

## HOW WILL USING AN AUDIO JOURNAL IMPROVE MY ORAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY?

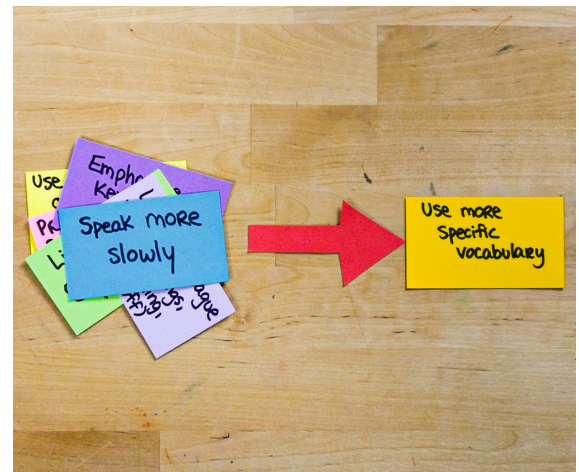
An audio journal is a short recording of your own speech, usually a story, explanation, summary, or description. After recording, you listen and analyze specific features of your speech. Use audio journaling to build awareness of language strengths and weaknesses and to intentionally apply strategies to improve your speech. While particularly useful for language development, audio journaling can benefit any person who is working on oral skills such as summarizing, word choice, pronunciation, or persuasive speech.

### 🏠 How do I start audio journaling?

**Set a specific goal** for an oral communication skill prior to recording. Focus on only one goal, for example: improving pronunciation, using more precise word choices, elaborating with specific details, or strengthening how you organize what you say.

**Choose a topic and record yourself speaking for 2 to 5 minutes.** Summaries work well for this; you can summarize your research, work, or an event, conversation, class, or article. You can also practice specific tasks like outlining the steps in a process; describing an event, object, or image; defining a term or teaching a concept; **choosing an impromptu topic**; or adapting a topic for different audiences (experts, learners, or the general public).

**Listen to your recording.** Reflect on how effectively you achieved your goal, think about specific ways you'd like to improve, and then intentionally try to improve in a second recording. **Record again.** Recording again helps you develop self-monitoring habits.



### 🏠 How can I use an audio journal to improve my pronunciation or speaking style?

Consider how you can use your voice as a tool to speak clearly. After you have identified a feature of pronunciation you want to develop (such as intonation, emphatic stress, clearer pausing), create a recording while intentionally applying strategies to improve the feature you chose. If you are trying to improve how persuasive or engaging you sound, practice using more emphasis, speak more slowly, and consider your word choices.

### 🏠 How can I use an audio journal for vocabulary and fluency development?

When working on your fluency or vocabulary, talk about a variety of topics. You can expand your fluency when you practice discussing topics you are familiar with (i.e., your research, your field, your life) as well as general topics (i.e., news, community events, steps in a process). Aim to speak for 4 to 5 minutes without stopping as this challenges you to elaborate, expand on initial statements, and integrate specific details.

If you are developing your vocabulary by keeping a word list, you can record yourself defining and explaining each word. This useful strategy ensures new vocabulary is integrated into your oral communication. You can also practice self-paraphrasing by saying something one way, and then repeating it using different terms and sentence structures.

Try it: Practice narration and description by describing everything you're seeing as you commute.

## 🏠 How can I use an audio journal to improve my organization and grammatical accuracy?

If you are working on improving your organization or your grammar, transcribe your audio journal. What kind of grammatical errors do you make? Use **prompts** to elicit specific grammar structures and practice reducing your errors. Do you use mostly simple connectors like *and*, *but*, *so*, *also*, *because* or do you integrate more advanced organizing language (*first of all*, *in addition*, *not only that*) or sentence structures? Do you start with a clear main point and then support it with specific details or do you jump around? If you transcribe and outline your recording, you can assess how you structure information and connect details when speaking. As you notice confusing areas, pause your recording and practice rephrasing more clearly.



## 🏠 What should I keep in mind when assessing and re-recording my journal entry?



When assessing your recording, it's easy to be distracted by simple or basic errors, but prioritize areas related to your set goal. If you are developing emphatic stress, only listen for how you apply stress. If you are working to improve your persuasive style, listen for your word choices and outline how you organized your content; are there ways to adapt your topic to the desired audience or context?

When re-recording, your goal is to respond to your original prompt while deliberately working to improve on the gaps you noticed in your first recording. You should **not** aim to repeat your first recording word for word; instead you should challenge yourself to refine and improve on your recording while authentically creating language.

## Additional Resources

- Check out our [Professional Communication for International Scholars](#) canvas site to find more strategies and guidance on how you can develop your voice as a tool.
- Take a Bok Seminar on [Communication & Language](#) to work on your oral communication skills.

