

Hi! It's Audra, and I'm here to talk about some audio tools that you can use in the library, in the classroom, when you're working with kids. We'll start with just some basic... Sometimes, you just want the basics. You might be adding some audio to a slide deck that students are going to complete on their own so then you can add audio to those read-aloud directions, answers, add some hints, add some reminders so that every student can access the materials whether they are a visual learner, whether they struggle with reading... Or you might want to add audio to your website. Maybe you have some really cool events coming up and you want to make sure you get the chance to talk about how cool these events are going to be and really put it out there.

If you're doing something like that, the best thing then would be to use a really straightforward, simple tool. One of those tools is online voice recorder, that's online-voice-recorder.com. All you have to do is hit record, unlimited length of time, very straightforward, completely free, no need to log in, hit that stop button, download, you're good to go. You can upload that file straight into your Google Slide, straight into your website. Another option is Vocaroo. Vocaroo is really great for young children because the user interface is very simple. But you still don't have to log in, which makes it something you can use with lots of different school systems without any worry. When you finish recording with Vocaroo, you'll get a link or you can download. It even has a QR code. It does not get rid of your recording automatically but it will delete it over time if it's not accessed. But there's no time limit, which is really nice compared to some of those other tools out there.

But sometimes you don't want something simple. You want to play! You want to explore, you want to have fun with sound. If that's the case, then I recommend Chrome Music Lab. Fantastic tool. Chrome Music Lab -- it's just musiclab.chromeexperiments.com. Bright colors, very enticing, cartoon characters, it's a great tool for messing around and experimenting. You can share the piano with a friend on another site, so then you have your hanging out... um... you're exploring together, you're making music, I'm bouncing ideas off you, we've got both of our Chromebooks there, we're synthesizing... Songmaker, where you can click spaces and make a song. You can then download. Great for "let's make a soundtrack to go along with that story we just read", great for "What does that make you feel? What does that feeling sound like? Is that high pitch sounds? Is that low pitch sounds?" Something that kids can do together or kids can work independently. There are other tools where you can look at sound waves, look at frequency, I've seen some awesome Twitter conversations about how to use it to explore math, the opportunities are endless.

But what's even better is that it's so engaging... In my house, it wasn't just the preschoolers that wanted to play with it. It was the teenagers. It was the adults. Everyone wanted to get in on the conversation. My favorite, personally, was that song maker, but my teenage son was definitely into Kandisky, where you get to make music by drawing. Draw a smiley face, write your name, turn it into a song.

It's accessible on the Chromebook. It's accessible on the iPad. Young children. Adults. And the best part is that it could really be incorporated into any environment. Kindergarten. Sixth grade. Story time at the public library. And there's no failure, there's no "Oh my song is terrible. I don't know how to do this, I don't know what I'm doing." It's just a chance to play, to explore, to mess around, to geek out, to get involved in something through that connected learning framework that connects to your literacy, that connects to your community. Huge fan. Definitely go check it out, try it out, I promise you'll lose track of time playing for a little while all on your own.