Assignment: Creating an Audio Book

Get ready to dive into the world of mystery and create your very own audiobook! In this exciting project, you and your group will craft a thrilling mystery story that comes to life with your own writing, voice narration, sound effects, and visuals. Let's bring your imagination to life and create an audiobook that will keep everyone on the edge of their seats!

Step 1: Script Writing

Generate Story Ideas: Use ChatGPT to help you create a 3 Act radio play in the mystery genre theme. Discuss with your group the following prompts you want to use for your story and fill out your information on the page below. Once your answers are completed, check with your teacher for approval before inputting on Chat GPT.

1. Setting:

2. Time period:

3. How many characters:

4. Names of characters:

5. Specific details you want to include about characters:

6. Villain:

7. Problem/crime:

8. Clues:

9. Twist:

If you are having trouble coming up with ideas for your play, you can use this link to look at prompts that can be used https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/mystery/

Once your group has approval use the following prompt to start your Chat GPT request and then add in your specific details to create your story.

Link to Chat GPT https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/

● **Create a 3 Act mystery radio play script with sound effects. The script needs to include…(list all your information from the teacher approved list above).**

Read through the script with your group and refine as needed in Chat GPT. Once your script is complete, copy and paste in a Google Doc.

Make sure you add in any licensing agreements to share information from Chat GPT at the end of your script.

Step 2: Visual Design

Now that your script is ready, it's time to add visuals to bring your story to life. Here's how to go about sourcing or creating images:

Identify What You Need:

Read through your script and identify key moments or scenes that require images. Think about how the visuals can enhance the story and make it more engaging for your audience. For example, if your story involves a forest, you'll need an image of a forest scene. Make a list below of all the images you will need for your story:

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Find Free-to-Use Images:

It is time to connect your list of images you want to use in your audio book with digital images! Remember to think of the mood you want to create in your story as you choose your images. Use online platforms that offer free, high-quality images that are free for commercial use. Some popular sites include:

- Pixabay - Link to tutorial video how to find images
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3drVgKckgE

- Unsplash - Link to tutorial video how to find images
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B88mfbuo7Uc

- Pexels - Link to tutorial video how to find images
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvPsEkgHZ20

When you find an image, complete the following steps:

1. Make sure to check the usage rights for each image to ensure you are allowed to use it in your project. Please credit the creator as per the licensing terms for each image you use.
2. Check image quality. Ensure that your images are high-resolution (at least 300 dpi) for clarity, especially if you plan to print the digital storybook. For digital-only formats, aim for images that are at least 1024x768 pixels.
3. Create a folder to save all your images - Name the folder the same as your story
4. Download the picture to your computer
5. Open the downloaded image and rename each one in the order they will appear in your storybook.
6. Put the image into the folder you created

Upload or Import the Images:
Now that you've gathered or created your images, the next step is to upload or import them into Google Slides to create your digital storybook. Follow the steps below to complete this task:

Log into Google Slides:
- Go to Google Slides and log in with your student account.
- Create a new presentation by clicking the "+" button to start a new project.

Set Up Your Slides:
Video Tutorial link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmD0I34Fs74
- Once your new presentation is open, adjust the layout to suit a storybook format. You can set each slide to a standard size by clicking on File > Page setup, then selecting Custom and entering a size, such as 8.5" x 11" (portrait or landscape).
- Consider the number of slides you'll need based on your script (each scene or page of your story should be on a separate slide).

Upload Images to Google Slides:
Video Tutorial link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dRxDnmO-PE&t=31s
To upload an image to your slide, follow these steps:

- Select the slide where you want the image to appear.
- Click on **Insert > Image**, then choose **Upload from the computer** (or select another option, like Google Drive, if your images are stored there).
- Browse your folders and select the image you want to upload. Click **Open** to insert it into the slide.
- Resize and position the image to fit your slide as desired.

Repeat for Each Slide:
- For each slide of your storybook, repeat the above process of uploading and placing images in the order that follows your script. Make sure that each image aligns with the corresponding text or narration on that slide.

Review and Finalize:
- After you've uploaded all your images and paired them with your script, go through each slide to check for any errors or adjustments needed. Ensure the images look good on all devices and that the text is easy to read.

By the End of This Step:
You should have successfully uploaded your images to Google Slides, with each image paired with the appropriate text from your script. Your digital storybook will now be visually appealing, bringing your script to life with engaging visuals!

Step 3: Audio Production

Congratulations, you have a story and a picture book but now it is time to add in the sound that will make your audio book come to life! In this step, you will complete your digital storybook by recording narration with sound effects, saving the audio files, and uploading them into **Google Slides** to create a fully narrated audiobook. Follow the steps below to combine your narration and sound effects into a seamless project.

Identify What You Need:
Read through your script and identify key sounds or mood music you will need for each page. Think about how the sounds can enhance the story and make it more engaging for your audience. For example, if your story involves a storm, you'll need the sound of thunder or if you have a door slamming, you will need to include that sound. Make a list below of all the sounds you will need for your story:

- Page 1 -
- Page 2 -
- Page 3 -
- Page 4 -
- Page 5 -
- Page 6 -
- Page 7 -
- Page 8 -
- Page 9 -
- Page 10 -

Log into Soundtrap and create and Share Your Soundtrap Project with Your Team:
Video tutorial link - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CUUxQ3UoCk**
We will be using Soundtrap to collaborate, record the story, and add in the sound effects.

- Each student needs to go to Soundtrap and log in with your student account.
- Your teacher has created a group with all the members of your project. This will be a **Music & Podcast** template as the project type, which will give you a blank recording workspace.This will be the place where you can collaborate together to complete your audiobook.
- Title your project with the name of your audiobook

Record and Save Your Audio Files:

Prepare Your Script:
- Before starting, read through your script (or the page of your story) to make sure you're familiar with it.
- Focus on conveying emotion and tone through your voice, with pauses and inflections as needed.

- Include where you will start and stop on your script so when you are reading your audio matches the image page number for your audio book you created earlier.

Set Up Your Recording Environment:
- Find a quiet space to minimize background noise.
- If you have access to a microphone, use it for clearer audio. Otherwise, use your device's built-in microphone, ensuring it's positioned well to capture your voice clearly.

Record One Page of Your Story:

Video tutorial link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfvv63_TWAw

- Add a track
- Choose voice and microphones
- Choose CLEAN and take out the reverb
- Complete a volume check
- **Record one page at a time as a single track.** Click the **Record** button (red circle) at the bottom of Soundtrap to start recording your narration.
- Read aloud and narrate the first page of your story with clarity and expression. Make sure you leave short breaks in the talking if you are going to add in a sound effect at that point in the story.
- If you make a mistake, click **Stop**, and then click **Record** again to re-record that page.

Add sound effects with Soundtrap:

Video tutorial link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YivvP6W0yM

- Click **Add New Track** (the "+" button on the left side of the screen).
- Choose **Loops & Sounds** to browse Soundtrap's built-in sound effects.
- In the **Loops & Sounds** library, type keywords like "footsteps," "rain," or "door creak" into the search bar.
- Click **Play** on any sound to preview it.
- Once you find the right sound effect, **drag and drop** it onto a new track in your project.
- Position the effect where it should play in relation to your narration.
- Click on the sound effect clip to make changes:
    - **Trim**: Drag the edges of the clip to shorten or extend its duration.
    - **Volume**: Lower or increase the volume so it blends well with your narration.
    - **Fade In/Out**: Smoothly transition sound effects by applying fade-ins or fade-outs.

Review of your audio:

- After positioning and adjusting all your sound effects, listen to how the narration and sound effects work together.
- **Balance the levels** of narration and sound effects by adjusting the individual track volumes. Ensure that the narration is clear and the sound effects are subtle but enhance the mood of the scene.

- Click **Play** to preview the audio. Listen for any areas where sound effects might overlap incorrectly or need to be adjusted in timing or volume.
- Make final adjustments to the tracks by moving them along the timeline, trimming them, or changing the volume levels as needed.

Save Your Recording:

- Once satisfied with the narration for that page, **save the recording**:
    1. Click **File > Save Project** to ensure your work is saved.
    2. Optionally, click **Download** in the upper-right corner of Soundtrap to download the audio file (choose **MP3** or **WAV** format).

Repeat for the Next Page:

- After saving the first recording, start a new recording for the next page of your story. This way, you can ensure that each page has its own distinct recording.
- Remember, record **one page at a time** to keep the process manageable and organized.

Continue Until All Pages Are Recorded:

- Continue recording each page of your story in this way, making sure to save each one individually.

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Step 4: Editing & Finalization

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Once you've completed your Soundtrap project with narration and sound effects, you'll need to add the audio to your Google Slides presentation to finalize your audiobook. Here are the steps to do that:

Upload Audio to Google Drive:

- Open **Google Drive** (drive.google.com) and log into your account.
- Click the **New** button in the left-hand corner, then choose **File upload**.
- Find the audio file you downloaded from Soundtrap on your computer and upload it to Google Drive.
- Once uploaded, **right-click** the file and select **Get link**. Ensure the file's sharing settings are set to **Anyone with the link can view**.

Open Your Google Slides Presentation:

- Open the **Google Slides** presentation where you've created your digital storybook.
- Go to the specific slide where you want to add audio (e.g., the first page of your story).

Insert Audio into the Slide:
Video tutorial link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ5ufk1vVhI

- In the top menu of Google Slides, click on **Insert** > **Audio**.
- A window will pop up showing files from **Google Drive**. Click **My Drive** to access the files you uploaded.
- Find and select the audio file you want to insert into the slide, then click **Select** to add it to the slide.

Adjust Audio Settings:

Video link tutorial - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU5kXAtxAhI

- Once the audio is added, an **audio icon** will appear on the slide.
- Select the audio icon to adjust its settings:
  - **Autoplay**: If you want the audio to play automatically when the slide appears, select **Play automatically** in the audio toolbar.
  - **On click**: If you want to trigger the audio manually, leave it as **Play on click**.
  - **Volume**: Adjust the volume of the audio by clicking on the audio icon and using the volume slider.
  - **Start and End**: Use the **Trim** feature to adjust when the audio starts and ends on the slide, if necessary.

Repeat for All Slides:

- Move to the next slide where you want to add audio.
- Repeat the steps to insert the corresponding audio file (narration and/or sound effects) for each slide of your storybook.
- For each slide, ensure the audio plays at the right time, either automatically or on click, and adjust the volume as needed.

Preview and Test the Audiobook:

- Click **Present** in the upper-right corner of Google Slides to preview your presentation.
- Check that the narration and sound effects are syncing correctly with the slides and playing as intended.
- Make sure the audio levels are balanced, with the narration clearly audible over any background sounds.

Save and Share Your Project:

- Once everything is set, your audiobook is ready.
- To share it, click the **Share** button in the top-right corner of Google Slides, then choose **Copy link** to get the link to your project.
- Make sure the sharing settings allow **Anyone with the link to view** the presentation.

Good luck and have fun creating your audiobook!