

# iPod Audio Tours

Students capture information, reflections, and sounds from a trip to the zoo and then enhance the experience with narration and original music. The project provides a team approach to learning that caters to a variety of learning styles within each team. The use of the iPod allows easy recording and capture of information, sounds, and reflections. It is also used as an audio tour device to share the students' work.

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**Curriculum areas:** Language Arts and Science

**Grade level:** Middle School

## Project Description

In this project, students work in groups to create an audio tour from a field trip to the zoo. (The same lesson could be used with a similar type of field trip.) They use an iPod and a voice recorder to record commentary and sounds at the zoo. They then combine this audio with music they create and additional narration they record in GarageBand. The final mix of audio and music is then exported back to the iPod for use as an audio tour guide for other visitors to the zoo.

## Project Steps

- 1 Divide the students into groups of three. Assign each group a specific area of the zoo, such as the rainforest, African plains, or sea lion tank.
- 2 Discuss with the students the kinds of information they will need to look for on the field trip, including the difference between the facts they gather and their personal reaction to the experience.
- 3 At the zoo, have each group go on three different kinds of walks through their area. The first is the fact-finding walk to capture facts and figures about the animals and the environment. Students can dictate this information into an iPod using a voice recorder. The second walk is to capture the sounds of the area and the animals, using an iPod. The third walk is to record student feelings, reflections, and reactions about the animals and the environment. Students should record these as audio reflections using their iPod.
- 4 Have each student group download their audio from the iPod into iTunes on a classroom computer.
- 5 Have students import the recordings into GarageBand as separate tracks within one project by dragging each audio file from iTunes into GarageBand.
- 6 Ask each group to write a final script for the audio tour. The script should include information from any notes students made at the zoo.

- 7 Using GarageBand, have students combine facts and reflections that they recorded during the field trip with a recording of their written script. This commentary part of the audio tour should convey what students learned and give a feeling of what it was like to be in that area of the zoo.
- 8 Have students use GarageBand to compose background music that reflects the sights, sounds, and mood of the animals and their environments. They should mix in the animal sounds and other noises that they recorded during the field trip at this stage.
- 9 Students should review and edit their audio tour in GarageBand. When they are done, they should export the file to iTunes and download it to an iPod to share with others.

### Extensions

- Students can create an iMovie project with photos and their sound.
- A return visit to the zoo can be arranged to let visitors use the iPod audio tours to enhance their visit experience. This is an important stage because it is the authentic publishing of the students' projects.
- Students can survey or interview users of the tours about the information and effectiveness of their product and seek constructive feedback to be used for future projects of this nature.

### Outcomes

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Have a greater understanding of a different animal species
- Understand some of the environmental and human threats to certain species
- Be able to differentiate between facts and feelings
- Understand how music and sound textures can enhance the perception of what they read and see
- Have a greater ability to organize sentences and present high-quality oral language performances

### Technology Skills

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Use an iPod with a voice recorder
- Import and manage audio files
- Compose music using pre-made sound loops and/or a keyboard connected to a computer
- Arrange music and voice tracks
- Mix sound levels
- Convert and export sound files to iTunes and an iPod

### Assessment Suggestions

Assessment can be done with an agreed-upon rubric on what makes a quality audio tour and also by questionnaire feedback from users of the tours.

## Preparation and Duration

Before the field trip, make a visit to the zoo and use a map to divide the zoo into areas for the student teams to focus on.

## Tools and Resources

### Internet

- <http://www.uaf.edu/museum/planvisit/summer/moreaudio.html>
- [http://www.smm.org/chinasaurus/audio/family\\_tour.mov](http://www.smm.org/chinasaurus/audio/family_tour.mov)  
Audio Tour Sample sites
- <http://education.apple.com/education/ilife/howto/>  
iLife How-To guides

### Tools

Macintosh computers, iPods, iPod voice recorders, digital camera (optional), USB or MIDI keyboard (optional), headphone splitter jack for two to use an iPod at once (optional), GarageBand, iTunes, iMovie (optional), iPhoto (optional)

**Note:** A voice recorder can be used with all iPod models that have a Dock Connector, except for the iPod mini. (The iPod shuffle does not have a Dock Connector.) For more information, see your iPod User's Guide.

## Prerequisite Skills

Before beginning this project, students should have the following skills:

- Familiarity with using an iPod and a voice recorder
- Ability to use iTunes and GarageBand
- Ability to transfer files to and from an iPod with iTunes

## Technology Tips

- A third-party piece of software such as PodWorks (<http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/17443>) makes it easy to transfer recorded materials from an iPod and to compile all work to and from multiple iPods.
- Have students practice with the voice recorder to determine the proper distance and volume needed for best results.