

Hello and Welcome!

If you're receiving this packet, that means we're working together for the first time, and I couldn't be more excited to get started on your audiobook project! This helpful guide covers the process I use when producing your audiobook, along with some other useful information. This packet covers information relating to both fiction and nonfiction, so please feel free to simply ignore anything that doesn't apply to our project.

If this *isn't* your first rodeo, some of this information may already be familiar to you, but just in case what I do differs from other narrators you may have worked with, **please read this document carefully.** It should answer most of the questions you might have, but feel free to contact me if you need more information or clarification.

Here's how you can reach me:

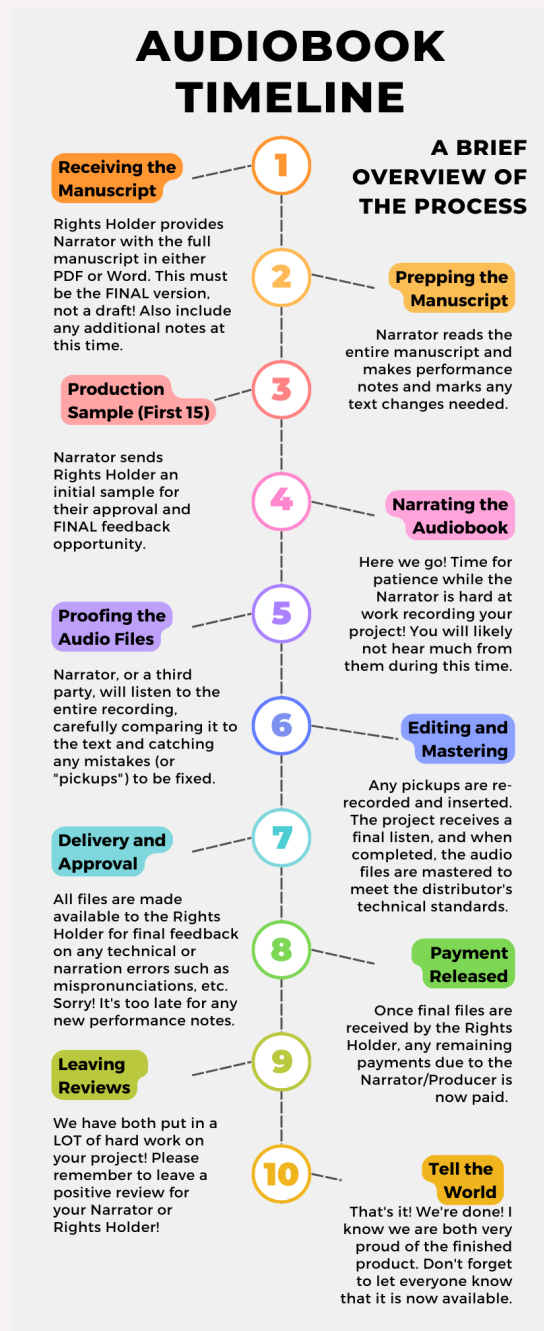
- Email: connect@jessvox.com
- Phone/Text: (844) JESSVOX • 844 537-7869

For the fastest response, please leave a detailed phone or email message and I will get back with you ASAP. My phone is frequently on silent while recording.

Process Overview

The process of producing an audiobook includes a series of steps in its development. Here's a quick overview of the process, with more details about each section to follow. At the end of this document, I will also share some general guidelines about audiobook marketing that you may find helpful. And at the very, very end, you can learn a little bit about me! Let's dig in!

1. Receiving the manuscript
2. Prepping the manuscript
3. Production sample ("The First 15")
4. Narrating the title
5. Proofing
6. Editing and mastering
7. Delivery and approval
8. Payment
9. Reviews
10. Marketing



Receiving the Manuscript & Notes

Once we have agreed to work together and are ready to get started, I will need the full manuscript of the book in either PDF or Word document format. This must be the final version of the book, not a draft.

As we all know, nothing is ever 100% error-free, and I do sometimes come across typos or other things that were missed. (Not because I'm a great proofreader, but because I'm reading the entire thing out loud and with a fresh pair of eyes!) If I do come across an error, I will correct it in my narration and, if possible, make note of the error in my copy of the manuscript.

Along with the manuscript, I need to receive any additional notes you may have about the content, such as pronunciations of names and/or places, character notes, or anything else you think will be helpful for me as I narrate.

Here are a few examples:

Fiction Title Notes

- **Character notes:**
 - **Age**
 - **Location** - Where the character is from: country, city, and any cultural particulars
 - **Identity** (contextual) - ethnicity, socioeconomic, education
 - **Accent** - if any other than standard American English
 - **Name Pronunciations** - especially if unusual or not obvious
 - **Adjectives** - descriptive of their attitude, voice traits, talking pace, and so on (sarcastic, gruff, kind, cocky, flighty, shy, etc.)
- **Series notes:**
 - Any characters that may recur later in the story or series
 - Any minor characters in this book that may have larger roles in future books
 - Any story arcs or plots that are good to keep in mind

Nonfiction Title Notes

- **Pronunciation:** any names of people or places that may not be well known and that might be difficult to research, or that might be pronounced differently due to regional, or other, variants. For example:

Houston, Texas (**HEW**-ston) vs. Houston, Ohio (**HOUSE**-ton)

Karissa - Most people pronounce it with a short ĭ sound, (kuh - **rĭ**-suh) while *my* name is pronounced with a long ē sound. (kuh - **rē** -suh)

- It's important that I receive all pronunciations **before** recording starts. If I don't, and it turns out I've been pronouncing something incorrectly, well, that'll need to be fixed and will involve cost: time for me, and in some cases, additional expense for you.
- After reading the manuscript in full, I may also approach you before recording starts with a list of any additional words I need pronounced. If I do, we can either set up a call so I can record you pronouncing the words, or I can send you a list and you can leave me a reply by voicemail.

Preparing the Manuscript

Again, I will need the full manuscript of the book in either PDF or Word document format. This *must* be the final version of the manuscript, not a draft.

First, I will read the entire book, making notes to aid in narration: highlighting dialogue, researching any pronunciations, and making any performance notes for myself.

Among the things that I address in my prep, especially for nonfiction, are any changes to the text that help clarify things for the listener as opposed to a reader, since many of the visual cues readers rely on are not present when listening. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **Abbreviations** are usually read out fully. (“e.g.” is read as “for example”; “i.e.” is read as “that is”, “etc.” is read as “and so on”, etc.)
- **Acronyms** are read out fully the first time they are used. If an acronym hasn’t been used in a while, I might expand it again in the first use in a later chapter.
- **Titles of books, films, songs, etc.** - I may add some text for clarification. For example, I will add the words “the book titled...” before a title to help distinguish it from the surrounding text for the listener.
- **Bible citations** are read as “chapter x, verse y”. For example: John 3:16 is read as “John chapter three, verse 16”. Bible versions and common abbreviations in Scripture references are not usually narrated, but if you prefer they be included, they will be read out fully, such as “King James Version”, and so on.
- **Quotes** - To clarify where quoted text begins, some text may be added, if needed, such as “for example”, “she said”, “they wrote”, etc.
- **Website addresses** are usually simplified, by omitting “http://” and sometimes “www”. I may also repeat the address slowly, to allow the listener time to jot it down.
- **Bullet points and lists** may be alphabetized or numbered for clarity. Sometimes a word like “and”, “or”, etc. will be added before the final item in a list.

I also decide the best way to handle any charts, tables or illustrations. (This is generally only necessary in nonfiction.) These will be dealt with in one of the following ways:

- **Omitted** Some illustrations are purely for design or decorative purposes, and while they enhance the *reading* experience, they provide no extra information and can be left out of the audiobook.
- **Converted** into descriptive text to be read aloud, or
- **Added to a companion PDF** that listeners can download. This is usually done when something is critical to understanding the text, but cannot be suitably modified for reading aloud.

Audiobook Omissions

If you've listened to a number of audiobooks, you know that certain parts of the book are often left out, usually because they would either detract from the listener's experience, or add nothing to it. The following table shows which sections are usually included, and those that aren't.

SECTION	INCLUDED
Opening credits	Always
Author or book reviews	Never
Table of Contents	Never
Glossary	Never
Dedication	Sometimes
Acknowledgements	Never
Preface/Introduction/Foreword	Usually
Author's Note	Rarely
Prologue	Always
Epigraph	Usually
Full, unabridged text	Always
Charts, graphs, appendices, etc.	Sometimes
Epilogue	Always
*Footnotes	Rarely
Bibliography	Never
Index	Never
About the Author	Sometimes
Preview of next book	Sometimes
Closing Credits	Always

**If information in a footnote is important to the story, the information may be moved to the body of the text where it is referenced, thereby providing easier clarification to the listener.*

Production Sample - “The First 15”

After prepping the book, I record a short excerpt. On ACX, this is usually called “the first 15 minutes” or “first 15”; other platforms may call it a “performance sample”. First 15 is sometimes a misnomer, especially in fiction, as I will most often try to include a section, or selection of sections, that includes most of the main characters and not necessarily the first part of the book.

I then send this to you for your feedback. **This is a critical step.** It’s where you give your *final* approval for any performance choices I make in the production. **After this preview, the only notes I will accept from you will be for technical issues or reading errors.** (More about those two things in a later section.)

Narrating the Title

Now that the initial preparation is complete, it’s time for me to do the actual narration, to take your brilliant work and give it a voice! How long narration takes depends on the length of the book itself, how complex the text is to read, and other factors.

During this time, you may not hear a lot from me. Rest assured, I’m hard at work. My aim is always to complete the book according to our agreed-upon schedule, barring any unforeseen circumstances. If something unexpected happens, I will contact you immediately.

Proofing

Once initial recording is done, I have a third party listen to the entire recording, comparing it to the text. I make mistakes too, and anything that needs fixing such as technical glitches, the wrong text was read, mispronunciations are noted. A list of these is made, called “pickups”, which I then use to go back through the recording and fix them.

Editing & Mastering

Once pickups are recorded, and the corrections are inserted into the recording, the entire project is gone over once again to give it that “final polish” and make it sound amazing!

After that step is completed, each individual file is mastered to meet the technical standards specified by ACX or the final distributor.

Delivery & Approval

After proofing, editing, and mastering are all completed, you come back into the process.

All the files will be made available to you to listen to and give your feedback. On ACX, this will be through their website; in other cases, it will be different, and I'll advise as to how the files will be made available to you.

At this time, I highly recommend that you listen to the entire audiobook!

I know that may be asking a lot, but it's **critical** to the process, and we both want the final project to be the very best it can be! This is also your **final** opportunity to find any additional errors that may have slipped through the cracks in the proofing and editing process.

At this point, you should make note of any instances of:

- **Technical errors:** Glitches, missed edits, background noise—essentially, anything that distracts from the performance.
- **Narrator errors:** Mispronunciations, stumbles, etc. Ideally, these will all have been taken care of during the proofing & editing stages, but there's always a slim chance something gets missed.

Any notes on performance? Sorry, these are only addressed after the first 15. I'm afraid it's too late for those now.

Once you've listened to the entire audiobook, submit any notes you have to me. I usually provide an online spreadsheet for this purpose. I will go through your notes, make any final corrections, and get the files ready for submission.

Conclusion

I know this has been a ***lot*** of information all at once... maybe even just a little bit overwhelming! Believe me, I understand completely! But... clear expectations always make for a much smoother collaboration!

If there's anything in this packet that's unclear or confusing, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at any time, and I'll respond just as quickly as possible.

By the way, I'm also open to any suggestions you may have for inclusion in future versions of this Welcome Packet, that you would have found helpful.

Once again, here's how you can reach me.

- **Email:** connect@jessvox.com
- **Phone:** Text preferred - US Central Time (844) JESSVOX · 844 537-7869

And again, I'm so pleased that you've chosen to partner with me in this audiobook project. I know that you're placing a ***lot*** of trust in me, and I promise you that I will do my very best to live up to that trust!

In the meantime, I wish you **all** the best with your writing!

Bonus - Audiobook Promotion

All outside links were verified at the time of this printing, but are subject to change. If you do come across a broken link, please let me know so I can update it!

How to get the word out

I'm sure you're already familiar with promoting your book. The process is similar for audiobooks, but here are a few things that you may find useful.

During production, post on social media, just as you would for writing a book. Social media is a great way to reach both your existing audience and new people. Using tags, posting to relevant online groups, and so on are all great ways to raise awareness of the soon to be released audiobook.

Should you want me to record a little "behind the scenes" snippet for you to share, I'd be more than happy to do that. Once the title is completed, I can provide you with a promotional clip to use on social media or your website. And of course, whenever you plug the other versions of the book, remember to include the audio version in your promotions.

Podcasts are another great way to get the word out. If you have the opportunity to appear as a guest on a podcast, and you'd like me to appear as well, I'd be happy to do that. I can talk about the audiobook, the process, etc.

Promo Code Giveaways

Sites like ACX may provide you with promo codes to pass on to your listeners. There are lots of places you can give away these codes:

- On social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- On your website
- In your newsletter
- At book signings or events

Promo Code in Exchange for a Review

In addition to giveaways, you can post your audiobook and the codes to the following sites in exchange for a review. (Keep in mind: reviews are not guaranteed because of Amazon/Audible rules regarding promotions.)

Promo Code Giveaway Sites

In addition to regular giveaways, you can post your audiobook and its codes to the following sites to in exchange for a review. (Remember, reviews are not guaranteed because of Amazon/Audible rules regarding promotions.)

Free Audiobook Codes - <https://freeaudiobookcodes.com/>

Formerly Audiobook Boom, this service is for listing your audiobook and any codes you have available for listeners to download. There is a small charge for each title listed, however, authors have more control over how they want codes distributed and who gets them. There is no charge for the listener.

Audiobooks Unleashed - <https://audiobooksunleashed.com/>

This is also a self-service code site with no cost to listeners and a small fee for authors/narrators depending on the number of titles and level of control you want as to who can receive your codes. From the main page, select "Add an Audiobook" for more information and pricing.

Social Media Groups

Social media platforms, like Facebook and Goodreads, have groups specifically aimed at audiobook promo code giveaways, and are often specific to certain genres and sub-genres. These groups allow promotional and giveaway postings. Most groups have rules about promotions, so be sure to follow them.

Many groups are very active and members often recommend authors and narrators they like in their discussions.

General

- **Audiobook Lovers:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/audiobooklovers>
- **Audible Book Club | Audiobooks:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/219431745345392>
- **The Audiobook Club**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/theaudiobookclubgroup>
- **Everything Audiobook.....E.A.R.S.:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EverythingAudiobooksE.A.R.S>
- **Audiobooks Unleashed:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/audiobooksunleashed>

Christian

- **Christian Audiobook Narrators & Authors (CIA-CARS):**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/220404914802348>

Mystery/Thriller

- **Mystery Audiobook Lovers:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mysteryaudio>
- **Cozy Mystery Audiobook Lovers:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/293318778619666>

SciFi / Fantasy

- **Fant-SciFi Audiobook Club:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FantSciFiAudiobooks>
- **SciFi Audiobooks:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/292258431569710>
- **Fantasy Audiobook Fans:**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/fantasyaudio>

Whispersync

Whispersync allows the listener to switch back and forth between the eReader and audio without losing their place in the book. Audiobooks that have a Whispersync option often sell well, because readers who have the eBook can purchase the audiobook version at a discount. Contact ACX (or other distribution platform) about Whispersync to make sure the audio and ebook are synced.

Glossary

Even though I come from the tech world, **I hate jargon!** That said, here is a handy guide of terms and abbreviations you might run into in the audiobook world.

- RH:** Rights Holder - That's hopefully you! Usually the author, but sometimes companies can buy the audio rights for a book from the author. It is the person of entity that has the legal rights to produce the audio version of a work.
- RS:** Royalty Share - In exchange for no up-front charges for production, the narrator receives a share of the royalties from all sales of the audiobook for a particular term. The RH receives a share, as well as the distributor. The percentage and duration of royalty payments varies with the distributor.
- RS+/Hybrid** Royalty Share Plus or Hybrid Production - The same as Royalty Share, with the addition of a stipend paid to the narrator to help cover costs of production. This stipend can be a lump sum or a small PFH rate.
- PFH:** Per Finished Hour - Usually in reference to a narrator's rate for producing an audiobook. If you want a rough estimate of this, you can divide the word count of your book by 9300. For example, a 100,000 word book / 9300 = 10.75 hours. Of course, this is just an estimate, and the final PFH count will depend on the content, pacing, and other factors.
- Pickup/CRX:** CRX is an abbreviation occasionally used for "Corrections/Retakes". Also known as "pickups". These include a number of items such as misreads or uneditable background noise, and may come from the RH or the proofer.

Hello! It's so nice to meet you!



My name is **Karissa Clayton Jess**, and I'm truly honored that you've chosen me as the voice for a project you've poured so much of yourself into. Choosing a narrator is a personal decision, and my hope is to make the process feel clear, comfortable, and collaborative from start to finish.

I'm a Dallas-based audiobook narrator and voice actor, born and raised in Northeast Texas. I work full-time from my home studio, where I record and edit using only professional-grade equipment and software.

I've also spent over 13 years leading live media and production as a church Creative Production Director. That work has given me a lot of experience supporting other people's work from behind the scenes. (One of my favorite places to be!)

I take my work seriously and pay close attention to detail. I communicate clearly throughout the process and understand the trust involved when an author hands their work to someone else. My goal is to make the experience straightforward and stress-free... especially if this is your first audiobook. If you ever have questions or want to talk through your project, I'm always happy to do that.

Outside of work, my husband Dave and I have been married for over 43 years and live in the country about an hour east of Dallas. We have five grown children, their spouses, and seven grandchildren. When I'm not in the booth or with my family, I'm usually reading (or listening to) books, taking care of the animals, playing games (video or tabletop) or painting miniatures.