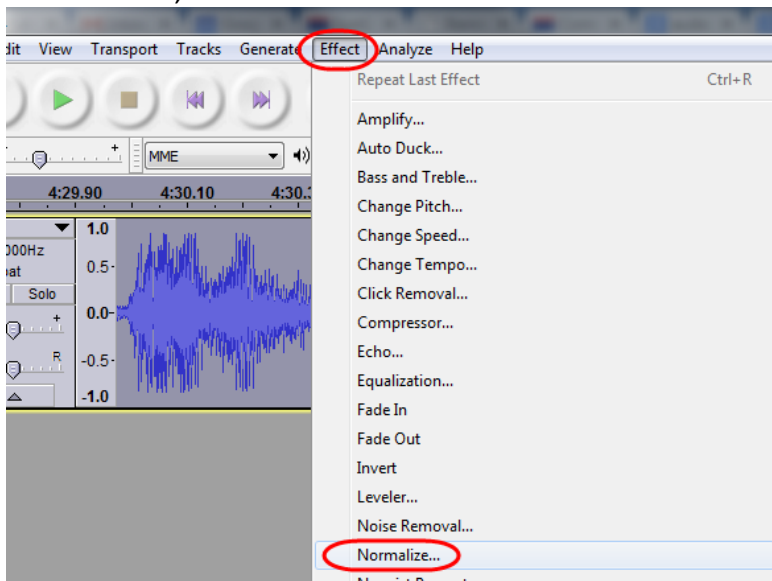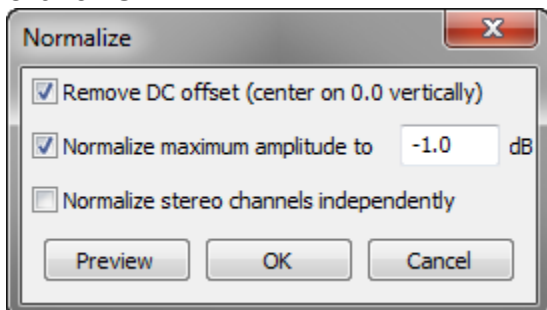Then hold Ctrl (Win) or Cmd (Mac) and press **v** (for *paste*):
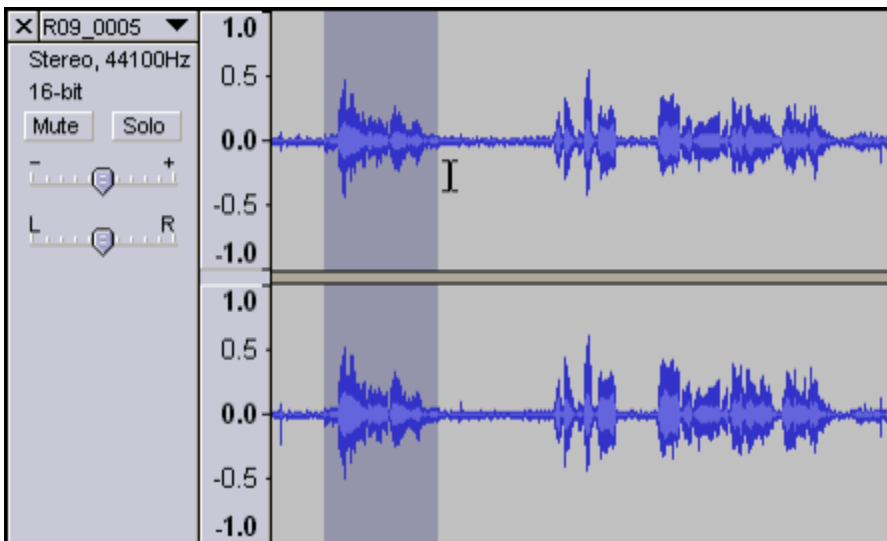
Normalize

DC offset is a potential source of clicks, distortion and loss of audio volume. Audacity's Normalize feature improves sound quality by centering an audio file's DC offset on the 0.0 horizontal life, as shown below.
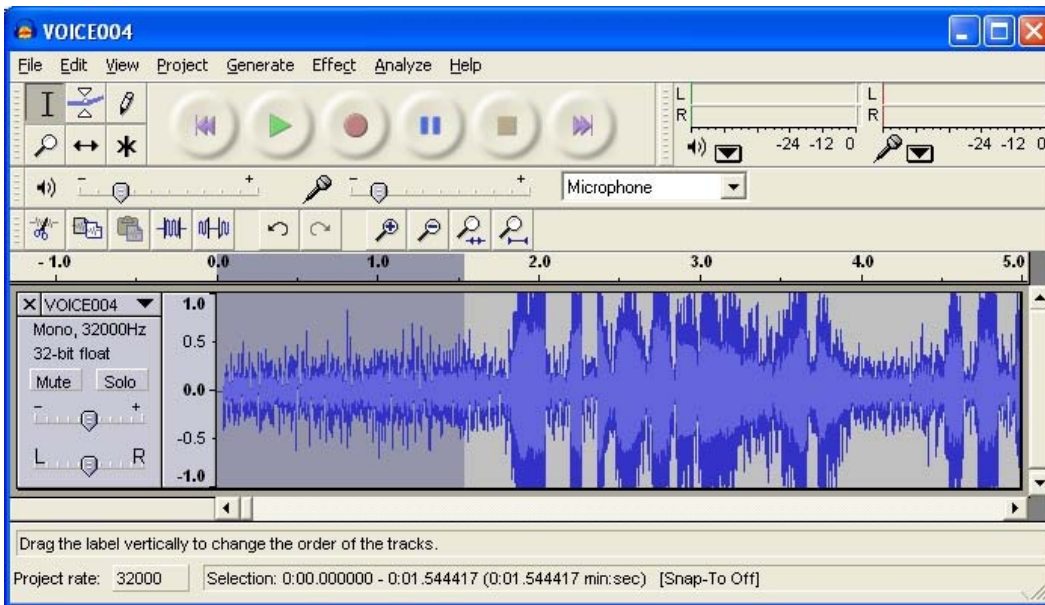

To normalize, click on **Effect** and **Normalize…**
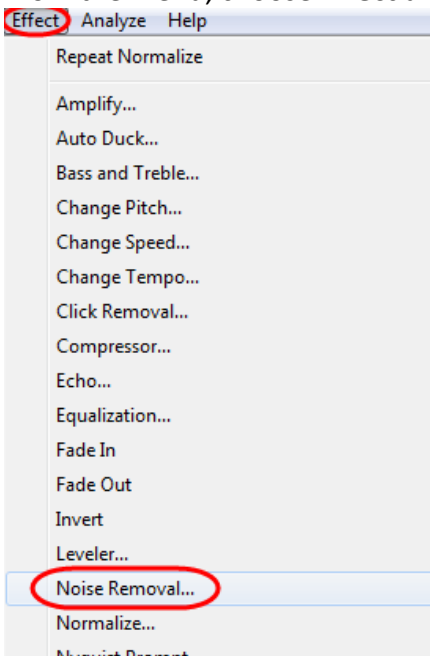

Click on **OK**.

Noise Removal

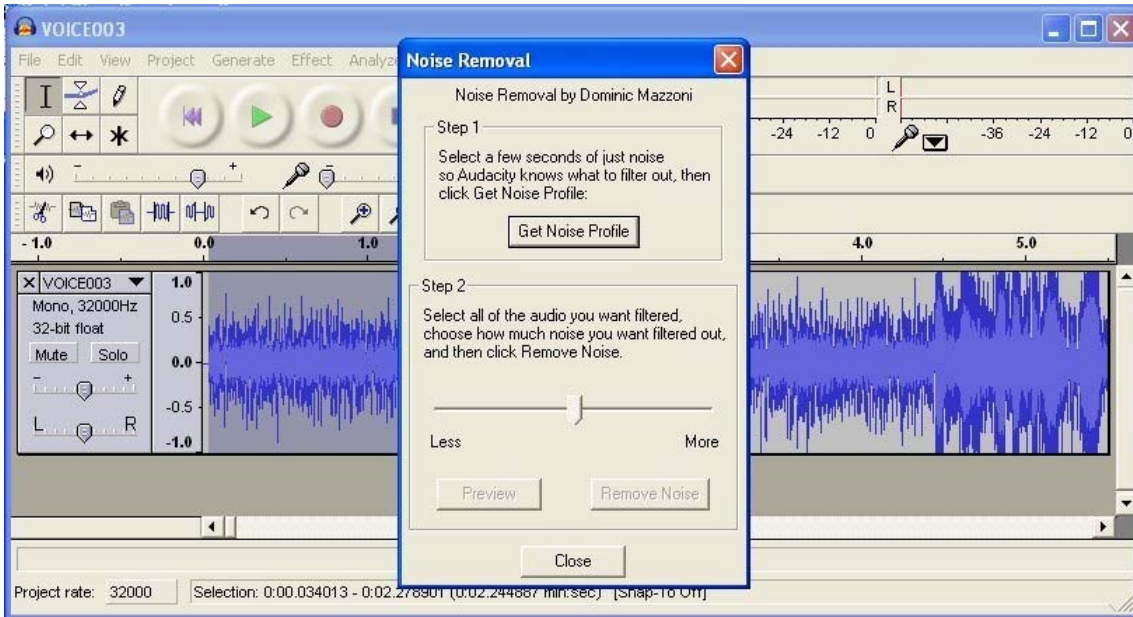The Noise Removal feature allows you to remove background or "white noise" from your recording.

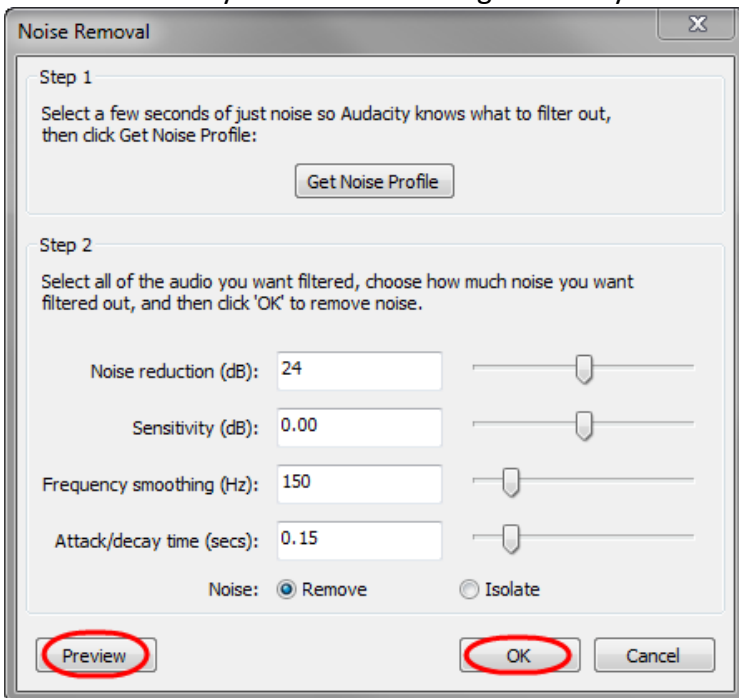Highlight an area of your audio file that is *only* background noise.

From the menu, choose **Effect** and **Noise Removal…**

On the Noise Removal window, click **Get Noise Profile.**

Next, select your entire sound file. From the menu, again, choose **Effect** and **Noise Removal…**
Click to **Preview** your audio recording. You may choose to adjust the noise filters. When finished, click **OK**.
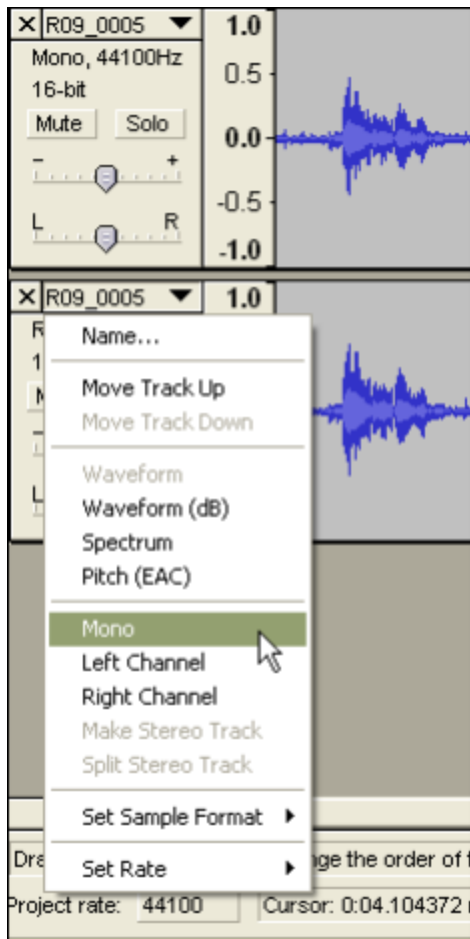
Before You Export the Finished File

When you've completed your editing, you will want an MP3 file. First, you should convert a **stereo** file (two tracks) to a **mono** file. This reduces the file size by **50** percent. (If you have only one track, please skip this section.)

Convert Stereo to Mono

      1. Click the track name (here it is **"R09_0005"**; yours will be different) to open the menu. Select "Split Stereo Track."
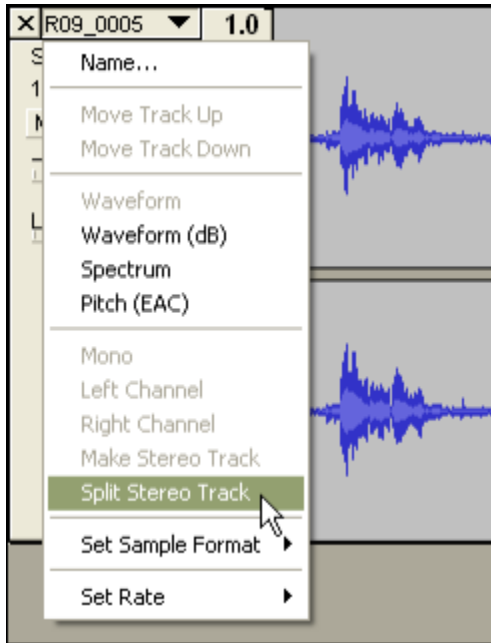
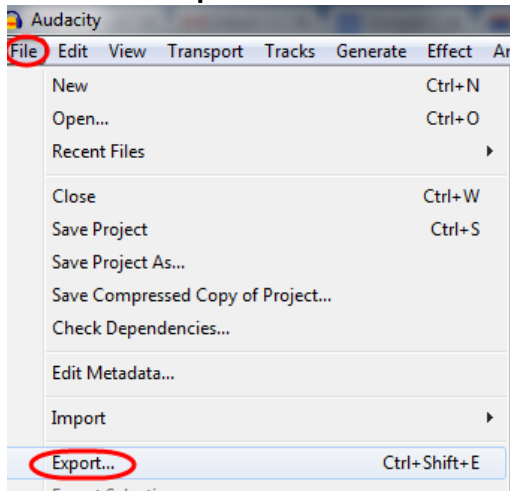   2. After splitting, change EACH track to **Mono**.

3. Select **all tracks** by shift-clicking each track until all are highlighted.
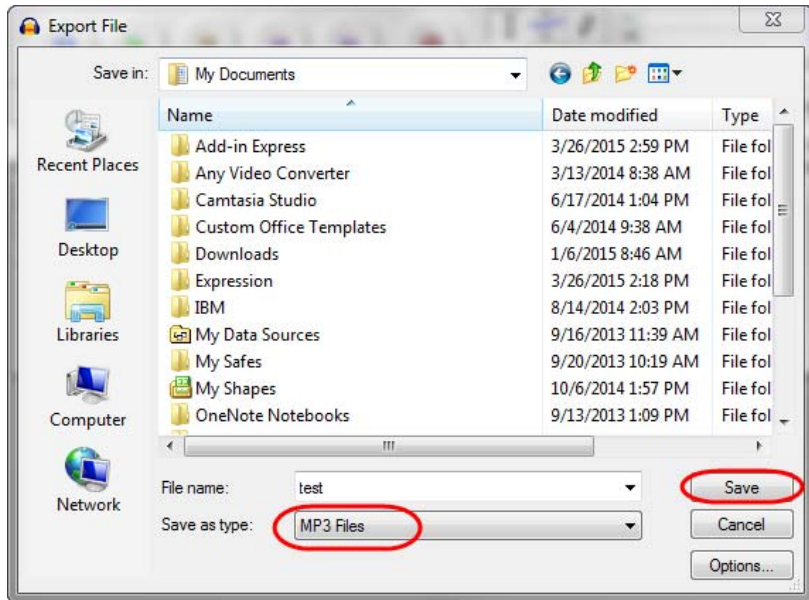
4. **Tracks** menu > **Mix and Render**.

Exporting the Finished File

If you have completed all your editing, then it's time to export an MP3.

File menu > **Export.**

Make sure that at the bottom, where it says "Save as type," it says **MP3 Files**. Give the audio file a name and **save**.

You can leave the Metadata blank, or fill them in. Click **OK**.

Voilà! You have an MP3 file suitable for uploading to the Web.