

Found Sound Rhythm Composition

Goal: Create a 4-measure looped rhythm composition made entirely of short samples you collect and arrange in the timeline grid.

Technical goals:

- Samples are short (max 1ish second each)
- Audio samples are edited to remove all silence
- All audio is below 0db
- Volume of audio samples is balanced
- All samples line up with the 16th note grid in arrangement view

Aesthetic goals:

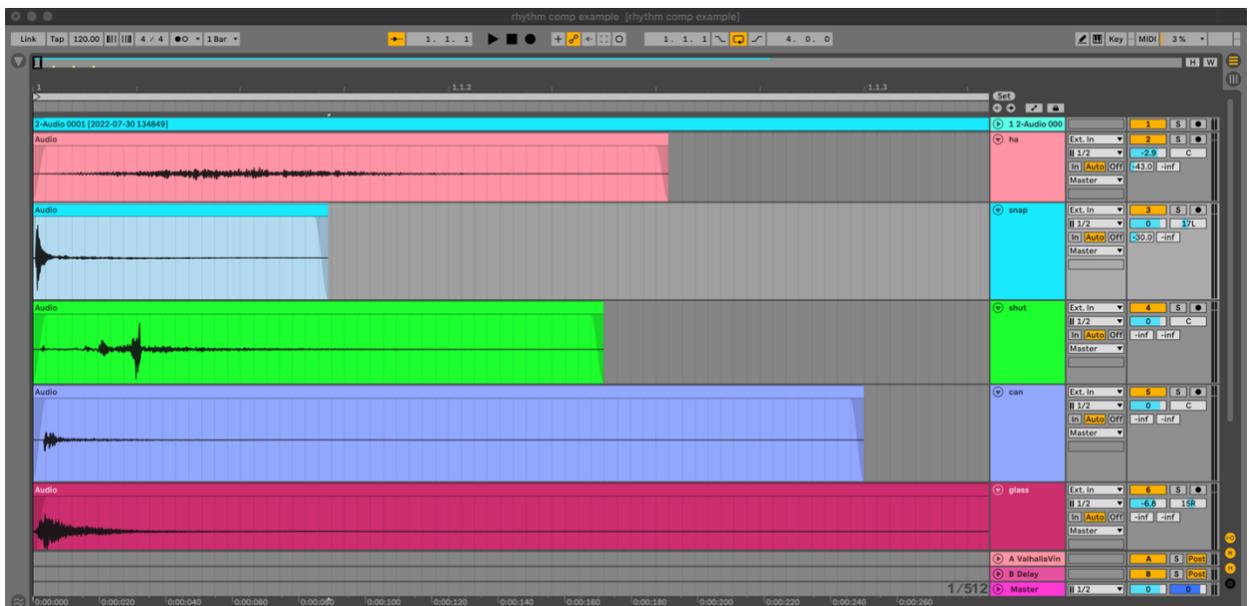
- Project is 4 measures, looped
- Tempo between 80 and 140 bpm
- Minimum 4 different sounds
- Samples come together to create a beat/groove
- Variety in the found sounds
- EQ and other audio effects are used to enhance and change sounds

Step by Step

1. Collect your items for creating the sounds you will sample.
2. Record the sounds one at a time onto a new audio track



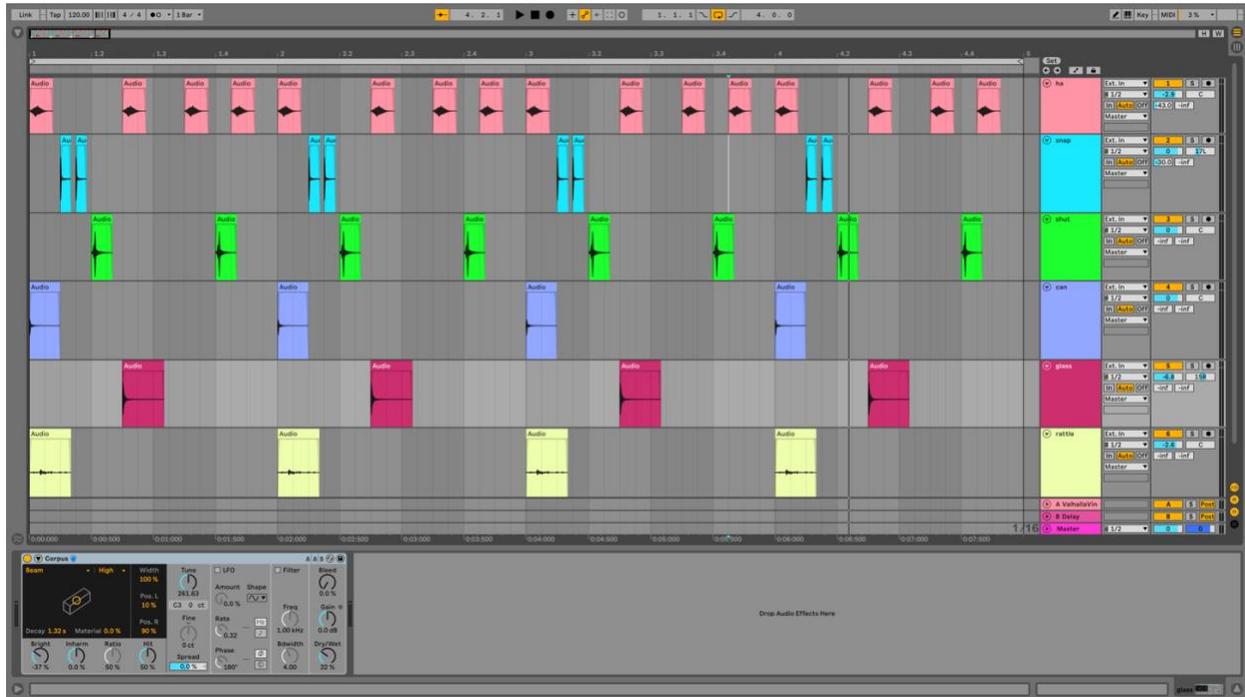
3. Cut out each of the samples (cmd-E) you want to use and place them on their own track
4. Zoom in and edit each sample so there is no silence at the start by clicking and dragging the top left corner of each clip. Do the same for the end, but be careful not to cut the sound off too early.



5. Rename each track to something that describes the sound on it. You can also change the colour of each track and “Assign track color to clips”.
6. Set the loop to 4.0.0 and make sure it starts at 1.0.0



- Copy and paste the clips (hold Option, click and drag) into a rhythmic arrangement, keeping each sound on its own track.



- Make sure all your levels are balanced, the audio doesn't go above 0db on any track (including the master), and get creative with some audio effects. Try playing with the BPM to see where it sounds best.

Tip:

There are lots of interesting creative effects you can use for this. In addition to the usual EQ, reverb, and delay, check out Corpus and Frequency Shifter!

Putting a limiter on the master track is one way to be certain your audio never peaks.



Unreliable Product Ad

Goal: In pairs, write and record an advertisement for a product you make up. Edit the audio, add sound effects, audio effects, and anything else you think will make the advertisement sound like a legit radio ad. Maximum 30 seconds.

Technical goals:

- Students will learn how to record audio tracks using a microphone.
- Students will edit overlapping clips in Arrangement View on multiple tracks.
- Students will alter audio pitch and time as needed in their project.

Aesthetic goals:

- Students will balance audio levels to draw attention to the spoken dialogue tracks.
- Students will write an engaging, persuasive, and/or entertaining advertisement.
- Students will write a script that is easy for the listener to understand.

Step 1: Brainstorm

As a cohort, check out [this playlist](#) on YouTube and listen to a bunch of the videos. Then, brainstorm the following:

What are the features of a radio/YouTube ad? What are the features of the voiceover audio?

Step 2: Script writing

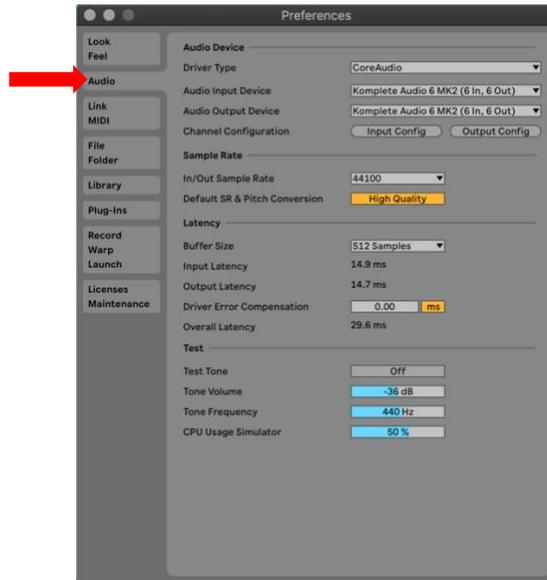
In pairs, come up with an idea for product. Write a script for two or more characters advertising said product. Aim for something engaging, persuasive, and/or entertaining!

Step 3: Recording

In a practice room, set up an audio interface and microphone and record your script. Put each character's audio on a different track.

Things to remember when you are setting up to record:

- Open Preferences by hitting ⌘-, (command comma) and check in the Audio tab that your Scarlett interface is selected input and output device.



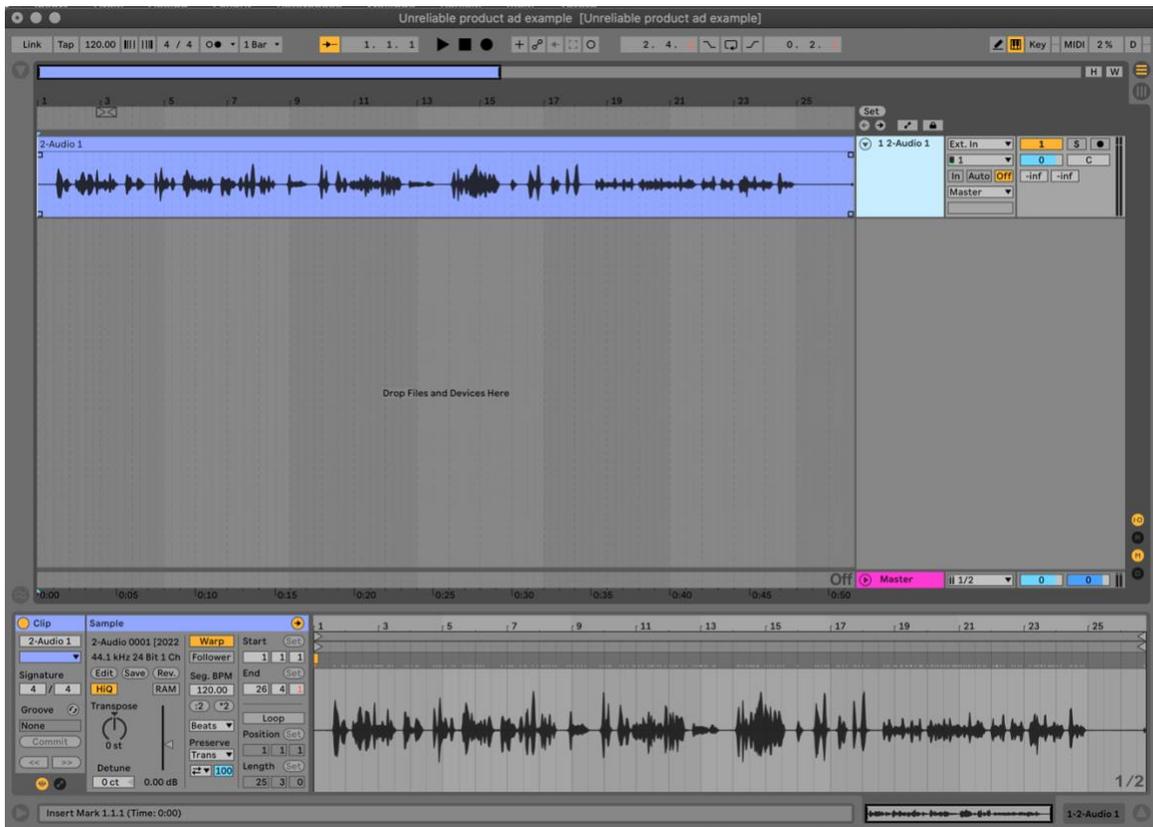
I'm using a Komplete Audio 6 as my interface in this screenshot

- Make sure you have an audio track in your project: you can't record audio to a MIDI track. Add one by pressing ⌘-t
- Ensure the input on the track you are recording is set to the same channel your mic is plugged into on your interface and the track is armed for recording.



- Do some level checks and set the gain on the interface before you start: mic position and distance from the speaker will have a big effect on how the recording sounds. Try to keep the recorded voice between -24db and -10db for best results.

- Use arrangement view for this project, not session view. You want to record your audio to the timeline, not as clips.



Audio recorded in arrangement view

- Instead of trying to record the whole script in one take, try recording line by line. It'll make your editing easier!

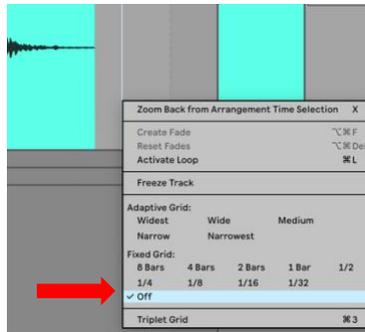
Step 4: Sound effects

Use free sound libraries like the [Free Sound Library](#) or [freesound.org](#) to find sounds to add to and enhance your advertisement. You can download them and then drag them into your project from the downloads folder in the Finder.

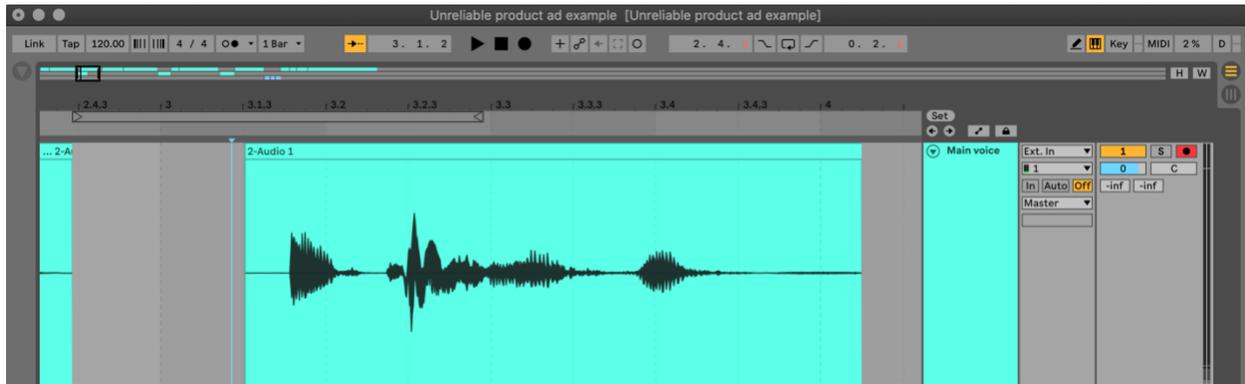
Step 5: Editing

Once your script is recorded and you've got your sound effects, you can start editing.

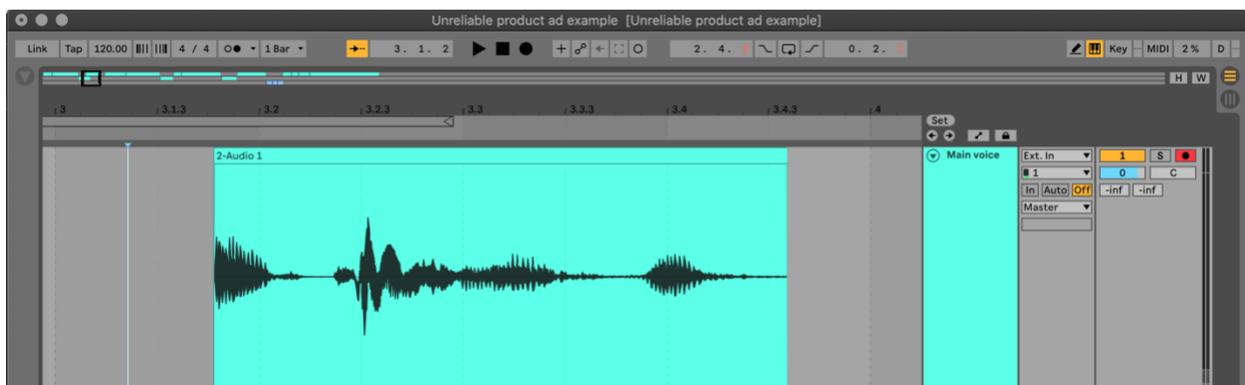
- Turn off "Fixed grid" for more precise editing by right clicking somewhere on the timeline.



- Remove as much silence as you can by looking at the waveforms and removing the silence at the starts and ends of each clip. If there are any breaths that were recorded, get rid of those too!



Before removing silences at the start and end of this line of text



After removing silences

- You can edit and combine your sound effects too! If you want overlapping sounds, just put them on different tracks and have them overlap on the timeline.

Step 6: Audio effects and finishing touches

The most important effect you'll need for this is compression on the voice tracks. I suggest using the compressor preset "Brick Wall" on all the dialogue tracks and playing with the threshold parameter until it sounds good. Feel free to get creative though! You can use all kinds of effects to spice your ad up. Maybe you want to add some music?



Step 7: Export

Export an mp3 of your completed project and put it in your portfolio! Make sure both people in your group get a copy, and put both names on the file name.