

SPINELESSWONDERSAUDIO

short australian stories

Recording your audio story

1. Plan ahead and try it out.

It's important to do a read through with a listening audience in mind. Take note of dramatic bits, the dialogue and where you may need to pause to let certain words or ideas sink in. Have you inadvertently written yourself a tongue-twister?

Page turning - where sentences carry on to the next page, it's a good idea to copy a few words from the top of next page onto the bottom of the current page, so your reading isn't interrupted when you turn a page. If you can print your story out, do so, since reading from loose leaf is easier than a bound book.

2. Positioning yourself, the text and the equipment

Place the mic comfortably just a few inches away from your mouth. Ideally, it should be on a mic stand so that the mic can be suspended above the pages you are reading from, out the way of pages being turned and close to your mouth.

Do a sound check of the first paragraph and replay. If there is a volume meter, the lights should be peaking in the orange or yellow - you shouldn't be seeing any red. If you can bear to listen to yourself over headphones and your setup has the capability, then do it.

There's a few things in particular to look out for. One is being 'off-mic' - it'll sound like you're far away, almost in the next room. Another is 'popping'. On plosive consonant sounds ('p' is the worst offender), the air emitted from your mouth hits the mic in such a way that you'll hear, well, a distracting popping noise. Another thing to look out for is distortion - which happens when you're too close to the mic and/or too loud. Fortunately these problems are easy to avoid, easy to hear and easy to fix.

3. Take a few deep breaths.

This will relax your voice box and get you in the right frame of mind to deliver.

4. Pacing

Take it easy, take your time, it's not a race - your voice will sound better for it. Not only will you almost always be reading faster than you think, it's almost impossible to read too slow. Also long pauses can be edited out, but they can't be edited in. And if you feel yourself flagging - pause, take a break and resume recording when you've rested your voice. Just remember, it's important to complete the recording in the same room and under the same conditions.

5. If you make a mistake

You don't need to scrap it and start again. If you make a mistake just back up a few sentences and start from there. You don't need to stop he recording. We'll make sure everything joins together in the end. If you are interested in self-editing, Audacity is a great program which is free to download and easy to use. Plus there are plenty of Youtube tutorials around. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>

Replay the entire recording before submitting to us. We can fix up some recording problems, but only you can control the energy and expression with which you read. If it sounds too flat or too fast, it's worth taking a break and recording it again.