An important part of any movie is the soundtrack. You'll soon discover—through the addition of sound effects, music, and narration—that audio is the most powerful and dynamic aspect to storytelling. You have several ways to bring audio into the iMovie application. Although there are limits to the kinds of audio files you can import, there is no limit to the amount of clips you can include. This opens up great opportunities for moviemakers who want to enrich their stories with the depth and complexity a good soundtrack can provide. In fact, first-time directors using iMovie may never know how easy they have it. Previously, digital audio was recorded on a separate system from the film camera equipment (usually DAT tape) at a different rate of speed. This made reliable synchronization tough for the filmmaker. Fortunately, this concern has been eliminated by the digital video (DV) format.

Audio is the most powerful and dynamic aspect to storytelling.
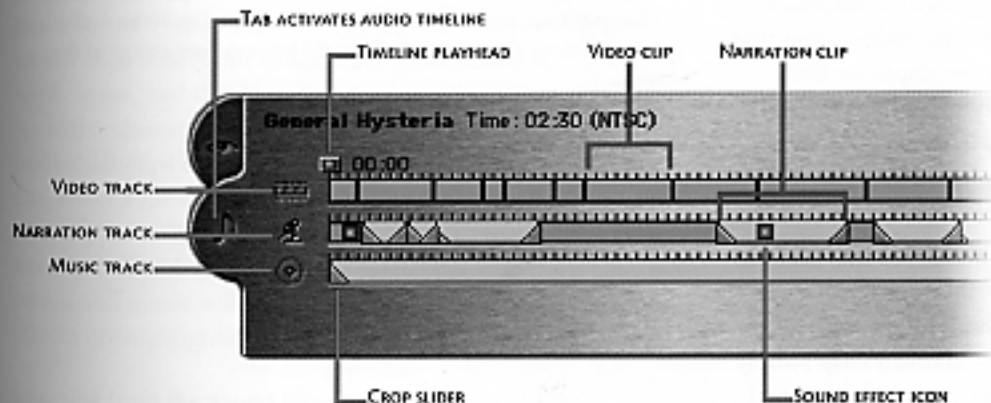
Audio in Perfect Sync

The DV format—which is what's used in most commercial camcorders today—keeps audio completely synchronized with the moving images at all times. Furthermore, once the digital video footage is encoded and transferred to your computer, the audio and video travel together through the entire production cycle. More sophisticated video applications allow you to extract the soundtrack from its accompanying video image, but iMovie forbids this practice.

Currently, there are only a few choices for playback of the synchronized audio attached to your captured footage. You can turn the volume off completely, turn it up completely, or adjust it somewhere in between. The benefit of this is that your characters' dialogue is always in sync with the picture. However, this makes it tough to overlap a single line of dialogue with several different images.

Selecting Sounds in the Audio Timeline

Sound files in iMovie are displayed in the Audio Timeline viewer, which can be activated by clicking the tab under the Clip Viewer—the tab has an icon of a musical note. The Audio Timeline includes three separate representations of audio. The synchronized sound in video footage is displayed as blue clips on the top bar. The middle bar shows audio files introduced

TAB ACTIVATES AUDIO TIMELINE
TIMELINE PLAYHEAD
VIDEO CLIP
NARRATION CLIP

General Hysteria   Time: 02:30 (NTSC)
00:00

VIDEO TRACK
NARRATION TRACK
MUSIC TRACK

CROP SLIDER
SOUND EFFECT ICON

Audio files share many of the same properties of video clips; they can easily be cropped, shuffled, duplicated, or deleted from the timeline. Audio clips can also overlap, letting you combine several sound effects for added impact.

Audio Selection: Voice Narration   Time: 08:27 Start: 54:11 Stop: 01:03:08

59:00

Audio clips will change color when they are selected. Once highlighted, a clip's volume and time markers will change immediately to indicate their precise position and duration.

into the timeline through the Sounds palette, particularly sound effects and narration clips. The bottom bar indicates music tracks captured from CD-ROM discs through the Music palette as well as audio files imported into iMovie using the File menu's Import Command.

The timeline also has an Audio Selection readout in the top center, which will display the current name and duration of any clip once it is selected. This information includes the starting point of the audio clip as well as the marker location where the file stops. You can change the name of any clip by highlighting the text in the Audio Selection box and typing in a replacement.

The number of audio files and sound effects is limited only by the capacity of your iMac computer. Although the interface may become a bit unruly, the possibilities are endless; you may overlap audio files on top of one another or duplicate the same sound again and again. This flexibility lets you experiment with a wide range of creative sound options.

Changing the Audio Settings

When you've got lots of sound edits to make, you may want to isolate one track to hear it more clearly. iMovie lets you turn off audio tracks to listen to sounds without interference from other tracks. Turning audio tracks off is relatively easy. Simply click the checkbox at the end of an audio track to mute all of the clips on that track (a checkmark in the box indicates that the track is active; an empty box means it's mute). It's important to understand that muted tracks will not be included in the soundtrack of your final movie if you do not reactivate them before exporting to a QuickTime file or videotape.
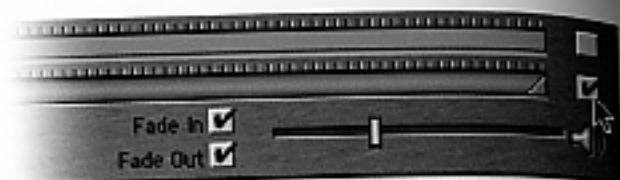
To temporarily turn off an audio track, uncheck the checkbox. This prevents all sounds on the track from playing anywhere along the timeline.
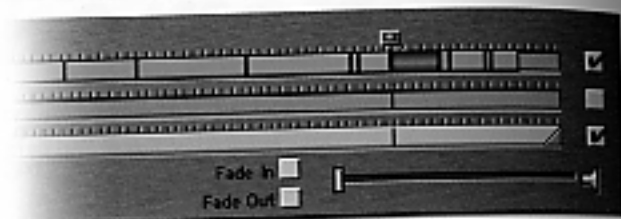
To change the volume of audio files, simply select a clip in the Audio Viewer and move the volume slider in the bottom-right corner of the timeline.

> **MASTER VOLUME**
> BEYOND ADJUSTMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL CLIPS, THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO ADJUST THE MASTER VOLUME LEVEL IN iMOVIE. MASTER VOLUME CAN BE SET BY DRAGGING THE THUMBWHEEL AT THE BOTTOM RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF THE MONITOR PREVIEW WINDOW. YOU CAN ALSO PRESS THE UP AND DOWN ARROW KEYS ON YOUR KEYBOARD TO CONTROL VOLUME.

After working with multiple audio clips, you may discover that the recording levels of certain sounds may be too loud or may interfere with the clarity of another clip. In these cases, it often helps to vary the volume levels of each file independently. The volume slider, located at the bottom right hand corner of the timeline, allows you to set the desired level for any audio clip; this applies to video clips, narration, sound effects, music, and imported audio files. Each audio file may be adjusted individually, but there can be only one setting for the entire duration of the clip. *Volume levels cannot fluctuate within the same clip.*

However, it is possible to have your clips fade in gradually and diminish smoothly as they come to an end. Fading audio is accomplished by clicking the Fade In and Fade Out checkboxes located to the left of the volume slider. The degree to which clips fade (both in and out) is calculated by the iMovie application, and there are no user controls to alter this effect. As with volume adjustments, these settings can be applied to individual clips or to multiple clips selected as a group. You can select a group of clips by holding down the Shift key and clicking them. Each type of sound file will change its appearance to indicate a selection; the video clips turn deep blue, narration and music will appear as a darker orange, and the sound effects are highlighted around the edges of their red squares.

Selecting from the Sound Effects Collection

A variety of prerecorded sound effects comes installed with iMovie. This collection includes everything from simple noises such as birdcalls and musical instruments to more elaborate and professional effects such as audience laugh tracks and studio applause. You can easily add these sound effects to your projects by dragging them into the Audio timeline from the Sounds palette.

Selecting Sounds
Special effects such as the Crowd Clapping file can be instantly added to your soundtrack by dragging clips from Sounds palette to the timeline.

## Step Four: Positioning Audio Clips in the Timeline

DVD Keep the "Flower of Love" project open to finish adding narration tracks to the Audio timeline. Because the actors prepared their voiceovers, they have been made available to this lesson as narration clips in the Sounds palette. You can restore the location of the previous clips, "Narration #1–#3," and follow the lesson to complete the movie.

The exact position has been indicated for each clip, but feel free to experiment with the location of the voiceovers for dramatic impact.


☐ Narration #1	06:10
☐ Narration #2	04:03
☐ Narration #3	03:21
☐ Narration #4	03:14
☐ Narration #5	03:17

🎙 (Record Voice)

(Titles) (Music)

(Transitions) (Sounds)

▲ **1** With the Sounds palette open, locate the sound effect called "Narration #4" from the list.

2 Drag the voiceover from the list, and position it on the middle track of the Audio timeline.
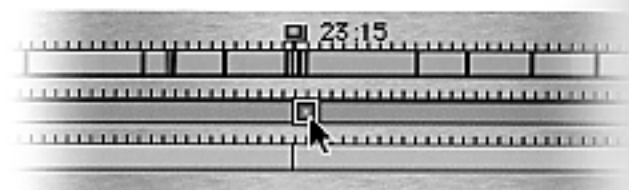
▲ **3** Using your cursor, drag the red square until the playhead indicates the position of 23:15 in the timeline.

Done Your finished project should look like this in the Audio Timeline view. (The exact position of all sound effects is not important.) Make sure your tracks are all activated by clicking the checkboxes at the end of the timeline.
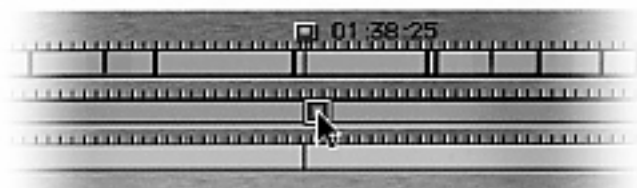

The Flower of Love Time : 02:00 (NTSC)
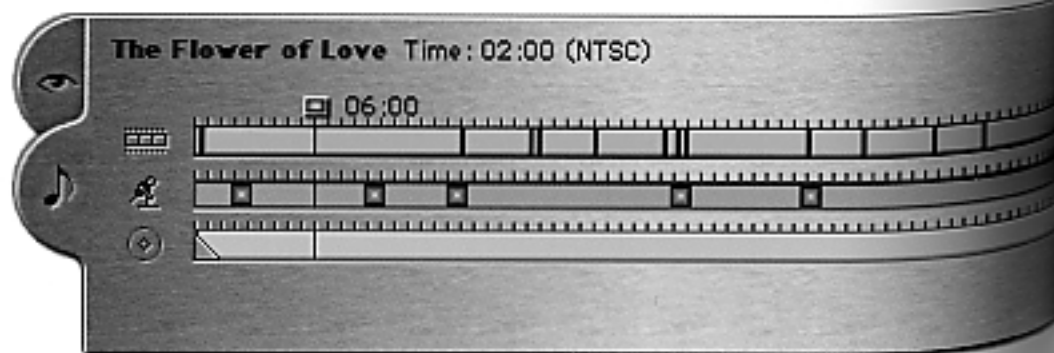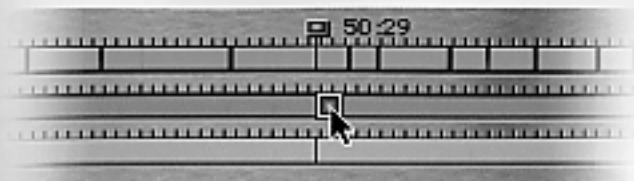
▲ **4** Locate the sound effect called "Narration #5" from the list, drag it into the middle audio track, and position the playhead to indicate 50:29 in the timeline.

▲ **5** Drag the sound effect called "Narration #6" into the middle audio track, and position it at 01:16:21 in the timeline.

▲ **6** Drag the sound effect called "Narration #7" to the 01:38:25 position in the timeline.

Move the playhead to the beginning of the movie and press the Space bar to play the entire soundtrack. Your timeline should closely resemble the example below.

Fade In ☐
Fade Out ☐