

Preparing Your Project

If you completed Lessons 8 and 9, your edited movie should be ready to start this lesson, and you should skip this section.

NOTE ► If you completed Lessons 8 and 9, continue with Lesson 10 using the BikeRide project in your Project Library. You do not need any other project files for this lesson.

If you'd prefer to use the prepared file that came on the DVD, or if you skipped Lessons 8 and 9, follow these steps. If you skipped Lesson 8, you'll need to import the Events as well, so please refer to Lesson 8's "Preparing Your Project."

- 1 If iMovie is open, close it.
- 2 Open and arrange two Finder windows as described in Lesson 8.
- 3 From the top Finder window, navigate to the **Lessons > Lesson10 > Start_project_10** folder. Inside, find the **BikeRide_AUDIO.rcproject** file, and Option-drag it to the **User > Movies > iMovie Projects** folder in the bottom Finder window.
- 4 Open iMovie.
- 5 If the Project Library is not visible, click the Show or Hide Project Library button at the bottom of the Project Browser.
- 6 Select BikeRide_AUDIO from the list.



NOTE ► If you skipped Lesson 8, you won't have the BikeRide project in your Project Library, and if you skipped Lesson 9, you won't have BikeRide_PICTURE.

- 7 Click the Show or Hide Project Library button to hide the Project Library.

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NOTE ► The BikeRide_AUDIO project file references the same Events used in the previous lessons. If you didn't copy those Events into your iMovie Events folder in Lesson 8, please do so before continuing.

NOTE ► If you skipped Lesson 8, be sure to swap the vertical positions of your Events area and Project area to ensure that the screenshots here match what you're seeing.

You're now ready to get started on the project.

Adjusting Audio Tracks and Sound Levels

As you play your movie back, the first thing you'll notice is that you need to fix the audio levels. Some sounds are very loud whereas others are soft. Sounds compete for attention, making it difficult for the audience to follow the logic of the story. Background sounds like crowds and traffic start or end abruptly on the edit points.

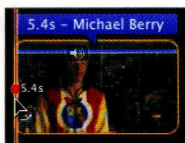
Adjusting audio can be done at any stage of editing, and in practice, when you're familiar with all of iMovie's audio tools, you'll probably adjust audio levels while you're editing.

Normalizing Clip Volumes

We'll start with one of the easiest and handiest audio features of iMovie—its ability to *normalize* the audio level of a track. Normalizing audio means bringing its volume to the same level as all the other clips. For example, Michael's interview audio is much lower than the voiceover you recorded; normalizing brings them both to the same level.

With the click of a button, normalizing your audio ensures audio consistency throughout your project.

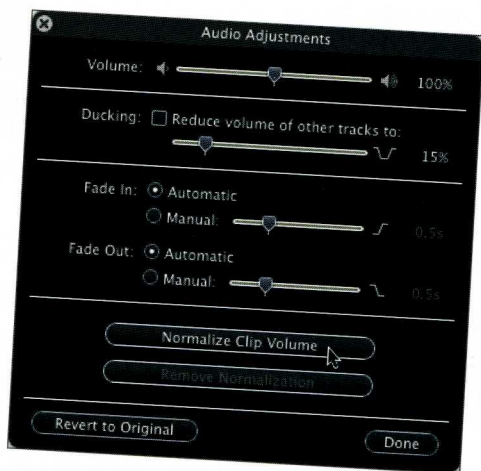
- 1 Select the first 5.4-second interview clip of Michael, where he says, "My dream as a kid was to ride cross-country."
- 2 Drag the playhead to the front of the clip and press the spacebar to hear the current level of the audio. Press the spacebar again to stop playback when the clip has finished.



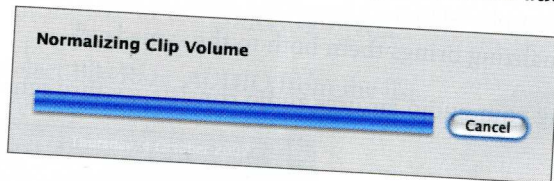
- 3 Click the Adjust Audio button, or press the A key to open the Audio Adjustments window.



- 4 Click the Normalize Clip Volume button in the Audio Adjustments window.



iMovie displays a status bar as it processes the audio track to normalize the clip volume.



- 5 Play the clip again to hear the (much louder) normalized audio level. Because all of Michael's interview footage was recorded at the same audio level, you'll need to normalize the volumes of every interview clip.
- 6 Keeping the Audio Adjustments window open, click to select the next interview clip where you see Michael talking, which comes just before the establishing shot of the start of the bike ride. When you've selected it, click Normalize Clip Volume in the Audio Adjustments window.

When you have multiple clips that need the same adjustment, you can paste the adjustments in the same way you can paste video adjustments.

- 7 Close the Audio Adjustments window, or click Done.
- 8 Select one of the two clips you've already normalized, and choose Edit > Copy.
- 9 Command-select the three remaining interview clips and the clip of Michael's wife on the cell phone, and choose Edit > Paste Adjustments > Audio.

NOTE ► If the Edit > Paste Adjustments > Audio menu is dimmed, be sure that you actually selected the clip in step 8. If you attempt to Edit > Copy before you've selected the normalized clip, the Paste Adjustments properties won't be available to you.

The three clips are automatically normalized.



TIP ► Before you edit, you can normalize the volume of all the clips in the Event Browser, and then when you edit them into your movie, the volumes will be normalized already. Because we've edited everything first and worked with audio last, you'll need to individually normalize each clip. Normalizing clips in the Event Browser will not affect any clips in the project.

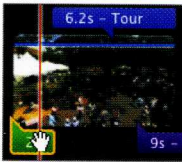
NOTE ► If you normalize the clip volume of clips in the Event Browser, any extracted audio will still need to be normalized again, because iMovie treats the extracted audio as its own reference file.

Mixing Your Sound with Audio Ducking

Even with sound normalized, audio tracks can compete with one another, and cause sounds or dialogue you want your audience to hear to be inaudible or unclear. iMovie enables you to choose a track as your primary sound source and *duck* all the others behind it, automatically changing their levels.

Here's how to normalize and set audio ducking for extracted clips and VOs.

- 1 Select the extracted audio track you placed at the start of the overhead crowd shot after Michael's first interview (it's the green one), and open the Audio Adjustments window.



The extracted audio from the interview is so soft it gets lost amidst the crowd walla (*walla* is industry lingo for that indiscernible background chatter). We need to normalize this audio, but we also need to drop, or duck, the crowd noise behind it.

- 2 Click Normalize Clip Volume.
- 3 Select the Ducking checkbox.



By default, iMovie ducks all audio on any other overlapping tracks to 15% of their original volume. This default setting has a pleasant effect in most situations and is generally preferable for longer tracks that extend over multiple edits, such as the voiceover tracks in your project.

But when you play this clip back to hear the results, you'll notice that the crowd volume is extremely low, and when the interview audio finishes, the crowd suddenly gets very loud. You can soften this by moving the ducking slider to keep it from dropping the other tracks too low.

