Everybody Has a Story!
Guidelines for Documenting Personal Histories

Giving someone the chance to tell you their story is a great gift to them as well as to you and to future generations.

~ Do you have a grandparent, aunt or uncle, parent, teacher, or friend you'd like to interview? Talk to them about your idea and make sure they understand and approve. Then set a date, time, and place where you will both feel comfortable and where you will be out of the way of external noise and interruption, if possible!

~ If you're going to make your recording on a smart phone, consider making a short (30 seconds or less) video recording to set the scene, then switching to audio recording (video files are huge, but you'll be able to record an hour or more of audio)

~ Whatever recording device you use, practice recording at home first with a friend or family member so you won't have to worry about tech matters when you sit down with your interviewee.

~ Prepare a list of questions ahead of time, both to get the conversation going and to have handy if the conversation lags: When and where were you born? Who are your parents? Would you tell me about your family? What are your earliest memories? What was it like living in Wenatchee?

~ At the beginning of your recording, state your name, the name of your interviewee, and the date and place –
>   Ex. – "This is [your name] talking to my grandmother [her name] on [date] at [location]"

~ Begin your session with a few questions to get the conversation going. Interviews are not like casual everyday chats, so it may take a little while for both of you to feel comfortable.

~ You can help move the conversation along by nodding, smiling, and encouraging your interviewee with follow-up questions –
>   Ex. – "You mentioned your aunt Betty – did you see her often as a child?"

~ Whether your session is only a few minutes in length or an hour or longer, follow up with a few steps to document your recording session. This part isn't nearly as much fun as the interview itself, but it's essential for preserving the history you and your interviewee have made together.

~ If you recorded using a digital device, copy your recording to a computer as soon as possible; give the file a name that includes identifying information:

     Ex. – Gr-mother_Interview_042917.mp3
        MarySmith_Interview_042917.mp4

~ Store your digital file in at least 2 places; if you have access to a server or cloud storage, store a copy there.

~ Make notes, by hand or on the computer, describing the session and providing contextual information (who walked through the room during the recording, why your interviewee laughed at one point). It's also useful to note your own feelings about how the session went and add "notes to self" about ways you can improve your interviewing techniques next time.

~ If you plan to do more than one interview session, start a journal where you can keep notes about each session. One option is to record your notes in a document on your computer, such as Google Docs or Microsoft Word, and keep a copy of the document with your recording files so that they never get separated. If you are not very comfortable with computers or for that "old school" touch, buy a small notebook and write your notes by hand!

~ Professional field workers transcribe their recordings word for word. This is very time-consuming but does provide a text record of your recording. There are software options, such as Express Scribe, which can make the process more comfortable. Remember, if you do transcribe a recording, to note the time of the recording every thirty seconds or so. That way, you, or future readers can go back and easily find the section they are looking for.

Online Resources –

Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques (Library of Congress, 2002 (revised)) - https://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/pdf/fieldwkComplete.pdf

UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research
http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/interviewGuidelines.html

Vermont Folklife Center - https://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/fieldwork-guides/

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Recording Tips

AVOID NOISE

Look for a quiet space. Away from traffic noise, other people, etc.

If possible, be aware of ambient noise, such as loud refrigerators and air conditioners.

Try to put the recorder and microphone (unless it is a lavalier or headset microphone that the interviewee will wear) on a stable device that no one will touch or accidentally bump.

ALWAYS DO A TEST RECORDING

Before doing the real recording do a quick short recording to make sure everything sounds ok.

If your recorder has a display, check the sound levels when the interviewee is speaking on the test. You want the black bars to be as big as possible without ever turning red.

Don't put the mic too close to the interviewee so that they will 'pop' their p's and b's into the mic.

BE QUIET

As the interviewer it is important to not talk over the interviewee. Ask a question and then wait for the them to stop talking. Especially with language recordings, and especially when recording elder speakers of Lushootseed. Clear, uninterrupted recordings of speech is ideal.

Don't worry about quiet moments in the recording. It's important to give your interviewees time to think and be relaxed.

However, if you are recording two speakers at the same time, some 'talking over' is expected and fine.

EQUIPMENT

Good audio recording equipment is fairly affordable these days. There are many options depending on what type of recordings you are interested in and what environments you will be recording in. Check the internet for many great guides on academic or community interviewing audio recording equipment.

However, do not avoid doing an interview because you don't have good equipment. A decent recording done with a smart phone is much better than no recording at all.
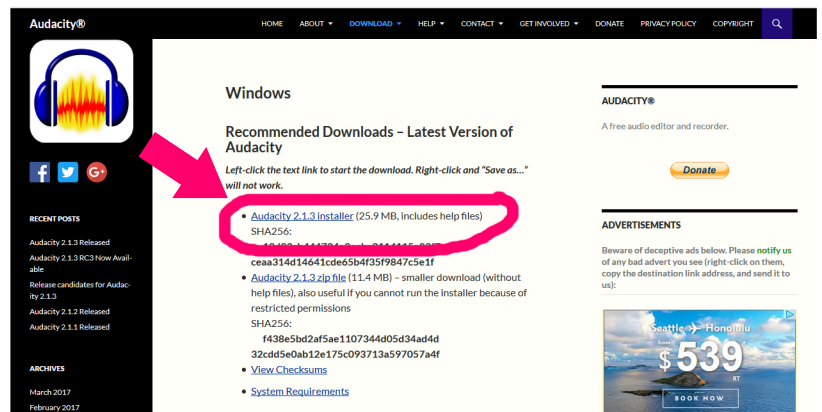
Free Audio Editing Software

Audacity, is a great, free application for editing audio.

Go directly to their OFFICIAL website to download it: **http://www.audacityteam.org/**

Step 1) At the top of the page, hover over the "download" tab and select your OS (e.g., Windows or Mac).
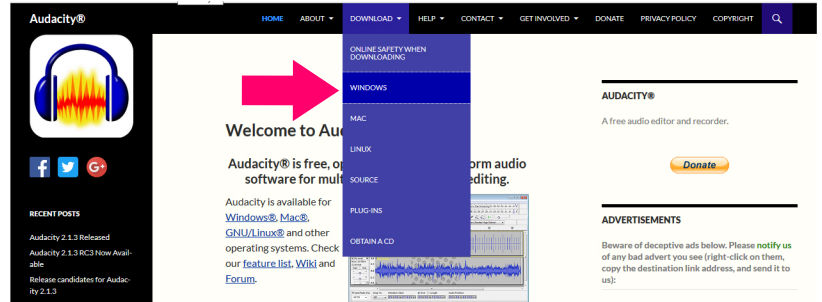
Step 2) Click on the "installer" under recommended downloads.

Step 3) You will be taken to the "Fosshub" website and you should get a popup to download the software, like it shows to the right. If so, click 'Save File'. If not, click the link for the installer you need (e.g., 'Windows Installer') and then click 'Save File' when the popup appears.
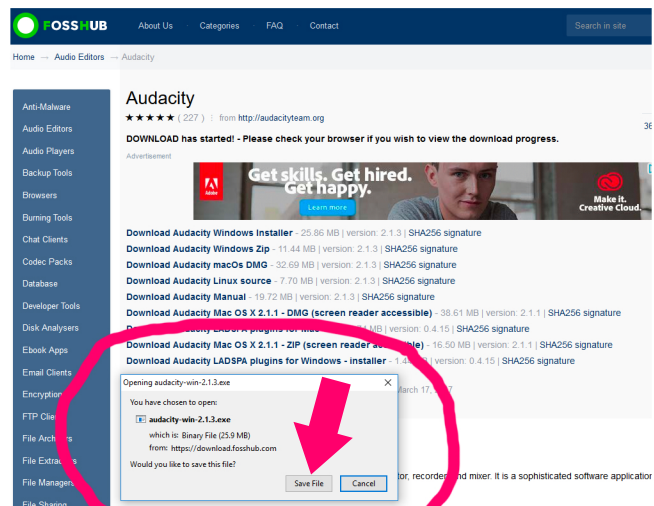
ALWAYS BE CAREFUL! Only download Audacity from the official website and beware of ads that look like the real think. Check the URL (www.audacityteam.org) to make sure you are on the right website.

Using Audacity to Edit Audio

This is only a very basic introduction to using Audacity, but there are many resources on how to use it on the web. YouTube is a great place to find helpful videos.

When you first open Audacity, you should see something like the image below at the top.
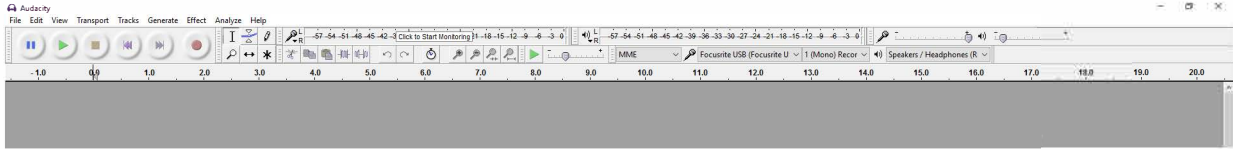
If you want to record something new, simply click the red 'record' circle and then the yellow 'stop' rectangle when you are done.

If you want to edit a file you recorded elsewhere, click 'File', then 'Open' and find the file you would like to edit.

After you have a recording to work with, you should see something like below.
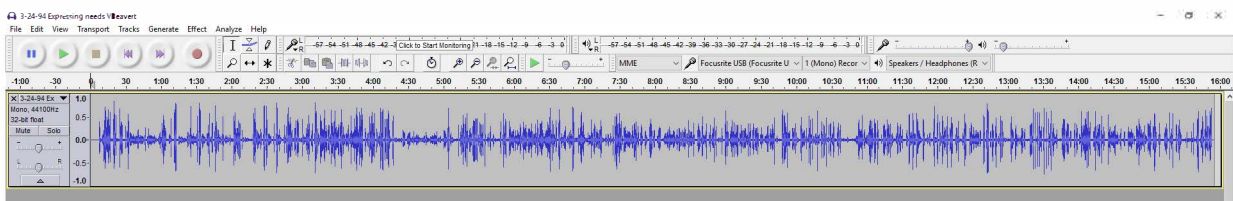
LISTENING: You can click with your mouse at any point of the recording and then click the green 'play' triangle to listen.

EDITING: If you want to delete a section, you can simply click and drag to select the section, then press the 'delete' key or go to 'Edit' then 'Delete'.
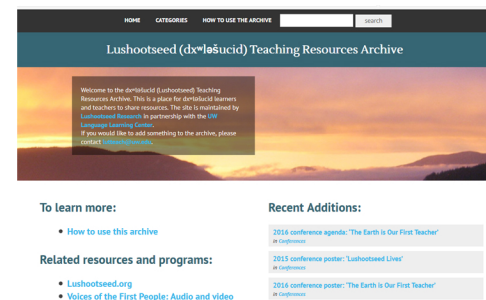
IS YOUR RECORDING TOO QUIET?: Sometimes we may have a recording that was too quiet and the blue line looks very thin. You might be able to help make the recording a bit better by selecting the entire audio clip by double clicking it until it all selected. Then, click on 'Effect', then 'Normalize' and then 'OK'.

SAVING: 'File' and then 'Export Audio'. Remember to name the file with some helpful description. Always save an uncompressed copy (e.g., .WAV Microsoft signed 16-bit PCM).
However, if you ALSO want a smaller file to share more easily with others you can save an MP3. (If you do not see this option you may need another application, called LAME. Instructions on setting that up can be found here:
https://www.howtogeek.com/howto/40274/how-to-add-mp3-support-to-audacity-to-save-in-mp3-format/

Lushootseed Teaching Resources Archive

depts.washington.edu/lutteach/

What is the purpose of the site?
The goal of this site is provide a community-accessible and community-controlled place to archive and share Lushootseed language teaching and learning resources. Individuals can store resources to be kept for the long term, or they can store them AND share them with the Lushootseed community.

What kinds of things can be shared/archived?
Anything related to the teaching and learning of Lushootseed. This includes activities, lessons, video recordings, audio recordings, etc. The materials don't have to be designed for teaching, but instead have language content. For example, you might record an interview with a relative about baseball in Lushootseed. Or, you might have written a short story in Lushootseed. All Lushootseed has value and some of it should be kept safe for future generations and shared with other learners and teachers.

When you submit something, you must be authorized to archive and share it. This means that we can't accept materials made or recorded by someone else without their permission.

Who is behind the site?
The site is maintained by Lushootseed Research in partnership with the UW Language Learning Center. The UW LLC provides the server and technical support (at no cost), and the UW LLC does not control or own any of the content. At any point, should there be concerns, Lushootseed Research or another appropriate organization will be given a full copy of the website and all of the content, and then the copy residing on UW Servers will be removed.

Is the site secure?
When you submit a resource, you can decide who should have access (i.e., should the material be password protected, open to the community, or not available to anyone for a certain period of time but should still be archived for the future so it isn't lost).

How do I submit something?
Please contact lutteach@uw.edu
Tell us what you are interested in sharing and we will work with you on getting it added. It's easy and fun!