



# artsNOW

Integrated learning solutions

## VOICE ACTIVATION STATION Grade Band: K-1 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.

### LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	"I Can" Statements
How can drama techniques be used to improve speaking skills?	I can use my voice in different ways to express different emotions and ideas.

### GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
Kindergarten:	Kindergarten:



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<p>ELAGSEKSL6: Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.</p> <p><b>Grade 1:</b> ELAGSE1SL4: Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly</p>	<p>TA2.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use voice to communicate emotions.</p> <p><b>Grade 1:</b> TA3.PR.1 Act by communicating and sustaining roles in formal and informal environments. a. Use voice to communicate ideas and emotions.</p>
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## SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
<p><b>Kindergarten:</b> <b>COMMUNICATION – Language, Craft &amp; Structure</b> <b>Standard 5:</b> Incorporate craft techniques to engage and impact audience and convey messages. 5.1 Use voice inflection, expression, rhythm, and rhyme, when presenting poems, short stories, role-plays, or songs.</p> <p><b>Grade 1:</b> <b>COMMUNICATION – Language, Craft &amp; Structure</b> <b>Standard 5:</b> Incorporate craft techniques to engage and impact audience and convey messages. 5.1 Present poems, short stories, role-plays, or songs using voice inflection, expression, rhythm, and rhyme.</p>	<p><b>Anchor Standard 3:</b> I can act in improvised scenes and written scripts.</p>

## KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Audience</u> – People intently watching and/or listening to a speaker or performer</li> <li>● <u>Craft techniques</u> – The ways in which voice and language are used for communication, such as intonation and word stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <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’</li> <li>● <u>Articulators</u> – The parts of the body that help to shape sound</li> </ul>



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- Characterization - The process by which an author develops and reveals a character's personality, traits, and attributes to the reader

- Diaphragm – A muscle extending across the bottom of the ribcage, below the lungs and above the stomach
- Diaphragmatic breathing – Breathing from the diaphragm, allowing the shoulders to remain relaxed and the belly to engage with expansion and contraction
- Neutral Position – 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
- Pace – How fast or slow speech is delivered
- Pitch – How high or low a sound is
- Slating – A process in which an actor states their name and piece (text, speech, monologue) before presenting
- Volume – 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

### 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.



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- 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.
  - 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.
    - Toy boat, toy boat, toy boat



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- Unique New York, Unique New York
  - She sells seashells by the seashore.
  - Use other tongue-twisters by preference.
- 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., a paragraph about weather, a dialogue between two characters, roles of community helpers, 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 say the first part of the Itsy Bitsy Spider”. 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.
  - Make an anchor chart of different characters or types of characters (e.g., monster, cowboy, kitten) and next to each write some of the vocal qualities they would have.
    - Practice one or two together as a class.
  - Arrange students in pairs. Assign (or allow pairs to choose) a character from the list. Students should use what they learned about vocal qualities to speak as that character.
    - 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.
  - Allow students to perform their character for the class.
    - Facilitate a class discussion of how the students embodied the character using their voices.

## Closing/Reflection



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- 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 draw pictures to show people speaking loudly and quietly, fast and slow, clearly and mumbly, and high and low to show what they learned.

## 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 use the elements of voice to express emotions, ideas and to embody a character.
- Students can identify different types of vocal qualities.
- Students can show what they learned about vocal qualities through drawings.

## DIFFERENTIATION

#### Acceleration:

- Have students create their own tongue twisters.
- Have students practice changing volume, pace, articulation and pitch on a scale of 0-10, exploring more subtle gradations.
- Have students create their own characters and dialogue instead of using one from the class chart.

#### 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.
- Provide pictures for students to sort and glue onto a chart in the closing activity rather than drawing.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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



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*\*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.*

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