



REEL NIKKEI STORIES: Nikkei Family Legacy Project

A project of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

RECORDING SOUND/AUDIO FOR VIDEO

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What is sound or audio?

Sound is what you hear. You can hear a few sounds or you can hear a bunch of sounds mixed together.

A few basic steps:

- Find a quiet time and place to record, preferably away from a loud busy street, away from barking dogs and crying babies.
- Make sure you turn off the ringer on your house phone(s) and turn off your cell phone(s).
- If you must record your video in the kitchen, you will need to unplug your refrigerator. Tip: put something important in the refrigerator (like your car keys) so you'll remember to plug it back in.
- Close all of the other doors of the house. It helps prevent noises from other areas.
- Turn off all fans and heaters or you may pick up background noises as well.

Recording your audio:

- This can be done using a microphone (mic), either the built in mic on your camera or an external mic.
- First, make sure that your mic is set to "manual" using your camera's instructions.
- If using an external mic, plug it in to the mic input now. Also plug in your headphones into the headphone jack.
- Make sure you point the mic as close to the interviewee as possible without it getting into the shot. Also make sure you point the mic in the direction of your interviewee's mouth for the best sound possible.
- Make sure that your mic input volume is higher than your headphone output level. This is important because your headphone level is higher than your mic level. You might be getting sound that you think is good, but in reality it's really low.
- If your camera has audio level meters, put them on "display" on your camera so that you can see what's going on with your audio.



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Recording your audio (cont.)

- A good level to have is about (-12) decibels. Adjust your mic input to where it hits about (-12).
- If you're using an external mic, make sure to keep it in place once you start. This will allow you to get more consistent audio levels.
- Also make sure that you are monitoring your audio through your headphones. This way you can hear what's going on.

Things to avoid when recording audio:

- Loose jewelry
- Squeaky and/or swivel chairs
- Loud areas
- Rooms near busy streets

SOUND TIPS:

- Be aware of sound coming from unexpected sources, like lights, clocks, fish tanks, computers, etc.
- Don't forget to "room tone," which is the natural silence of the room when no one is talking. You can use this during your edit if you need a bit of silence between two pieces of sound.