

# Preparatory exercises

If you have never used the Praat program before, you should complete these exercises first.

## Learning goals

- Installing and starting Praat
- Overview of what you can do with the Praat program and some of the most common use cases
- Independent searching for information and support in using Praat
- Taking a screenshot on your own computer

## Exercises

1. Take a look at the overview of the features in the [Intro](#) of the Praat program. What purposes do you think you might possibly be using Praat in the future?
2. Visit the Praat home page at <https://www.praat.org/>. Check out at least some of the links you find on the website. Were any interesting features added to the Praat program lately? You can find information on the latest updates by clicking on the link on the main page at "**Questions, problems, solutions:** 1. Many problems can be solved by upgrading to [version x.x.x](#) of Praat.")
3. Just for fun, try Googling for some websites that are related to the Praat program (you could, for instance, include words like "phonetics", "speech" or "acoustics" as search terms). Take note on potentially useful websites that you did not yet find in the course area on Moodle.
4. Download and install the most recent version of the Praat program on your own computer. For the purposes of this course, you should be running version **6.1.28** (20 October 2020) or later.

In case you are the only one using the computer in question, you can remove older Praat versions, unless you still need them. When you only have one fresh Praat version installed, you may be able to avoid some potential confusion. In some older Praat versions, some of the menu commands looked slightly different, and also the syntax of the scripting language within Praat changed many years ago. Fortunately, all recent Praat versions are in practice fully compatible with previous versions.

5. Launch Praat. Make sure that the version number of the program is the same as in the version you downloaded from the website. The version number is displayed every time Praat starts up, and it can also be found by selecting **About Praat...** under the menu called **Control** or **Help**.
6. Check out the various commands under the Object window and the Picture window. Try to discover a logic for why some particular commands are grouped under specific menus. You don't have to try all the commands, though – spend no more than a few minutes on this task.

7. Download or find a sound file that you can play with in Praat. (A few Finnish example files are provided within this lesson.

For instance, from the [IPA Handbook Downloads](#) website, you can download the zipped file package **American English** or some other language that is more to your liking. Each zip file contains a number of example pronunciations of different speech sounds as part of words, and the read-aloud story *North Wind and the Sun* split into individual sentences, saved as WAV audio files. Extract all the files from the archive (on Windows, right-click on the name of the zip file and select **Extract to...**) to a suitable location on your computer's hard drive. It is best to extract the files to a place where you can easily locate them later.

**Note that you cannot open the zip file directly in Praat!** You need to extract the files first (even though Windows might display the contents of the unextracted archive within Windows Explorer).

8. Find a pair of headphones and plug them in your computer. Try to open a sound file of any kind in Praat (for instance one of the files you just downloaded). Play the sound in Praat (do your best to make the sound audible on your machine!) Watch the video "[The Sound editor window in Praat](#)".
9. On your own computer, learn to take a screenshot and to save the resulting picture in an image file (e.g., in **jpeg** format). If you do not know how to take a screenshot, you can search for information online (e.g., on [Wikipedia](#)).