

Using Your Voice

Before you watch

A

Discuss the questions with a partner and then share your answers with the class.

Think of voices you like on the radio, podcasts, television, or movies. What qualities make these voices pleasant to listen to? Choose any qualities that apply or add your own.

clear	informal
deep	lively
expressive	professional
fast	relaxed
formal	slow
friendly	warm

B

Read the following sentences aloud with different emotions: bored, excited, disapproving. Does your voice change? If so, how does it change?

- Look at that.
- It's time to go.
- I'll be back soon.

Video

A

Watch the video and decide if the statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. An audience is more likely to listen to you if you have a good speaking voice. T F
2. It's easy to follow a speaker who mumbles. T F
3. You will lose your audience if you pause. T F
4. Using too many filler sounds shows that you are nervous when speaking. T F
5. Showing emotion as you speak can engage your audience. T F

B

Choose the correct option.

1. The speaker spoke too fast. He needed to **slow down / mumble**.
2. The speaker mumbled the last part of her sentences. She needed to **add pauses / speak clearly**.
3. The speaker never stopped talking. He went on and on. He really needed to take **a slight pause / high pitch** once in a while.
4. The speaker said *um* and *uh* a lot. It was **distracting / expressive**.
5. It was very boring to listen to the speaker. She didn't have much **variety / effect** in her pitch or volume.

C

Complete the conversation with the words in the box.

absorb emotion follow lacks lost mumbling

Speaker: Our studies show that people who exercise at least an hour a day have mmmmmmm risk of heart attacks throughout life.

Fred: (*whispering to Gina*) What was that?

Gina: (*whispering to Fred*) I don't know. He was **1** _____.

Speaker: Based on those ... uh ... studies, we can ... like ... see a correlation between ... um ... exercise and heart ... uh ... heart disease.

Gina: (*whispering to Fred*) He seems a little nervous, or maybe he **2** _____ confidence.

Speaker: Now, if you look at the chart on the right, you'll notice that this is especially true for males aged 50 and over, but has less impact on the women 50 and over, but almost no impact on either gender prior to age 50, and no impact at all on teens unless they are in certain categories of risk, such as obesity or immune-compromised because ...

Fred: (*whispering to Gina*) Wow. He's speaking fast. I'm not sure I **3** _____ his ideas. I can't **4** _____ all this information.

Gina: (*whispering to Fred*) I'm **5** _____ too. He's not showing much **6** _____. Let's go to a different session at this conference.

Digital skills focus

A

Read the tips for using your voice effectively in online talks. Match the sentence beginnings (1-7) with the endings (a-g).

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Test your microphone before the online event starts | a. speak at a normal level of conversation. |
| 2. Set the volume to the correct level or place your microphone | b. and make sure it works. |
| 3. Don't shout into the microphone - | c. invest in a high-quality microphone. |
| 4. If you are referring to notes on paper or note cards, | d. avoid making noise by shuffling or crunching the paper or cards. |
| 5. Speak clearly. Your audience may be listening to you through audio devices that that don't transmit sound perfectly, | e. so you need to be extra clear and pause more frequently. |
| 6. Support your talk with visuals | f. by including an outline of the talk, slides, charts, graphs, or pictures. |
| 7. If you plan to give talks frequently, | g. so that it picks up your voice easily. |

Language focus

A

Complete the text with the words in the box.

a tremendous impact emotional impact expressive let the pitch rise slight pause
slow down slowly and clearly to pause variety with your voice vary your pitch

Using your voice effectively can have **1** _____ on your listeners. When your voice is **2** _____, it conveys strong emotions and forceful convictions to your audience. If you practise good vocal techniques, you will see improvements that make a big difference. The first time you rehearse your talk, practise speaking **3** _____. Imagine you are talking to someone who knows nothing about your topic. Mark your script or note cards with symbols to help you remember to **4** _____. For example, use a symbol that looks like a *pause* button to help you remember **5** _____. Practise pausing and making eye contact with the audience to increase your **6** _____. Rehearse your talk again and focus on creating **7** _____. When you ask a question, **8** _____, take a **9** _____, and then give the answer. Look for places in your talk to ask questions and **10** _____. You may want to increase your volume to make a point, but use this technique only when necessary, or you will seem to be shouting.

B

Complete the phrases with a verb from the box.

absorb change up follow insert lose show take

1. _____ a slight pause
2. _____ a speaker
3. _____ filler sounds
4. _____ a lack of confidence
5. _____ your pitch and volume
6. _____ an audience
7. _____ what a speaker is saying

C

In pairs or groups, prepare a “Three Good Reasons to...” speech on a topic. Speak for one minute and check that you consider the tips on the checklist. Use one of the following topics or choose your own.

- Three good reasons to buy an electric car
- Three good reasons to work from home / go to an office
- Three good reasons to own a pet

Effective Voice Practice Checklist**Clarity**

- Speaker's speed is at a pace that is easy to follow.
- Speaker's pronunciation is clear.
- Speaker uses pauses for emphasis.

Volume

- Speaker can be heard easily.
- Speaker changes volume (at least once).

Pitch

- Speaker changes pitch (at least once).
- Speaker uses questions with change in intonation.

Expressiveness

- Speaker makes eye contact with audience.
- Speaker expresses an emotional connection to the topic.

Confidence

- Speaker rarely uses filler sounds.
- Speaker appears relaxed and professional.

Digital communicative task

A

Prepare a short talk on a topic of your choice.

- Select a topic for an informational talk.
- Write the talk and/or make note cards.
- Rehearse the talk and focus on clarity.
- Rehearse the talk again and focus on changing up pitch and volume.
- Rehearse the talk again and focus on expressiveness and confidence.
- Review the checklist for effective voice practice and be sure you have incorporated the tips.

B

Give your talk and ask your audience for feedback on clarity, variety, expressiveness, and confidence. Record your talk and watch the video. Reflect on the progress you made from your rehearsal to your talk.