

Notes and Tips

Jenn Ashworth

- There are lots and lots of ways to make a podcast: I wrote an essay and read it aloud a few times, editing it to make sure the text worked on the ear as well as the eye. Every single time I read it aloud I found something new to cut and tinker with.
- I'd imagined recording this essay outside somewhere, perhaps in town – so I could capture some of the ambient sounds of a town gradually coming to life at the end of lockdown. Sadly, rain stopped play and my mobile phone couldn't cope with the inclement weather. All the same: consider how background sound might work in your recordings as a way to capture the experience of a particular place at a particular time.
- You will sound very different on the recording than you do in real life. It is horrifying. Everyone experiences this. I've read it's because we hear our own voices from the inside, vibrating through our jawbones and sinuses, and obviously, nobody else does. This thought doesn't help the self-consciousness, but practice does.
- Polly advised me to imagine an audience when I was recording the essay – I'm used to reading at literary festivals and lecturing to groups of students, but reading towards my laptop was a strange, solitary experience. My first recordings felt flat and dull – Polly was right – imagining a listener and trying to conjure the feeling I was speaking to someone in particular really helped
- Consider breaking a thought up into short sections, take breaths and breaks between paragraphs and ideas and images: most podcast listeners are doing something else as well as listening – giving your thoughts some breathing room is a way of being hospitable to the listener.
- Listening to Heidegger and thinking about the way I lost track while listening to long sentences and loops of argument made me think about the way I used loops and long sentences in my own work and when and where it would help, or not help, for my listener to lose track of me.
- Us prose writers can learn from poets in most things, especially in our need to pay special attention to sound: I thought about the words wander and wonder, and how

they might fall on the ear, and whether an ambiguity in the hearing would be okay for this essay. I decided in the end that it would.

- I also thought about repetition: the idea of lines – walking the line, taking the line on walk - the line of a sentence or a route on a map – and decided that the repetition, while not quite forming a rhyme, would help to structure the essay and hold some thoughts together.

Polly Atkin

Notes and Tips On Recording

I recorded using Audacity, which is a free programme and easy to use. You can pause it to rest during recording, and you can cut and edit if you're a bit more adept, as well as exporting your recording in different formats. There are lots of guides to using audacity online, but these are some general tips based on my experience that might be useful.

- Make sure you know what you want to say before you start recording. I find it helpful to have a complete script, so I don't get confused or distracted. Make sure it is in an easy to read font that you can follow as you read along. You might find it helpful to put reading directions to yourself in it.
- Practice your recording before you try it out – read through, time yourself if the recording needs to be a certain length – but make sure you give your voice a rest before you record.
- Choose as quiet a place as possible to do your recording. Turn off any machines that make a noise if you can. It might help to shut windows and curtains, and create a kind of sound booth from cushions, pillows or blankets to help muffle external sounds. It might be helpful to be sure your pet isn't going to join in, as mine did in one take.
- Do a sound test and play it back before you begin properly – does it sound okay? If not, you might want to rethink your space, or your position.

- An external microphone can help to get a crisper sound, but you can use the one in your computer or phone.
- Try not to shuffle round or shuffle papers etc. whilst you're recording. Pause the recording if you need to cough, or take a drink, or stretch. If you tend to fidget, make sure you are comfortable and in a position you can maintain before you begin recording.
- Imagine you are speaking to a friend, and it will help keep your voice sounding natural and lively.
- Be prepared to make mistakes and try again! Give yourself plenty of time and remember to rest your voice between takes.
- It can help to have water close by to sip between takes, or in pauses.
- Playback your recording and check for big mistakes or unintended sounds before you send it in.
- Don't worry too much about perfection – unless you're a professional sound-recorder with professional equipment – that is not expected of you.

Notes and Tips to Write Your Own Walk

There are lots of ways to write about a walk, and you might already have a good idea. If not, here are some ideas to get you started.

- Think of a walk you have done recently, or used to do frequently enough that you can remember it well. Describe the route you would take, and things you would see, hear and feel along the way.
- Are there landmarks or places along the way you don't know as much about as you could? Look them up.
- What do you know about the history of places along your route? Do some research to add to what you know.
- How does it make you feel to write about it, to remember it?