

Audacity Basic Training



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What is Audacity?

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Audacity is a free audio recording software program

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

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Why Audacity?

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Do you remember the old analog cassette recorder? Like Audacity, it records audio, but it does so in analog format onto tape, which is much more difficult to edit and work with.



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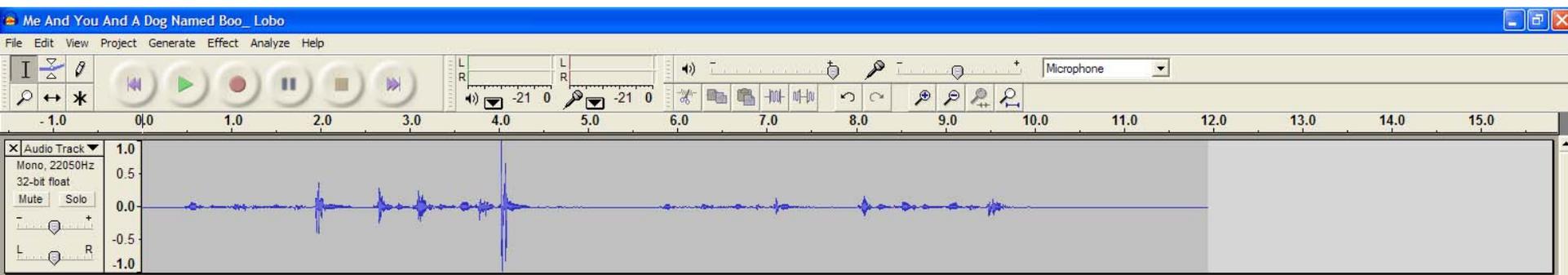


Why Audacity?

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Audacity eliminates the need for a stand-alone audio recorder. If you have a computer, with either a built-in microphone or an attached external microphone, you can download the free Audacity program and begin your journey into the world of digital audio recording and editing!



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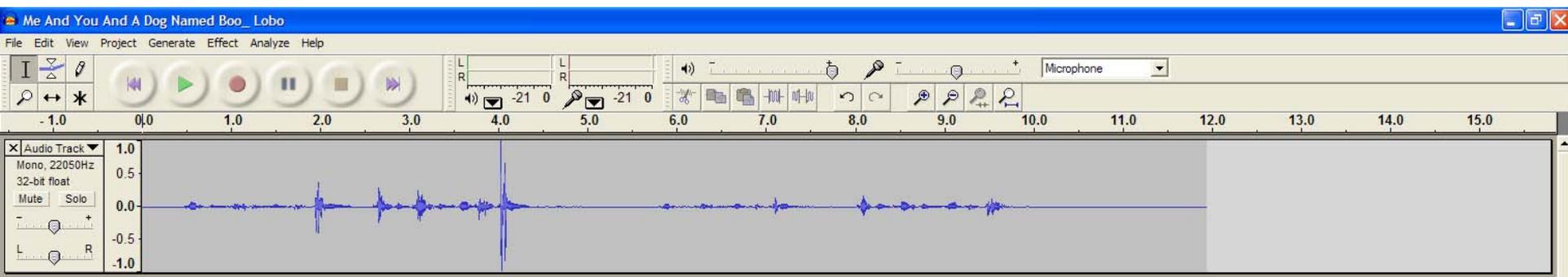


Ways to use Audacity

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You can record audio using a built-in or external microphone, or you can import an audio file to edit. You can also use a patch cable to record directly from another computer or audio source.



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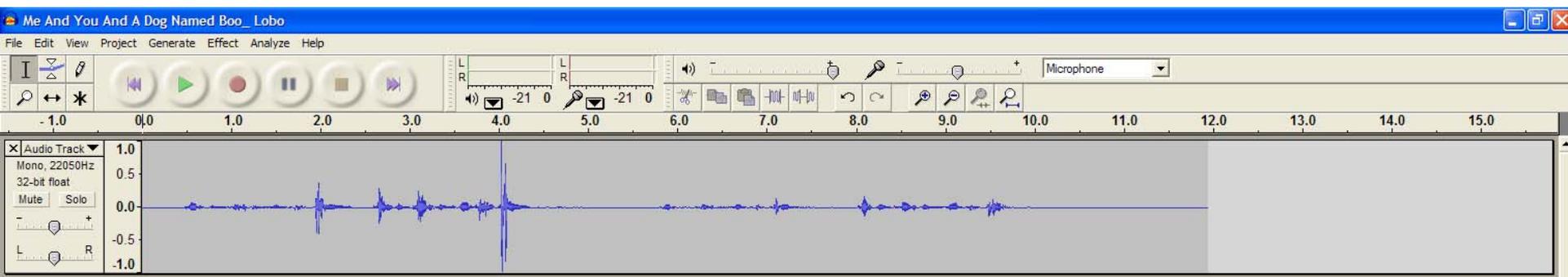


How to use Audacity

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It doesn't take long to learn the basics of Audacity. If you learn what the buttons do, you can start recording without having to study all the ins and outs of the program. Let's take a look at the Audacity interface so you can start recording.



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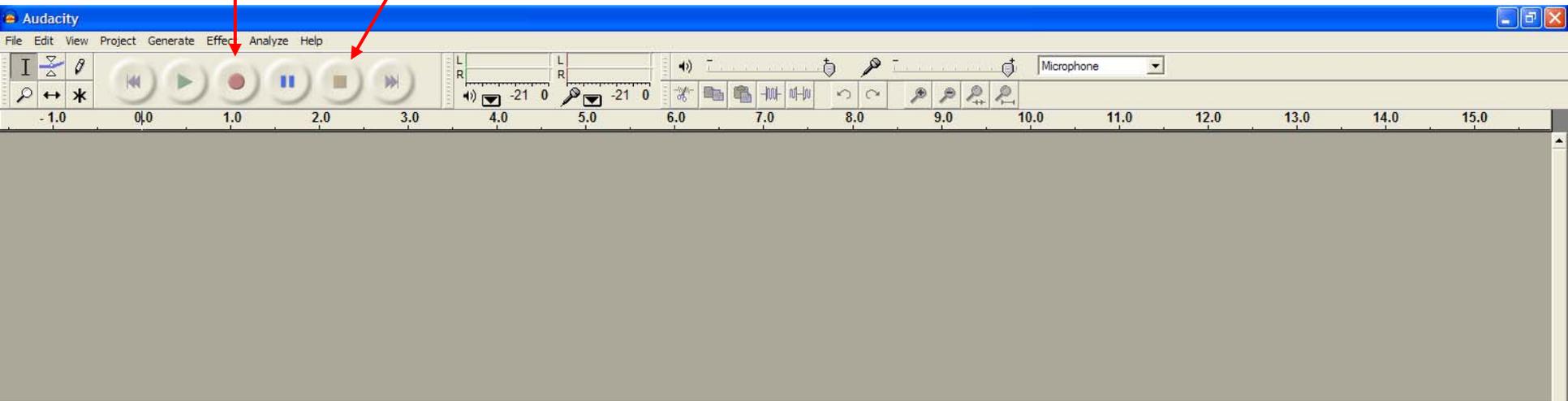
Let's start recording

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Record

Stop



This is what your screen will look like when you first open Audacity and haven't started recording. To start recording, click on the Record button. To stop recording, click on the Stop button. For editing practice, record speaking softly, then more loudly. Also, leave a few seconds of silence at the end of your recording before clicking the stop button.

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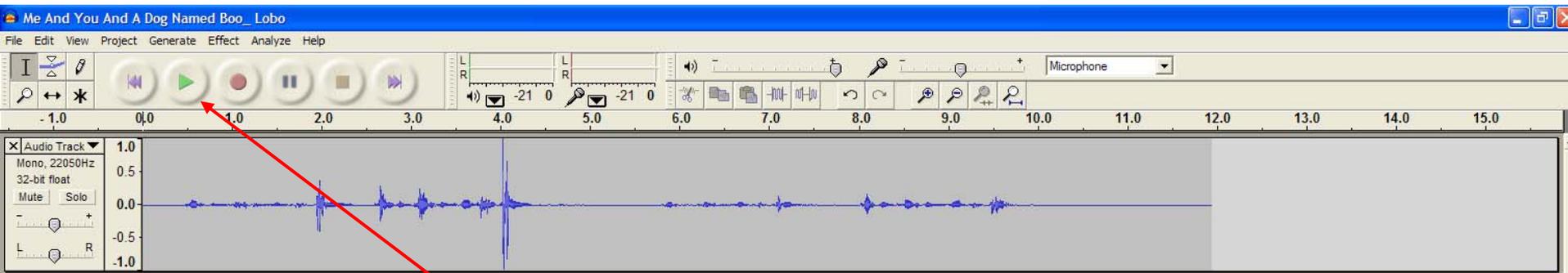




Your Recorded Audio



After you record your audio, you will see that your blank screen has been replaced with a “Track” containing your audio file, and you can see the audio recording length, and audio characteristics. You can edit this recorded audio, or you can record more audio.



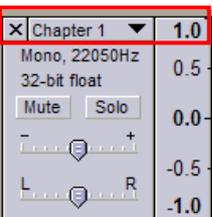
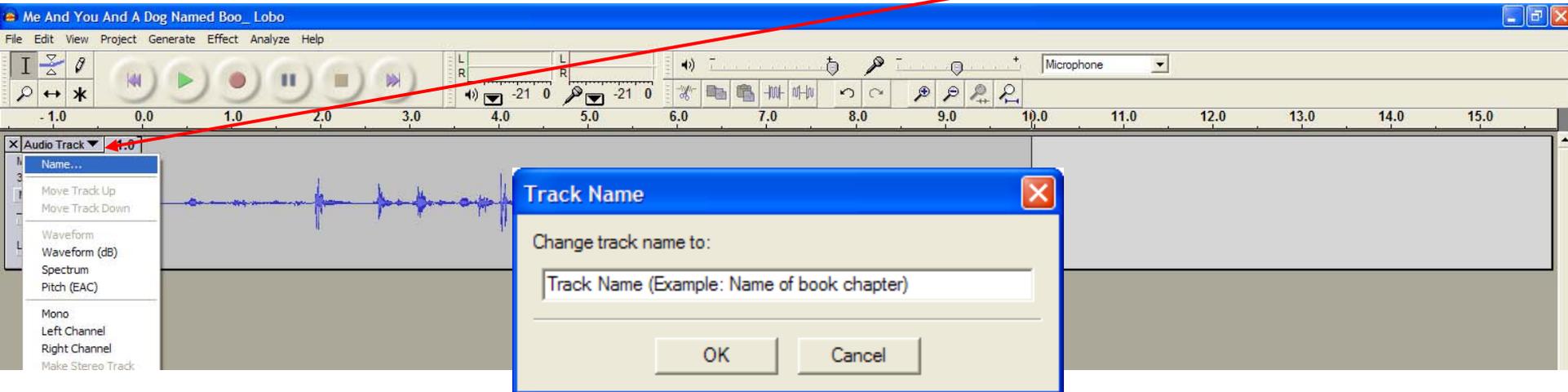
You can click the **Play** button to listen to what you have just recorded.





Your Recorded Audio

It's probably a good idea to name your track. Click on the down arrow, then click Name.



After naming the track, and clicking OK, the **track name** is now displayed. Notice that there is an “X” in the upper left corner. Click that X if you want to delete the track.

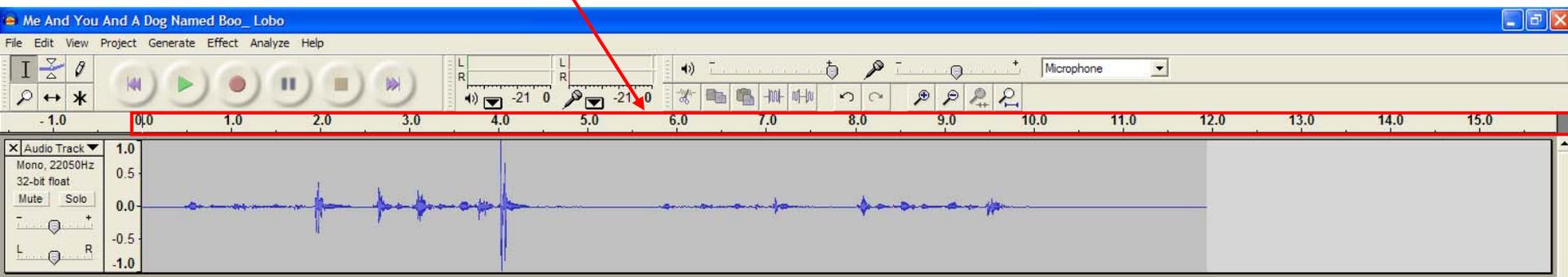




Your Recorded Audio



This is your recording timeline. It shows you the length of your recording in seconds or minutes/seconds.

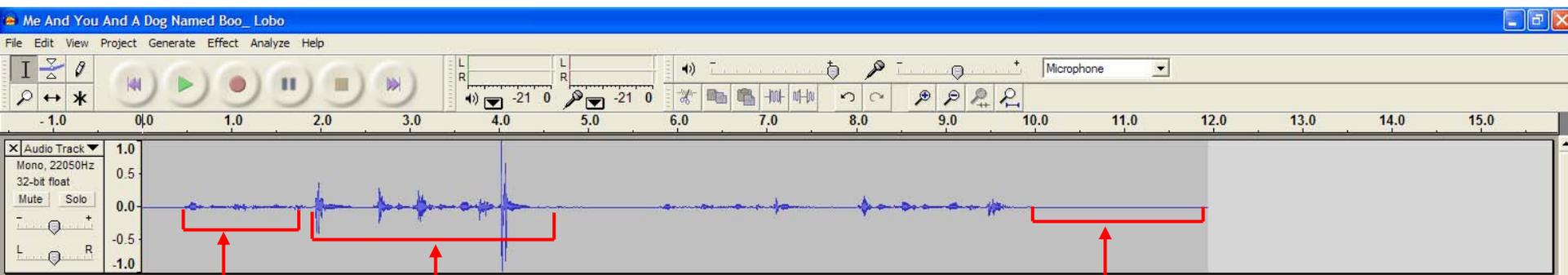




Your Recorded Audio



This is your Track showing the waveform of your recorded audio, and how the amplitude changes with the loudness of your recording.



Softly Spoken

Loudly Spoken

Silence

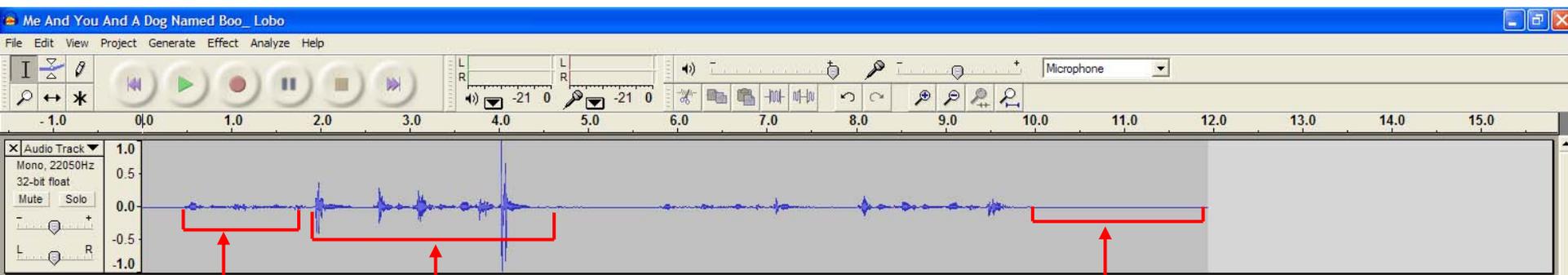




Your Recorded Audio



Recorded audio often varies in loudness, but with Audacity, you can edit the recorded audio to make it louder or less loud. You can also delete portions of recorded audio, such as recorded silence.



Softly Spoken

Loudly Spoken

Silence



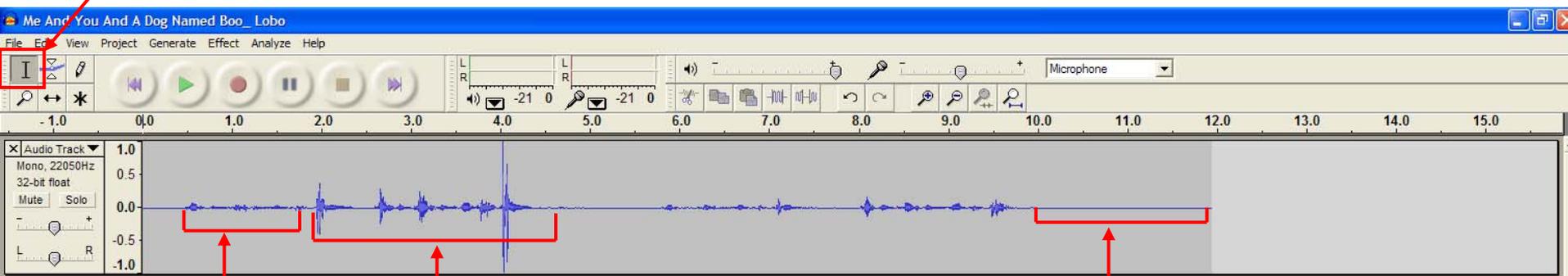


Let's take a look at Audacity's editing tools



The default editing tool is the **Selection tool** that looks like an "I" beam. This tool allows you to click and drag over your waveform to select areas you want to edit. Let's use the Selection tool to select the area of silence at the end of our recording.

Selection Tool



Softly Spoken

Loudly Spoken

Silence

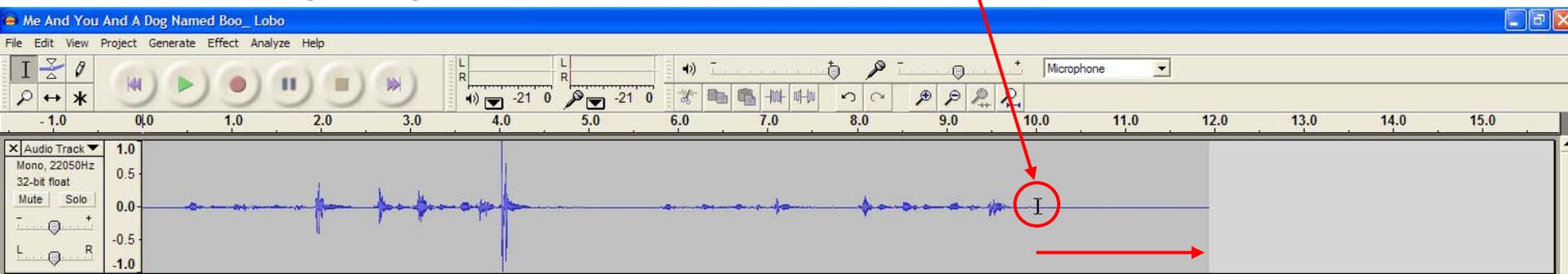




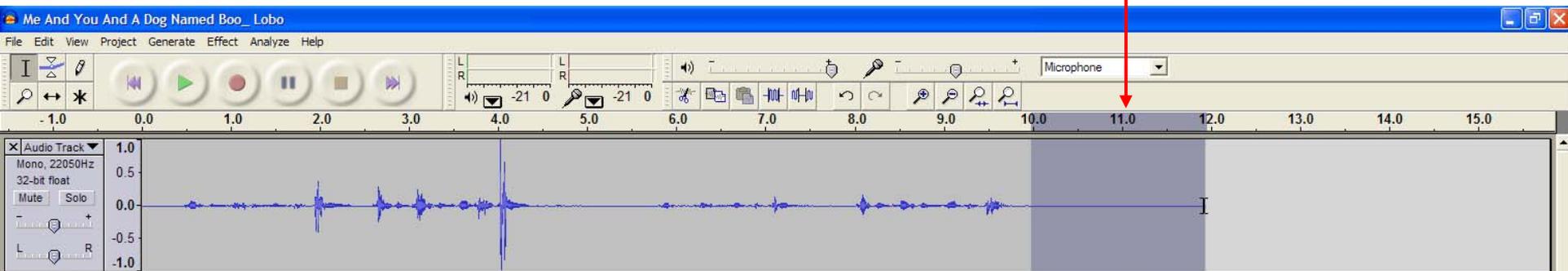
Delete Silence



You don't have to click on the Selection Tool, because it's the default tool. Move your cursor to the beginning of the area of silence as shown.



Click and drag



Area of silence highlighted with click and drag



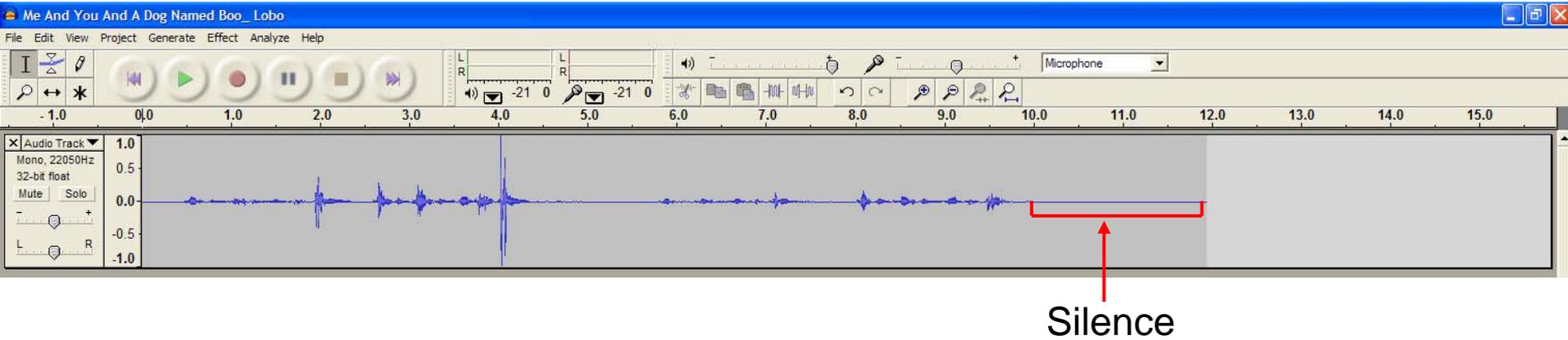
After the click and drag, your area of silence will be highlighted. Click the Delete button on your keyboard to delete the silence.



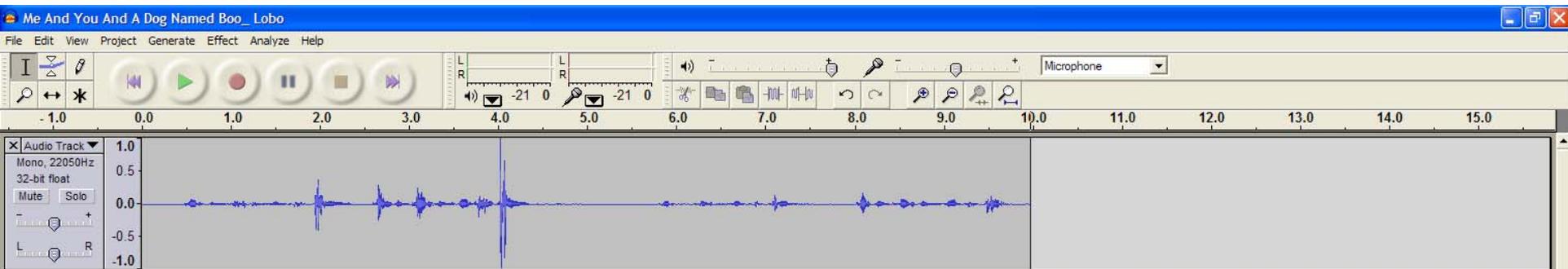


Delete Silence

Before silence is removed



After silence is removed

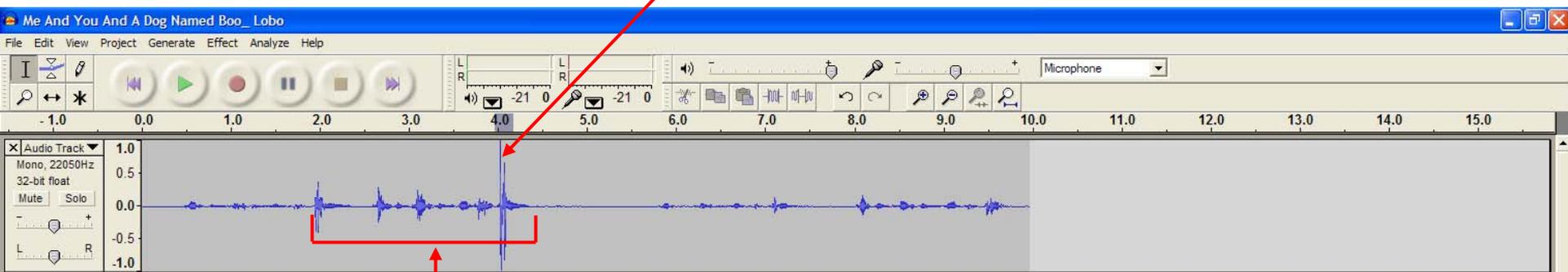




Reduce Amplification



Sometimes the recorded audio is so loud, it causes distortion to the finished audio. You can reduce the amplification. As you can see from the waveform below, the amplitude of a portion of the recorded audio reaches the top and bottom of the track area. This signifies that the recording was very **loud** and needs to be reduced.



Loudly Spoken

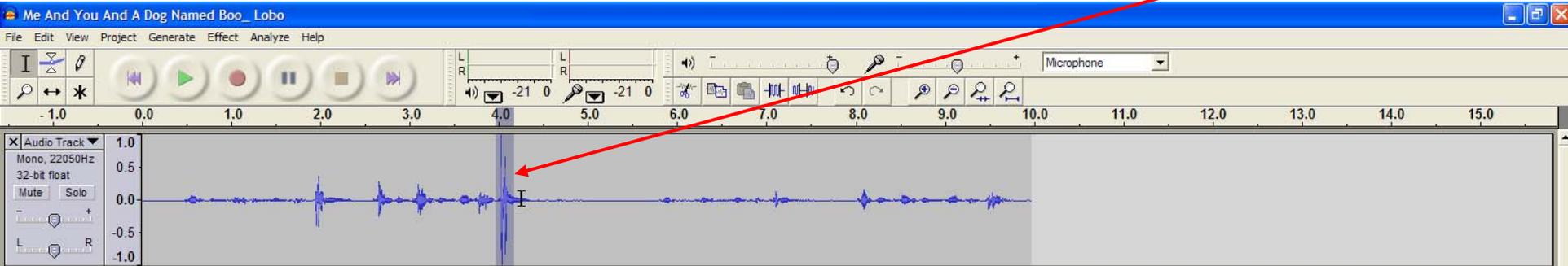




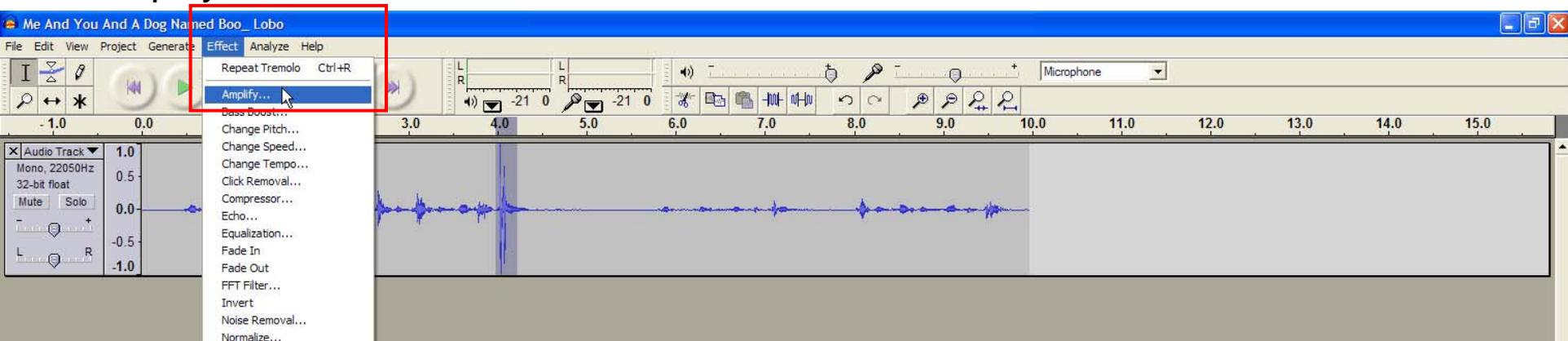
Reduce Amplification



To reduce the amplification, once again we will use the Selection Tool to **click and drag** over the portion of the waveform that we want to edit.

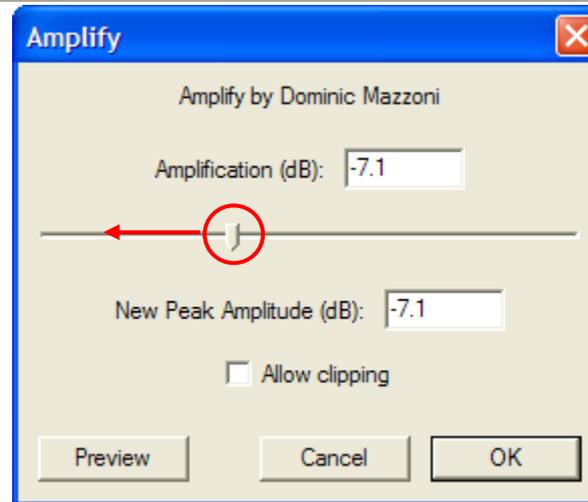
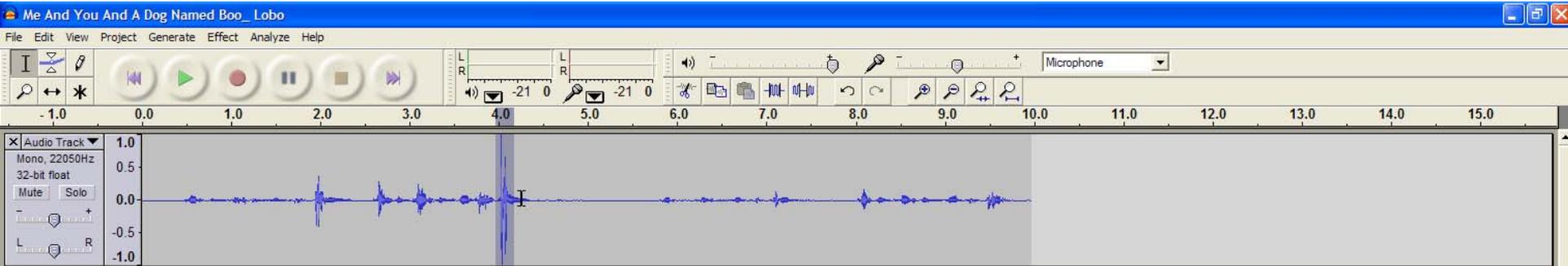


After you've highlighted your section of loud audio that you want to reduce, click Effect and Amplify.





Reduce Amplification



After selecting Amplify, you will see the box above. To reduce amplification click and drag the slider to the left. The decibel level changes. Click OK to reduce your highlighted audio by the specified decibel level.

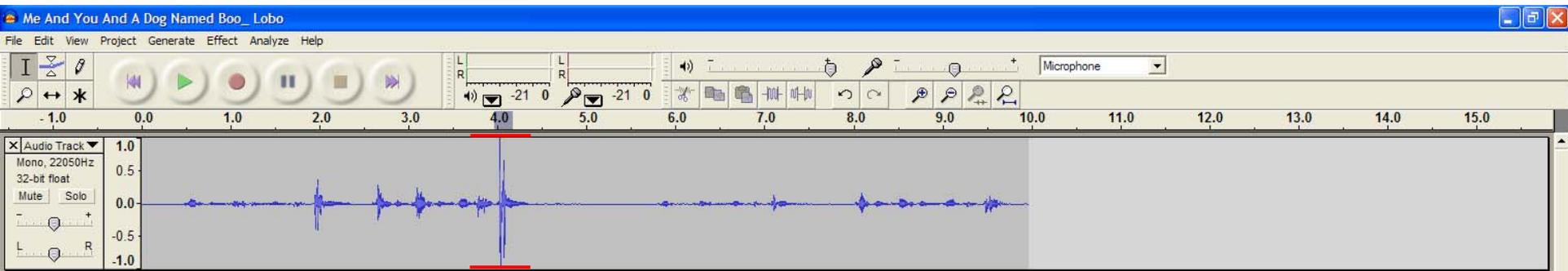




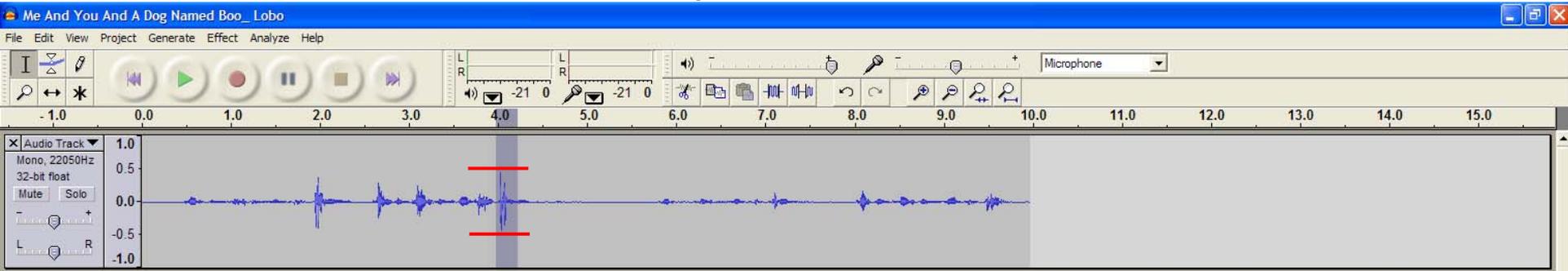
Reduce Amplification



Before amplification reduction



After amplification reduction

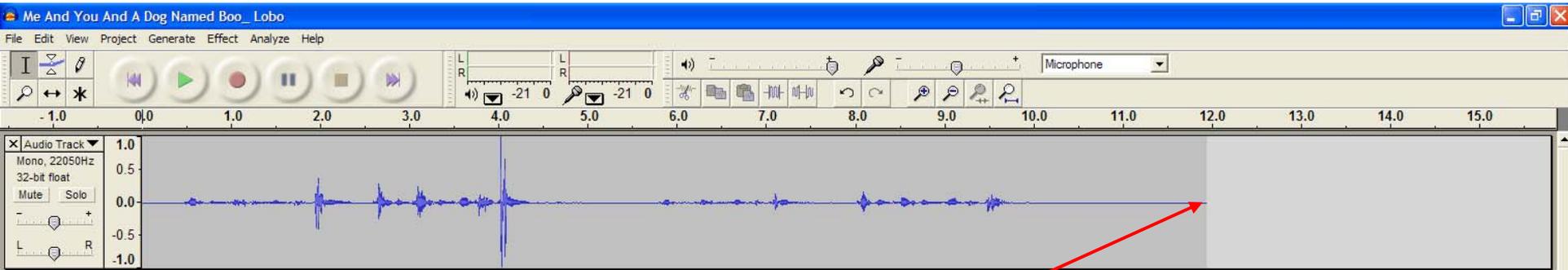




Recording more audio



Sometimes, you will record a segment of audio, stop, and then record more audio. To do so, click at the end of the waveform. This will allow you to start recording at that point in the timeline. Audacity treats multiple recorded tracks like transparencies. If you don't click at the end of the waveform, you may end up with two tracks on top of each other, which isn't good if you're recording voice.



Click here and then click the Record button to start recording.

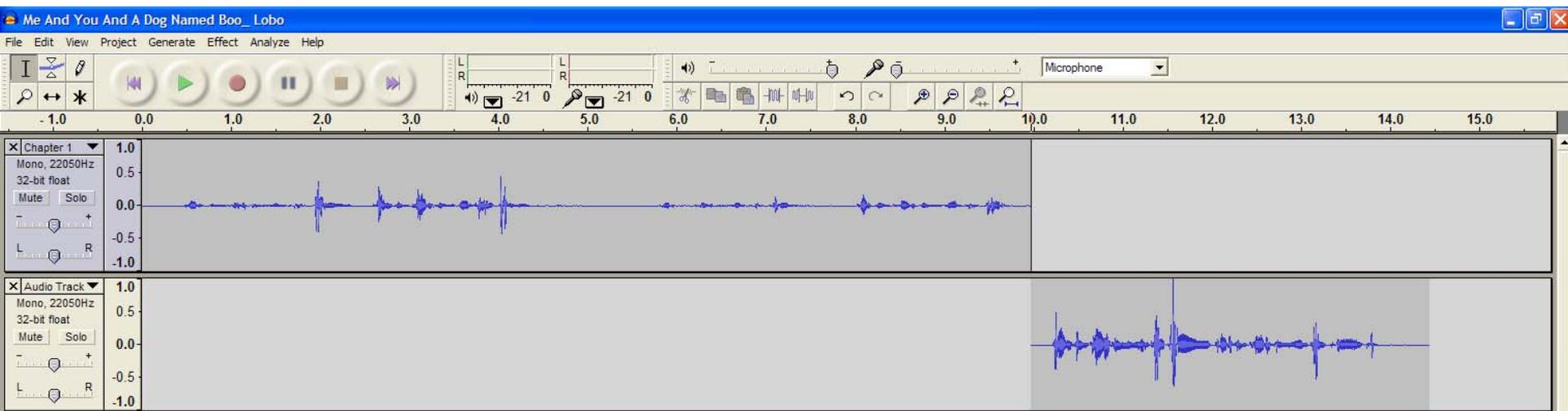




Recording more audio



You now see that I have two recorded tracks, and that the second track starts where the first track (Chapter 1) ends.



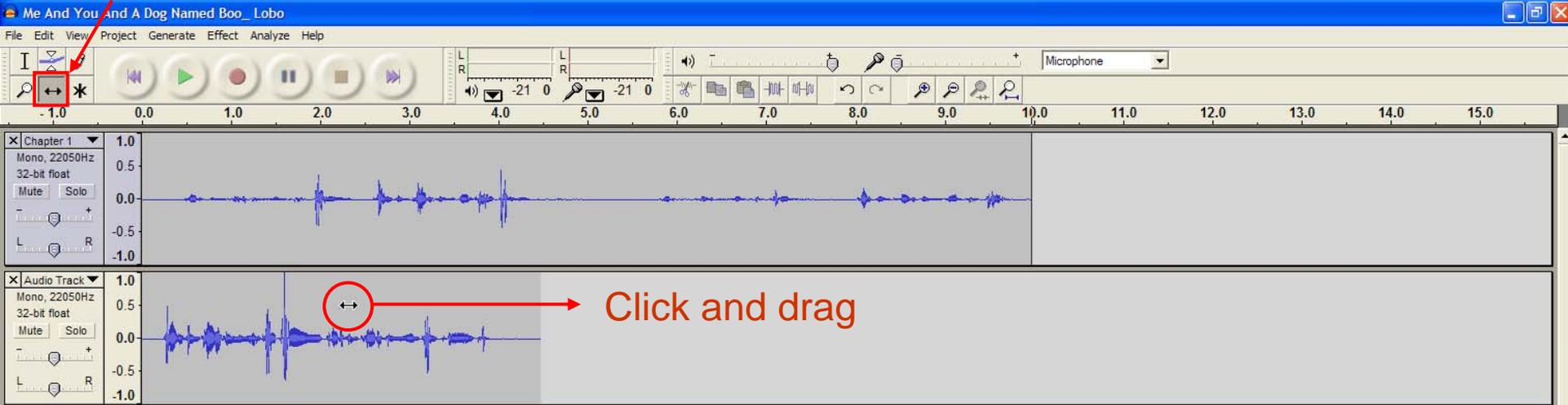


Recording more audio



If you forgot to click the point in the timeline where you want to start recording, you can move the audio to a new point in the timeline. We do so with the Timeshift tool.

Timeshift tool



Once you've clicked on the Timeshift tool, move your cursor onto the audio you want to move and then **click and drag** to the desired location in the timeline.

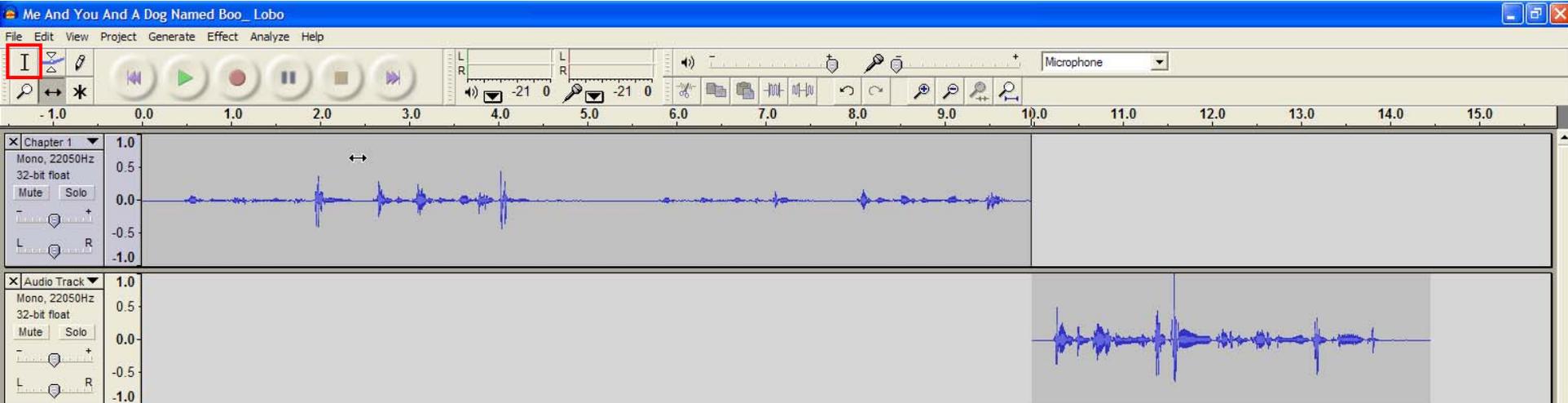




Recording more audio



The image below shows the second track after the audio was moved to the point in the timeline after the first track ends. This way, the audio from the two tracks are separate. When you're finished moving your audio, it's a good idea to click back on the **Selection** tool so you can select and edit your audio again.



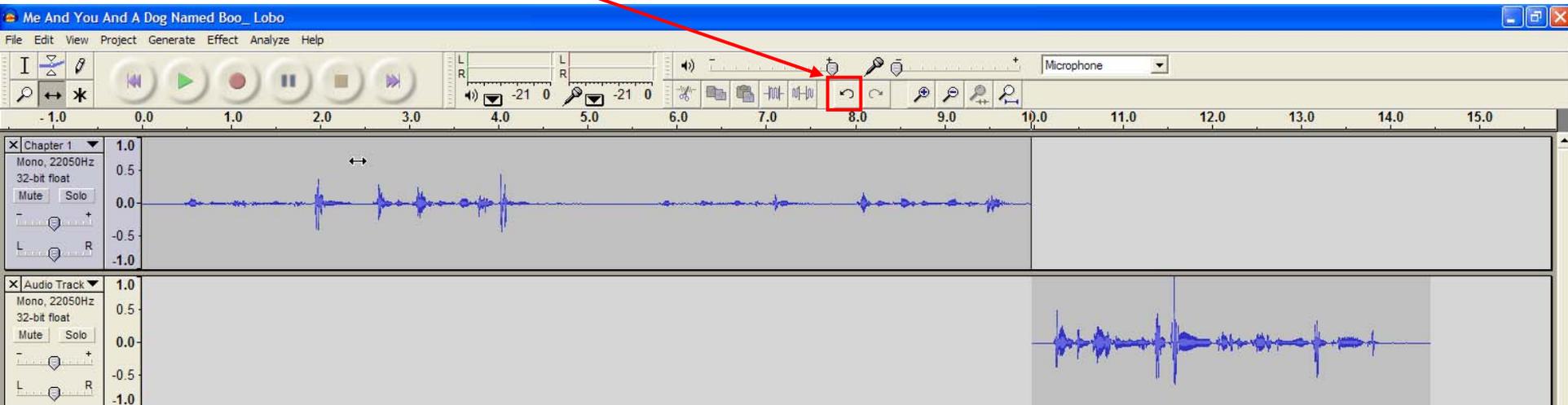


Recording more audio



You can lay down as many tracks as you want following the same procedure.

Helpful hint: If you make a mistake, don't worry, you can go back several steps by clicking the "Undo" button.

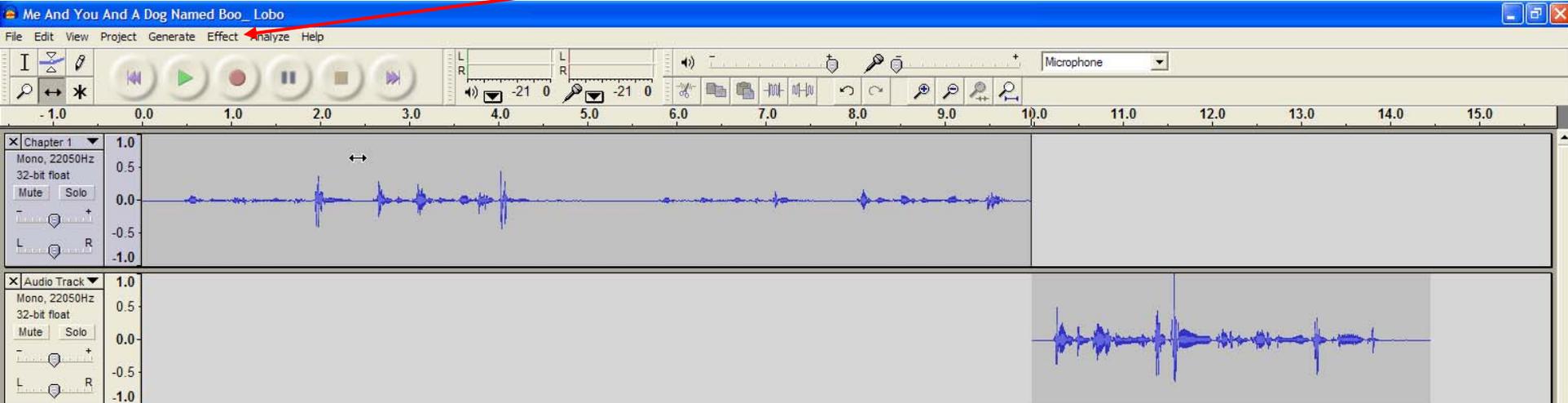




Helpful Hints

If you want to apply an effect to all tracks (everything you've recorded) you can click anywhere on a waveform and click the Control (Ctrl) plus the A key on your keyboard.

There are many different effects you can test out. Click "Effect" in the menu bar to see what's available.





Saving Your Project



You may not finish your audio project in one sitting. You can easily save your project and come back to it at another time. To save your project, simply click File > Save Project. You may get a popup window...just click OK. It's just telling you to use Export if you're ready to save your finished audio instead of a project file. The project file is saved as an aup file, and you can double click it to open it with the Audacity program.



Me And You And A Dog
Named Boo_Lobo.aup



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Exporting Your Finished Product

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If you are finished with all of your recording for a particular project, you will want to Export to a wav file format that you can then burn to a cd, play on your computer, or post on the web. Choose File > Export As Wav (you may get a warning popup...just close it), and then save the file. If you double click on this new exported audio file, it will open up in a media player such as Windows Media Player.

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Getting LAME with Audacity

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No, Audacity is definitely not a “Lame” program, but you will probably want to download something called the LAME encoder which allows you to export your recordings in mp3 format, a format that compresses your recording with very little, if any, noticeable loss in audio quality. The mp3 file format is popular because it results in **MUCH SMALLER FILE SIZE** compared to the wav format.

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Getting LAME with Audacity

Audacity®



1. Go to the LAME download page.

<http://lame.buanzo.com.ar/>

2. Under "For Audacity on Windows", left-click on the link "Lame_v3.98.2_for_Audacity_on_Windows.exe " and save the file to anywhere on your computer.

3. When you have finished downloading the file, a popup window will appear. Click the Run button. Just click Next and agree to the license agreement (you are free to read this intricacies if you wish, but it's not necessary). Just keep clicking Next until the install is finished.

4. The first time you use the "Export as MP3" command, Audacity will ask you where lame_enc.dll is saved.

5. In case of difficulty, please view our more detailed instructions on the Audacity Wiki:

http://audacityteam.org/wiki/index.php?title=Audacity_Wiki_Home_Page

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