

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL

YOUR  
**SPEAKING  
VOICE**



Tips for Adding Strength and  
Authority to Your Voice



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**



# YOUR SPEAKING VOICE

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**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**

# CONTENTS

▶ <b>The Medium of Your Message</b> .....	3
▶ <b>How Your Voice Is Created</b> .....	4
Breath Produces Voice .....	4
Production of Voice Quality .....	4
▶ <b>What Kind of Voice Do You Have?</b> .....	5
Do You Whisper or Boom? .....	5
Are You Monotonous or Melodious? .....	5
Is Your Voice a Rain Cloud or a Rainbow? .....	5
Do You Have Mumbly? .....	5
How Well Do You Articulate? .....	5
Do You Trudge Like a Turtle or Race Like a Rabbit? .....	6
Do You Agitate or Orchestrate? .....	6
▶ <b>Your Speech Profile</b> .....	7
▶ <b>How to Improve Your Speaking Voice</b> .....	7
Methods for Voice Relaxation .....	7
Breathing Exercises to Improve Volume .....	8
Extending and Controlling Your Pitch .....	9
Projecting Your Voice .....	9
Improving Your Articulation .....	10
Talk With Time, Not Against It .....	12
Spice Up Your Speaking .....	14
▶ <b>Rehearsing Speeches</b> .....	17
▶ <b>Presenting Speeches</b> .....	17
▶ <b>Your Voice and Your Image</b> .....	17
▶ <b>Speech Profile</b> .....	19

**Y**our audience judges you from the moment you stand up to speak. If you are dressed well and are neat and clean, their initial impression of you will be positive. However, if your voice is squeaky, your words unintelligible, or your voice too loud, their positive impression quickly will become negative. If you want to communicate effectively and positively influence your audience, you must pay special attention to your speaking voice.

## THE MEDIUM OF YOUR MESSAGE

Your greatest tool as a speaker is your voice. Every time you address an audience your mind, your body, and your voice act as partners in your effort to communicate with your listeners. When you speak, your voice is the primary link between you and your listeners. It is the medium of your message.

Yet most likely the voice you are now using is not your best voice. You may have buried your optimum speaking voice under layers of bad speech habits. However, you must find it and put it to work if you want to become a good speaker. This manual will help you add dimension, strength, vitality, and authority to your speaking voice.

An effective voice isn't necessary just for public speaking. A good, controlled voice is an asset in every contact with others. Your voice mirrors your personality with a language all its own. A natural voice which projects cordiality, cultivation, and authority is a significant tool for personal success. It can help in gaining promotions, making sales, winning the respect of others, and improving your social opportunities, as well as in speaking effectively to audiences.

When you speak, your voice reflects your psychological and emotional state of mind. You cannot hope to persuade or influence others – or even get them to listen in a positive way – if your tones are harsh and unfriendly. Such a voice can repel even when the speaker wishes to attract. The quality of friendliness is a requirement for a good speaking voice. It is largely a matter of habit, as is the unfriendly tone.

If you scold, snarl, and speak in an unpleasant tone and you want to produce the genial, cheerful, and gracious tones that characterize a good speaking voice, you may need to do more than simply develop your voice. You may have to reassess how you look at yourself, other people, and events in general.

But most likely you can develop the sort of voice that wins favorable attention and reflects the qualities you wish to project. You simply have to strip away any bad speech habits and replace them with positive ones that will enhance your speaking voice.

One of your goals as a speaker should be to develop a voice that is:

- ▶ pleasant, conveying a sense of warmth
- ▶ natural, reflecting your true personality and sincerity
- ▶ dynamic, giving the impression of force and strength – even when it isn't especially loud
- ▶ expressive, portraying various shades of meaning and never sounding monotonous or without emotion
- ▶ easily heard, thanks to proper volume and clear articulation

## HOW YOUR VOICE IS CREATED

Before you try to improve your speaking voice, you should first learn how speech sounds are produced. This is the process that you can change in order to improve your speech. As you read about the process, refer to the following diagram.

### Breath Produces Voice

Deep, controlled breathing is necessary for good vocal production. Your voice is supported by a column of air, the depth and steadiness of which determines your vocal quality. Think of the diaphragm as the foundation on which this air column rests and by which it is controlled as it comes upward to meet the vocal organs.

When you breathe in, your abdominal wall expands and the dome-shaped diaphragm flattens. When you exhale, the diaphragm relaxes and the abdominal wall contracts. The relaxed diaphragm rises, pushing air out of the lungs. The exhaled air provides the controlled production of speech sounds.

As the air pushes upward against the vocal cords, it causes them to momentarily separate, allowing the air to pass between them. The rush of air and the elasticity of the vocal cords then pulls them back together. The production of these vibrations is called phonation.

Consider how sound is produced at the mouth of an inflated balloon. Vocal sound is produced in a similar manner. Air pressure comes up through the throat, mouth, and nose, causing a continuous pressure change in the air surrounding the speaker. These pressure changes are called sound waves. They are transmitted to the ear of the listener and the voice is heard.

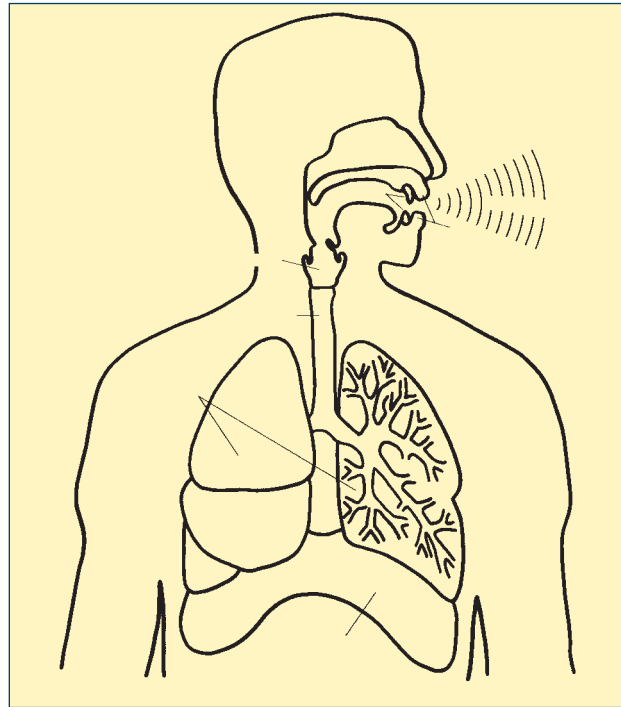
### Production of Voice Quality

Think for a moment about musical woodwind and brass instruments. Their sound comes from the musician's breath and lip vibrations or the vibrations of a reed in the mouthpiece. Because the chambers of these instruments differ in size and shape, their tone qualities are distinctive. Different parts of the original tone are increased, or resonated, and other parts are reduced.

Human resonance is the increasing or modifying of sounds by the throat, nose, and mouth. The sound waves created by the vibration of the vocal cords travel into the upper part of the throat, then to the mouth and, at times, into the nose. As these waves bounce around within these structures, they are reinforced and amplified.

The differences in people's voices arise from the size of the vocal cords and the effects that the resonators (throat, mouth, nasal passages) have on the vocal tone.

To a certain extent, a speaker can change the size, shape, and surface tensions of the pharynx and the oral cavity; he or she may also use, partly use, or close off the nasal cavities.





## WHAT KIND OF VOICE DO YOU HAVE?

### Do You Whisper or Boom?

Some people speak too loudly. At the other extreme are those who can barely be heard. Voice loudness or volume should be appropriate in strength and intensity and should be varied in order to add emphasis and dramatic impact to your speeches. Inaudibility is different from speaking softly with vocal support. A whisper is air without sound; air must vibrate against your vocal cords to produce audible sound. A fading voice is first cousin to a whisper; a sentence or phrase may begin well enough, then collapse into unintelligibility. If you want to communicate with your audience, you must project your voice.

### Are You Monotonous or Melodious?

When you speak about something, does your voice convey life, color, and melody, or do your sentences come out flat, wooden, and without variety? Do people find your vocal range pleasant? Good speakers vary their speech to express emotion and conviction. The highness or lowness in the sound of your voice is known as pitch. If your voice is squeaky, guttural, shrill, or flat, then you should work on your pitch. The desired speaking pitch sounds low, clear, full, and varied.

### Is Your Voice a Rain Cloud or a Rainbow?

The essence of your speaking sound is your voice quality. It expresses emotional color. Your voice coloring is what you use to convey your feelings, and these feelings should be positive when you address an audience. Your thoughts are a form of energy that you transmit to others. Through the quality of your voice, you actually establish the tone of your relationship with an audience or with an individual to whom you're speaking. If your voice is full, clear, mellow, and enthusiastic, you can create an unbreakable bond of friendship and acceptance. On the other hand, if your voice quality is nasal, breathy, harsh, or lifeless, you should concentrate on improving it.

The primary cause of negative voice quality is tension – emotional or physical tension – so controlling tension is critical to improving your voice quality.

The key to developing effective voice quality is being aware of the different roles you play during a typical day: parent, employee, boss, friend, lover, consumer, salesperson. Each of these roles reflects different personality traits and requires different voice images. Listen to how your voice sounds in your various roles as you relate to others. Consider what you are doing with your voice. How is your mouth moving? How are you using your lips?

To improve your voice, you must become aware of stress, muscle tension, and relaxation. The most important recommendation for developing voice quality is to relax your throat while you speak. Think in terms of friendliness, confidence, and a desire to communicate. If you release the tension from your voice, a pleasing tone will likely result. Remember that the emotions and vocal colorings you express with your voice can arouse similar emotions in others.

### Do You Have Mumblitis?

Indistinctness is an especially annoying speech habit. When you speak, you must be understood. If you mumble your words or swallow, suppress, or mumble them, people will soon tire of trying to follow your thoughts. Talking through a half-opened mouth is the same as speaking with a book in front of your mouth.

### How Well Do You Articulate?

The term articulation refers to how distinctly you formulate your words when you speak. It includes both how you pronounce individual words and how clearly you create speech sounds.

Pronunciation is the formation and utterance of words. It is the product of correct sounds in the sequence of a word. Mispronunciation, on the other hand, is the failure to produce the correct sounds; for example, just – jist, asked – axed, length – lenth, going to – gunna, etc.

Enunciation relates to the fullness and clarity of speech sounds. Pronunciation and enunciation combine to form the basis of articulation or the shaping of sounds by the tongue, teeth, palate, lips, and nose. Clear articulation requires three conditions:

1. The sound must be accurately formed.
2. The sound must be sufficiently supported by the breath.
3. The sound must be completely finished.

### Do You Trudge Like a Turtle or Race Like a Rabbit?

The rate at which you speak is closely associated with your personality. Consequently, rate is difficult to change because it relates to how you think and behave – how you live your life. Yet you should avoid speaking either too slow or too fast because either can distort your articulation, limit changes of pitch, and alter your voice quality.

A slow speaker may not realize how listeners must struggle to pay attention. People think at a much faster rate than the flow of speech, and overly slow speech encourages listeners to daydream. In addition, it often results in sound distortion and lack of variety, which can make what you say incomprehensible.

Talking too fast creates similar problems. When information is spewed forth at a rapid rate, listeners become frustrated and stop paying attention. A fast speaker also may shorten sounds and fail to vary intensity, volume, and pitch.

The most effective speaking rate is between 120 to 160 words per minute. You can easily keep within this optimum range by speaking rapidly enough to avoid a boring drone, yet slowly enough to be understandable. By varying your speaking rate during a talk, you can also reflect changes in emotions and mood, as well as emphasize critical points.

### Do You Agitate or Orchestrate?

People speak in musical notes. A good speaker may use as many as 25 different notes to convey variety and meaning. A one-note speaker is tedious to an audience and promotes inattention and boredom.

Vocal variety is the way you use your voice to create interest, excitement, and emotional involvement. It is accomplished by varying your pitch, volume, and timing.

Inflections comprise another important characteristic of speaking. An inflection is a raised pitch – a high note used to add emphasis to a word. A single change in inflection may often change the meaning or implication of a sentence, as illustrated in the following example:

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| I was born in Australia        | (You, on the other hand, were born somewhere else.) |
| I <b>was</b> born in Australia | (How dare you imply that I wasn't?)                 |
| I was <b>born</b> in Australia | (I'm a native – not a newcomer.)                    |
| I was born <b>in</b> Australia | (Not outside Australia.)                            |
| I was born in <b>Australia</b> | (Not in New Zealand.)                               |

## YOUR SPEECH PROFILE

The first step you should take in developing a clear speaking voice is to analyze your voice and articulation. This will tell you what needs improvement.

Use the speech profile at the end of this manual to analyze your vocal characteristics and discover what problem areas may exist. Since you cannot objectively analyze your own voice, arrange to have a member analyze your voice while you present a speech at your Toastmasters club. Ask the vice president education to select a member who will do the analysis as you speak. Once the analysis is completed, follow the instructions on the profile to create a sample graph that reflects your vocal characteristics.

## HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SPEAKING VOICE

Now that you know your voice problems, the exercises in this section will show you how to improve your voice. Your goal should be vocal efficiency – the production of maximum vocal output with minimum effort. An efficient voice is smooth, versatile, and produced with very little effort.

### Methods for Voice Relaxation

Voice relaxation is essential for good speaking, especially when doing vocal exercises. Many people “talk in the throat,” meaning they hold their vocal tones too far back. When this happens, the throat and jaw muscles tense, and the voice sounds harsh and squeezed. You cannot produce a fine, resonant, pleasing tone when your throat muscles are pinched, tense, or strained.

Tight muscles combined with inadequate breath support cause disagreeable tones that are thin, nasal, high-pitched, and lacking in resonance. Throat tightness may be caused by nervousness, a common occurrence for inexperienced public speakers. If this tightness is present during ordinary conversation, it is usually because of carelessness or ignorance about proper voice use.

Here is a six-step method for relaxing your voice. If you do these simple exercises several times daily for a few minutes each time, you will soon notice a difference. Your voice will sound richer and more colorful.

1. While standing or sitting comfortably, place your hands lightly on your throat muscles and speak in a normal tone. Note the tenseness of the throat muscles and the tightness of your jaw.
2. Yawn. Open your mouth wide. Finish the yawn with an easy “ho-hum,” prolonging the “hum” for several seconds. Drop your jaw as far as it will go without stress. Waggle the jaw from side to side and continue humming with your lips closed and jaw loose.
3. Repeat the yawning and humming. Notice how your throat muscles have loosened and become relaxed. See how comfortable your throat feels with the strain removed.
4. Retaining this feeling of ease and looseness, say the following words: hang, harm, lane, main, lone, loom. Open your mouth wide, dropping your jaw loosely. Exaggerate your lip and jaw movements. When your throat feels tired, stop and yawn again.
5. Lightly knead the throat muscles with your fingers to eliminate tightness.

### WARNING

Voice exercises should be done in brief stints – five minutes or less – and spaced throughout the day. If your voice tires or your throat feels rough or scratchy, you are probably overdoing the exercises, or doing them incorrectly. Toastmasters International does not assume any responsibility for injury to a reader’s vocal apparatus that results from overdoing or incorrectly performing the exercises described in this manual. If you have a serious voice or speech problem, you should consult a speech therapist.



6. Slowly repeat the following sounds: *nah, nay, nee, no, noo*. Drop your jaw and relax your throat. Prolong the sounds, giving each equal length.

### **Breathing Exercises to Improve Volume**

How do you breathe? Unless you've had voice lessons or athletic training, most likely your breathing is shallow, misdirected, and lacking in control.

Correct, natural breathing is the foundation of a good voice. Failure to breathe properly is a leading cause of poor speaking volume. Watch an infant or a dog or cat lying asleep. The entire body is relaxed and the abdominal muscles work with every breath. The muscular movement is almost entirely below the ribs. You can judge the correctness of your own breathing by watching your shoulders. If they are raised as you inhale, you're missing the deep, abdominal breathing effect that is natural and correct. Here are 10 exercises that will help you develop proper breathing and improve your vocal volume.

1. Exhale all air from your lungs. Continue pushing it out even after you feel it's totally expelled. When no more air can be forced out, you will automatically inhale. Inhale deeply. Observe how the air rushes in. Only a deep, full inhalation will satisfy your hunger for air. Repeat this process frequently, but not more than three or four times at each repetition.
2. Exhale comfortably. Then take a moderately filling breath, not crowding your capacity. Hold it for 15 seconds, then exhale quietly. Repeat this process frequently for several days. Then gradually increase your holding time to 20 seconds, 30 seconds, and 45 seconds. Eventually, you will be able to hold your breath for a full minute. This exercise will help you to develop breath control by strengthening your diaphragm and related muscles.
3. Standing erect, inhale with five quick, short gasps through an open mouth. You will notice that you cannot gasp like this without using your diaphragm. Five gasps should fill you to capacity. Then exhale in five quick gasps or puffs. Next, practice gasping and puffing through your nose with your mouth closed.
4. Laugh heartily with a big *Ha Ha Ha*. Carry this through to complete exhalation, then inhale deeply and quickly.
5. Close your lips and laugh soundlessly through your nose. You will exercise your diaphragm whether you breathe through your mouth or your nose, but laughing silently through your nose will promote better control.
6. Lie on your back. Place a book on your diaphragm. Try to relax each part of your body, then concentrate on the movement of your diaphragm. As you inhale, the book rises. As you exhale, flatten your abdomen as much as you can. Repeat this exercise until you automatically expand and contract your waist as you breathe.
7. Stand, then bend over as if to touch your toes, but just hang limply. Remain in this position for a full minute, then straighten and repeat the exercise. Your breath is expelled naturally when you bend at the waist.
8. Standing, place your hands on your hips, lean your head back, look at the ceiling, and yawn. Your waist will expand as your diaphragm flattens and draws in air. Then, as you exhale, produce the sound *ah*, holding it as long as you can without discomfort.

9. Standing, take a deep breath. As you exhale, count aloud from one to five on a single breath. Repeat the exercise, counting from one to 10. Do not strain. Allow the air to flow easily.
10. Read aloud a paragraph that contains a mixture of short and long sentences. Read each sentence on a single breath, if possible, inhaling before the sentence, then controlling your exhalation as you read.

Do not think that you must fill your lungs to capacity before speaking. Your brain controls the amount of air needed with each breath. Keep your breathing easy and comfortable.

The preceding exercises will help you increase breathing strength and technique. But when you speak, keep your breathing quiet and natural so that the audience won't notice it. Breathe easily at natural pauses. And if you're using a microphone, be especially careful that the microphone does not pick up your breathing sounds and transmit them to your listeners.

### **Extending and Controlling Your Pitch**

Most speakers talk on too high a pitch. A thin, high-pitched tone lacks authority and appeal and is often harsh and unpleasant. Cultivate deeper tones. Be careful not to develop too low a pitch, which results in rumbling, indistinct, ponderous speech.

We each have a natural pitch on which we speak. It may or may not be good. If your natural pitch needs to be lowered, work on it by consciously pitching your voice lower in all conversation. Change it a half-tone at a time. Speaking with careful enunciation and in a relatively soft tone will help you to establish the change.

You can determine your natural pitch range with the aid of a piano or guitar. Sing the sound *ah* at a comfortable pitch. From that point, sing the next note downward on the musical scale. Continue to sing downward one note at a time until you cannot go lower without straining. Then sing your way upward until you reach the highest note possible without strain. The total number of notes from top to bottom represents your pitch range. Once you have established your range, apply it to the following exercises on stretching, extending, and controlling your pitch. While working on these exercises, remember to keep your throat relaxed and the breath coming from the diaphragm or abdomen.

1. Sing the sound *ah* at a normal volume. Increase your volume until you feel yourself straining or losing clarity of sound. Repeat this process several times in smaller segments until you reach the maximum loudness level comfortable for you.
2. Sing the sound *ah* as in the preceding exercise, but this time do it at various higher and lower pitch levels. Do not do this exercise for more than a few minutes at a time and stop whenever you feel strain. Periodically rest your voice by performing breathing and throat relaxation exercises. Do not do this exercise if you have a cold, a sore throat, or other irritation that affects the voice.
3. Repeat the two preceding exercises, but this time recite letters of the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, or months of the year. Always strive for total relaxation of the vocal apparatus.

### **Projecting Your Voice**

The purpose of these exercises is to improve your voice quality by bringing your voice "out of the throat" and focusing it forward where it belongs. Projecting your voice requires mental and muscular control – you must "think" your voice forward. Make your tones feel as if they're produced on your lips.

1. **Exercises for Reducing Vocal Constriction.** As you do these exercises, always be certain your jaw and throat muscles are relaxed. Do them for short periods every day, performing only as many repetitions as you can without tiring your vocal mechanism.

- a. Lying on the floor or on a firm mattress, breathe abdominally and exhale slowly through your mouth. Concentrate on relaxing your lips and jaw by allowing them to hang open. Then relax your throat. Each time you exhale, the passage of air through your throat and mouth should feel smooth and unobstructed.

In the same position, exhale with a breathy sigh and say *ah*. Repeat and open your mouth wide as if you're yawning. Then, with your next series of exhalations, keep sighing, but this time count slowly up to five. Repeat the exercise until you can say each word without strain.

- b. While in a sitting position, repeat the above exercises. Then count to five using your full voice. If you sense constriction in your throat, repeat the exercises while lying on your back.
- c. Do the above exercises in a standing position. Eventually you should be able to produce open phonation while counting to 100 and taking in a new breath after each five numbers.

## 2. Exercise for Reducing Breathiness

These exercises require that you record your voice for playback or have someone listen to help you distinguish between your breathy voice and your full voice.

- a. Make an *ee* sound while you record your voice or speak to your listener. The breathiness or escaping air will be heard along with the vocal tone. Repeat until the vocal tone and the rush of air can be heard independently of one another. Next, repeat this process using the sound *ah*.
- b. Next, produce louder and louder *ee* sounds. The rush of escaping air will decrease at some point in your loudness range, which means you are fully voicing. Do the same with a series of *ah* sounds. Concentrate on the feeling as well as on the sound in your voice. You should feel the sensation somewhere around the bridge of your nose; this is known as high vocal focus. Maintain that same feel and sound while slowly decreasing your volume. Each time breathiness occurs, increase your loudness until you no longer hear it. Then lower your voice again. Repeat this exercise until you can lower your voice without producing breathiness.

## Improving Your Articulation

To improve your articulation, you must first decide that you are going to be careful with your speech. You are going to be your best – no more careless, sloppy, slovenly talking.

Next, your mouth must be capable of opening fully. You might as well talk with your hand in front of your mouth as to talk with teeth and lips half closed. Open your mouth.

Third, loosen lazy lips. Make your lips flexible, wrapping them around your words as if each word were a tasty morsel.

Fourth, teach your tongue to keep its place. This is less difficult, because the tongue usually acts without your conscious direction. But if it gets in the way of your words, you must consciously make it respond to your demands.

And fifth, practice. Every time you speak, remind yourself to speak each word well.

Your speech muscles must be trained and exercised just as you would train your body's other muscles for athletic activity. As you perform the following exercises, exaggerate the specified actions while remembering to breathe diaphragmatically. The secret of correct articulation is the positioning of the lips, tongue, and teeth. The purpose of these exercises is to help you obtain the greatest possible flexibility.

## 1. Lip Exercises

- a. Stretch your lower lip over the upper lip, then stretch the upper lip down over the lower one. Alternate this process with increasing rapidity.
- b. Pucker your lips as tightly as possible, then widen them vigorously. Do this slowly 10 times, then do it another 10 times rapidly. Relax and repeat.
- c. Repeat the following syllables slowly, then increase your speed, exaggerating your lip movements:

*be-me-be-me-be-me-be-me*

*whee-whoo-wa-who*

*bo-po-bo-po-bo-po-bo-po*

*blee-be-kee-blee-bee-kee*

*flee-flee-flee-flee-flee*

*mle-mle-mle-mle-mle-mle*

*vro-vro-vro-vro-vro-vro*

*flack-mack-flack-mack*

- d. With your jaw and tongue relaxed in a normal position, try to use only your lips as you read the following vowel sounds. Make a distinct change between each:

*ah-aw ah-aw ah-aw ah-aw*

*ee-oo ee-oo ee-oo ee-oo*

*ay-oh ay-oh ay-oh ay-oh*

- e. Now, with your lips and tongue relaxed, pronounce the following vowel sounds by closing and opening your jaw:

*ee-oo ee-oo ee-oo ee-oo*

*ee-aw ee-aw ee-aw ee-aw*

*oo-aw oo-aw oo-aw oo-aw*

*ee-ah ee-ah ee-ah ee-ah*

## 2. Tongue Exercises

- a. Double your tongue back against your palate as far as you can, then stretch it outward from your mouth as far as possible. Repeat 10 times.
- b. Push your tongue hard against one cheek, then the other. Extend it over the upper lip and down over the lower lip, then waggle it from side to side. Repeat 10 times. Relax and repeat.
- c. Round your lips tightly and, grooving your tongue, push it through the opening. Repeat several times.
- d. Press the upper surface of your tongue against your palate and release it. Repeat and increase in rapidity.

## 3. Jaw Exercises

- a. Say the following sounds with a broad movement of your jaw. Exaggerate and prolong the vowels:

*wee-ee-ee-ee-ee*

*wo-o-o-o-o-o-o*

*why-y-y-y-y-y*

*wah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah*

- b. Utter the following syllables while exaggerating your jaw movements:

*bah-bah-bah-bah-bah*

*bee-boh-fee-foh-mee-moh*

*mah-mah-mah-mah-mah*

*wee-woh-de-doh-gee-goh*

*wah-wah-wah-wah-wah*

*jee-joh-pee-poh-tee-toh*

*fah-fah-fah-fah-fah*

*kee-koh-lee-loh-nee-noh*

*pah-pah-pah-pah-pah*

*kwee-kwoh-ree-roh-see-soh*

c. While uttering the following syllables, exaggerate your tongue and jaw movements:

*dah-dah-dah-dah-dah*

*gah-gah-gah-gah-gah*

*jah-jah-jah-jah-jah*

*kah-kah-kah-kah-kah*

*lah-lah-lah-lah-lah*

*nah-nah-nah-nah-nah*

*kwah-kwah-kwah-kwah-kwah*

*rah-rah-rah-rah-rah*

*sah-sah-sah-sah-sah*

*tah-tah-tah-tah-tah*

*thah-thah-thah-thah-thah*

d. With your jaw completely relaxed, rest your tongue normally in the bottom of your mouth. Then push down your tongue and pronounce the following syllables, returning to the relaxed position after each:

*sah say see so soo*

*kah kay kee ko koo*

*zah zay zee zo zoo*

*gah gay gee go goo*

### **Talk With Time, Not Against It**

If you are a high-energy person, you probably will not be able to permanently slow down your rate of speech. But you can learn to vary your rate. People live according to patterns or rhythms, usually structured around a work week and a weekend. Language is also rhythmic. It contains regular beats and pauses. Your language rhythm is an expression of your life's rhythm. If you are a slow speaker, you can consciously vary your rate to increase speed. Your speaking rate is similar to your rate while reading out loud. A slow speaker reads about 120 words per minute, while a fast speaker reads more than 190 words per minute.

Read the following passage in your everyday speaking style. Don't attempt to read interpretively or use vocal variety. A slash (/) occurs at 50-word intervals. Use a stopwatch or a watch with a second hand to time yourself and determine your speaking rate.

from **THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON EDUCATION TO CONGRESS, JANUARY 29, 1963**

*Education is the keystone in the area of freedom and progress. Nothing has contributed more to the enlargement of this nation's strength and opportunities than our traditional system of free, universal elementary and secondary education, coupled with widespread availability of college education.*

*For the individual, the doors to the / schoolhouse, to the library, and to the college lead to the richest treasures of our open society: to the power of knowledge – to the training and skills necessary for productive employment – to the wisdom, the ideals, and the culture which enrich life – and to the creative, self-disciplined understanding of / society needed for good citizenship in today's changing and challenging world.*

*For the nation, increasing the quality and availability of education is vital to both our national security and our domestic well-being. A free nation can rise no higher than the standard of excellence set in its schools and colleges. / Ignorance and illiteracy, unskilled workers and school dropouts – these and other failures of our educational system breed failures in our social and economic system: delinquency, unemployment, chronic dependence, a waste of human resources, a loss of productive power and purchasing power, and an increase in tax-supported*

benefits. The loss of only one year's income due to unemployment is more than the total cost of twelve years of education through high school. Failure to improve education performance is thus not only poor social policy, it is poor economics.

At the turn of the century, only 10 percent of our adults had a high school or college education. Today, such an education has become a requirement for an increasing number of jobs. Yet nearly 40 percent of our youths are dropping out before graduating from high school; only 43 percent of our adults have completed high school; only 8 percent of our adults have completed college; and only 16 percent of our young people are presently completing college. As my Science Advisory Committee has reported, one of our most serious manpower shortages is the lack of Ph.Ds in engineering, science, and mathematics; only about one-half of 1 percent of our school age generation is achieving Ph.D. degrees in all fields.

This nation is committed to greater investment in economic growth; and recent research has shown that one of the most beneficial of all such investments is education, accounting for some 40 percent of the nation's growth and productivity in recent years. It is an investment which yields a substantial return in the higher wages and purchasing power of trained workers, in the new products and techniques which come from skilled minds, and in the constant expansion of this nation's storehouse of useful knowledge.

In the new age of science and space, improved education is essential to give new meaning to our national purpose and power. In the last 20 years, mankind has acquired more scientific information than in all of previous history. Ninety percent of all the scientists that ever lived are alive and working today. Vast stretches of the unknown are being explored every day for military, medical, commercial, and other reasons. And finally, the twisting course of the cold war requires a citizenry that understands our principles and problems. It requires skilled manpower and brain-power to match the power of totalitarian discipline. It requires a scientific effort which demonstrates the superiority of freedom. And it requires an electorate in every state with sufficiently broad horizons and sufficient maturity of judgment to guide this nation safely through whatever lies ahead.

John F. Kennedy

If you're a fast speaker (over 150 words per minute), take a full two seconds to say each of the following words:

droopy	crash	gloomy	sputter	grisly
roar	grumble	luscious	murmur	rumble
lovely	snowflake	merry	stretch	
glimmer	sluggish	passion	moan	
rustle	stroll	hush	lover	
lonely	fluffy	happy	delicious	

If you're a slow speaker (less than 120 words per minute), say each of the following words rapidly:

flick	snap	flip	pip	flit	bit
glib	clip	chip	blip	dip	snit
tip	nit	snit	fib	glint	click


Write a one-page composition describing your daily activity. Then read it aloud. If you are a slow speaker, read it as rapidly as you can. If you are a fast speaker, lengthen the time you spend saying each word.



## Spice Up Your Speaking

### 1. Pitch Variety

There are four types of pitch changes you can make within words. The arrows below indicate whether the voice goes up, down, or remains level in the examples.

No change in inflection      *Johnny* 













Inflection up or rising pitch      *Johnny* 













Inflection down or lowering pitch      *Johnny* 

Inflection up and down      *Johnny* 

Inflection down and up      *Johnny* 

Practice the following words and sentences, and change the pitch as indicated:

- a. *hello*       *goodbye*   
*hello*       *goodbye*   
*hello*       *goodbye*   
*yes*       *no*   
*yes*       *no*   
*yes*       *no* 

- b. *Stop*  *doing*  *what?*  
*Stop*  *doing*  *that.*
- c. *Is*  *that*  *what*  *you*  *mean?*  
*Is*  *that*  *what*  *you*  *mean?*

- d. Take sentences from a book, magazine, or newspaper, and break them up in step shifts up and down as in the preceding examples. Practice in this manner with various kinds and styles of reading materials.

## 2. Duration Variety

Duration refers to the amount of time you take to say a word. You can change the meaning and importance of words by saying them quickly or drawing them out. Try this while you read the following poem.

### THE NEW COLOSSUS

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep, ancient hands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."*

*Emma Lazarus*

## 3. Pause Variety

Pauses are periods of silence between words and phrases. Their function is to separate ideas and hold attention. Read the following selection and pause at each dash. Then take a selection from a book, magazine, or newspaper and do the same.

from **THEIR FINEST HOUR**

*The whole fury and might – of the enemy – must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows – that he will have to break us in this island – or lose the war. If we – can stand up to him – all Europe – may be free – and the life of the world may move forward – into broad sunlit uplands. – But if we fail – then the whole world – including the United States – including all that we have known and cared for – will sink into the abyss – of a new dark age – made more sinister – and perhaps more protracted – by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore – brace ourselves to our duties – and so bear ourselves that – if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years – men will say – "This – was their finest hour."*

*Winston S. Churchill*

#### 4. Loudness or Volume Variety

Remember to use diaphragmatic respiration to project volume. As you read the following speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., interpret what words should be spoken loudly and which ones softly.

from **I Have A Dream**

*I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. . .*

*Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.*

*I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.*

*I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal" . . . I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.*

*I have a dream today. . .*

*I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.*

*This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.*

*With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.*

*This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."*

*And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!*

*Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!*

*Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.*

*And when this happens, when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## **REHEARSING SPEECHES**

Find a place where you can be alone when you rehearse your speeches, and turn your voice loose without inhibitions or interruptions. Vary the pitch, volume, rate, and quality of your voice, and work diligently on varying your delivery rate.

A valuable aid in rehearsing is an audio recorder. Record your voice and continue to practice until the playback satisfies you. Then record the entire speech. Pay attention to your organization and sincerity, as well as to your voice. The sound of your recorded voice may surprise you at first, but it is closer to what an audience hears than the voice you are used to hearing as you speak.

## **PRESENTING SPEECHES**

Make use of the voice techniques you develop while rehearsing. Speak out with enthusiasm and use a wide variety of vocal styles. Let the motivation for voice changes come from the context of your speech. Reflect sincerity when you are sincere, humor when you're amused, emotion when you feel deeply. Build appropriate pauses into your presentations to give listeners a chance to mentally digest what you have said and catch up with you.

When you speak, stand up straight, but don't be tense and rigid. Give your lungs room to expand. Take moderately deep breaths as you speak and vary your voice to match your words. Speak clearly and project your voice so the entire audience can hear you.

## **YOUR VOICE AND YOUR IMAGE**

Your voice and your face are your public relations agents. More than any other factors, they serve to establish an image of you in the minds of others. Your face, body, and speech are the interpreters of your mind. They reveal your character – the real you – as nothing else can.

A smile – whether it starts in your face, your disposition, or your voice – reacts on the other elements and tends to induce a positive, constructive complex which makes your attitude and appearance attractive and pleasing.

Your best voice can help bring out your best self. Nature has given you a priceless gift in your voice. It is the means by which you can communicate with others – the medium of your message. It also makes possible understanding and camaraderie. Take advantage of the information and exercises in this booklet, because by your voice and your words, you influence others.

## **SPEECH PROFILE INSTRUCTIONS**

### **For the Speaker:**

1. Before presenting a manual speech, arrange with your club's vice president education to have a member evaluate your voice according to the Speech Profile.
2. When the evaluation is completed, draw a line connecting the marks on the profile. Any characteristics rated four or less on the scale indicate possible voice challenges.
3. Refer to the corresponding exercises in this manual for help in correcting your voice challenges.

### **For the Evaluator:**

1. Identify each of the characteristics on the speech profile. During the speaker's presentation, rate each characteristic on a scale from one to seven, one being negative and seven positive.
2. Return the profile to the speaker at the conclusion of the presentation. You may wish to verbally evaluate the speaker's voice.

## SPEECH PROFILE

This profile has been designed to help you determine what is right and what needs improvement with your voice. Before using it, please read the section entitled “Your Speech Profile.” Instructions for using the profile appear on the previous page.

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
<b>Loudness or Volume:</b>								<b>Loudness or Volume:</b>
Too quiet	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Good projection
Inaudible	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Easily heard
Flat	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Vibrant and dynamic
<b>Pitch:</b>								<b>Pitch:</b>
High	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Low
Shrill	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Full
Monotonous	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Varied
<b>Voice Quality:</b>								<b>Voice Quality:</b>
Nasal	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Open
Breathy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Clear
Harsh, raspy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Mellow
Lifeless	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Enthusiastic
<b>Articulation (Word Usage):</b>								<b>Articulation (Word Usage):</b>
Slushy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Clear
Lazy lips	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Crisp
Tangled tongue	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Controlled
Tight jaw	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Open mouth
Mumbling	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Projection
Mispronunciation	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Pronunciation
<b>Timing or Rate:</b>								<b>Timing or Rate:</b>
Jerky	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Smooth
Slow, plodding	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Fluent
Unvaried	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Varied, exciting
Hesitant	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Deliberate
<b>Vocal Variety:</b>								<b>Vocal Variety:</b>
Emotionless	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Conveys emotion
Unfriendly	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Genial
Strained	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Natural
Dull	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Vital







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