

SONGFEST 2019

iTunes FAQs and Tips

Though Apple's iTunes music store/library application is not directly involved in the use of the Songfest website or server, it is frequently used by students in the overall process of acquiring and preparing song audio files for delivery to the server. It is also used by many students to store, manage, and catalog song audio files that have been downloaded from the server. Therefore, the answers to some common Songfest questions about using iTunes are included here.

Remember- for Songfest, we can work ONLY with songs that are in the AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 file formats.

A. I purchased my song from the iTunes store- is it an AAC (.m4a) file?

All songs purchased through the iTunes store are in the AAC format. However, some audio files purchased in earlier versions of iTunes are *protected* AAC (.m4p) files and cannot be used without undergoing conversion. If your song file is not an unprotected AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 file (see 1.B below), you must convert it (see Section D below) in order to use it in Songfest.

B. I have a song in my iTunes library. What kind of file format is it?

iTunes will let you organize and playback several kinds of audio files (.mp3, AAC .m4a, AAC .m4p, .wav, etc.). However, files for Songfest use can ONLY be in the AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 format. *Protected* AAC (.m4p) files must be converted before they can be used.

Here's how to find out a specific song's file type:

1. Highlight (single-click) the song in your iTunes library.
2. Go to menu Edit>Get Info (Windows PC shortcut: Control-I. Mac shortcut: command-I)
3. In the window that pops up, select the "File" tab at the top.
4. In the bottom section of this window, look for the information section named "location"
5. This area describes where this song's actual audio file is saved on your computer.
6. At the end of this description (after the last "\ " or ":"), you should see the file name of the song.
7. If the file name ends with ".mp3" (or ".MP3" or any similar variation), it is an .mp3 file
8. If the file name ends with ".m4a", it is an AAC (.m4a) file.
9. If the song ends with anything else (.m4p, .aiff, .wav, etc.), then it is NOT an AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 file and must be converted (see Section D below) before it can be used for Songfest.

C. How do I set iTunes to convert songs to the AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 format?

Here's how:

1. Open iTunes Preferences:
 - a. On Windows: menu Edit>Preferences (shortcut: Control-comma)
 - b. On Mac: menu iTunes>Preferences (shortcut: Command-comma)
2. In the window that opens, select the tab/icon labeled "General".
3. Select the button labeled "Import Settings".
4. In the "Import Using" selection box, select "AAC Encoder" or "MP3 Encoder".
5. In the "Setting" selection box, select a setting that is at least 128 kbps or higher ("iTunes Plus" is fine).

6. Click “OK”, click “OK” again, and exit iTunes Preferences.

D. How do I convert an iTunes song (audio file) to the AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 file formats?

Here’s how:

1. Highlight (single-click) the song in your iTunes library
2. Go to the File menu, and then select Convert.
3. In the menu that opens, look for either the “Create AAC Version” or “Create MP3 Version” commands
 - a. If it’s there, select it. A copy of the file will be created in the AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 format. (Yay!)
 - b. If “Create AAC Version” or “Create MP3 Version” is greyed-out (not selectable), you must do this conversion the “long way” by burning your song to an audio CD and then reimporting it from that CD as an AAC or .mp3 formatted file (see Section E below and F below)
 - c. If your menu command says “Create XXXXXX Version” (where “XXXXXX” is anything other than “AAC” or “MP3”), then you need to set your iTunes preferences for .mp3 or AAC format conversion (see Section C above) before trying this again.

E. How do I burn an Audio CD of a song or songs in iTunes?

Here’s how:

1. Create a new iTunes playlist.
2. Drag to this playlist the song(s) that you want to burn to an Audio CD
3. Insert a blank CD-R in your computer’s CD-burner
4. Make sure the playlist is selected in the strip on the left side of iTunes.
5. Do either of the following:
 - a. Right click (Mac: control-click) on the playlist and select “Burn Playlist to Disc”.
 - b. Select “Burn Playlist to Disc” from the File menu at the top of iTunes.
6. Once burning is finished, remove the CD from your computer.

If you need to re-import these songs into iTunes as .mp3 or AAC files, see Section F below.

F. How do I import songs from an Audio CD into iTunes as AAC (.m4a) or .mp3 files?

Here’s how:

1. First check and make sure that iTunes is configured to import/convert files in the AAC or MP3 format (see Section C above)
2. Insert your Audio CD (commercial or self-burned) into your computer’s CD drive.
3. Let iTunes load the CD (look for the CD icon to appear on the left side of the iTunes window).
4. Select the CD in iTunes by selecting/highlighting the CD name/icon on the left side of the iTunes window.
5. Place a checkmark in the box next to all songs you wish to import as AAC or .mp3 files. Remove the checkmark from the box next to the song(s) you do not want to import.
6. Make sure that all CD tracks to be imported are named/labeled in the iTunes screen (and don’t just say “Track 1”, “Track 2”, for example). If they’re not, go ahead and name/label them (see the *Group Music Guide* for more information on audio file naming requirements).
7. Click the “Import CD” button at the bottom of the iTunes window.

8. The songs on the audio CD have now been added to your iTunes library as .mp3 or AAC formatted songs!

G. How do I upload my song to the server from iTunes?

You can't do this directly from iTunes. Groups must upload the file using the file submission form on the website. Hosts and staff may also use the file submission form on the website, or may alternatively use one of the SFTP upload methods described in their *Online Guide*.

Important notes:

1. **Do not try to drag-drop song names directly from within iTunes to other places (such as the server).** This will not work, and will cause problems. This is because the song names listed in the main iTunes window are not the actual audio files, but are simply iTunes-only internal shortcuts. For example, dragging a song name into and out of a playlist does not actually move the actual audio file on your computer. It just causes iTunes to create (or remove) a shortcut to that audio file, and not the audio file itself.
2. Instead, you must upload your song's actual audio file (not just a shortcut) by navigating to it in your computer's file browsing system (Windows: Explorer; Mac: Finder). See Section H below for guidance on how to do this.

TIP: To prepare for server upload, we recommend that, outside of iTunes, you make a complete copy of your actual song file (.mp3 or .m4a) and drag it to your computer's desktop. There, you can check that the file (not just the song title but the actual file) is named properly (see Section I below) before uploading it to the server. Also, should anything go wrong, your original file in iTunes would still be completely untouched and unmoved. Then, if everything has gone right, you can simply delete the copy from your desktop once the file upload is complete.

H. How do I find the actual audio file of this iTunes song on my computer?

Here's how:

1. Highlight (single-click) the song in your iTunes library.
2. From the File menu, select "Show in Windows Explorer" (Mac: "Show in Finder")
3. A new window will open up, with the actual audio file selected.
4. Do not move this original file (doing so can mess up your iTunes database). Instead, make a copy of it and move it wherever you like (such as your Desktop). You can now handle (or rename, or upload, etc.) the copy without causing any problems with iTunes.
5. TIP: there are even faster keyboard shortcuts for locating a song's actual audio file. With the song highlighted in iTunes:
 - a. Windows: select "Ctrl-Shift-R"
 - b. Mac: select "command-shift-R"
 - c. Continue from step 3 above.
6. That's it!

I. How do I properly rename my audio file for upload to the server?

After making a copy of your actual audio file (see Section H above), do the following with the copy:

1. Before uploading, rename the audio file to be the simple title of your song.
 - a. Correct:
 1. My Favorite Song.mp3
 2. Amazing Song Title.m4a

- b. Incorrect:
 - 1. 2-13 My Artist – Album Name_1999 Remix Edition [DISC 2] Song.mp3
 - 2. 06 My Favorite Song.mp3
 - 3. The Beatles – Let It Be.m4a
- 2. That's it. Go ahead and upload the renamed copy!