



VOICE ACTIVATION STATION
Grade Band: 4-5
Content Focus: Theatre & ELA



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

Students will harness the power of one of their most valuable assets, their voice, through exploration of vocal expression, including diaphragmatic breathing, the elements of shaping sound, and the dynamics of volume, pace, articulation and pitch to embody a character from a text.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	"I Can" Statements
How can drama techniques be used to improve speaking skills?	I can use the elements of voice intentionally and with great variety to express emotions and ideas.
How can the elements of voice be used to embody a character?	I can use the elements of voice to embody a character.
	I can identify and describe each element of voice.



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GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: ELAGSE4RL3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).</p> <p>ELAGSE4SL4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.</p> <p>Grade 5: ELAGSE5SL4 Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.</p>	<p>Grade 4: TA2.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate a character's thoughts, emotions, and actions.</p> <p>Grade 5: TA3.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use vocal elements (e.g. inflection, pitch, volume, articulation) to communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions of a character.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p>Grade 4: COMMUNICATION – Language, Craft & Structure Standard 5: Incorporate craft techniques to engage and impact audience and convey messages. 5.1 Set a purpose and integrate craft techniques to create presentations.</p> <p>Grade 5: COMMUNICATION – Language, Craft & Structure Standard 5: Incorporate craft techniques to engage and impact audience and convey messages. 5.1 Set a purpose, integrate craft techniques and maintain a clear focus in presentations.</p>	<p>Anchor Standard 3: I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.</p>

KEY VOCABULARY



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Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Audience</u> – People intently watching and/or listening to a speaker or performer ● <u>Craft techniques</u> – The ways in which voice and language are used for communication, such as intonation and word stress ● <u>Characterization</u> - The process by which an author develops and reveals a character's personality, traits, and attributes to the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Articulation</u> – The way that words are shaped by the articulators – the lips, teeth, tongue, cheeks, and jaws; the way that an accent or dialect affects speech; the clarity of speech; also called 'diction' or 'enunciation' ● <u>Articulators</u> – The parts of the body that help to shape sound ● <u>Diaphragm</u> – A muscle extending across the bottom of the ribcage, below the lungs and above the stomach ● <u>Diaphragmatic breathing</u> – Breathing from the diaphragm, allowing the shoulders to remain relaxed and the belly to engage with expansion and contraction ● <u>Neutral Position</u> – A simple position of readiness and neutrality, in which the actor has not committed to any specific movement or attitude; standing upright with feet flat on the ground and arms hanging by the sides ● <u>Pace</u> – How fast or slow speech is delivered ● <u>Pitch</u> – How high or low a sound is ● <u>Slating</u> – A process in which an actor states their name and piece (text, speech, monologue) before presenting ● <u>Volume</u> – How loud or quiet the voice is

MATERIALS

- Anchor paper
- Markers
- Photo Image of the respiratory system showing the diaphragm
- Copies (or projection) of text that demonstrates characterization
- Paper and pencils

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN



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Opening/Activating Strategy

- Introduce Neutral Position to students.
 - Have students stand in a large circle (alternative: have students stand at desks or tables).
 - Tell students to put their hands on their hips and look down to place their feet directly under their hips and shoulders. Tell students, “Your feet shouldn’t be too far apart or too close together; directly under the hips; hip distance apart”.
 - Tell students that this is called Neutral Position. Have students repeat the term.
 - Discuss the meaning of “neutrality” as ready and not committed to movement or action in one direction or another.
 - Have students drop their hands by their sides and lead them through some shoulder movements, such as forward and back, up and down, then circles to the front and the back.
 - Give the students a signal (such as a clap) to move their bodies freely, and then suddenly to return to Neutral Position. Practice several times.
 - Explain that Neutral Position is a good starting point for speaking with a clear voice.

Work Session

- Introduce “Breathe” to students.
 - Ask students what “breathing” means. Take in answers and discuss the definition in scientific terms.
 - Instruct students, “Breathe in through your nose all the way to your toes”.
 - Have them imagine there is a tire around their belly/waist area. Encourage them to fill up the entire tire, the front, the back and the sides.
 - Tell students that this is using our diaphragm. Show an image of the diaphragm to explain its role in supporting breath and the production of sound.
- Introduce vocal exercises to students.
 - “Pass the ‘Ha!’”: Lead students in practicing expelling all the air out of the lungs in one exhalation saying “Ha!”.
 - Model saying the “Ha!” to the next person in the circle, and having them pass it on. The “Ha!” is then passed around the circle at full volume.
 - “Hiss it Out”: Direct students to breathe in using their diaphragm muscle, and then exhale slowly and evenly using a hiss.
 - Use fingers to count out how long it takes to completely exhale the breath.
 - Repeat several times, trying to extend the hiss each time.
 - “Ahhhh”: Shift from the hiss to a voiced “Ahhhh,” continuing to elongate by evenly drawing out the breath longer with each “Ahhhh”.
- Introduce articulation to students.
 - Ask, “Does anyone know what the word “Articulation” means? Discuss the definition of “articulation”, as well as the related words “enunciation” and “diction”.
 - Ask, “What do you think ‘articulators’ are?”
 - Explain that “articulators” are the body parts that help us to shape sound: Lips, teeth, tongue, cheeks, jaws, the roof of the mouth, the nasal cavities, etc.



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- Instruct students, “Let’s warm up our articulators by scrunching and stretching our mouths saying, ‘ee’ and ‘ooo’.”
- Have students chew on an imaginary wad of bubble gum that keeps getting bigger and bigger, thus requiring greater stretching of the articulators.
- Discuss how articulation can be very important in communicating with an audience.
- Introduce tongue twisters to students.
 - Ask the students to repeat each line of the tongue twisters that you say. Lead the following “call and response” phrases one line at a time.
 - She sells seashells by the seashore.
 - The big black bug
Bit the big black bear
But sometimes the big black bear
Bit the big black bug.
 - Topeka bodega, Topeka bodega
 - Rubber baby buggy bumper
 - If a woodchuck could chuck wood, how much wood would a woodchuck chuck?
 - Use other tongue-twisters by preference; ask students to suggest their favorites.
- Introduce the elements of vocal expression to students.
 - Describe and define the four main elements of vocal expression: Volume, pace, articulation and pitch.
 - Direct the students to change the volume, pace, articulation and pitch with which they speak the tongue twisters.
 - Volume: Louder/quieter
 - Pace: Faster/slower
 - Articulation: Clearer/mumblier
 - Pitch: Higher/lower

Teacher note (South Carolina): Tell students that these elements are sometimes referred to as Craft Techniques – aspects of the craft or techniques of speaking.
 - Make an anchor chart of volume, pace, articulation, and pitch.
- Apply concepts to a class text.
 - Apply the voice work to a particular text. It can be a general text (familiar nursery rhyme, poem, part of a story), or something drawn specifically from a current curriculum topic (e.g., an excerpt from a historical speech, dialogue from a novel, etc.).
 - Model walking to the front of the room and “slating”.
 - Tell students that slating is when you state your name and introduce what you will be reciting in a strong clear voice.
 - For example, say, “My name is _____, and I’m going to recite the beginning of the Gettysburg Address”. Speak the chosen text using the concepts that students have learned.
 - Ask students what techniques they recognized.
 - Have individual students come to the front, slate and speak the selected text.
- Incorporate the concept of characterization.

- Discuss vocal expression and vocal qualities that characters take on.
- Explore using different combinations of voice work to see how they might change a character (e.g., quiet, slow and high-pitched; loud, fast, and mumbly; melodic with many highs and lows and volume shifts; etc.).
 - Have students practice each technique together.
- Using a text from class, such as a memoir or excerpt from a novel, have students come to the front of the class and use techniques of vocal expression to speak how they think the character would have spoken based on the qualities of the character described in the text.
 - Remind students to try articulating how the character would and to speak from their diaphragm.
 - Refer to the different vocal qualities on the anchor chart as needed.

Closing/Reflection

- Ask students to point to their diaphragm.
 - Ask students the following questions:
 - What is diaphragmatic breathing?
 - Can you point to your articulators? Who can demonstrate moving one of your articulators?
 - How can we make different types of sounds?
 - How does an actor's voice help to convey a character in a play or story?
- Have students create a four-square chart, putting an element of voice into each square (volume, pace, articulation, and pitch).
 - Have them write a definition or description of each, and draw a picture, with words as needed, to illustrate each element of voice in action.

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

Teachers will assess students' understanding throughout the lesson by observing how students use their voices as each technique is taught and how students use the techniques to embody a character.

Summative

CHECKLIST

- Students can create a chart that correctly identifies and describes each element of voice (volume, pace, articulation, and pitch).
- Students can use the elements of voice to express emotions, ideas and to embody a character.

DIFFERENTIATION

Acceleration:

- Have students create and practice their own complex tongue twisters.
- Have students practice changing volume, pace, articulation and pitch on a scale of 0-10, exploring more subtle gradations.



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- Have students draw a picture of an open mouth (possibly, if mirrors are available, have them draw their own), and then label the different articulators.

Remediation:

- Allow students to work and vocalize at their own level of comfort throughout the lesson.
- Introduce the tongue twisters slowly and chunk them into sections.
- Allow students to draw or orally explain the content on the chart rather than write it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [An exploration of tongue twisters and vocal expression with ArtsNOW Theatre Consultant Susie Spear Purcell](#)

**This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

Ideas contributed by: Jessica Rosa Espinoza and Barry Stewart Mann

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