

# How do I create my 310 - Sound Track?

**Q** I am making a 310 film that has no sound. I am expected to create a sound track for it... How and where do I begin?

**A** The best place to begin is in the script. Sound is an important story telling tool and introducing its use in the conceptual stage of your script is invaluable.

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**Q** I really don't understand how including sound in my script can help me tell my story, can you give me some examples?

**A** Example, you can use sound to place your scene into any location without having to travel to the actual location. You can also designate the size of a crowd or place through the use of sound. By changing the level and amount of reverberation in a sound, you can create a spatial relationship. The most important use for sound is to set the emotion of a scene. Sounds can set up comedy or the dark and dreary. So now you get the idea that the practical and creative uses of sound goes on and on.

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**Q** Unfortunately, I am beyond the script stage and starting principal photography, what should my approach be?

**A** You can still analyze your script to determine how sound elements can help tell your story. You could even eliminate some planned locations by using sound Fx and backgrounds to tell your audience where they are.

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**Q** I'm getting a pretty good idea that sound will help me tell my story but I still don't know how to put it all together, Give me a clue, how do I start?

**A** Organization is the key! Go through your script and make notes of all the sounds you want to use. Line your script (in continuity) to determine the backgrounds and ambience you will need. As you progress from cut to cut determine where sound can re-enforce your story or even tell your story, when your images don't. If your film is completed and locked, have a spotting run for sound (music is part of your sound) to determine all the sounds that will be in your final sound track. Make extensive notes. Again, organization is the key to creating an effective sound track.

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Q How do I organize the choice of sounds as I am conceiving my sound track?

A When selecting your sounds use the “5 Elements of Sound Design” as a guide: The 5 Elements are; Dialogue (voice over or narration), Sound Effects, Backgrounds, Ambiance, Music, and Silence. Ask yourself if the use of any of these elements will help you tell your story. Go through your picture scene by scene (spotting) and apply each of these elements to see which one or ones help you to tell or clarify your story.

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Q Now that I have an idea of the sounds I want to use, how do I get them?

A Since you did not record any production sound you will have to get your sound from a library or record them. There are thousands of sound cues available on Net FX and can be imported into your Avid or Protools sessions. A CD library is also available for you to audition and pre-select your sounds.

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Q How long will it take me to collect all the sounds, I need?

A The process of selecting sound cannot be done in a two or three hour session. To select quality sounds takes days of auditioning and note-keeping. Just because the sound library is “digital” does not mean it’s 100% best-quality. Many of the older sounds in a digital library originated as analog tracks and therefore have background noise. Don’t settle for just “make-do” Fx; listen to multiple cues before making your selection. You should have all of your Fx selected by the time your picture is locked. You should only have to look for an occasional sound cue when you are editing your tracks. The term editing is used as most sound cues will have to be “cut” to fit your picture.

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Q I’ve heard something about doing “Foley”, what is that?

A Foley is the process of recording Sound in Sync with the picture. There will be a whole lesson devoted to the Foley process.

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Q I have made my selections of all the sound fx and backgrounds I will be using and have an extensive list. Now how do I get a hold of these sounds to edit them in my film?

A Very good, you’re way ahead of the game. All the sounds you’ve selected are on the server. Whenever you are on a Protools editing session, you can access the server and download the sounds that are on your list. Now you don’t have to lose editing time by looking for and auditioning sounds (like the student next to you).

Q Now that I know how to find sound cues what other things will I have to know?

A Sound design (the thought process) and sound editing (the physical process) are two very different but strongly related processes. In addition to sound design and concept, you will need to learn sound editing on Protools, track layout, and cue sheets.

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Q You mentioned that Music is part of the sound track. How should I prepare the musical part of my sound track?

A You should take the same approach with music as you do with the rest of your sounds (voices, Fx and backgrounds.) The same regard should be given for choosing a composer or library music early. An early choice will work to your advantage. A future lecture dealing with the composer and your score will explain these advantages.

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Q How much time will it take for me to Edit my sound for the mix?

A The time required depends on the complexity of your project. Even for the simplest project, you can be sure that the time allotted for Sound Editing in your 310 schedule is too short so be prepared to work overtime and weekends. You will learn how to avoid many of the pitfalls and sidestep obstacles that you will encounter. Organization of your time and materials is the key to your being ready.

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Q Once I have all my tracks edited how do I combine them into my one final and cohesive sound track?

A The process of combining all your sound elements into a balanced single final track is called the "Mix". This will be done for you in a scheduled two hour session where you will supervise the mix. The mixer will be an advanced sound student who is experienced in the mix procedure.

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**Q** The sound process sounds technical and complicated, will I be prepared to do all of this?

**A** The sound class and its content is presented in a way that stimulates the creative process as you learn the technical procedures. Since our schedule for this Fall loses one day due to a holiday, you will not be short changed in what you need to know to create a stunning sound track. In the end, a personal effort must be made by you to get the most out of this class.

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**Q** Who can I turn to if I need additional help or instruction?

**A** You can always turn to Sara or me for assistance, you have our numbers. If you have a catastrophic crash and it was the fault of the equipment and not yours, let the post-department monitor know. There will probably be a TA assigned to handle emergencies. Let us know so we can work out some arrangement to make-up for the time you lost.

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