

# Intro to Voice Unit

Mari Bell



**Unit objective:** Students will understand essential concepts about voice and how to use their voice effectively when performing by presenting a dramatic reading.

**Beginning Drama Class:** Drama Foundations

**Class Period Length:** 70-75 minutes

**Number of Class Periods:** 9 days

No Prior Experience Needed

**Main Concepts:** Vocal Quality, Vocal Anatomy, Vocal Variety, Performance Skills

\*clipart from Microsoft Office

## Lesson 1- Intro to Voice

Objective- The students will demonstrate their ability to communicate a character through vocal technique by representing a character in a short improvised scene.

- HOOK- Can you identify someone by their voice? (Discuss)
  - o Option #1- Have students listen to an impersonator and say who is speaking (do not show the video so they cannot see it is all the same person)
    - Good videos, but kids won't know many people:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iobTXPgETOY>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1aKiolG2CA>
    - Or just have clips of the actual speaker- no need to show them after
      - Discuss how they knew who the speaker was. What vocal qualities did they notice?
  - o Option #2- Lead the students in a game of "Name That Voice." Have a student select one of the actors/characters and try to mimic his/her voice. They shouldn't quote the person, but rather talk like that person. When the rest of the class knows who the student is, they should quietly raise their hand. Repeat until time is up.
- Group List- What ways can you change your voice? Share as a class.
- Complete first part of **Voice Note page** as a class (see **Appendix A**)
- Practice– give each student a card with a different character on it. In groups, they need to plan a 1-2 minute scene using the characters they have. Each character must have a clear and distinct voice.
  - o ASSESSMENT- participation

## Lesson 2- Vocal Anatomy

Objective- The students will demonstrate their knowledge of voice by creating a poster with a group.

- HOOK- Vocal Countdown- Have students stand and count to 10 several times. Each time they will use a new vocal quality.
  - o Ideas- Drill Sergeant, Raspy, Opera Singer, Angry, Sad, Laughing, Cowboy, Three-year old, Romantically, Really Fast, Low Pitched Voice, Bored, Rock Singer, High Pitch, Very Slow, Martian voice, Airy, Sarcastic, Irish, Stern, Ultimate Power, Valley Girl, etc.
- Review ways to change the voice
- Finish **Voice Note page**- Vocal Anatomy part
- What is voice? In groups- have students make a poster- they can draw vocal anatomy, list ways to change their voice, anything. Have students share their posters and hang them up.
- ASSESSMENT- participation in poster creation and sharing
- HOMEWORK- (see **Appendix B**)

## Lesson 3- Poetry- Dramatic Reading (2 days)

Objective- The students will demonstrate their ability to use vocal variety by planning a presenting a dramatic reading of a short poem.

- In small groups, have students discuss their findings from their homework. What traits stood out the most? What kinds of voices were most pleasing? Most annoying?
- HOOK- listen to a SHORT dramatic reading of a poem

- The Bells by Edgar Allan Poe- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arYJmDmjAkc>
- Think-Pair-Share- What made this reading interesting? What vocal techniques did the reader use? What could have made it better?
- Go over **rubric** (See **Appendix C**). Student should mark their poems when they will change their voice. (Model on Elmo)
- Students should select a Shel Silverstein poem (or Halloween Carol if October) from the poems collected by the teacher. Students should mark their poems and practice reading it aloud. If time permits, let them rehearse with a partner near them.
- Have students perform when they are ready. Performances will continue to the next day.
- ASSESSMENT- oral presentation graded based on rubric (See **Appendix C**)

#### Lesson 4- Autobiography Speech- 3 hobbies (3 days)

Objective- The students will demonstrate their ability to use their voice effectively when speaking by presenting their Autobiography Speech.

- Teacher gives a sample autobiography speech (using 3 items that represent them)
  - Discuss- in what ways was it interesting to listen to this speech? What could have made it better?
- Go over project requirements (3 objects, use vocal variety, etc) and **outline format** (See **Appendix D**)
- Give students planning time remainder of the first day. Check in on their progress and offer ideas to students who may be struggling.
  - Check in with students after 30 minutes (they should have the first half of their outline done- the rest can be homework)
- 2 days of speech presentations will follow.
- ASSESSMENTS- 1- Teacher will use **rubric** (See **Appendix E**) to score students. 2- students grade themselves by answering the **reflection questions** (See **Appendix F**)

#### Lesson 5- Dramatic Reading of Children's Book with a partner (2 days)

Objective- The students will demonstrate their ability to use vocal variety by planning and presenting a dramatic reading of a children's book.

- HOOK- Think back to when someone has read a story to you out loud. Take out a paper and make a 2-column list. Good readers... and bad readers... Give a few minutes to brainstorm and then make a list as a class
  - Listen to a SHORT dramatic reading of a children's book
  - Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdU6FF7Nxf8>
  - Think-Pair-Share- What made this reading interesting? What vocal techniques did the reader use? What could have made it better?
- Field trip to the library to select a short picture book with their partner (Readings should be 2-4 minutes. They may need to do a small portion of it if it is too long)
- Go over **rubric** (See **Appendix G**)
  - Students can begin planning and rehearsing with their partner
    - Then pair up with another group, share, and give feedback- What did they do well? What can they work on?

- Students will do a final rehearsal and start performances the next day
  - Option 1- Walking field trip to a local elementary school to share stories
    - Email teachers a month in advance to see interest. Have students go in groups of 2-3 to each class interested.
  - Option 2- Coordinate with the English teachers- send in groups of 2-3 per teacher to read aloud to the class. English teachers would fill out rubric (See **Appendix G**).
- PROJECT ASSESSMENT- oral presentation graded based on rubric;
- FINAL ASSESSMENT- Have students take the voice quiz! (See **Appendix H**) For #s, 22-25, the students will come read to their teacher using vocal qualities they have learned about. **Answers** are included (See **Appendix I**)
- FINAL DISCUSSION- why is it important to be able to change your voice as a performer? Is the ability to change your voice useful for any other reasons?

**Appendix A**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocal Variety and Expression**

Quality- \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Eliminate/ lessen vocal distractions and poor voice qualities, such as:

- 
- 
- 

Voice quality and emotional state are closely connected. A well-trained voice conveys the whole range of emotions and attitudes. What we hear in the voice leads us to all kinds of judgments: the speaker is \_\_\_\_\_

Flexibility- \_\_\_\_\_

General flexibility gives \_\_\_\_\_ to the voice.

Pitch- \_\_\_\_\_

Pitch is determined by the vibration of the \_\_\_\_\_. The faster they vibrate, the \_\_\_\_\_; the slower they vibrate, the \_\_\_\_\_.

- Medium pitch-
- High pitch-
- Low pitch-

Inflection- \_\_\_\_\_

- Rising inflection-
- Falling inflection-
- Circumflex inflection-

Emphasis- \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Rate- \_\_\_\_\_

*{TAKE RATE QUIZ}*

My rate of speaking is \_\_\_\_ words per minute (wpm). The average is around \_\_\_\_ wpm.

- Speaking slowly can make you seem \_\_\_\_\_.
- Rapid delivery shows \_\_\_\_\_.

One can create a climactic effect by presenting a series of ideas or examples at a rapid rate or build up a CLIMAX by reading in a fast-to-slow rate.

Volume- \_\_\_\_\_

The basis of a person's volume is \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

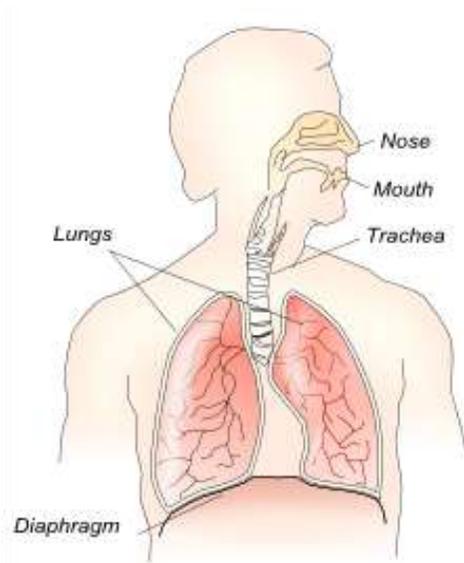
When you inhale \_\_\_\_\_

When you exhale \_\_\_\_\_

Projection- \_\_\_\_\_

Projection is also delivering your voice with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Vocal Anatomy



The Nose \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Lungs \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Trachea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Diaphragm \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Mouth \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Respiratory\\_system.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Respiratory_system.svg)

As an actor, you have 2 tools:  
your \_\_\_\_\_  
and your \_\_\_\_\_.

**Appendix B**

Name:

Period:

**Voice Homework**

Observe 3 people. Listen and analyze their everyday speaking voices. Write down specific vocal qualities.

Describe pitch, rate, phrasing, quality, etc.

Person #1:

Person #2:

Person #3:

**Appendix C**

Dramatic Reading- Poetry	Points Earned	Points Possible
Used CLASS TIME wisely		5
PROJECTED voice the entire time		4
RATE- fast & slow		4
VOLUME- loud & quiet		4
PITCH- high & low		4
Used PAUSES appropriately		4
Overall presentation (enthusiasm, etc)		5
Total:		/30

**Appendix D**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Autobiography Speech Outline**

1. Introduction

- a. Name
- b. Capturing statement (something really interesting about you)
- c. Preview (tell them what you are going to tell them)

i. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Body of Speech (Select 3 hobbies or activities of yours)

a. Hobby 1-

i. Detail 1-

ii. Detail 2-

b. Hobby 2-

i.

ii.

c. Hobby 3-

i.

ii.

3. Summary (tell them what you told them)

Evaluation- (Total 60 points)

I turned in a complete outline	10 points
I projected my voice	10
I was enthusiastic	10
I looked at the audience	10
I spoke for 1-2 minutes	10
I had at least 1 prop	10

**Appendix E**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I turned in a complete outline
- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I projected my voice
- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I was enthusiastic
- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I looked at the audience
- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I spoke for 1-2 minutes
- \_\_\_\_\_/10 I had at least 1 prop
  
- \_\_\_\_\_/60 Total Score

**Appendix F**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Autobiography Speech Reflection**

Were you prepared? Did you have a completed outline? 3 objects?

Why is it important to be able to use vocal variety?

How did you feel about your overall performance? What would you do differently next time?

**Appendix G**

<b>Dramatic Reading- Children’s Book</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>
Actors have proper INTRO (names, title, author)		10
Actors PROJECT voice the entire time		10
Actors ARTICULATE		10
Actors use TONE to create mood and emotion		10
Actors use a variety of PITCH, RATE, and VOLUME		10
Actors create at least 2 believable CHARACTER VOICES		10
Performance is ENGAGING		10
Performance is 3-5 Minutes long		10
Actors are PROFESSIONAL performers <u>and</u> audience members		10
Overall presentation (enthusiasm, etc.)		10
<b>Total:</b>		<b>/100</b>

**Appendix H**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_ / 50

**Voice Quiz**

**Matching (2 points each):** Please write the letter that corresponds with each definition.

a. emphasis	b. flexibility	c. inflection	d. pitch
e. projection	f. rate	g. quality	h. volume

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. _____ what makes your voice unique                     | 5. _____ giving special stress to a syllable or word            |
| 2. _____ the process of changing your voice               | 6. _____ the speed at which you speak                           |
| 3. _____ how high or how low you speak on a musical scale | 7. _____ how softly or loudly a person speaks                   |
| 4. _____ rising and falling pitch                         | 8. _____ how far your voice can travel or dispersing your voice |

**Fill in the blank. (2 points each)**

9. Name the 2 tools you have as an actor. Your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10-12. 3 ways you can give emphasis to a word or syllable are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

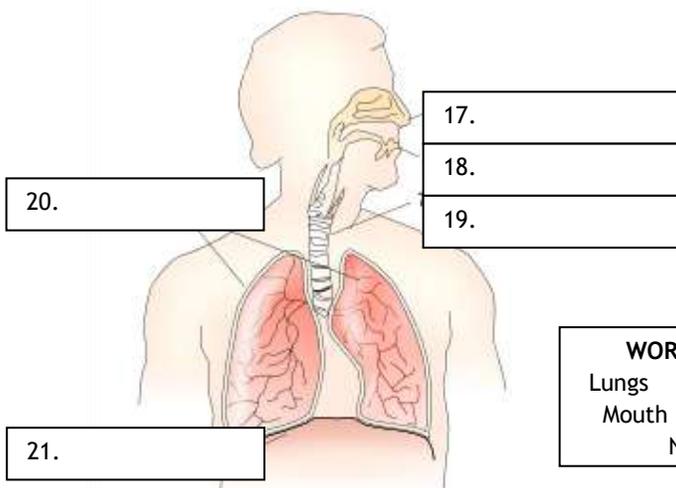
**Fill in the blank, continued... Use the word bank.**

13. Your pitch is determined by the \_\_\_\_\_ of your vocal chords.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ inflection goes up and down.

WORD BANK	
circumflex	loudness
aiming	vibration

- 15-16. Projection is delivering your voice with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**17-21. Label the Chart (2 points each, use the word bank):**



WORD BANK	
Lungs	Diaphragm
Mouth	Trachea
	Nose

**Participation (2 points each):**

22-25. Select 2 of the sentences below and come read it to Mrs. Bell with expression and vocal variety! You should read each of your 2 sentences 2 **different** ways. Be sure to plan our how you are going to say it ahead of time!

1. Did you seriously just do that?
2. Where do you think you're going?
3. Aw, Mom, I don't want to go to bed.
4. Just wait 'til your father gets home.
5. I've looked everywhere, but I have no idea where it is!
6. (Or come up with your own creative sentence)

**Appendix I**

**VOICE QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. G
2. B
3. D
4. C
5. A
6. F
7. H
8. E
9. & 10. voice, body (or vice versa)
- 11-13. pausing, stretching it out, volume, pitch, accent, rate, inflection, loudness, speed, repeating, body language, et cetera
14. vibration
15. circumflex
- 16-17. loudness, aiming