

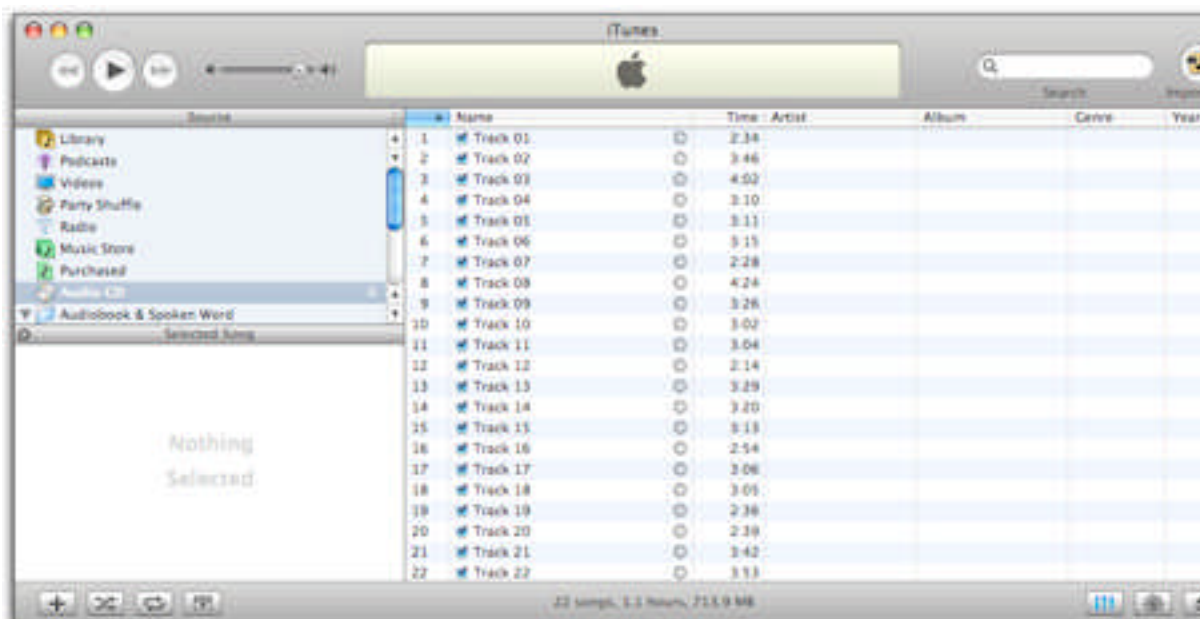
How to Import Audiobook CDs into iTunes

Audiobook CDs cannot be played (directly) on an iPod. Although importing CDs is easy to do with iTunes, it is optimized for music CDs. It can take quite a bit of trial and error to come up with a recipe that works well and are reasonable in size and quality.

First you will want to ensure that your import settings are optimal for audiobook and spoken word. See "Optimal iTunes Import Settings for Audiobooks" for instructions for how to configure iTunes for importing your audiobooks. Then you can move onto the next steps, where you actually import the CDs.

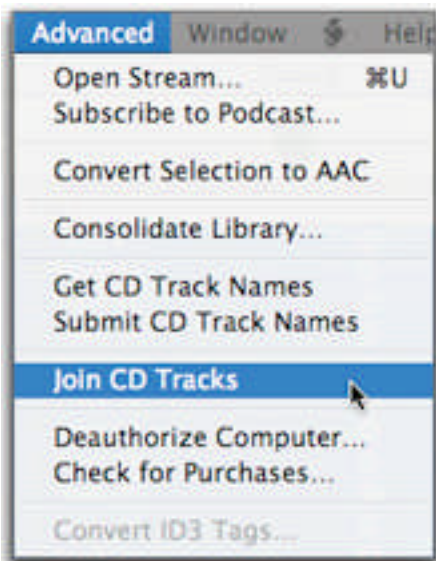
Importing CDs for audio books can be kind of painful, because there are usually a lot of them. To make matters worse, each CD usually has dozens of tracks on it, which makes it a challenge to manage on the small screen of an iPod. Track names are rarely recognized by the automatic lookup service, so you need to enter them by hand. This import process attempts to reduce the amount of manual input, while also making sure that the track information is highly usable on an iPod.

1. Insert the CD, and wait for the tracks to appear in iTunes. Sometimes you'll have to dismiss a dialog or two, which invites you to do some automatic action. Don't, just display the tracks; it does not matter if the automatic lookup of track names is successful or not.



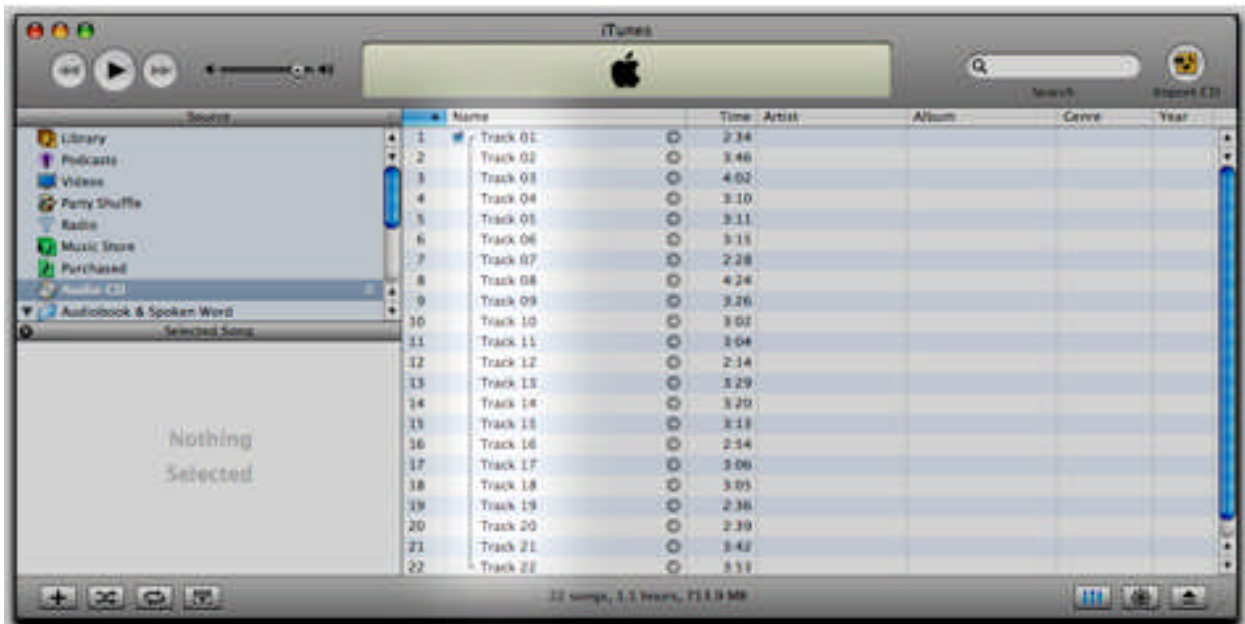
Audio CD tracks list in iTunes

2. Select all of the CD's tracks, and choose Join CD Tracks from the Advanced menu:



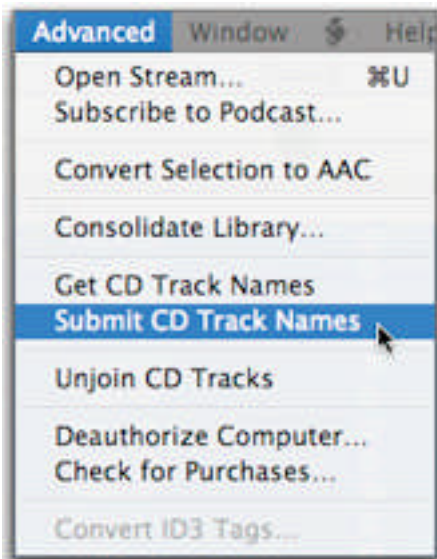
iTunes Advanced menu, Join CD Tracks

This will consolidate the many tracks on the CD into one, which will make it much easier to manage when the tracks are copied to your iPod (the indication that the tracks are joined is subtle):



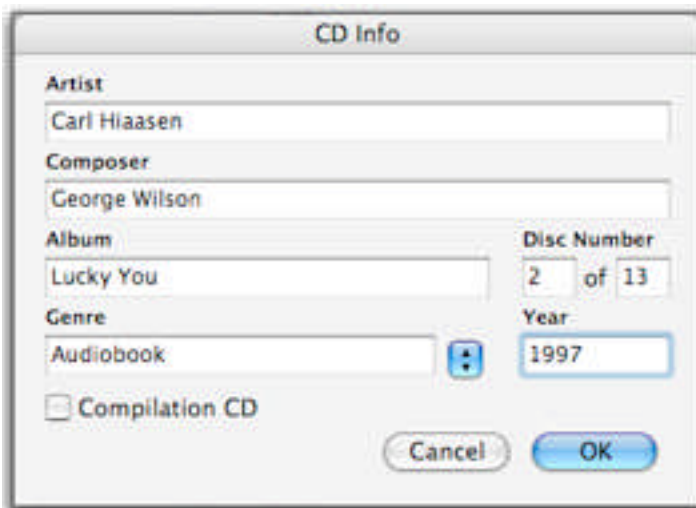
Audio CD tracks which have been joined together

3. Select Submit CD Track Names from the Advanced menu:



iTunes Advanced menu, Submit CD Track Names

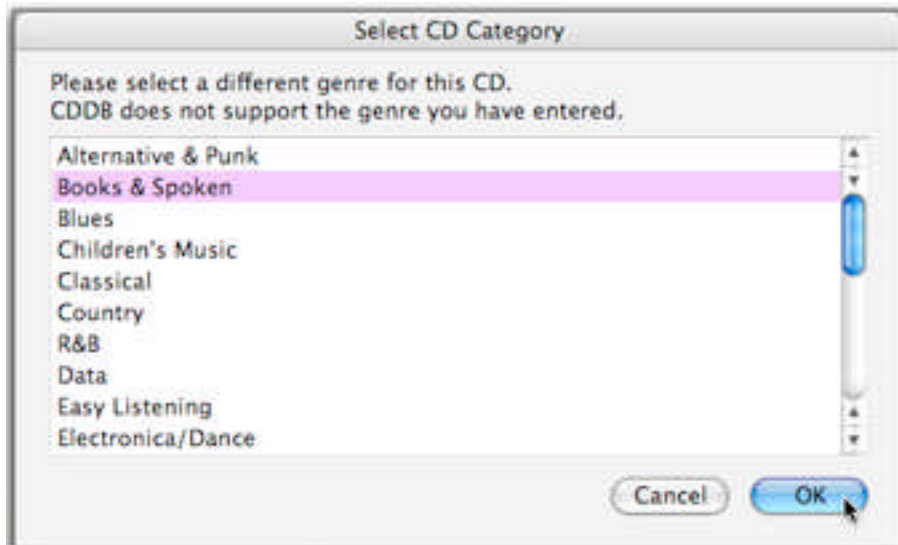
In the CD Info dialog that appears, fill out the information you know about the audio book.



iTunes Submit CD Track Names, CD Info dialog

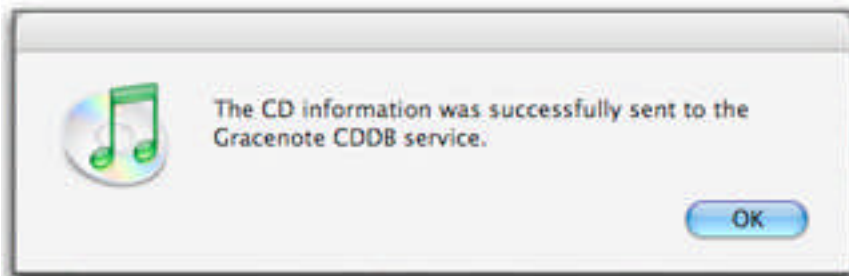
1. Artist: the book's author
2. Composer: I use this to record the reader of the audio book
3. Album: the book's title
4. Disc Number: which disc this is out of how many total discs
5. Genre: "Audiobook"
6. Year: the year the book or recording was published

4. Click OK, and the information will be submitted. You will probably be prompted to Select CD Category, since the online database uses a different category for audio books. Choose "Books & Spoken", and click OK.



iTunes Submit CD Track Names, Category dialog

5. You'll get a dialog telling you it's done, click OK:



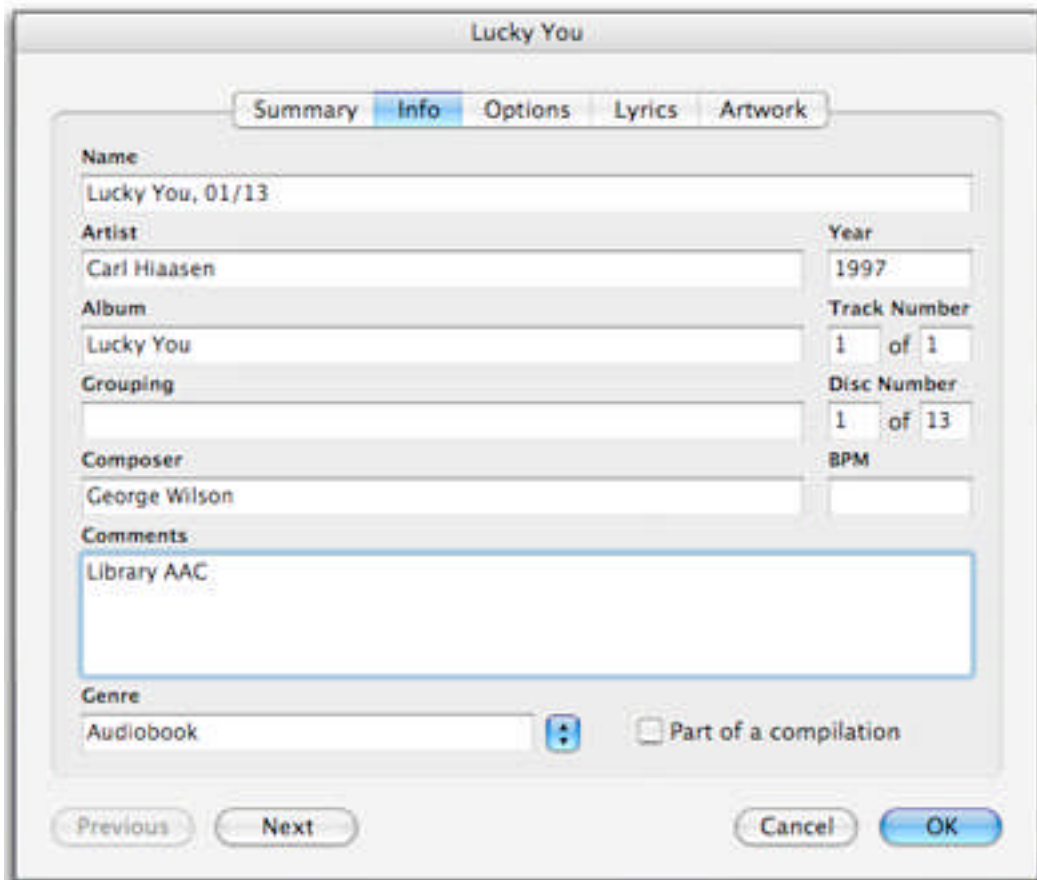
Submit CD Track Names Successful

6. When the submission process is completed, all of the tracks on the CD should have the appropriate information attached to them. This means everything has worked so far. So...

7. Click the Import button (top right corner) to import this disc, using the import settings you set up initially.

8. When the import finishes, eject the CD.

Switch to your Library, and find the newly imported track. There should be only one. Select it, and press Command-I to do a Get Info on the track, and switch to the Info tab:

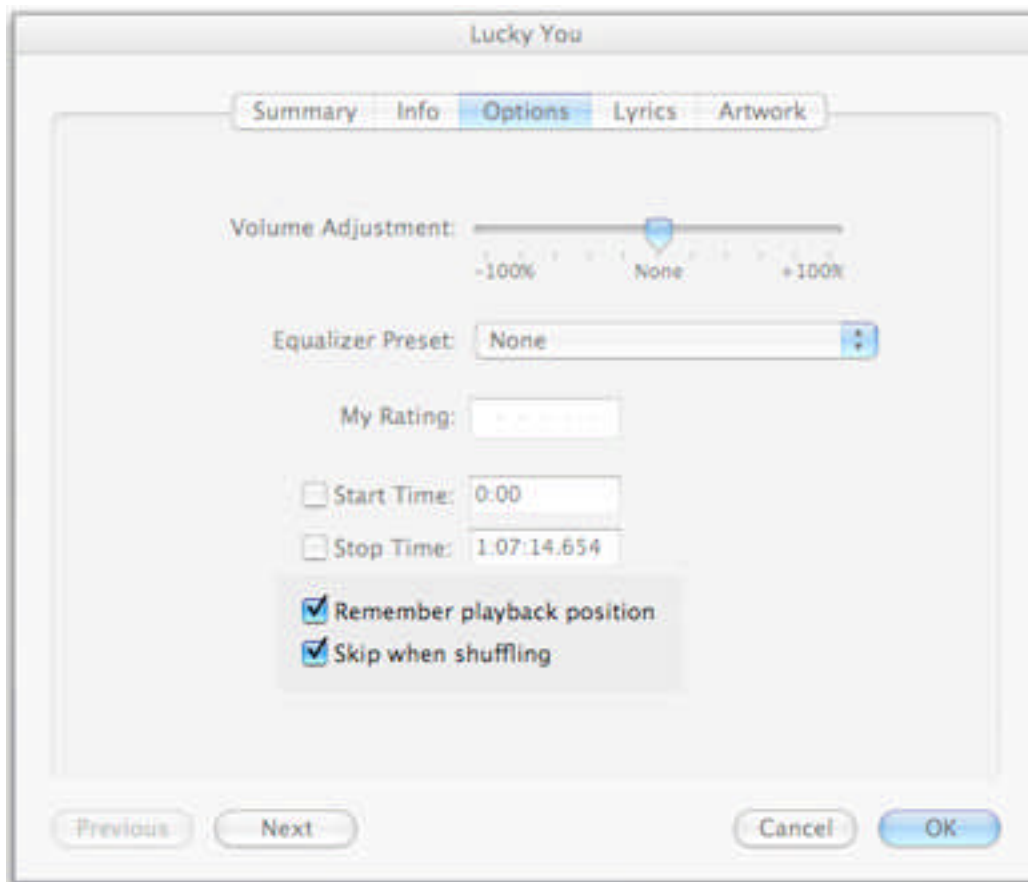


iTunes Track Info panel

Verify all of the information there. The song Name will be the same name as the album. Since the Name will be what you see on your iPod, you want to add the disc sequence number to it. A shorter format is better, especially if you have an iPod mini, with the more narrow screen. I generally add "xx/yy", where xx is the disc number, and yy is the total number of discs. Be sure to add a leading zero to the disc number if the total number of discs will be more than one digit, e.g., "04/13" rather than "4/13". This way, the tracks will sort correctly when sorted by Name.

9. You may also want to add a note to the Comments field, to note where you obtained the book, etc.; I type "Library AAC" into my imported tracks.

10. Switch to the Options panel, and check both the Remember playback position and the Skip when shuffling checkboxes:



iTunes Track Options panel

Remember playback position tells iTunes and the iPod to make the file bookmarkable. Skip when shuffling keeps the spoken word track out of your random music mixes, where it would probably interrupt the mood.

11. Repeat this process for the each CD in the audio book, until you have imported all of the CDs.

12. Sync to your iPod, and enjoy a great book!