MP3 Recording Guidelines

Using Audacity® on a Computer

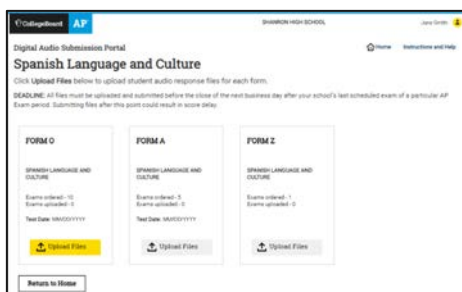**Effective March 2021**

Contents

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.
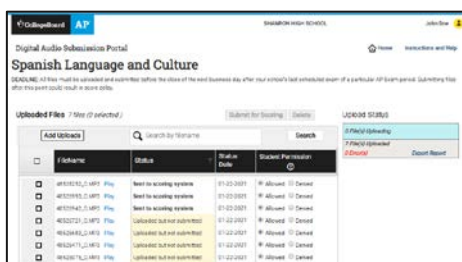
Introduction

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 *2020-21 AP Exam Instructions* book; it is not a replacement for those instructions. Be sure to follow the directions in the *2020-21 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 on pages 26 and 130 of **Part 2** of the *2020-21 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.

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.

- The current release of Audacity is 3.0.0. You can download the software by clicking on the Audacity link on page 5 of this guide. If you have an earlier version, it's recommended that you download and use the current release.

- Systems requirements:

Windows version	Recommended RAM/ processor speed	Minimum RAM/ processor speed
Windows 10 (32- or 64-bit, requires **appropriate drivers**)	4 GB / 2 GHz	2 GB / 1 GHz

Microsoft has discontinued support of Windows 7 and 8.1 and will no longer provide technical support, software updates, or security updates for the operating system. If your school still uses Windows 7 or 8.1, upgrade to Windows 10 to avoid technical problems that could jeopardize your students' exam scores. Third-party video and/or audio drivers may also no longer be supported, causing poor quality audio recording of students' responses.

| Mac	Recommended RAM/ processor speed	Minimum RAM/ processor speed
macOS 11 Big Sur macOS 10.15 Catalina macOS 10.14 Mojave macOS 10.13 High Sierra	2 GB / 2 GHz	1 GB / 1 GHz For lengthy multi-track projects: 4 GB / 4 GHz

MacOS 10.07 (Lion) to 10.12 (Sierra) are no longer officially supported, but are believed to work with the latest Audacity version.

More information about system requirements is available on the Audacity website:

Windows: **http://www.audacityteam.org/download/windows/**

Mac: **http://www.audacityteam.org/download/mac/**

NOTE: Do not click on any banner ads that look like these. These may be malware disguised as banner ads.
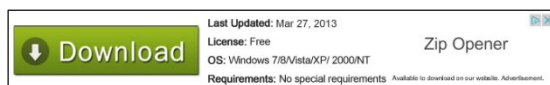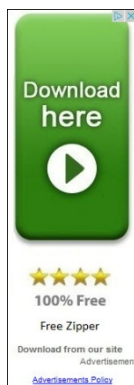
Involving Your School's Technical Consultant

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 9 of this document and in the appropriate subject in the *2020-21 AP Exam Instructions* book:

   - **French Language and Culture,** pages 160 – 162
   - **German Language and Culture,** pages 160 – 162
   - **Italian Language and Culture,** pages 160 – 162
   - **Music Theory,** pages 201 – 203
   - **Spanish Language and Culture,** pages 160 – 162

Downloading and Installing Audacity

1. Download and install the **Audacity** software for your operating system (Windows or Mac), and follow the steps below:

   - Windows: Audacity 3.0.0 installer (.exe file, 28 MB, includes user manual) or Audacity 3.0.0 zip file (.zip file, 11.9 MB, without user manual).
     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: Audacity 3.0.0 (.dmg file, 39.4 MB, includes user manual).
     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.

   - **IMPORTANT: The LAME encoder library has been included in the program installation by default since Audacity 2.3.3.**

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/**

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** ●
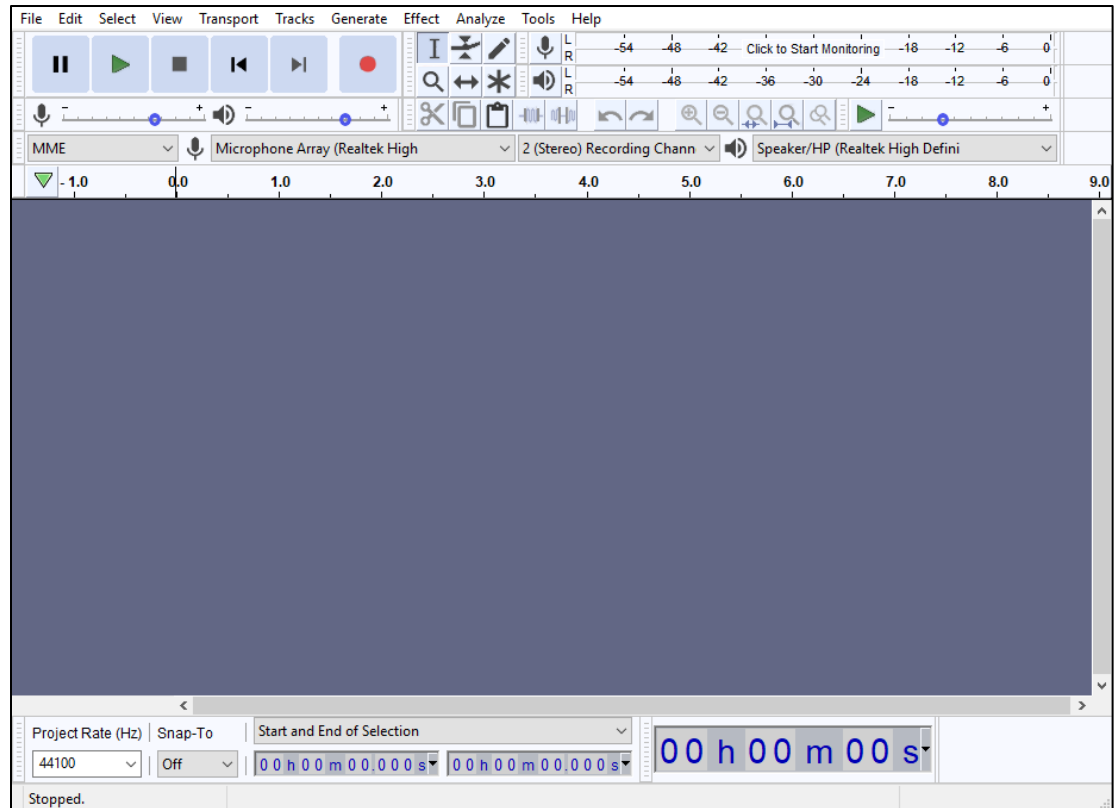
Subject-Specific Information

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 feature in the Edit > Preference > Recording menu.

- 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.

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 ***2020-21 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 waveform window:

Windows
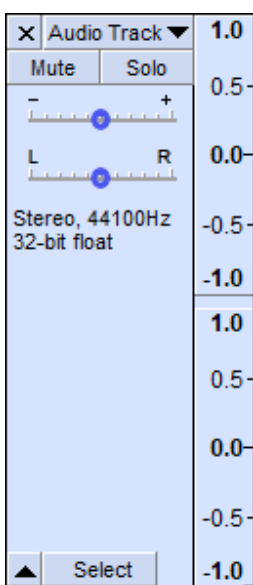
Mac
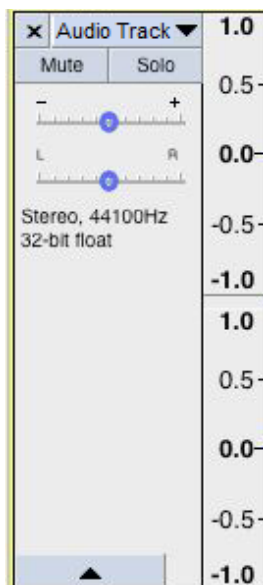
After students have successfully recorded, checked, and deleted their test AP IDs, the proctor will continue with the instructions for recording the responses. If there were any issues recording, please refer to the troubleshooting tips on page 12.

Saving, Naming, Uploading, and Submitting Student-Response MP3 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.
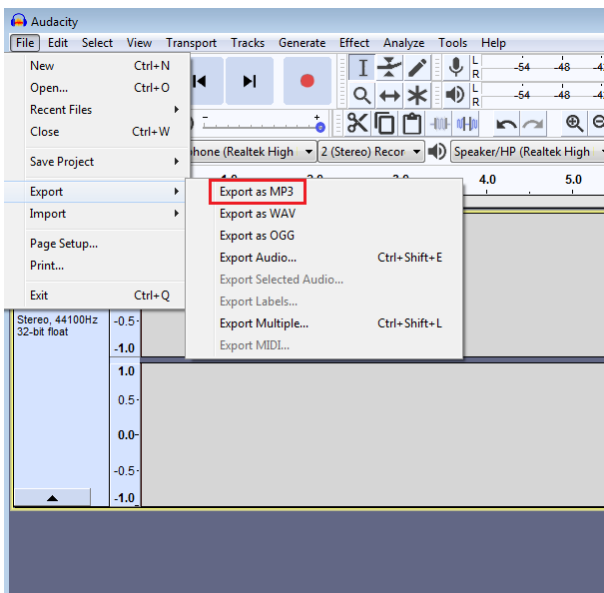
Saving the Files in MP3 Format

When students have been dismissed, begin the process of saving the files in preparation for submission to the AP Program.
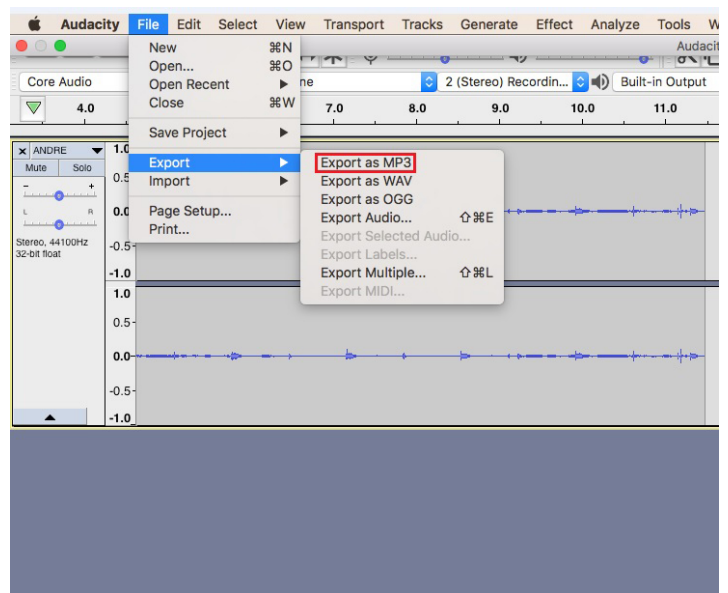
You need to export each student's responses in MP3 format. **Do not** save responses to individual questions as separate files. **Save the student's recorded AP ID and both recorded responses as a single file.**

Click "File" and then "Export" from the menu.

Windows:

Mac:

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-digit 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**.

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

Type the student's AP ID, an underscore, and the form in the "File name" box if you're using a Windows or in the "Save as" box if you're using a Mac. Make sure "MP3 files" is selected in the "Save as type" box (Windows) or "File type" box (Mac). Save the file to your shared location, USB drive, or computer hard drive.

Windows
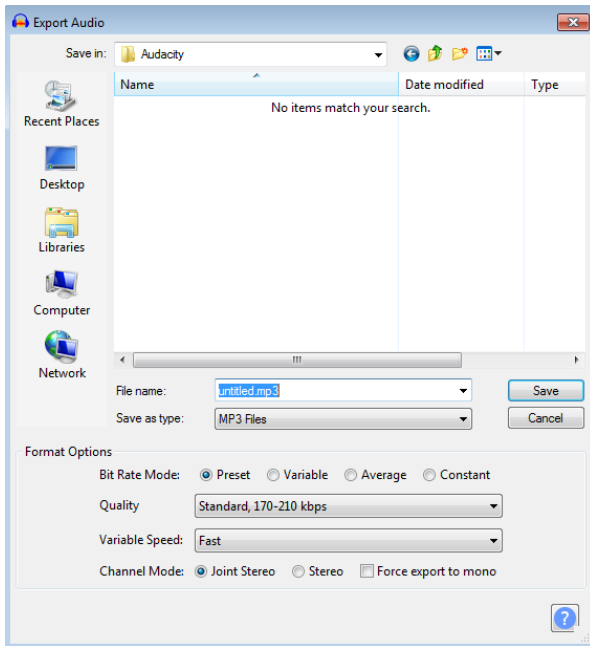
Mac
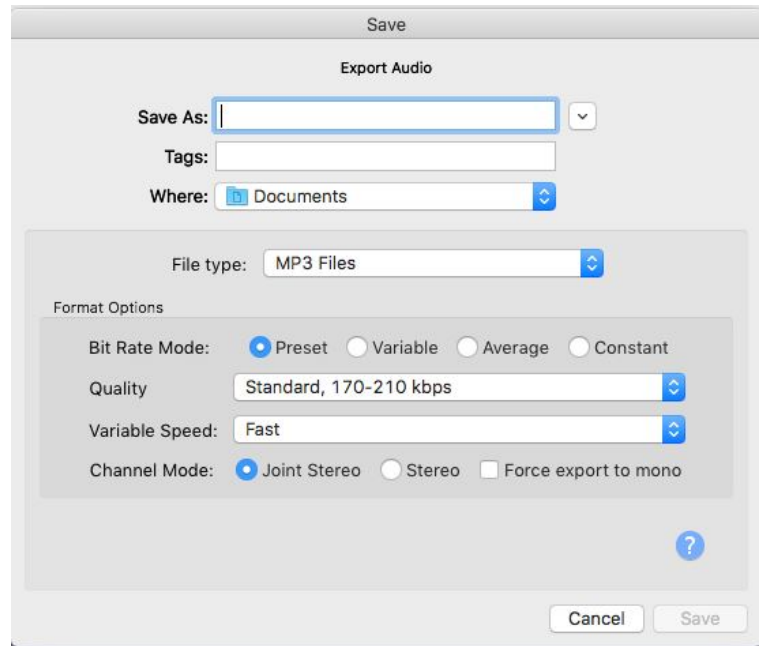
Do not complete any of the fields on the Metadata screen. Click "OK," leaving the fields empty to complete the process.

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, <u>and</u>

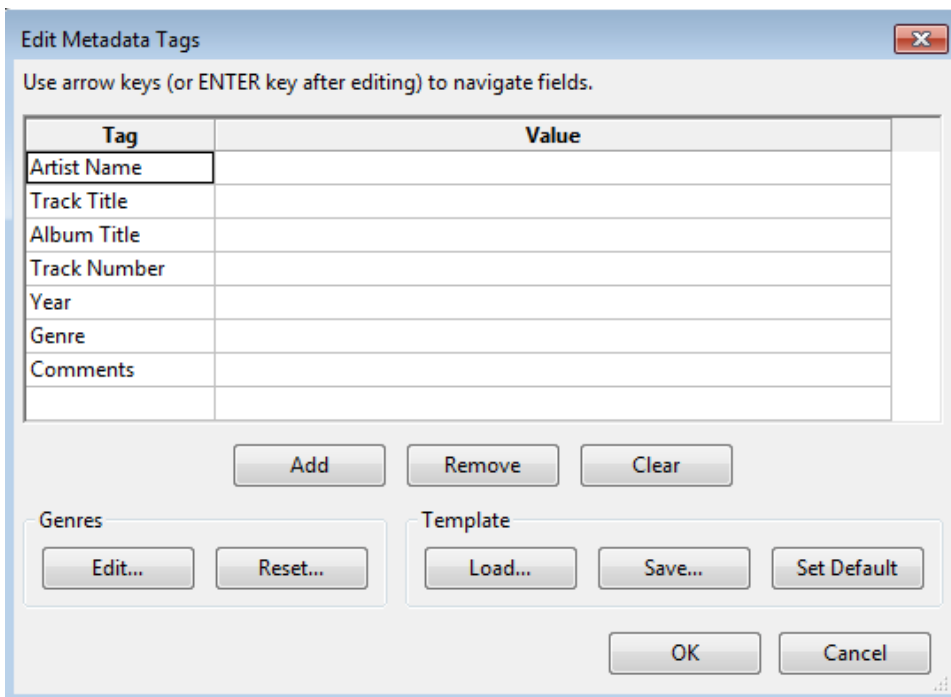2. Name each file with the student's eight-digit AP ID, underscore, and exam form letter. An example of a correctly named file is **WXYZ1234_O**.

On a Windows, click "File" on the menu and select "Exit" 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 *2020-21 AP Exam Instructions*.

Uploading and Submitting the Files

<u>IMPORTANT</u>: 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 2021, the AP coordinator at the school will be notified and provided 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**.

(**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 consult the "Help" document on the DAS portal: **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, 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.

4. Students' orange booklets. (You will need these to flag any students who did not grant permission to College Board to use their recorded responses for educational research and instructional purposes.)

To begin the upload and submission process:

1. Access the DAS portal (**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 "UPLOAD" to begin the process.

3. The system will prompt you to select the correct form (based on your school's exam order, 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. Confirm each student's permission for College Board to reproduce recorded responses as indicated on the students' orange booklets. Students who did not grant permission were instructed to indicate "NO" on the orange booklet. For these students, select the "Denied" option.

5. Once you've confirmed that all files are accounted for, and that those for which students did not grant permission have been marked, select the files and click "SUBMIT" to submit the files for scoring.

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., Administration 1, 2, or 3). **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 *2020-21 AP Coordinator's Manual* for more information about secure storage.) Refer to page 159 in the *2020-21 AP Exam Instructions* for the tasks you need to complete before storing materials.

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.

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** or call **609-406-5677** for assistance during these hours.

About College Board

College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success—including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement® Program. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools. For further information, visit collegeboard.org.