

Creating Word-by-Word Audio Books in PowerPoint

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to use Microsoft PowerPoint to make a word-by-word audio book.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

The instructions in this techtorial refer to Microsoft PowerPoint XP, but with some minor adaptations, the instructions also apply to earlier versions of Microsoft Office. You also will need a microphone and Microsoft's Sound Recorder -- which is standard in Windows XP.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard V.c. in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

MAKING WORD-BY-WORD AUDIO BOOKS

Stories with recorded audio are great tools for emerging readers. A number of Web sites, such as [StoryPlace](#) and [StarFall](#) offer such resources free. Few sites, however, highlight each word as it's spoken, a feature that would benefit any K-2 student. Making your own word-by-word audio books, on the other hand, allows you to customize the content to your class as well as to highlight specific words your students need to see and hear. This techtorial demonstrates how to use PowerPoint to create such audio books.

This activity requires intermediate to advanced knowledge of PowerPoint.

For a beginner's techtorial, see [Creating a Class PowerPoint Presentation](#).

Begin the project by creating a folder in which to store all the resources you'll create for your audio book: Right-click your Desktop, click New > Folder, and type an appropriate name for the folder.

WRITE THE STORY

First, you'll create a slide show so students can read the story. Begin by typing the title of the story -- one word at a time. (Each word must have its own text box.)

- Open PowerPoint.
- Click the title box of the first slide -- where it says "Click to Add Title" -- and type the first word of the story's title. (The title of the demo story is "It's Time for Summer!")
- Click anywhere on the border of the title box, hold down the CTRL key, and hit Do duplicate the title box. Hit D as many times as necessary to create as many boxes as there are words in the story's title.
- Click and drag the title boxes apart, so no boxes overlap.
- Delete the first word of the title from all but one of the boxes. Type another word from the title into each box. Your slide should now look something like this:



- Save the slide show in the new folder you created on your Desktop.

RECORD THE SOUND

Next, you'll record the title of your story -- one word at a time. (Each word must have its own sound file.)

Before you begin, minimize the slide show, and (if you do not have an internal mic) make

sure your microphone is plugged in. Then:

- Click Start > All Programs > Accessories > Entertainment > Sound Recorder.
- Click the Record button in the Sound Recorder window, say the first word of the title into the microphone, and then click the Stop button.
- Click File > Save, name the file, and save it as a .wav file --*its.wav*, for example. Be sure to save the file in the same folder in which you saved the story.
- Click File > New, record the second word of the title, click Stop, and save the file as a .wav, *time.wav*, for example.
- Repeat the steps above to record each word of the story title.

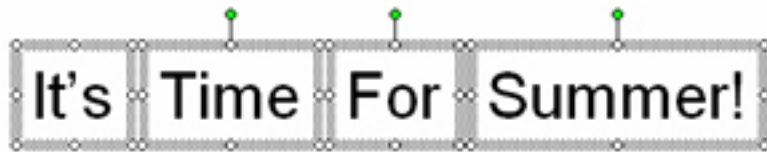
Hint: When recording a word at the end of a sentence, be sure your voice inflection indicates the end of a sentence. You'll understand the importance of inflection when you hear the recording!

ORDER TEXT

Now, you'll put the title words in the correct order. First, minimize the Sound Recorder and maximize the PowerPoint slide show. Then:

- Hold down the CTRL key as you click each title text box.
- Double-click the border of any box. A Format Placeholder Window will appear.
- Select the Text Box tab. Check the box next to Resize Autoshape to fit text, uncheck the box next to Word Wrap the Text in Autoshape, and then click OK. Notice that the boxes around each word now are much smaller.
- Click and drag each text box, so the words of the title are lined up from left to right in the correct order.
- Press CTRL and click each box again.
- Click Draw > Align or Distribute > Align Middle.
- Click Draw > Align or Distribute > Distribute Horizontally.
- Save your work.

The text boxes now should be evenly spaced in the middle of the slide.



It's Time For Summer!

Click to add subtitle

INSERT SOUND

Now, insert the sounds into the slide show.

- Click Insert > Movies and Sounds > Sound from File.
- Select the first word of the title, and click Yes for "Do you want your sound to play automatically in the slide show?"
- Repeat the steps above for each word of the title in their exact order. Don't worry where on the slide the sound icons appear; you'll move them in a minute!
- Save your work.

ADD CUSTOM ANIMATION

Custom Animation allows you to select when a sound, image, text box, or other affect appears, disappears, has special effects, and so on.

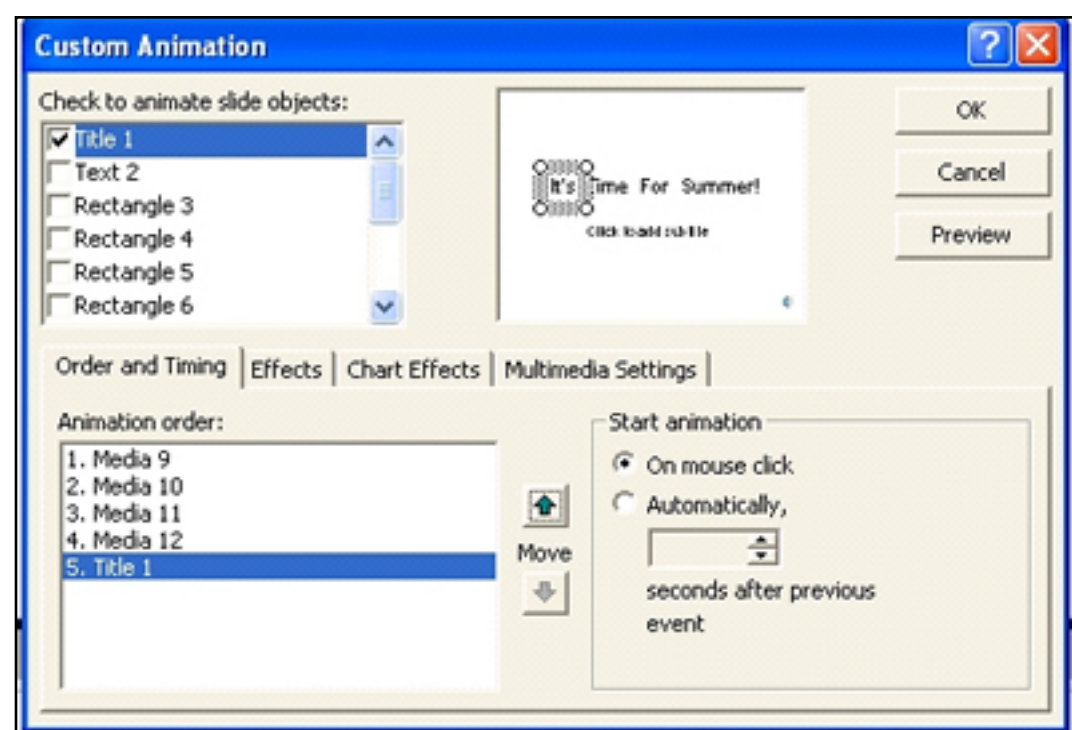
Note: Before beginning this step, you might want to disable some of the newer Custom Animation features in PowerPoint XP; they can cause problems when sending slide shows, saving as them Web pages, and so on. To disable those troublesome features, click Tools>Options>Edit and check the box next to Disable New Features: New Animation Effects. Then click

OK.

To add Custom Animation, click Slide Show>Custom Animation. (Notice that the Custom Animation pane that now opens is from an earlier version of PowerPoint, not PowerPoint XP.)

In the box beneath Check to animate slide objects:, you'll see a list that includes the media (sounds), rectangles (copied text boxes), and Title 1 (the original text box) you've created. You want to find each text box, correctly match each word with its sound, put the words and sounds in the correct order, and animate each word.

Click the items beneath Check to animate slide objects: until the first word of the story's title appears in the preview window. Check the box next to that item.



To animate the first word of the story's title:

- Select the Order and Timing tab.
- Click the green arrow to the right of the Animation order: box until that item is first on the list.
- Click the button next to Automatically beneath Start animation.
- Select the Effects tab.
- Click the first drop-down menu and change the Entry Animation to Appear.
- Click the items beneath Check to animate slide objects: until you find the *sound* of the first word of the title. Check the box next to that item.

- Repeat the steps above for each word in the story's title. Remember to alternate media with rectangles in the animation order box, ending with a media object.
- Click the Preview button to check your work.
- Click OK.
- Save your work

MORE OF THE SAME

Relax. The worst is over. Now, all you have to do is finish the slide show.

For each additional phrase or sentence in the entire story,

- Press CTRL M or click Insert > New Slide and choose a Title and Content layout.
- Create a separate text box for each word.
- Repeat all the steps in this techtorial -- from Record Sound through Put it All Together -- for each slide in the story (including the byline on the title slide).
- Save your work.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Make your slide show more interesting by

- adding images -- clip art, photographs, scanned art, or student drawings created using Microsoft Paint -- to each slide: Click Insert > Picture and select Clip Art or From File.
- adding background color: Click Format > Background, click the drop-down menu, click More Colors, and select the color you want. Then, click Apply to All.
- removing media icons. If you don't want to see a sound icon on your slide, you can hide it.
 - In the Drawing toolbar, click the rectangle tool and draw a rectangle on top of the sound icon.
 - Click the paint bucket and select the same color as the slide background to "hide" the icons under the rectangle
 - Click the paintbrush icon and select No Line to get rid of the outline of the rectangle.
- making slides move: Click Slide Show > Slide Transition. Select No Transition and then type "2 seconds" beneath Advance Slide.
- changing the font: Click Format > Replace Fonts and select a new font in the With drop-down menu.

Note: Don't use Animation Schemes in this presentation; it might alter the way in which the sounds and text boxes appear on each slide.

MORE ACTIVITIES FOR WORD-BY-WORD AUDIO

Word-by-word audio can be a lot of work to create, but the educational uses are many.

- Students, particularly those who have learning difficulties or need motivation, can record the narration for their own stories.
- By altering the timing of text and audio, you can create a self-paced spelling test, in which a word is pronounced, students spell it, and then with the click of a mouse, the word appears so students can check the spelling.
- Have each student in a program for the gifted and talented, an after school club, or a summer camp, record himself or herself saying a single word, and have each student type his or her word onto a slide. Then, compile all the words into a nonsense story.
- Hold a sing-along or Karaoke event for the class and use the word-by-word format to provide the lyrics to their favorite song. Instead of highlighting each word in red, you might -- in true sing-along fashion -- include a clip art image of a bouncing ball!