

# Using the Olympus Digi-Recorder

Model: **Olympus WS-200S** (Silver & Black)  
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## Introduction

The Olympus WS-200S is a digital voice recorder that can be used to record speech and then play it back again. The speech is recorded 'digitally' to the built-in electronic memory in the form of 'WMA' files. A large number of WMA files can be stored in the recorder and then found again easily for playback. The WS-200S has 5 'folders' within its memory, labelled A, B, C, D and E to allow files to be grouped together to make finding them a little easier. Files can be readily copied across from the recorder to a computer from where they can be burned onto a CD, emailed to someone or simply kept for future reference.

The recorder itself is small and slim – about 4cm x 10cm x 1cm – and powered by a single AAA battery that should last for 10-12 hours, depending on usage. The WS-200S has 128 MB of memory and can hold a total of around 17 hours of recording at 'Standard' recording quality. Each of the five folders can have up to 199 files in it (though this could make finding files quite tricky). There is a small built-in speaker which is useful for giving immediate reassurance that the recording was successful. There is also an 'earphone' socket which can be used for individual listening or used to connect the device to larger, powered, speakers for playback to a group.

## ***Part A - Setting it Up***

### **A1. Inserting the Battery**

Turn the recorder upside down and you should see 3 grooves going across the silver end piece. Use a finger nail or similar to push on one of these grooves and slide this compartment lid outwards a fraction when you should then be able to flip it up. Put in an AAA alkaline battery (flat end first, pointy end left poking out) then push the lid down and slide it back in. Sometimes it doesn't slide in quite all the way; if this happens, push down on the part of the lid nearest the black section then slide it the last little bit.

### **A2. Turning On and Off**

There is via a slider switch on the back of the recorder labelled POWER OFF/ON.

However, the recorder automatically puts itself into '**Standby**' if you don't use it for a few minutes, in which case the slider switch remains in the ON position but the recorder screen goes blank. To re-awaken it, press any button on the recorder (which has no effect other than waking it up).

### **A3. The HOLD switch**

Sliding this switch puts the recorder in 'Hold' mode which disables all buttons (so you can put it in your bag or pocket). To get back to normal, slide the HOLD switch back again.

## A4. Setting the time & date:

The recorder puts a very useful 'time-date stamp' on all recordings so it is important to have the time & date set correctly. If you have just received the recorder then you need to work through the following procedure to check that the time and date are correct – or change them if not. Once set up, the time & date should remain correct from then on (unless you leave the battery out for a long period).

1. Switch on, if you haven't already
2. Press the MENU/FOLDER button for 2-3 seconds until MENU or MOdE appears
3. Press FF a few times until the word TIME appears
4. Press PLAY to see the current time, with the **hour** flashing
5. If necessary press FF or REW to correct the hour
6. Press PLAY to move on to the **minutes**
7. If necessary press FF or REW to change the minutes
8. Press PLAY to move on to the **year** & use FF or REW to change if necessary
9. Press PLAY to move on to the **month** & use FF or REW to change if necessary
10. Press PLAY to move on to the **day-of-month** & use FF/REW to change if necessary
11. Finally press STOP to save the settings and get out

### Note

*If you want to change from 24 hour clock to 12 hour, or vice versa, repeat the process until step 4 then press MENU/FOLDER to swap between the two systems. You can tell if it's 12 hour because the letters AM or PM appear next to the time at step 4.*

*If you want to change from US to UK date format (ie MM-DD-YY to DD-MM-YY) or vice versa, repeat the process until step 8 then press MENU/FOLDER once or twice until you have the format you want (there are 3 to choose from).*

## A5. Setting the Recording Mode

The WS-200S has 4 recording modes (see table below) of which **SP** is the most useful for recording and storing ordinary speech as it produces compact files at an acceptable sound quality. To see what the Mode is currently set to, look on the main display when the recorder is on but not doing anything. It should show SP in small letters. If not you will need to set the recorder to SP as follows:

1. Press the MENU/FOLDER button for 2-3 seconds then release it  
You should see the word MOdE
2. Press PLAY to see the current mode, which will be flashing
3. Press FF until you get a flashing '**SP**'
4. Press STOP to save this setting and get out

What the modes mean:

Mode	Meaining	Max recording hours	Comments
HQ-ST	High Quality Stereo	4.3	Very large file sizes
HQ	High Quality	8.8	Large-ish files
<b>SP</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>Compact files</b>
LP	Long play	54.8	Tiny files but poor quality

## A6. Setting the Microphone Sensitivity

The built-in microphone has 2 sensitivity levels:

- In noisy places use '**Lo**' sensitivity, and hold the recorder very close to the speaker.
- In quiet situations use '**HI**' sensitivity and hold the recorder not quite so close.

You can change the sensitivity at any time:

1. Press the MENU/FOLDER button for 2-3 seconds until MENU or MOdE appears
2. Press REW to see the word MIC (or use FF - but it takes more presses)
3. Press PLAY to see the current sensitivity level
4. Press FF to change from **HI** to **Lo** or vice versa
5. Press STOP to save this setting and get out

## **Part B – Recording & Playback**

This section assumes that you are a tutor making recordings of learners in one way or another. Most of the information applies to other situations as well.

### B1. Recording

1. **Select the folder** you want to use by pressing the MENU/FOLDER button until the letter for that folder is shown at the top of the display (with a circle round it)  
*The WS-200S has 5 folders labelled A-E and you might choose each folder for a different purpose (eg all initial assessments go into folder A, all on-course reflections into folder B). Or if you have more than one group of learners you might want to use each folder for a different group (eg Tuesday's class in A, Wednesday's in B).*
2. **Check** that the recorder is in **SP** mode – ie shows SP in the display – and that the microphone symbol shows the appropriate sensitivity (**HI** or **Lo**) – see A5 or A6 if not
3. **Press REC** then wait a moment till the **red light** comes on – you are now recording!
4. **Press STOP** when finished
5. You may then want to press PLAY to check that what you just recorded sounds OK

Notes

- The recording is given the next available 'track' number in that folder. So if you already have 16 recordings in the folder, the new recording becomes track 17.
- If you want to pause whilst making a recording, press the REC button. Then press it again when ready to resume.

### B2. Playback - basics

1. **Select the folder** you want to play back from - by pressing the MENU/FOLDER button until the letter for that folder is shown at the top of the display
2. **Select the track** that you want to play - by using FF or REW to move through the numbers. Note that the duration of each track is shown momentarily at the bottom of the display.
3. **Press PLAY** to hear the track
4. **Adjust the volume** if necessary using the VOL (+ and -) buttons on the side

### B3. Playback – tricks & tips

The following apply during playback.

Note: elapsed time is shown at the bottom of the recorder's display during playback.

To **pause** a track: press STOP. Then press PLAY to continue

To **return to the start** of a track: press REW at any point

To **jump straight to the start of the next** track: press FF at any point

To **search for a recording aurally**; listen to 2-3 seconds of first track, press FF, listen to 2-3 seconds of next track, press FF and repeat till you find the one you want!

To **fast forward** (in jumps) through a track: press and hold FF whilst watching the elapsed time counter on the display; then release to listen

To **rewind** (in jumps): press and hold REW, watch the elapsed time counter, then release

To **listen to a section repeatedly** when playing back: press INDEX at the start of the section, listen to that section as normal, then press REW to return to that 'index mark' and listen again. (In fact, you can have up to 16 index marks in each recording, and use REW or FF to jump between them). Alternatively you can add the index mark(s) during recording.

To hear a recording a **bit slower**, or a **bit faster**: press PLAY again during playback (once for slower, twice for faster, third time to get back to normal)

### B4. Erasing an unwanted recording

1. Select the appropriate folder
2. Find the recording you want to erase.  
Just to be sure, press PLAY, listen to the first couple of seconds, then press STOP
3. With that track number on display, **briefly** press ERASE
4. Briefly press ERASE a second time to confirm (or press STOP to abandon this)
5. The recording has now been erased

Important!

- When you erase a recording (unless it's the very last one) all the recordings after it 'shuffle back one'. So if you have 17 recordings and erase track 14, you magically get a new track 14 in its place - which is actually the 'old' track 15 that has simply shuffled back one. Similarly the 'old' 16 shuffles back to be track 15 and the old 17 shuffles back to be 16. Sounds confusing but easy to get used to.
- At step 3, only press ERASE briefly. If you hold it for 3 seconds or more you end up erasing everything in that folder – which can be useful, but only if you intended to do it.

### B5. How much time left?

To find out how much free space/time there is left on the recorder: Press and hold STOP when the recorder isn't doing anything else.

## **Part C – Copying across to a PC Computer**

The audio files on the WS-200S voice recorder can be copied over onto a PC computer and moved around just like any other type of file. The computer will need to have a 'USB' port (socket) to plug the recorder in to, and have Windows ME/2000 or later as its operating system. It may not work on Apple computers.

The instructions below assume you are using Windows XP.

### **C1. Plugging in to the PC**

1. Make sure the recorder's ON/OFF switch is in the OFF position (otherwise there's a risk you could damage some of the recorded files)
2. Hold the top of the black part of the recorder (where it says OLYMPUS) between finger & thumb on one hand, and hold the middle of the silver part between finger & thumb on the other hand
3. Pull, firmly, so that the black part slides up and out of the silver part  
You should now be able to see the recorder's USB connector.
4. Assuming the computer is already powered up and running normally, simply plug the recorder into the USB port on the computer and wait for the recorder's light to flash (if it doesn't flash, pull it out and push back in again).

If you know how to copy files from a USB device (eg a 'pen' or 'flash' drive) you can do so in the normal way. If you're not sure, look at sections C2 and C3 below.

### **C2. Locating the recordings**

When you plug the recorder into the USB port, one of two things will normally happen:

- a small window headed 'Removable Disk' appears on the computer screen OR
- it doesn't.

#### **If the small window appears:**

1. Click on the option saying 'Open folder to view files using Windows Explorer'
2. Click OK to do this  
You should end up with a list of five folders (DSS\_FLDA through to DSS\_FLDE) in the right hand part of the window
3. Click on the word Folders (or an icon for this) at the top of the window  
You should now see the same five folders in the left of the window too
4. In the left of the window, click on each of the five folders in turn  
You should see their contents (the recordings) in the right of the window.

#### **If the small window did not appear:**

1. Start up My Computer (eg click the Start button, then click on 'My Computer')
2. Click on the word Folders (or an icon for this) at the top of the window
3. In the left of the window, click on the words 'Removable Disk'  
You should end up with five folders (DSS\_FLDA through to DSS\_FLDE) under it

4. In the left of the window, click on each of the five folders in turn.  
You should see their contents (the recordings) in the right of the window.

*Each of the recordings has its own file name, such as WS\_20009, and if you point to a recording file with your mouse you should get an information box appear next to it telling you about that file (including Duration and size in KB)*

*If the PC has sound set up on it, double-clicking a recording file should allow you to hear it.*

### **C3. Copying the recordings**

First, decide where you want to copy the files **to** on the PC.

For example, you may want to create a separate folder on the PC for each learner, or each topic, or each class, then copy the recordings into the appropriate folders.

#### **Creating folders on the PC**

This follows on from C2 above.

1. In the left of the window, click once on the location where you want the new folder to be - eg click 'My Documents'
2. At the top of the window click File + New + Folder  
You should then see a new folder appear in the right of the window with its title (probably 'new folder') highlighted in blue
3. Type in an appropriate name for this new folder and press Enter on the keyboard  
This new name should replace the one highlighted in blue
4. Repeat the process to create more folders if required

#### **Copying files from the recorder to the PC**

1. In the left of the window, click on the recorder folder (eg DSS\_FLDA) which contains the files you want to copy. The folder's contents should appear in the right side.
2. Check that you can see the destination folder in the left side; if not, scroll up or down until it comes into view (but don't click it). The files in the right side should still be the same as at step 1.
3. In the right side, click once on the first file then hold down the Ctrl key on the keyboard and click on the other files you want to copy (if any)
4. Grab the highlighted files in the right side by pointing at one of them with the tip of the mouse-arrow and holding down the left mouse button.
5. Keep the mouse button held down and drag the files across to the left side and 'into' the folder where you want them to go; then release the mouse button.
6. In the left of the window, click on the folder to which you have just copied the files and check they are now there (they should appear in the right side)

#### **Renaming files on the PC**

You may want to rename the recorded files to help you remember what each contains.

To rename the files on the recorder before you copy them across, or afterwards on the PC:

1. Click once on the name of the file, pause, then click a second time
2. Type in an appropriate name, press the Enter key on the keyboard and the name should be changed

## C4. Copying TO the recorder

You can copy any 'WMA' audio file (eg music or other track 'ripped' from a CD) from the PC to the recorder and then play it back on the recorder later on. This could be useful if you have powered speakers to plug in to the recorder to allow play-back to the whole class – but remember to observe any copyright limitations.

To copy a file to the recorder simply drag it from where it is kept on the PC and put it into the appropriate recorder folder. This leaves the original file exactly as it was and makes a copy of it on the recorder.

Note that when you come to play the new file on the recorder itself it will probably be at track 01 in that folder and any other tracks will have been 'shuffled forward one' to make space.

You can also use the recorder as a portable memory device by setting up new folders on the recorder whilst plugged in to the PC, and copying files across to it. However, once unplugged from the PC, there is no way of seeing the extra folders on the recorder itself as the display can only show the normal 5 folders (A-E). Similarly, only files in WMA format will be assigned track numbers, other types of file in the 5 folders will be invisible on the recorder's display.

## C5. Safely removing the recorder

To avoid damaging data files, you should:

1. Make sure that the recorder light has stopped flashing
2. Click on the 'Safely Remove Hardware' icon (or similar), normally at the bottom-right of the computer screen
3. Click on the 'Safely remove USB Mass Storage Device' option that should pop up
4. Wait till you see the 'Safe to Remove Hardware' message
5. Unplug the recorder (the black part) from the PC, find the silver part and gently push the two parts back together

*What to do if 'device cannot be stopped right now' message appears at step 4:  
First, wait 30 seconds or so then try again. If the message still comes up, the safest thing to do is to shut down the PC completely, then unplug the recorder. Alternatively you can simply unplug the recorder without shutting down – which is not the recommended way but doesn't seem to cause any problems.*