
NEW EARTH ALMANAC

Audio Submission Requirements

Hello and thanks for your interest in recording for the New Earth Almanac!

We believe each contributor's piece can be amplified and further personalized by the unique qualities of their own voice. We encourage you to read for us and add to the chorus of talented voices in our circle.

In order to ensure consistency and professionalism across submissions, we've included this info sheet for new contributors. This sheet lists the basic setup the Almanac requires in order to consider your audio submission for publication. Please refer to it if you are interested in reading your piece for us.

For all contributors, we request that you submit a 30-second to 1-minute sample of you speaking normally or reading so we can evaluate the quality of your equipment and the environment you're recording in. From this submission, we can provide pointers and advice to help you get the most out of your readings and get the best voice quality possible.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at: newearthalmanac@protonmail.com

Basic Requirements for Audio Submissions

-USB microphone for recording audio. While the microphones in laptops and phones have come a long way, they still don't match the recording power and quality of a standard USB microphone. USB microphones enhance vocals, eliminate background noise, and have built-in hardware dedicated to improving overall audio quality. Brands like Blue Yeti, Shure, and Audio-Technica all produce excellent microphones. The mid-range models average about \$100.

-Laptop or desktop computer with a processor running at least 2.2Ghz, 4GB of RAM, and enough storage for submission files (we recommend at least 150GB of free space). Most any computer that is five years old or earlier should meet these requirements. We do recommend a desktop computer or dedicated workstation as laptop cooling fans may get picked up during recording.

-Pop or plosive filter for filtering out sibilant "S" sounds and pops that can come from "P" and "B" syllables when speaking. Most filters are inexpensive and come with clips or clamps to hook them right onto the microphone or the stand you're using.

-Audio software for recording your audio submissions. All Macs come with Garage Band installed and Audacity is a free, open-source audio program for both Windows and Macs. For more experienced users, Adobe Audition is a more robust option available with a Creative Cloud subscription. Audio software is designed specifically to capture audio and can even match to your microphone for better recording - the result is a much better recording quality

than the voice memo recorders that come on most computers. **All final submissions to the Almanac should be recorded in mono and saved in MP3 format.**

-**Headphones** (optional) for both monitoring audio and quality checking. Wearing headphones while recording eliminates feedback and allows you to monitor your audio quality in real time. Once recorded, listening to your piece through headphones will allow you to get a more complete picture of your submission. You may pick up on background noise, hisses, etc. that you can miss with traditional speakers. Though headphones are not a requirement for submissions, it is something to consider if you want your audio to stand out.

-**Dedicated quiet area** for recording (closed door, away from traffic, fans, etc.). A quiet space is a must for recording clean audio. Fans, electric appliances, construction and traffic noises, barking pets, all can take focus away from your voice. Most microphones have background noise filters and most audio software comes with filters to tackle hums and clicks, but the goal is to make the initial recording as clean as possible so that little-to-no post production is required. Thick blankets, basic sound panels, or baffle boxes offer inexpensive solutions to ensure quiet recording.

Tips & Tricks

-Practice your piece aloud a few times before deciding to record. This will help you familiarize yourself with how your writing sounds out loud and give you an idea of pacing and tone.

-Pace yourself. The golden rule is to read your piece like you would if you were telling a story to someone sitting next to you. Too fast and your words will run together and too slow and you will sound wooden. When in doubt, err on the side of slower.

-Remember your audience! It's easy to simply recite what is written and forget that you are speaking to an audience who is eager to hear what you have to say! Try to imagine yourself speaking to another person or a small group and you will naturally project instead of recite.

-Breathe! It's easy to forget to breathe, especially when first recording. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths before you start and try and find the natural places to breathe in the breaks between sentences. This will become much easier with practice.

-Bring water with you and keep it close. Staying hydrated is important and it's easy to dry yourself out speaking. Make sure you drink enough water to keep your voice sounding natural and smooth.

-Clap or pause for five seconds if you mess up. All is not lost if you mispronounce a word or trip yourself up when you're recording. Simply wait five seconds or clap your hands loudly in front of the microphone and then pick up from the beginning of the sentence. When you are scrolling through the timeline after recording, those claps will appear as spikes or silences will appear as flatlines, so it will be easier to find where your errors are so you can edit them out.

-Do one take. Voices can change throughout the day, so it's best to do your recording in one session at one time rather than do a little bit, pause, and then go back and do more later.

-Keep your mouth close to the microphone. This helps isolate your voice and keeps the focus on your narration. Make sure your audio gain is adequate and **do some test recordings first** to make sure your voice isn't too low or too high or distorted.

-Have fun! This is a chance for you to shine and instill your passion and style into your written work. These are stories only you can tell. Remember to relax, have fun, and enjoy the process of truly speaking to your fans!