

# Encoding Files to 192kbps MP3

## Introduction

The last step in preparing your audio files for upload to ACX is encoding them as 192kbps MP3s, [our required format](#). There are many tools available to perform this task, though some are easier to use and produce more reliable results than others. The information provided here explains how to use “fre:ac”, one of the best audio converter programs we’ve tested. fre:ac is free and available for both Mac and PC.

## Before You Begin

Before converting to MP3, make sure to back up your work! It is highly recommended to save a “final” version of your audiobook before beginning the encoding process. It is best to archive your completed audiobook’s contents as WAV files with the following properties:

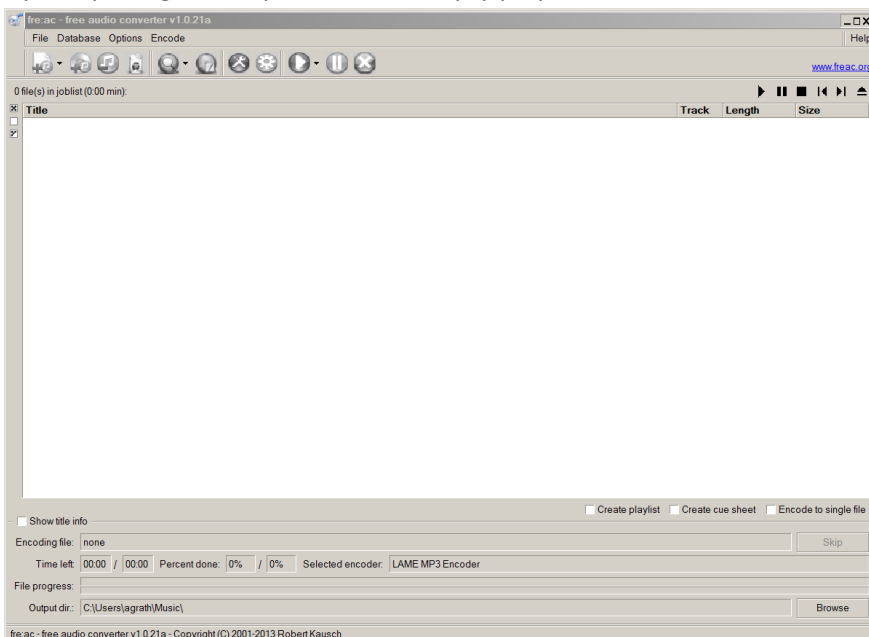
- Sampling rate: 44.1kHz
- Bit depth (or bit rate): 16bit
- A length of 120 minutes or less
- Filenames should be named as follows: 01-Intro.wav; 02-Chapter1.wav; 03-Chapter2.wav; etc.

## Download fre:ac

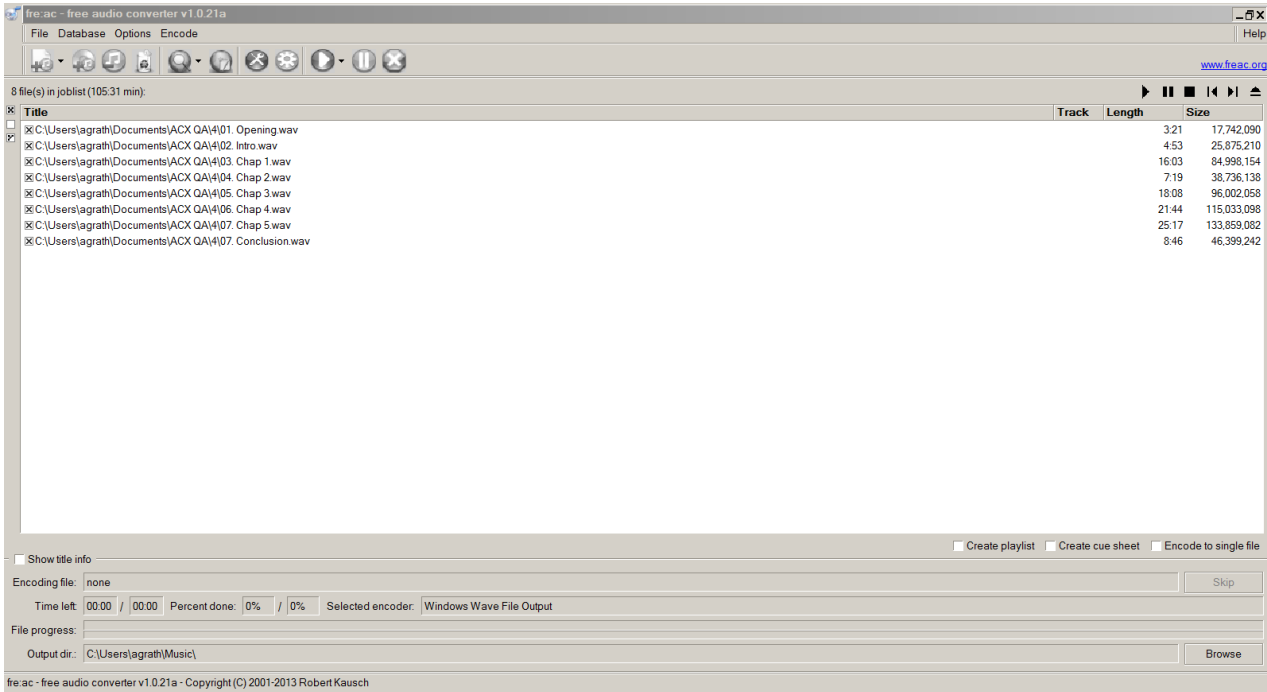
The software is easily downloaded via Sourceforge and also through CNET’s *download.com* website.

## Prepare Your Files for Conversion

Upon opening fre:ac, you’ll see an empty playlist.

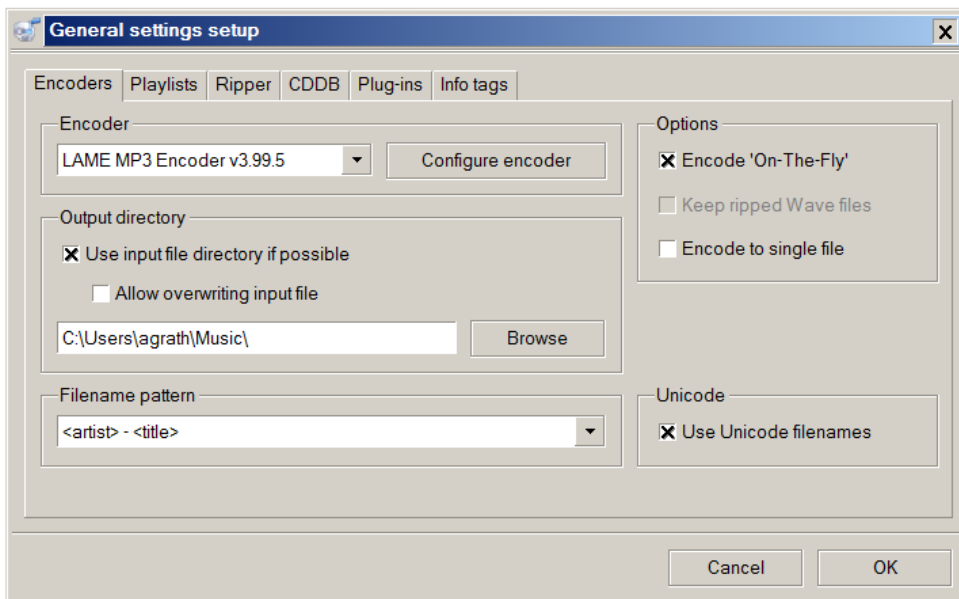


Drag your WAV files into the playlist. You will see the files listed in alphanumeric order, which is why the naming convention we referenced above is important.

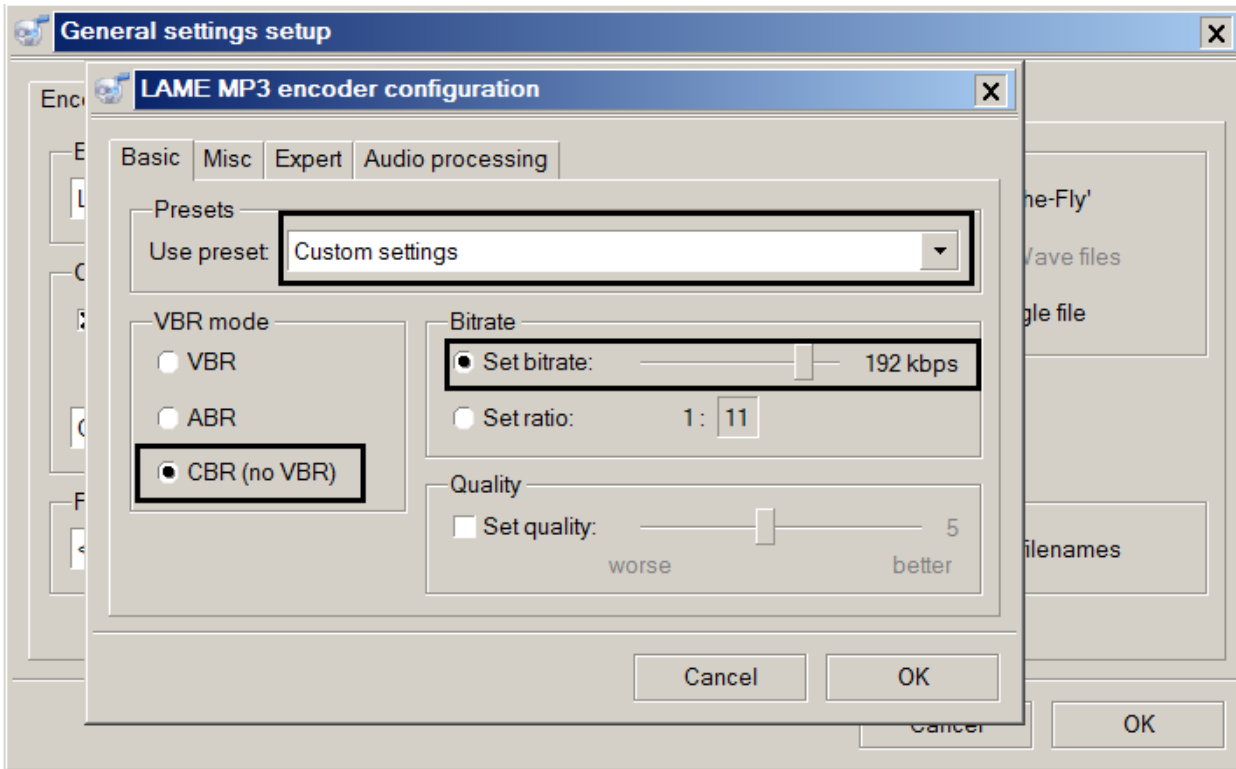


## Converting Files with fre:ac

Before converting, you need to set your MP3 encoding preferences. Click on **options**, and then select *General Settings* from the dropdown menu.

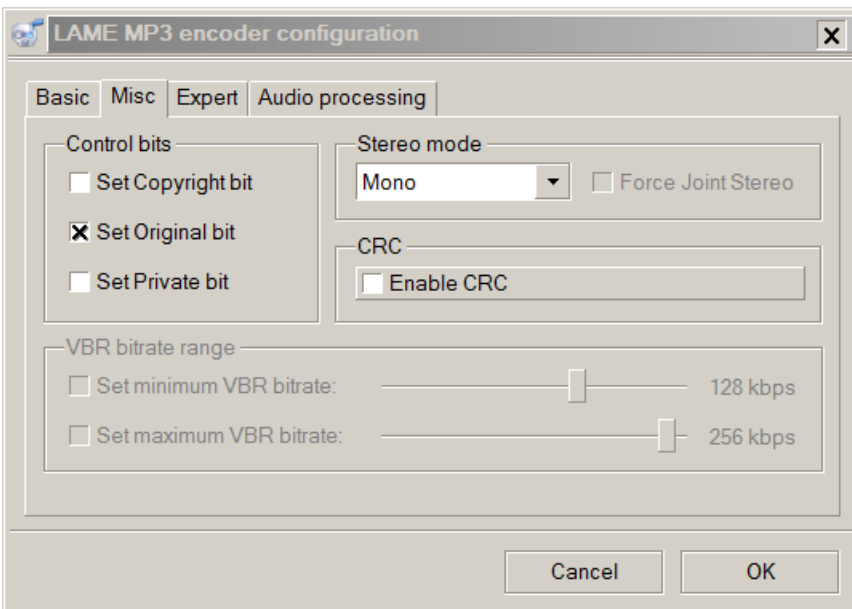


A new window called “General settings setup” will open. At the Encoder drop-down menu, select “LAME MP3 Encoder.” Next, click “Configure encoder” to set the encoding options. For best results, set the LAME MP3 encoder configuration to match the settings below:



- User preset: Custom settings
- VBR mode: CBR (no VBR)
- Set bitrate: 192 kbps

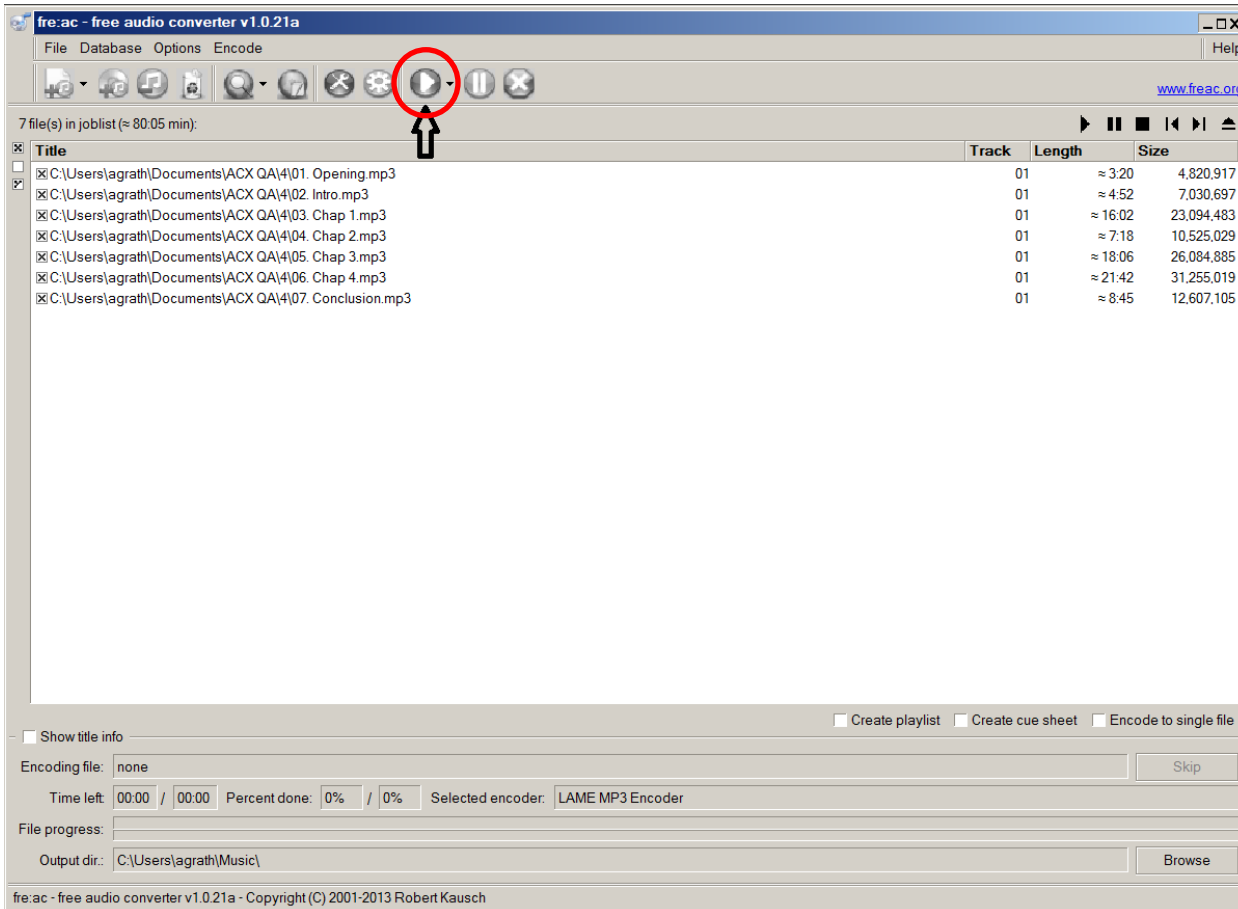
Navigate to the ‘Misc’ tab in order to force the “Stereo mode” to mono\*. Ensure that “Force Joint Stereo” is not checked when encoding your audio files to ACX specifications.



\*ACX strongly recommends that audio files are submitted in mono format.

fre:ac will remember your settings for your next project, but it is always a good idea to double-check these settings before converting your audio. Once you are sure that the profile matches these specifications, hit “OK”.

You will then return to the prior “General settings setup” screen. Click “OK” to return back to your playlist. Please note the “Output dir” option at the bottom of the playlist window. This field shows the directory in which fre:ac will write your new MP3 files. Make sure to change this location to your preferred output directory. Once you’re ready to encode, simply click the Play button at the top of the window in order to begin the conversion process.



## Confirmation

Once your MP3s have finished encoding, it is recommended you double-check that the resultant files fall in line with ACX’s requirements. Ensure that all files are smaller than 170MB and are no longer than two hours in length. Additionally, a brief listening scan of each file is encouraged.