

**The ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for
Excellence in Audiobook Production**

June 2012

History

The Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production (Odyssey Award) is given annually to recognize the best English language audiobook for children and/or young adults in the previous submission year. The award, established in 2007 and first awarded in 2008, is named to commemorate the epic poem *The Odyssey* by Homer, originally told and retold in the oral tradition. The Odyssey Award allows us to return to the ancient roots of storytelling, while recognizing contemporary formats. The award is jointly administered by the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), and is sponsored by *Booklist*.

Committee Charge

To annually select the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States during the preceding eligibility year and, if warranted, to also select honor titles.

Committee Members

The committee consists of nine members: four members appointed by ALSC; four members appointed by YALSA; a chair, whose appointment alternates between ALSC and YALSA divisions,

with ALSC coordinating in even-numbered years and YALSA coordinating in odd-numbered years.

Committee members must have the ability to access audiobooks in all generally accepted industry standard formats.

The chair is a voting member of the committee with all the rights and responsibilities of other members. In addition, the chair presides at all meetings of the committee and serves as facilitator of both discussion and committee business. The chair of the committee will have sole responsibility to contact publishers to obtain copies of nominated titles for all committee members. The chair will serve as list owner of an electronic discussion list created through the ALSC or YALSA office solely for use by the committee, and will take responsibility for list maintenance.

If the chair requests, the Vice President/President-Elect of the chair's ALA division may mirror existing policies of other youth award committees to provide assistance that does not impact the award charge, committee balance or voting membership.

The Editor/Publisher of *Booklist* magazine, the Odyssey Award's sponsor, will appoint a consultant to the committee. The *Booklist* consultant assists the chair with determining title eligibility and with other questions that arise. This consultant may participate fully in all title discussions and help count ballots but is not a voting member of the committee.

Members serve a one-year term beginning immediately after the Midwinter conference through the announcement of the award at the next Midwinter. All members are required to attend all Odyssey committee meetings held during the selection process. In the event a member is

unable to complete her/his term, the president of the appropriate division shall appoint a replacement. If a committee member is having difficulty with the time requirements involved in listening to the audios, he or she should immediately consult with the Odyssey committee chair and/or the ALSC priority group consultant or YALSA board liaison so that a mutual agreement, including possible resignation from the committee, can be worked out.

Division Consultants & Communication

ALSC will assign a priority group consultant and YALSA a board liaison to deal with questions from the chair and the committee regarding procedure, personnel, and procedures. The chair will communicate fully with both division representatives, while the representative from the administering division will serve as the lead liaison. In addition, the chair will maintain open and equal communication with the staff and leadership of both ALSC and YALSA.

Work with Chair

The ALSC priority group consultant and YALSA board liaison work with the chair to review the procedures of the committee and to make recommendations for improving the process during the working year. The division representatives also work with the chair to resolve procedural and personnel issues as they come.

Work with Committee Members

Committee members may consult either or both of the division representatives should there be unusual issues that the chair cannot resolve, particularly if there are issues regarding the chair's performance of his/her duties.

Eligibility

The ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production is awarded annually to the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults during the previous submission year.

- All literary genres are eligible for consideration, including read-alongs (book + audio productions). The award considers solely the audio production of the title.
- The audiobook must be available for school and public libraries as well as consumer use.
- The committee will consider and vote on titles published within their assigned calendar year, January 1 to October 31, in addition to those published between November 1 and December 31 of the previous year. A title may only be submitted once and cannot be reconsidered the next year. Note that committee member terms begin immediately following Midwinter in January, and thus incoming members will listen to titles that had been released in the two months preceding their term of service.
- Publication date is considered the first U.S. release to the public for purchase, whether download, CD, MP3, or other audio format.
- The recipient of the award is the producer of the first U.S. release of the title.
- Audiobooks produced previously in another audio format are ineligible for consideration.
- The audiobook is intended for either young adults or children, who are defined as persons up to and including age eighteen; works for this entire age range are eligible. Adult titles are ineligible.
- Audiobooks featuring single or multiple narrators are eligible.

- Audiobooks previously published in another country are eligible (presuming a U.S. edition has been published during the period of eligibility).
- “In English” means only audiobooks produced in English are eligible, but this requirement does not limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context.
- If no title is deemed sufficiently meritorious, the award will not be presented.
- The chair, with assistance from designated ALSC or YALSA staff and the *Booklist* consultant, is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all nominated titles.
- The award will be presented to the producer of the winning and/or honor audiobooks.

Title Acquisition & Recommendations for Publishers

While the Odyssey Committee may receive audiobooks from publishers, the chair, with the assistance of the *Booklist* consultant, must scout reviews and publisher materials to find and solicit eligible titles that have not been submitted and request them from audio publishers.

Publishers should be aware that the Odyssey eligibility period, November 1 through Oct 31, does not match the calendar year. Thus, Fall titles released after November 1 should be submitted to the following year’s incoming committee members in January, after appointments have been made and are listed on the Odyssey Award website. In addition, publishers submitting titles to the Odyssey Committee are strongly advised to provide titles immediately upon publication release to allow careful evaluation. Publishers are encouraged to provide titles of superior merit to each Odyssey committee member, including the chair. Publishers submitting download-only titles to the committee should first consult with the chair regarding submission procedures.

Because the Odyssey Award is given to the title’s producer, it is critical that producers list the appropriate contact person and provide both business and non-office phone contact numbers

on submission forms. The award winner and honor recipients will be contacted by committee members prior to the announcement of the Youth Media Awards held in January at the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting.

Publisher Solicitation

- All committee members must comply with ALSC and YALSA Policy for Service on the Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production Committee.
- The chair and/or division designee are responsible for contact with the publishers. Committee members must not solicit publishers for free personal copies of titles. If members receive, or are offered, unsolicited titles from publishers, they may accept the titles.
- Committee members must not solicit publishers for favors, invitations, etc. If members receive these, however, they will use their own judgment in accepting. Publishers understand that such acceptance in no way influences members' actions or selections.

Odyssey Award Criteria

❖ General Guidelines

This award recognizes excellence by a producer or director for accomplishment and/or innovation in the production of an audio program. The winning title must exemplify the highest standards of direction, narration, engineering, and technical achievement.

- Popularity is not the criterion for this award nor is the award based on the message or content of the book on which it is based.
- The committee must consider technical and aesthetic aspects, including the effective use of narration as well as music and sound effects when they are incorporated into the

production. These elements must combine to support and enhance, through the audio medium, the literary merit of the work.

- The audio production is the primary focus of the Odyssey Award. In the case of an audio-only production, it is solely the audio that is evaluated (although the committee may refer to the text to resolve questions concerning portions of the audio). However, in a publication that includes material that is intended to be explored simultaneously with the audio (as in the case of a picture book plus audio read-along that requires a text-to-audio match), the combined material plus audio elements must create a seamless production.
- The audio must engage, stimulate and maintain listeners' interest.
- During evaluation, a committee member may perceive a narration, editing, or production flaw such as a segment of text repeated, omitted, edited incorrectly or other flaws that result in unacceptable audio quality. The committee member should immediately communicate with the chair who will investigate whether that flaw is unique to the committee member's download or physical title, or if it is an error that appears on every copy. Although no title may be perfect, noticeable flaws will remove a title from consideration.
- Committee members are encouraged to read articles that explore the unique characteristics, terminology and evaluative challenges of the audio format (see appendix).

❖ **Production Qualities**

- **Narration:**

- Does the reader(s) have good voice quality, diction, and timing?
- Is the reader(s) believable and convincing?
- Does the reader(s) distinguish between characters by changing pitch, tone, and inflection? Are accents or dialects used and if so, are they handled authentically and consistently?
- Are all words, including proper nouns, locales, foreign terms, character names, and others pronounced correctly and consistently?
- Does the reader(s) avoid condescending vocal mannerisms and style?
- Is the performance dynamic and does it reflect the expressive nature of the text?

➤ **Sound Quality**

- Is the sound sharp and clear with no obvious humming, distortion, or electronic interference?
- Does the sound quality remain consistent throughout the recording?

➤ **Background Music and Sound Effects**

- If music and sound effects are used, do they enhance the text and support the vocal performance?
- Does the music represent the emotional and structural content of the text?

❖ **Overall Rating**

The sum of all the criteria should represent the highest achievement in audiobooks for children and/or young adults, including

- excellence in narration;
- excellence of audio interpretation of story, theme, or concept;
- excellence of execution in the aural techniques of the medium;
- excellence in the delineation through the audio medium of literary elements including plot, theme, characters, mood, setting, or information presented;
- excellence in the appropriateness of technique or treatment to the story, theme, or concept.

Calendar

The Committee will observe the following calendar:

October - Dec: Committee members and chair are appointed and the chair sends letters of welcome to committee members, which include a draft calendar and a copy of policies and procedures. The chair may arrange an informal, optional committee meeting during the upcoming Midwinter conference. The chair works with ALSC and YALSA staff to establish the method for best notifying publishers with an explanation of the award and a list of committee names and addresses, noting that members will begin their term in the coming January and that titles released in November and December will be under consideration by the new committee (see Eligibility). Appropriate award information for publishers and other interested parties will also be posted on the ALSC and YALSA websites.

January - April: Members' term begins immediately following Midwinter. Listening

commences as audiobooks become available, and includes titles released in the previous two month (see Eligibility). The chair establishes a routine for equitable evaluation by committee members, which includes multiple listeners of titles and allocation of listening minutes. Committee members suggest titles for evaluative listening that may lead to nomination and award consideration to the committee as a whole. The chair compiles a monthly master list of suggested titles and distributes these updated lists to the committee.

May: By May deadline, the chair will assemble and send to committee members a list of all suggested titles that will be discussed at the Annual meeting. Committee members will listen to all suggested titles in their entirety and maintain careful evaluative notes of the meritorious qualities of the work in preparation for in-depth discussion at Annual.

Annual Conference: Prior to the Annual Conference, the chair will communicate the audio-video equipment needs for the committee meetings. The chair's division office will assist in scheduling the appropriate playback equipment prior to the meeting. The chair should verify the set-up at the meeting location as early as possible, and immediately communicate with the division at ALA Conference Headquarters if there are problems. The committee meets in three closed sessions to discuss all titles suggested up to May deadline.

June - October: Committee members continue to listen, and each month, at an agreed

upon time, suggest titles for award consideration. The chair will compile and distribute to committee members, and appropriate division representatives, monthly cumulative master lists of titles suggested since Annual. Committee members will listen to all suggested titles in their entirety and maintain careful evaluative notes of the meritorious qualities of the work.

- October - December: October 31: Final date to submit audiobooks for consideration.
- October deadline as determined by the chair (no later than October 10): From the list of suggested titles, committee members nominate up to three titles for the voting ballot; members write annotations for each title. All nominations are submitted confidentially to the chair. The chair compiles a list of all nominated titles and sends the list to members and division offices.
- October deadline –December deadline: Committee members continue to listen and suggest titles for award consideration. The chair will compile and distribute master lists of newly suggested titles to committee members and division offices. Committee members will listen to all suggested titles in their entirety and maintain careful evaluative notes of the meritorious qualities of the work.
- December - Jan: December deadline as determined by the chair (no later than December 8): Committee members nominate three additional, (previously un-nominated) titles and submit them, with annotations, for the voting ballot. Chair compiles and sends a final annotated list of all nominated

titles to members and division offices. Committee members will re-evaluate all nominated titles noting the qualities that match the award criteria. The committee chair will establish a routine for each nominated title to be reviewed through a process of critical listening. Critical listening requires a committee member to perform a detailed, rigorous, assessment in an optimum audio listening environment of each assigned title, noting its excellence or deficiency in meeting the award criteria.

Midwinter Conference Prior to the Midwinter Conference, the chair will communicate the audio equipment needs for the committee meetings. The chair's division office will assist in scheduling the appropriate playback equipment prior to the meeting. The chair should verify the set-up at the meeting location as early as possible, and immediately communicate with the division at ALA Conference Headquarters if there are problems. The committee meets in three closed sessions to select a winner and honor titles (if any) from the list of nominated titles. Winning titles are announced at the Youth Media Awards Press Conference at Midwinter.

Confidentiality

As all nominated titles must be kept confidential, there will be no announcements of nominated titles. All committee meetings and discussions, including electronic discussions, are closed to YALSA and ALSC membership and the general public.

Suggested Listening & Nominations

Because the listening load is substantive, committee members must maintain a rigorous schedule for listening to audiobooks throughout the entire committee year. As members listen to titles assigned by the chair or those personally selected, they will suggest those that they deem potentially award-worthy to the committee as a whole for further evaluation. These suggestions should be made as they are discovered and not held for official nominating deadlines. Following this procedure allows committee members to reflect on what their peers consider to be award-worthy titles and narrows the list, leading to more efficient and productive meetings.

At the agreed-upon deadlines in October, and again in December, committee members submit three official nominations each to the chair. Each committee chair sets these specific deadlines to accommodate the oddities of that year's calendar, the actual conference dates, and any conflicts that the chair may have that would prevent the compilation of suggestions and/or nominations.

Field Nominations

Field nominations are encouraged, and should be solicited by the chair. To be eligible, they must be submitted on the official ALSC/YALSA suggestion form, available on the ala.org website. Field nominations require a second from an Odyssey committee member. The chair informs the committee of field nominations, which remain active until all nominations are closed. If no committee member seconds the field nomination, the title is dropped from consideration. No publishers, authors, or editors may nominate their own titles.

Voting Procedures

Following discussion at Midwinter, balloting will begin. Members must be present to vote.

Proxies will not be accepted.

Selection of Award Audiobook

- Paper ballots will be used and tallied either by the chair or her/his designee(s).
- Members are reminded that, at this point, they are voting for the winner, NOT for honor titles. A separate ballot will be conducted for honor titles.
- There is no requirement that the Odyssey Award be awarded. If no audiobooks are deemed worthy of the honor, the committee can decide to withhold the award for that year.
- On the ballot each member votes for her/his top three choices. First choice receives five points, second choice receives three points, and third choice receives one point. To win, a title must receive five first-place votes and must also receive at least five more points than the second-place title. If no title meets these criteria on the first ballot, any title receiving no votes is removed from consideration and a period of discussion of remaining titles follows. A second ballot is then conducted. Balloting continues in this fashion until a winner is declared.

Selection of Honor Titles

Once a winner is selected, the committee will begin the discussion of honor books. The terms of the award provide parameters:

- There is no requirement that honor audiobooks be named.
- There is no rule dictating the number of honor audiobooks to be named.

- There is the expectation that honor audiobooks be truly distinguished, not merely strong contenders for the award.
- If the committee decides there are no titles worthy of being honored, the selection process is complete.
- If there are titles that the committee deems worthy of being honored, the selection process proceeds and the committee must choose between two options for determining honor titles
 - Option 1: to use the winning selection ballot to choose honor titles. The committee looks at titles with the next highest number of points and determines which of those titles merit being awarded honor status.
 - Option 2: to ballot one more time. Only one additional ballot is allowed. The honor audiobook selection ballot consists of titles from the winning selection ballot (minus the winner itself of course) that received points. By consensus, titles with no remaining support also may be withdrawn.

The committee studies the ballot tally (either from the winning selection ballot or from one subsequent ballot on honor audiobooks), and the committee determines which titles committee members deem to be truly distinguished.

Honor audiobooks are announced to the public in alphabetical order by author to confer equal status for all.

Annotations and Press Release

The committee is responsible for writing a press release; annotations for the winning title and honor audiobooks, though previously written, are reworked by the committee to ensure consistency. The chair divides up the titles among committee members to complete this task; the *Booklist* consultant aids the chair by reviewing these annotations and assisting with the writing of the press release. Both the annotations and the press release will mention the specific audiobook criteria which led to each title's recognition. ALA Public Information Office provides specific information about the press release, annotations and the press conference.

Immediately after the press conference, the chair, and/or the appropriate divisional staff, will see that the ALSC and YALSA audiobook selection committees receive information about the winning and honor book title(s) appropriate (by age) for their lists. This information will include specific bibliographic information and annotations. The titles will automatically be included on the final lists of these committees.

After Midwinter Selection Meeting

Public Relations

Committee members work with their local news media in publicizing the Odyssey Award. If interviewed, committee members emphasize the importance of distinguished audiobooks for children and teens, the award criteria, and the committee's reasons for its choice as stated in the press release. Committee members are free to express their own views on particular audiobooks, but they need to be mindful of confidentiality issues.

Correspondence

The chair handles correspondence specific to his/her committee's selection and work. In particular, the chair sends a letter of appreciation to the employers/supervisors of committee members.

Preparation for the Award Presentation

The chair works with her division office and *Booklist* Consultant to make necessary arrangements for presentation of the award during the ALA Annual Conference.

Communication with the winner is paramount. In addition, the chair prepares remarks for the award presentation at the Annual Conference following the award announcement. The winner receives a medal and honorees receive certificates mounted on a plaque. Although committee members are not required to be present, most find a special satisfaction in being part of the audience on this important occasion.

In making the award presentation, the chair:

- Introduces committee members.
- Introduces any representatives from the producer.
- Makes prepared remarks, explaining why the committee deemed the winning audiobook as truly distinguished with regard to the award criteria.
- Introduces the award recipients and presents their award to the honorees.
- Clips from the award-winning and honor audiobooks are usually played.

Evaluation of Award

At the end of every three years, the Award will be reevaluated by a task force, composed of a group representative of audiobook publishers, *Booklist* personnel, and members from ALSC and

YALSA. Reevaluation is to include discussion of any changes needed in policies and procedures (especially as related to accommodating changing technology), determination of the merits/feasibility of continuing the award, and to determine if ALSC and YALSA wish to continue their collaboration.

Appendix 1

Recommended Reading

- Beavin, Kristi. "Audiobooks: Four Styles of Narration." *Horn Book Magazine* 72, no. 5 (September 1996): 566-573.
- Beers, Kylene. "Listen While You Read." *School Library Journal* 44, no. 5 (April 1998): 30-36.
- Burkey, Mary. "The Booklist Odyssey Interview: Arnie Cardillo." *Booklist* 104, no. 13 (March 2008): 79
- . "The Booklist Odyssey Interview: Dan Musselman." *Booklist* 107, no. 12 (February 15, 2011): 82.
- . "Voices in My Head: Odyssey 2010." *Booklist* 106, no. 13 (March 2010): 84.
- . "Sounds Good to Me: Listening to Audiobooks with a Critical Ear." *Booklist* 103, no. 19/20 (June 1 & 15, 2007): 104.
- . "Audiobooks Alive with the Sound of Music." *Book Links* 18, no. 1 (September 2008): 24-25.
- Campbell, Robyn. "The Power of the Listening Ear." *English Journal* 100, no. 5 (May 1, 2011): 66-70.
- Clark, Ruth Cox. "Audiobooks for Children: Is This Really Reading?." *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 49-50.
- Frum, David. "Reading By Ear." *Commentary* 127, no. 5 (May 2009): 94-96.
- Goldsmith, Francisca. "Earphone English." *School Library Journal* 48, no. 5 (May 2002): 50-53.
- Grover, Sharon, and Lizette Hannegan. "Not Just for Listening." *Book Links* 14, no. 5 (May 2005): 16-19.
- Harmon, Amy. "Loud, Proud, Unabridged: It Is Too Reading!." *New York Times*, (May 26, 2005): 1.
- Holley, Pam Spencer. "The Booklist Odyssey Interview: Troy Juliar." *Booklist* 105, no. 14 (March 15, 2009): 72.
- Jemtegaard, Kristi. "Readers vs. Listeners." *Booklist* 101, no. 15 (April 2005): 139.

Jemtegaard, Kristi Elle. "Audio Poetry: A Call to Words." *Horn Book Magazine* 81, no. 3 (May2005): 357-364.

Maughan, Shannon. "Audiobooks 2.0." *Publishers Weekly* 257, no. 19 (May 10, 2010): 11-16.

Mediatore, Kaite, and Mary K. Chelton. "Reading with Your Ears." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (Summer2003 2003): 318-324.

Myrick, Ellen. "Say It With Music: Audiobooks With Pizzazz." *Booklist* 105, no. 5 (November2008): 64.

Saricks, Joyce. "LA: Essentials of Listening Advisory." *Booklist* 104, no. 21 (July 2008): 16.

Vardell, Sylvia. "My Odyssey Voyage." *Booklist* 104, no. 19/20 (June 2008): 124.

**Appendix 2:
Audiobook Lexicon**

Abridged	original work edited by professional abridger, with goal of staying true to spirit and content of book
Accent	of a specific nationality or region, e.g. German or Mid-Western, or a socio / economic or class accent
Actuality audio	section of audio from another source (such as interviews, animal sounds) added to the original studio recording
Ambience	sound quality that comes from the recording studio environment rather than directly from the sound source
Attributives	identifying phrases such as "he said" and "she whispered"
Audio cue mismatch	audio mismatch with source visual or text; a sound effect or added music that does not match the text, or in readalongs, match the illustration
Audiobook original	audiobook with no print/ebook counterpart, or a title that is available in audio prior to print/ebook publication
Bonus material	extras added to audio title, or items from print title that may be on audio: timeline, glossary, author interview etc.
Book app	interactive digital book that is accessed on a device such as a tablet computer or mobile phone, may include synchronized text, animations, audio, and more
Break point	logical and appropriate stopping points of audio medium segments or other breaks in the audio production
Breathy	type of mouth sound, sharp or odd breaths of narrator, audible breaths at sentence breaks
Bright	sound quality that is clear, sharp
Cadence	rhythm of speech, created through modulation and inflection
Choppy edit	noticeable or abrupt editing of sound
Clam shell	hard case designed for multiple circulations and used for library and school editions of physical audiobooks

Clarity of narration	clear and understandable reading, diction
Clarity of production	recording clarity, clean sound throughout title, not muddy or muted
Clipped edit	end of a word is cut off in audio editing
Consistency	narrator maintaining energy and character voicings, even if narration was recorded at different times
Context of line	maintaining meaning of text through expression and emphasis
Continuous record	narration recorded in extended segments without interruption, as opposed to "punch-in" edits
Cover art	audiobook may match hardcover or paperback print item's cover art, or may be entirely different
Cultural authenticity	match of reader and culture of character - accents or dialects authentic, not stereotyped. May include authentic music
Dialect	of a specific group of people: e.g. Appalachian
Digital distortion	cracking or blurry sound when volume exceeds upper digital range
Digital download	audiobook available as a digital file, accessed and downloaded directly to computer or playback device, needing no delivery medium
Digital-only	audiobooks distributed by a publisher solely as a download
Director	person hired to direct the talent in the studio during the audiobook recording
Direct-to-consumer digital	digital audiobooks that need no distribution media (such as MP3CD, Preloaded Digital player, CD) and are accessed by a playback device
Distribution media	method of delivering audio (MP3CD, Preloaded Digital player, CD) that requires another playback device such as a CD player
Download service vendor	an arrangement of an individual or library system to purchase licensed audiobooks from an internet retailer, e.g. Audible, OverDrive
Dramatic dynamic range	controlled range of volume, with emotion shown through energy, and not resulting in uneven sound levels

Dramatization	adaptation, usually multi-voiced, often with sound effects, music, interaction, often called "audio drama" or "radio theater" (NOT same as multi-voiced)
DRM	digital rights management, technologies used by publishers or distributors that control access or usage of digital audio
Dry mouth	clicking mouth sound
Emotion	degree to which emotional content of text is expressed, explicate the meaning of text through the voice
Energy	a quality of narrator's reading that engenders listener engagement
Enhanced product	material added to audiobook package, such as illustrations, games, computer files, video; see also "value-added"
Equalization	pleasant and non-fatiguing tonal quality over full range of audio spectrum of audio format
Executive producer	person employed by audio publisher, oversees total audiobook production and funding
Expression	overall performance quality, using a range which engenders listener engagement
Extras	forewords, afterwords, glossaries, dedications, photo captions or notes, miscellaneous words that appear in picture book's illustrations
Fades, in / out	bringing in or out music and sound effects, may be gradual or steep. Also known as "ramping" sounds in or out
Flat	narration that seems dull, unemotional, monotone
Formatting	editing to fit on cassette (104 min), CD (80 min), or MP3-CD (12+ hours)
Full cast narration	multiple narrators performing as individual characters during ensemble reading
Fully-voiced	a single narrator using a range of multiple character differentiations and voicings in a solo performance
Gluey	mouth sound
Hardware	the physical device that is used to access an audio medium

Hiss	audible background noise, unwarranted high-frequency noise
Hollow	sound quality that echoes or lacks depth
Hot sound	audio quality that is too loud or intense - or "hot"
ID3 tags	metadata that allows CD and digital audio players to display the track and title information
Incidental music	music at beginning, end, or other points in production
Index points / track points	invisible markings that allow listener to jump to points on audio file - may be of varied length, depending on producer
Inflection	over-all performance quality, rise and fall of voice pitch used for expression
Intro	Identifies title, author, narrator, etc.
Juicy	"wet" type of mouth sound, saliva noise
Licensed audiobook	audiobook available for legal purchase through authorized distributor by arrangement with the producer
Lifeless	sound quality that does not engage the listener, dry
Liner notes	text / visual material describing the production, may be on printed on sleeve / wrap or available digitally
Lip smacks	type of mouth sound
Listener engagement	the involvement of the listener in the production
Medium	a means that provides transmission or storage of information
Missing text	errors where text from source is missing in finish audio production
Mix	combining distinct tracks or audio segments into a unified production
Mood	emotional ambience of the audio, created by narrator's voice, music, sound effects
Mouth clicks	type of mouth sound
MP3	audio encoding format that compresses data, used for downloaded

	audiobooks and for MP3-CDs that hold more than an 80-minute CD
Muddy	sound quality - audio muffled, or indistinct; excess of bass energy, missing mid to high frequencies
Multi-voiced production	more than one narrator, but not necessarily an actor for each character, nor recorded as an ensemble at the same time
Mushy	vocal quality, lack of precision in diction
Music cues / tags	music used to note scene change, identify character, depict mood, reference time period, or other aspect of production
Music library	stock music licensed from a vendor, used in the audiobook production
Musical bed	music that is heard under the voice, throughout portions or large parts of the production
Musical intro	music at beginning of production
Musical outro	music at end of production
Narrator	one who delivers the content of the audiobook
Narrator match	narrator voice matches character age, gender, time period, setting, mood, etc.
Noise-gating	an abrupt edit resulting in clipped words or in silence between words
Off-mic	narrator is recorded away from the microphone, or narrator's mouth turns away from the microphone
Original music	musical score that is composed expressly for the audiobook production
Out-of-sync	mismatched sound and visual, when the voice doesn't track with the visual in a production such as a readalong picture book
Outro	information at end of production, may contain program title, performer's name, author, publisher information, copyright, etc.
Pacing of narration	narrator reading too fast or too slow
Pacing of production	passages paced correctly for dramatic arc of story
Page rate	how long it takes a narrator to complete a page of text, also known as pick-up and reader acquisition rate

Page turn / paper noise	studio noise
Partially-voiced	a single narrator using primarily a "straight read" with a few major character differentiations
Peaky	sound quality that is too high in sound or energy level
Pitch range	high or low range of sound
Playback device	hardware, such as iPod, cell phone or CD player, that allows playback of distribution media (cassette tape, CD disc) or digital files (MP3, WMA)
Plosives or wind pops	noticeable microphone noise, mouth pop sounds, "pp" "tt" "ff" pops
Podiobook	serialized, unpublished books available via the internet directly from the author as audio podcasts, usually free
Preloaded audio playback device	a hardware device that is preloaded with a digital audiobook, self-contained, i.e. Playaway
Presence	audio quality that feels authentic, actual - as if you are there
Producer	person hired by executive producer; hires talent, books studio time, handles financial details
Prosody	vocal melody and tonal inflection
Public domain	content not restricted by copyright, audiobooks that may be recorded by volunteers and distributed through Librivox or an audiobook publisher

Punch-in, punch and roll	narration edited as recorded, requiring a stop-and-start interruption to the reading, as opposed to a "continuous record"
Read-along	an audiobook meant to be listened to while following along with the picture book text and illustrations
Reader engagement	the perception that the narrator was actively involved in the production
Repeated sentence / word	production error where poor editing results in repeated content
Rich	recording clarity, clean sound throughout title, not muddy or muted
Sequence announcement	vocal prompt at end of CD, cassette, or audio portion, also known as "tag lines"
Sibilant	distortion / overload of sound resulting in an over-emphasis of "sss," "fff," and "ch" sounds
Silent intervals	silence, such as the space between the chapters
Simultaneous release	a release date of an audiobook simultaneous with the print book release
Sleeve	the packaging material that holds printed information or CDs
Sound effects	establish action, time, place, mood; added audio effects that are referenced in the text or illustrations, often found in read-alongs
Sound level	overall volume of recording - ideally consistent, not variable or uneven
Soundscape	the total sound environment, the created audible world of the audiobook
Special or bonus features	added author interviews or other audio material not found in original text, also known as "value added"
Spoken word performance	an audio presentation that is recording of a seminar, lecture, comedy routine, etc
Straight read	narrator reading in his or her natural voice
Streaming	digital audiobook playback over a live internet connection

audio	
Stress	emphasizing a word or syllable - stress on the wrong syllable or wrong word results in changed meaning
Studio noise	the noise made by clothing, jewelry, page turns, body movements and other extraneous sound that is captured in the recording
Tag lines	comments at beginning or end of audio segment such as "End of side two. Please insert..."
Tail	end of production
Talent	person hired to read; may be an actor, author, professional narrator, or celebrity
Talking Book Program	audiobook service provided by the National Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Text-to-speech software	computer program that allows software to create an artificial voice that translates text directly into a digital file
Thin	sound quality that strains the ear, difficult to hear
Throat swallows	body noise
Tinny	sound quality that is artificial, electronic - lacks low frequency
TOC files	Table of Content files - metadata that ensures that sound files play the audiobook in correct sequence
Top	beginning of audiobook
Track points / index points	invisible markings that allow listener to jump to points on audio file - may be of varied length, depending on producer
Tummy rumbles	body noise
Unabridged	complete, unaltered work
Underscore	music under narration
Unvoiced	a single narrator performing a "straight read" in his or her natural voice with no characterization

Upcut	choppy edit, noticeable or abrupt editing of sound at the beginning of a word
Value-added	extras added to audio title such as visual content, author interview, etc.
Vocables	non-word sounds that evoke meaning, e.g. clicks, grunts, sighs
Voice actor	professional narrator
Wall of performance	a barrier that may be apparent to a listener who is aware of the voice actor's performance, or may be removed by a skilled narrator
Widows and orphans	sentences or text fragment split by audio production side, CD, or segment change
Woofing the microphone	narration causing pops or plosives
Word count	used to estimate recording length - typical narrator reads approx 154 words per minute, or 9200 words an hour
Wrap	the paper with production information that slips in the outer packaging

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