

SOUNDBITES ACTIVITY #12

AUDIO RECORDING

AUDIO TOURS

SET-UP:

GUIDING QUESTION: What stories might be best told in the form of a tour?

TOOLS:

- Internet connection
- Smartphone or computer and speaker (for playing audio/video)
- Smartphone or other digital audio recording device (for audio recording)

INTRODUCTION

If you've ever been to a museum, you might have been offered the opportunity to take an audio tour through the exhibits. Typically, these tours ask you to walk up to a display, hit play on your device, and listen to a narrator describe whatever it is you're looking at.

But audio tours aren't just a convenient way to share museum information. An audio tour can be a compelling way to structure all types of stories. For example, if you gave me a tour of the street you live on, what stories would you share? What would I learn about you? If your little siblings gave me a tour of the same street, how might they do it differently than you?

In this activity, you'll listen to examples of audio tours. Then, you'll record an audio tour of a place you know well.

This activity is inspired by [Third Grade Audio](#) and [Audio Playground Assignment #1](#) by Sarah Geis.

SOUNDBITES ACTIVITY #12

AUDIO TOUR EXAMPLES

Here are a few examples of audio tours. Some are made by radio professionals, some are made by radio beginners, and some are made by third graders. Choose the ones that look interesting to you to listen to. You don't have to be anywhere near the location described in the tour to enjoy these stories.

As you listen, ask yourself: What stories might be best told in the form of a tour?

> [LISTEN: The Auditorium](#) (3 min)

Our first audio tour comes from the eight and nine-year-olds at [Third Grade Audio](#). In this story, a third grader takes you on a tour of the school auditorium, where he recalls an unusual problem he had during an assembly when he was in first grade.

> [LISTEN: Audio Guide to the Imperfections of a Perfect Masterpiece](#) (31 min)

Our next tour comes from the podcast [99% Invisible](#), a show about design. To help celebrate its 60th anniversary, the Guggenheim Museum in New York teamed up with 99% Invisible to offer visitors a guided audio tour of the museum. You don't need to be in the museum to find this audio tour delightful.

> [LISTEN: Audio Playground One-Minute Audio Tours](#) (1 min each)

Finally, check out this collection of one-minute audio tours from the collaborative audio project [Audio Playground](#). About 50 audio producers, some professionals and some beginners, responded to this prompt: *Make a 1-minute audio tour of a place you know well, for one specific person*. Scroll through and choose one that looks interesting to you. For an unusual take on the prompt, we particularly liked "a tour of my body for the worms who will decompose it after I'm dead" by Stefania Gomez.

SOUNDBITES ACTIVITY #12

MAKE YOUR OWN AUDIO TOUR

Your challenge is to create a one-minute audio tour of a place you know well.

First, choose your place. You can interpret this freely. It could be your bedroom. Your bookshelf. Your body. Your street. Even a place you go in your dreams.

Then, start recording. Be the eyes and ears of the listener. Describe what's in front of you, with lots of details. You can actually point to objects, like: "Over there on the sidewalk is a big orange dog." Even though the listener can't see the dog, a space is created in our imagination where the orange dog will be.

You can also tell us about the things we can't see. Why is this place important to you? What might we miss if we didn't have you as our guide? What histories and stories does this place hold? Feel free to be creative, and as always, have fun.

Recording with a smartphone: *If you're recording with an iPhone, use the Voice Memos app. On Android, there are many free recording apps you can download. Hold the bottom of your phone (that's where the microphone is) a few inches away from your mouth. For more info on smartphone recording, see [SoundBites Activity #2](#). And for audio editing, see [Activity #10](#).*

SHARE YOUR RECORDING WITH US

We would love to hear your tours! If you share your audio recording with us, we may feature it on kuow.org. To share your audio recording, email it to us at radioactive@kuow.org with the subject line "**SoundBites Activity #12 - Audio Tours.**"

MORE ON AUDIO TOURS

- [Audio tours of The Met](#) (6-12 min each)
Nate DiMeo from the podcast [the memory palace](#) takes listeners on a tour of nine exhibits in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.
- [Transom Manifesto: Brad Klein](#)
In this article, producer Brad Klein talks about his experiences producing audio tours for museums.