

How to Calculate Your Audiobook Workload

Step 1: Set your rate

The actor's union SAG-AFTRA states the minimum rate a narrator earns from audiobook work is \$250 per finished hour (PFH). This should be your absolute minimum rate.

If you have no previous audiobook experience, consider volunteering through Learning Ally to learn the skills before charging a professional rate.

If you have more than 50 audiobooks on your resume, you can probably charge more than this minimum rate.

My PFH rate: _____

If you plan on outsourcing your editing and proofing costs, subtract these costs from your total PFH rate.

For example: I pay \$100 PFH for editing and proofing costs. That means I only earn \$150PFH from audiobook work ($\$250\text{PFH} - \$100\text{PFH} = \$150\text{PFH}$)

Step 2: Calculate your monthly expenses

Gather all your bills for the year. Enter them into this table, or make your own.

Category	per year	per month
Rent/Mortgage		
Utilities (incl. Internet, water, electricity, phone, etc)		
Groceries		
Insurance		
Debt Payments		
Tax Savings (if you're a freelance worker, you should be saving around 20% of your income for taxes!)		
Car Payments/Insurance/Gas		

Pet(s)		
Business expenses (membership fees, website, etc)		
Other:		
TOTAL		

If you aren't planning on narrating audiobooks full time, then determine the amount of extra income per month you would like to be earning.

I need \$_____ per month from audiobook work.

For example: I need \$2,500 per month to fully cover my monthly business and personal expenses.

Step 3: Set your finished hour/month minimum goal

Take your total monthly earnings goal and divide it by your PFH rate (after outsourcing costs).

\$_____ / \$_____ PFH = _____ hours
(monthly earnings goal) (PFH rate less costs)

For example: \$2,500 / \$150PFH = 16.67 hours

Step 4: Determine your labour to output ratio

You need to know how many labour hours you put into each finished hour of audiobook so you can figure out how many hours per month you need to work on audiobooks to meet your earnings goal.

If you have never produced an audiobook before, I recommend planning for a ratio of 8:1. This means you need 8 hours to finish 1 hour of audio. Audiobook producers with experience have a 6:1 ratio to prep, narrate, edit, proof, master, and export an audiobook.

If you outsource your proofing and editing, you can expect a ratio closer to 3:1 or 4:1.

If you're already producing audiobooks, I recommend using a time tracker to get an accurate sense of your labour to output ratio. Clockify is a good option.

My labour to output ratio is: ____:1

For example: my labour to output ratio is 4:1 (since I outsource editing and proofing)

Step 5: Determine the number of hours per month you need to work on audiobooks

Multiply your minimum finished hour goal from step 3 by your labour ratio. This is how many hours you will need to devote to audiobook work per month. Please note, this does not include any administrative tasks.

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(min. monthly finished hour goal)}} \text{ hours} \times \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(labour:output ratio)}} = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(monthly work hours)}}$$

For example: 16.67 hours x 4 = 66.67 hours/month. I need to work at least 67 hours per month producing audiobooks. This does not include hours spent on administrative work.

(Optional) Step 6: Determine how many hours per day you need to work on audiobooks

If you want to be more specific about your workload, you can calculate the number of hours you need to devote to audiobooks per day.

First, determine the number of days out of the week you can work on audiobooks.

I can work _____ of days per week on audiobooks

Multiply this number by 4 (average number of weeks in a month) to get the total number of days in a month you can work on audiobooks

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# days/week)}} \times 4 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# days/month)}}$$

Then divide the total monthly work hours from step 5 by the number of days per month.

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(monthly work hours)}} / \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(# days/month)}} = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{(hours per day)}}$$

For example: I can work 4 days a week on audiobooks.

4 days x 4 weeks = 16 days per month

66.67 work hours / 16 days = 4.2 hours per day

If this number doesn't sound realistic, you can increase the number of days per week you work on audiobooks to bring the total number of hours per day down.