All right, so what is GarageBand?

It's a program that creates music with software and real instruments. What it delivers compared to all the other recording software is that this program is extremely user-friendly and very easy to use. Plus with any Mac it’s free too. This software is a great first step into taking people into the world of recording music.

So the basics:

So when you open up the interface at first there will be a couple of places to start. To start, under New Project click on any instrument you would like to get started. Don’t fret, though, as you can select all these instruments again.
Starting a project

So now that you got your basic instrument selected this window will pop up -- this will pop up before you even start on your musical document opposed to when you hit the save for the first time. Don’t worry about the signatures, tempo, or keys as you can easily change all of that yourself later.

Some Key Things

Monitor: This is basically the difference between you hearing what you play from the computer or NOT hearing the sound from your computer. There are a few ways to turn this on and off:

• “Software Instrument,” if there is no sound then you’ll probably have to restart.
• Using a “Real Instrument,” you should see that option on the right without clicking anything.
• If you’re using an “Electric Guitar” instrument, double click on the amp on the right and you will see some options under it.
Blue UI

A helpful interface for your musical project, found on the bottom of GarageBand. This interface shows the time, measures, shows your project info, and tunes your instrument! To toggle these options, just click the icon in the blue UI.

Measures

The usual default when you start up GarageBand. It shows how far the project is in, in measures, or by a metronome.

Tuner

Just tune the instrument until the meter hits the desired note and the middle of the meter.

Project

This will show you the information of the project, like the key, tempo and signature.

Time

Works exactly like Measures, but it counts in hours, minutes, and seconds. Something for the less musicals.
Adding Instruments

To add more instrument tracks, click the plus icon on the bottom of the interface and then these options will show.

Software Instruments:

These are instruments that can be programmed through digital hardware used with a MIDI or USB interface like keyboards, Guitar Hero drum kits.

Also in this option you can use an on screen keyboard that is built in with the GarageBand program.

Real Instruments:

These are instruments that use the standard instrument cable. These instruments include guitars, microphones (old fashion), basses, etc...

Within these there are different effects that you can add to your instruments with an equalizer option to tweak the effects. Also you can turn your external instrument into other instruments.

Electric Guitar:

In this option, you get a bunch of pre-effects, and amp settings that can spruce up the sound of your guitar without paying for all of those Marshall, Mesa Boogies and pedals.
Putting in mp3 files and exporting your piece as a mp3 file

Take the mp3 file and drag and drop into the GarageBand track interface and walaa. Also if you have a part of a piece that you really like in a different GarageBand file, export that specific song as an MP3 by clicking on “Share” on the top Mac taskbar and “Export to Disk” option.

Yellow Loops

So why do you need a loop? Well what the yellow loop does is that it loops a section (the yellow part) over and over again. This is extremely useful for recording many takes to get a certain part right.

So let’s say that you have the guitar and drum parts down in a rhythm section, but yet have no idea what to do with the bass part. Well get the specific track and highlight the track by pressing the icon that looks like the one on the left (located right next to the multi-blue interface) and go up to the top (pictured above) and highlight whatever track. Then highlight the bass track or whatever part that you don’t have down, click record and start. But wait, the first part you were getting ready and missed the part. No worries, let it run into the second loop. Still messed up, well keep rolling into the next loop! Once you get the right take you should press pause (w/o making instrumental noise, because if you make noise (very significant/loud noise) on the next loop it will detect it as a new loop!) and there you have it.

After you have these loops you can export it as an mp3 and then paste these loops on a track so you can loop it for a whole song.
A finer tune in volume

You can fine tune your volume at a given time in your instrument track. This was an important tool that one of the legendary music producers, Eddie Kramer used when he was producing the Jimi Hendrix albums. Every time the wah panned in and out, he would adjust the volume pan accordingly to the wah’s to get the pristine wah sounds that are on those albums, where the guitar sounds like it is swirling around you.

You can find both of these options by looking right under your instruments and clicking the down arrow.

**Panning** is when you want a specific speaker to omit a certain volume. In this, there are 2 spectrums, -64 and +63, where one is left-side panning and the other is right-side panning, respectively. When you fluxuate the points to different sides of the graph you’ll get the panning; up on the graph gets you the pan of the left side of the speaker, and the points coming down will get you the right side of the speaker.

In short what **Track Volume** does really is that it just allows you to adjust the volume on the track at a specific point, which is helpful because sometimes in a track it is helpful to quiet down some parts to annunciate another track for a solo, which you can also raise the volume for too. Or if you want one part to fade, you can use the graph.

**Panning vs. Track Volume?:** Well panning is for a specific speaker where one speaker will sound louder or quieter than the other speaker, and track volume is where a specific part will adjust the volume of both speakers. Also it looks like panning gives more smoother curves at ease, and track volume gives out a more harder time to make smoother curves too.
Troubleshooting

9 times out of 10 if there’s any problems that occur with GarageBand, just save your work and close everything out and restart GarageBand. This includes anything like awful-sudden feedback to little software bugs.

-What I’m playing isn’t coming out of the computer monitor!

Simple fix, and this is one of those times where you won’t need to restart.

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-If you’re using an “Electric Guitar” instrument, double click on the amp on the right and you will see some options under it.

Click on Monitor and a pan of choices should come up. Click ‘No feedback protection.’ The reason why GarageBand shuts off the monitor on default is that sometimes when you suddenly plug in the instrument with the volume out loud, it creates a sudden screech due to the frequencies of the instrument and the speakers conflicting, which is called Feedback. The reason why you don’t click ‘On’ is that there will be an annoying message that pops up every time there is a loud sudden noise.