

Podcast Production — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a buildable project: by the end you will have a documented show concept, a tested recording chain, a finished edited episode, and a live, distributed podcast. Work through one section per module, filling in the worksheets and ticking the checklists as you go. The templates at the end give you reusable production trackers you can copy for every future episode.

Planning Your Show and Building the Production Foundation

Define your format and audience, lock your show bible, and assemble a recording setup that fits your budget and space.

Exercise: Pin Down Your Concept in One Sentence

Draft your show in a single concrete sentence covering who it serves, the value it delivers, and what makes it specific. Rewrite it three times, narrowing the niche each pass until it could not describe any other podcast.

- Who exactly is your ideal listener, and in what situation do they press play (commute, gym, dishes)?

- What specific problem, question, or curiosity does each episode satisfy?

- Why would this person choose your show over the existing podcasts in the same topic?

- What format (solo, co-host, interview, narrative, panel) can you realistically sustain for at least 10 episodes?

Worksheet: Show Bible Starter

Fill in every field. This becomes the reference document that keeps episode 50 consistent with episode 1. Keep it to two pages.

Show name

Tagline (under 10 words)

One-sentence show description

Target audience

Format

Target episode length

Release cadence

Standard segment order

Role of music in each segment

Tone and language rules

Explicit tag (yes/no)

Standard call to action

Worksheet: Gear and Budget Plan

Choose each component of your recording chain and record the model and cost. Favor a dynamic mic and room treatment over an expensive condenser.

Microphone model and type (dynamic/condenser)

Connection (USB or XLR)

Audio interface or mixer (if XLR)

Monitoring headphones (closed-back)

Mic stand or boom arm

Pop filter or windscreen

Total budget

Planned room/space for recording

Checklist: Foundation Ready Checklist

- Show concept written in one specific sentence
- Show bible completed and saved
- Recording space chosen and softened with absorption (blankets, bookshelf, closet)
- Microphone and headphones acquired and connected
- DAW installed and project set to 48 kHz, 24-bit
- Test recording peaks between -18 and -6 dBFS with clean headphone monitoring
- Room-tone capture habit established

Recording Clean Audio In Person and Remotely

Build reliable mic technique and a remote-recording workflow that captures broadcast-quality audio from anyone, anywhere.

Exercise: Mic Technique Calibration

Record the same 60-second passage three times at different distances and angles, then listen back and choose your best position. Note the settings so you can reproduce them every session.

- At what distance (in cm) does your voice sound full but not boomy or plosive-heavy?

- Does speaking slightly off-axis reduce harsh 'p' and 'b' bursts in your recording?

- At what gain setting does your loudest line peak around -12 to -6 dBFS?

- What background noises did you only notice on playback, and how will you eliminate them next time?

Worksheet: Remote Guest Prep Sheet

Complete one of these before every remote recording, and send the guest-facing version to your guest in advance.

Recording platform (Riverside / Zencastr / SquadCast / other)

Guest name and time zone

Confirmed: guest will wear headphones

Confirmed: guest is in a quiet, soft room

Confirmed: guest internet connection (wired preferred)

Local backup recording method for host

Test clip reviewed (yes/no)

Files confirmed uploaded before guest left (yes/no)

Checklist: Pre-Record Session Checklist

- Each voice recording to its own separate track
- Headphones on for everyone in the session
- Phones and notifications fully silenced
- Name and date slate recorded on every track
- 10 to 20 seconds of room tone captured
- 30-second test recorded and listened back before the real take
- Redundant local backup recording running

Worksheet: File Naming and Backup Log

Define your naming convention and log where each backup copy of the raw files lives, following the 3-2-1 rule.

Naming convention (e.g. S01E04_host_raw.wav)

Folder structure (raw / project / exports / assets)

Backup copy 1 location

Backup copy 2 location (different media)

Offsite copy location (cloud)

Date raw files confirmed backed up

Editing and Sound-Designing the Episode

Shape raw audio into a tight, clean, well-mixed episode using a consistent edit order and a deliberate processing chain.

Exercise: Edit a Full Episode in Order

Take one raw recording through the full editing order without skipping ahead. Time each stage so you learn your real editing-to-finished-hour ratio.

- Which segments or tangents did you cut entirely, and did removing them improve the flow?
 - Where did over-tightening make the audio sound robotic, and what natural breaths did you restore?
 - How long did the full edit take per finished minute of audio?
 - Did a fresh-ears listen on another day reveal pacing problems you missed while editing?
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Worksheet: Voice Processing Chain Preset

Record the exact settings you settle on for your voice so you can reuse them on every episode for a consistent sound.

High-pass filter frequency (Hz)

Muddiness cut frequency and amount (around 200 to 400 Hz)

Presence lift frequency and amount (around 3 to 6 kHz)

Compression ratio and threshold

De-esser setting (if used)

Noise-reduction amount and source sample

Tool used (Audacity / Reaper / Hindenburg / Auphonic / Adobe Podcast)

Worksheet: Music Licensing Tracker

Log every piece of music and sound used in the episode and confirm you have the right to use it for a podcast.

Track name

Source library (Epidemic / Artlist / YouTube Audio Library / Pixabay / other)

License type and whether podcast/commercial use is allowed

Where it is used (intro / transition / bed / outro)

Attribution required (yes/no) and credit text

Date and proof of license saved

Checklist: Mix Quality Checklist

- Structural, content, and filler edits completed before adding music
- Noise reduction applied lightly with no watery artifacts
- EQ and compression applied consistently to every voice
- Music ducks under all speech so dialogue stays clearly on top
- Fades, not hard cuts, used when music enters and exits
- Mix checked on headphones, laptop speakers, and a phone
- Full rough cut reviewed end to end with fresh ears

Mastering, Publishing, and Growing Your Podcast

Master to broadcast loudness, get listed on every major platform, and build a release and growth routine driven by real data.

Exercise: Master and Export to Spec

Run your finished episode through a loudness meter or normalization tool, hit the spoken-word standard, and export the correct distribution file. Record your numbers.

- What was your measured integrated loudness before adjustment, and how far from -16 LUFS was it?

- Did your true-peak limiter keep peaks at or below -1 dBTP?

- Which export settings did you use (MP3 bitrate, stereo or mono)?

- Are your ID3 tags (title, show, episode number, cover art) embedded correctly?

Worksheet: Launch Submission Tracker

Fill this in as you set up hosting and submit your feed so nothing is missed before launch day. Podcast host chosen and monthly cost

RSS feed URL

Feed validated without errors (yes/no)

Cover art 3000x3000 px, legible at thumbnail size (yes/no)

Show metadata set (category, language, explicit flag)

Submitted to Apple Podcasts Connect (date)

Submitted to Spotify for Podcasters (date)

Submitted to YouTube and other directories (date)

Checklist: Pre-Launch and Release Checklist

- Episode mastered to -16 LUFS integrated, true peak at -1 dBTP
- Distribution MP3 exported with ID3 tags and cover art
- Three to five episodes ready to launch with momentum
- RSS feed owned by you and exportable to another host
- Show notes written with summary, timestamps, and call to action
- Consistent publish day and time scheduled in host
- Listeners asked directly for ratings and reviews

Worksheet: Episode Performance Review

After each episode has been live for about 30 days, log its numbers and the one change you will make next time.

Episode number and title

Downloads in first 7 days

Downloads in first 30 days

Consumption / completion rate

Biggest drop-off point (timestamp)

Top promotion source that drove listens

One change to apply to the next episode

Your Action Plan

1. Write your one-sentence show concept and complete the show bible.
2. Choose and assemble your recording chain, then treat your recording space with soft absorption.
3. Configure your DAW to 48 kHz, 24-bit and run a test recording that peaks safely between -18 and -6 dBFS.
4. Record your first full episode to separate tracks, with slates, room tone, and a redundant backup.
5. Edit in order (structure, content, filler, cleanup, levels), then add ducked music and sound design.
6. Apply a consistent voice processing chain and master the episode to -16 LUFS with a -1 dBTP ceiling.
7. Export a tagged 128 kbps MP3 and create 3000x3000 px cover art.
8. Set up a podcast host, validate your RSS feed, and submit it to Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and YouTube.
9. Launch with three to five episodes and a fixed weekly or biweekly release schedule.
10. Review downloads and completion rates after 30 days and apply one improvement to the next episode.

