

Richard Di Britannia

Speak and Be Heard: 101 Vocal Exercises for Voice Actors, Public Speakers and Professionals.

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Peter Piper, without pretension to precocity or profoundness, puts pen to paper to produce these puzzling pages, purposely to please the palates of pretty, prattling playfellows, proudly presuming that with proper penetration it will probably, and perhaps positively, prove a peculiarly pleasant and profitable path to proper, plain and precise pronunciation.

He prays parents to purchase this playful performance, partly to pay him for his patience and pains; partly to provide for the printers and publishers; but principally to prevent the pernicious prevalence of perverse pronunciation!

Marcia Brown (1902)

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Disclaimer: should you experience any pain or discomfort attempting any of the exercises in this book, cease them immediately and if issues persist please consult with your doctor.

This book is not to replace the expertise of a medically trained professional or speech therapist.

To:

The gracious sharing people of the internet: without you I would have naught in the way of books, references and knowledge.

## 1

#### THE POWER OF THE VOICE

'What legibility is to handwriting, audibility is to speech.'

Thomas Tait, How to Train the Speaking Voice, 1912

Arthur Brisbane, speech writer to Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and John D. Rockefeller is said to have coined the phrase '*a picture is worth a thousand words*'. Yet what do we remember about the greats of history? It is not what they looked like, it is what they said.

People say a first impression is often influenced by the sound of the speaker, and there is something quite marvellous about the human voice. It can rile the hearts of men and women to lay down their lives to wage war or it can enthrall audiences and take them upon a magical journey of wonder and adventure. Sir David Attenborough, Martin Luther King Jr., Sir

Winston Churchill, Joanna Lumley, Orson Wells, Richard Burton, Dame Judi Dench and many more are remembered not only for their achievements, but for their exceptional and unique voices. The clarity, passion and resonation of their spoken word carried the gravitas which captured the hearts and minds of their audiences. Their speeches and performances are remembered not only for the message conveyed, but for the manner in which they delivered them. The human voice leaves a compelling history and true it may be we easily forget faces but we seldom forget a distinctive voice.

Think of a person you respect or admire.

## Do they have a pleasing voice?

In comparison, think of a person you dislike.

## How do they sound to you?

Even this little exercise shows how emotion plays an enormous role in how we perceive a voice. But outside of often-irrational emotive judgements, an impressive speaking ability adds to a speaker's charisma.

The truth is, extraordinary public speakers do not use any form of microphone trickery to pull in the crowds which flock to them - they passionately believe in what they say and the passion is carried to their listeners via trained diction and resonance. Unfortunately, public speaking

## 2

is no longer trained as part of the education system. The chances are you may have never undertaken public speaking tutoring unless you have paid for private lessons. This has led to public speaking being recognised as one of the major fears amongst individuals in the Western world, yet it need not be.

When contemplating on how to improve your voice, you may believe that to sound impressive you must emulate a particular great speaker, perhaps by lowering your voice or performing a stentorian delivery style similar to Charleston Heston playing the part of *Moses* in *The Ten Commandments*. However, this is not ideal. It is only your own unique voice which will sound the most natural and believable. Furthermore, many people believe that to be heard you must have perfect diction and never err on a sound, but this is also not the case. Sir Winston Churchill had a speech impediment, a prominent lisp which left him pronouncing 's'

as 'sh', and yet he is regarded as one of the finest speakers of the English language to have ever lived. We can see; therefore, a powerful speaking voice comprises the ability to effortlessly articulate one's thoughts into poetic or concise words with clarity, confidence and crucially, emotion. A person who speaks well does so with little effort, and you will find that by resetting your body into the natural breathing techniques described in this book, you will place less stress on your speech in comparison to the poor habits you may subconsciously be practicing.

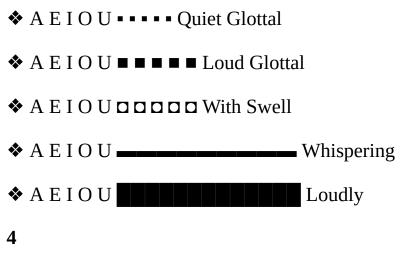
If you truly believe in what you say, you can convince others to follow your ideals. Think of actors, actresses, statesmen and motivational speakers - they truly believe in what they preach. A salesperson's charm can often sell you on a product, but it wasn't because of the words they said: it was how they delivered them. This book will therefore improve not only your speaking voice but also your confidence in your abilities. With earnest practice and dedicated study, I firmly believe you will be able to speak and be heard.

3

#### A basic vocal exercise:

◆ A E I O U • • • • • Naturally

- ♦ A E I O U ● ● Forcefully
- ♦ A E I O U ▲ ▼ ▲ ▼ ▲ High / Low
- $A E I O U \blacktriangleleft \blacksquare \blacksquare \blacksquare Rising$



## HOW THIS BOOK COULD CHANGE YOUR

#### LIFE

'I cannot understand what the young are saying anymore.'

The Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, BBC Nationwide Studio, 6 June 1979

You may have bought this book out of curiosity, or perhaps you sought the great ideal of bettering yourself as many others do. It cannot be ignored how millions of people take pride in improving themselves by buying new clothes, strengthening their physique and ensuring they have the latest gadget to impress others - yet they neglect to improve the very tool they use to communicate: their voice! Perhaps this is because it is a common misconception that the voice you are born with cannot be changed. Realistically, *you can change your voice just as you can improve your physical strength*. This is true because the organ which produces your voice is a muscle and like any other muscle, it can be trained, improved or torn if misused. Now, you may not be able to manipulate your voice to reach down to the depths or up to the heavens. Yet with correct breath support and vocal technique, you can strengthen your tones leaving you sounding empowered, confident and more likely to be heard.

This book aims to help you improve your voice through a carefully prepared series of exercises covering all aspects of the voice and breathing. Much as the pinnacle of vocal talent in Hollywood, the opera, or the arts seek out new coaches, tutors and methodologies to hone their skills so too should you strive to improve. Those very same celebrities may even consult this book! Although you may not be able to afford their personal £10,000 a session tutoring which some of the world's best voice coaches offer, you can expand your capabilities by diligent practice. This book, however, will not resemble others on the market which are mainly *repetitions*: a list of classic speeches or tongue twisters aimed to be narrated until memorised. Rather, it is a bespoke collection of physical exercises you can put into practice at a moment's notice which focus on strengthening each muscle involved in the production of speech. It is in my view that just as how babies learn how to speak by experimenting with the formation of sounds, so too should a student who wishes to build their speaking capability. This is therefore an exercise book offering a vocal workout for each phenome required to speak in English and help improve the fundamentals for both beginners and expert-speakers alike. It

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can also be used by non-native speakers who wish to improve their English accent, or simply someone who is fearful of delivering a public speech at work.

It is also my aim you may pick up this book and turn to any page and be able to start practicing without having to wade through copious pages of impenetrable text or metaphysical mysticism. Written in the simplest of terms without any technical jargon, this book can be used by both adults and children. It therefore aims to act as a guide for anyone wishing to become a more effective communicator. Also included later in this book is a brief exploration of the way vocal cords and mouth form the words we speak, exercises on correcting poor breathing and techniques to support the breath to add strength and confidence to your voice. You will learn how not a single vowel in the English language is formed in the throat and thus the importance of enunciating words with the tongue and lips. A consistent and earnest practice of these exercises will give you mastery over your voice, making it one of your most powerful assets. All that is required is ten to twenty minutes of time invested per day and your ongoing appreciation towards improving your voice. Remember, if thousands of others can speak well, so can you!

However, a word of caution. There can be no benefit from overexertion. Nothing will be gained but a lifetime of pain should you injure yourself. The old adages '*pain is weakness leaving the body*' and '*no pain, no gain*'

do not apply to the lungs and vocal cords. Feel your limitations and never fatigue yourself. Attempting to beat a personal record by holding your breath or forcing your vocal pitch to extremes will only bring ruin to your body. Practice responsibly. Your voice may be weak now due to a lifetime of underperformance but in a few months, you will look back and be astonished at the improvement you have made! Also remember you are doing your body a great service by providing yourself with a strong and capable pair of lungs for old age. It is a sad fact many individuals pass onto the next realm due to not a failure of the mind, but a failure of the lungs.

# 6

#### Five beginner steps to fluency:

Read aloud frequently: ideally every day.

Breathe deeply using the diaphragm.

Practice reading slowly. Slow reading requires more effort – repeat phrases where you stumble with any mispronunciation or breathing problems.

Practice reading aloud in a room with hard surfaces to hear the varied overtones of your voice to familiarise yourself with your speaking volume.

Relax and enjoy speaking aloud. It's fun!

#### 7

#### THE ORATOR'S ART OR WHY YOU

#### STRUGGLE TO TALK WELL

'Before all... let the nurses speak properly. The child will hear them first and try to shape his words by imitating them.'

Marcus Fabius Quintilianus – 95 AD

An understanding of the art of oratorial skill will help you come to understand why you may struggle to speak well. In my research on this topic, I consulted texts from ancient Greece and Rome concerning Cicero and Quintilian. I covered volumes from early China, Japan and Korea on respiratory metaphysics. I drew inspiration from Indic and Yogic arts on Pranayama breath control and all manner of early Edwardian and Victorian studies of the voice. Each work has been distilled here to gather as many beneficial exercises as possible. Among the works omitted were niche topics on the detriments of wearing a corset whilst performing, a dangerous throat tincture comprising of garlic, myrrh and arsenic and finally a philosophical musing that all in society should refrain from communicating if their words were not beneficial to human progress! I found a majority of the historical works were inaccessible, esoteric texts focused on spiritual matters or sparse, self-aggrandising anecdotes of public speaking rather than actual vocal training. Yet despite all their disparities, each work came to the same agreement – the voice can only be supported through adequate breath and that speech is the most important instrument for the transmission of thought aside the written word. I would say even Shakespeare, a genius at writing, suffered from the limitations of the written word. His great works only came to life when given the power of the human voice although such claims may draw the ire of many a thespian or English literature scholar.

Nevertheless, the spoken word has developed and devolved much since the days of yore. The art of oratory, that is, the art of public speaking is thought to have been professionally established in Ancient Athenian times with the master Greek orators being Pericles (495 – 429 BC) and Demosthenes (384 – 322 B.C). Pericles was a highly influential individual in Greek political society born from a wealthy background. He was provided with all manner of lessons concerning extempore speaking and rhetoric leaving him gifted

with excellent speaking skills. He was claimed to have 'carried the might of Zeus' within his words, with an uncanny

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ability to strike as lightning at his subject with an often-arrogant air.

Demosthenes on the other hand was an orphan child born with a severe stutter who was deprived of his father's sword-making factory and raised in poverty. He was fabled to have recited poems and verse whilst running to improve his lung capacity, along with speaking with pebbles in his mouth to bolster his enunciation in hopes to convince a jury of his inheritance rights. He succeeded and was initially hired as a speech writer, later becoming a master of rhetoric and political debate. However, he was neither an extempore speaker and unlike Pericles his speeches were often highly passionate and appealed to the audience by ensuring to use layman terminology.

Ancient Rome would later adapt many of the oratory methods developed in Greece. The Romans saw oratory skill as being a necessary part of personal development, with grand speeches often being delivered in the Senate. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) later penned *Orator*, a text on the ideals of rhetoric stressing the importance of discovering one's personal rhetorical and oratory style. However this was not to last and with the fall of ancient Rome and the introduction of *Pleaders*, individuals who were paid handsomely to applaud poor speeches, oratory skill began to wane with Pliny the Elder later stating "…you may rest assured that he who is the worst speaker has the loudest applause".

Later throughout East Asia, there was also little in the way of oratory skill practiced by the masses. Public speaking was especially limited due to the restrictions levied upon the merchant or farmer classes, with little being recorded in the way of ideal styles aside honorifics and linguistic formalities. Imperial Asian courts tended to focus on the private recitals of poems or lengthy Buddhist sutras, rather than rousing speeches to the populace. It may be that individuals were praised for their voices at the time, but little has been discovered to demonstrate an emphasis on oratory skill was employed. Similarly in the West, the Middle ages and Renaissance later led to a general decline in the importance of oration and public speaking, as the art was mainly confined to the educated clergy and their weekly sermons. This continued for centuries until the establishment of governments in England, France and America in the 18th century wherein the art would experience a monumental resurgence. Edwardian and Victorian societies became obsessed with eloquence and society was soon flooded with texts and schooling on the importance of enunciation and articulation. If a child were lucky enough to be afforded an education, they would no-doubt undertake lessons on such matters each day, for hours on end. Arguably, it was the 'fireside chat' of Franklin D. Roosevelt

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which led to the gradual waning of modern oratory skill. Citizens began to demand less in the way of grand speeches and more informal deliveries.

Now this is not to say FDR was a poor speaker, he was a rhetorical genius in his own right. Yet the people's desire for informal styles and addresses de-emphasized traditional oratory. Even Winston Churchill, a man who was later universally praised for his own methodologies of rising the morale of the public, could not motivate the British to sustain their oratorical practices after the war had understandably left their interests elsewhere. In fact, after World War II many began to see rhetoric as the language of the propagandist, with oratory skill later being seen in the same light as manipulation.

It is therefore easy to understand why you may be struggling with your speech and it is necessary to appreciate it is probably no fault of your own. As we have seen, enunciation was once taught in schools as part of a student's daily routine. Yet, do you remember vocalising your textbooks between science and mathematics? Lessons on elocution, diction and articulation have now been almost entirely removed from the curriculum.

There are those who claim such matters were removed to keep the general people ignorant of rhetoric and informed speech. Whilst others argue

'clear speech' simply isn't necessary nowadays given the rise of communication by text message and email. True it may be that the rise of

digital communication has led to an overall gradual worsening of speech, as clarity is no longer required over a once crackling telephone wire. But the rise of vocal fry, slurring, the use of '*umm's*, *err's*' and the dropping of consonants have become the norm. You need only travel on public transport to hear a plethora of speech devoid of clarity (and sometimes coherence *"you know what I mean like?"*) from all walks of life. It could even be said the English language nowadays can sound almost foreign.

However, what if there were an easy to stomach remedy for this malady that could leave you with an empowered, clear voice?

The leading Victorian critic of the English language, John Ruskin (1818 – 1900), once went so far as to claim the art of reading aloud was one of mankind's greatest accomplishments. Historically, reading aloud was considered the norm for hundreds of years until Aurelius Ambrosius (340 – 397) was observed reading silently: "...when Saint Ambrose read, his eyes scanned the page and his heart sought out the meaning, but his voice was silent and his tongue was still. Anyone could approach him freely and guests were not commonly announced, so that often, when we came to visit him, we found him reading like this in silence, for he never read aloud". Consider then, for thousands of years among the learned in the Western world it was the norm to read aloud! Only less

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than a hundred years ago families would sit around and read aloud to each other for hours at a time for entertainment or necessity. There were even occupations available to the layman to read aloud, orators who sat on podiums in giant halls informing mill-workers of the day's news. Although the decline of torturous mills is a wonderful thing, the dearth of public speaking has robbed people of one of the easiest exercises to practice their diction. Now imagine how you would be perceived if you stood out from the crowd with a beautiful rich, clear and vibrant voice! History has shown those with powerful voices are less likely to be interrupted and more likely to be appreciated. Knowing this, it works in your own benefit to develop your voice and help you put forward your own, influential opinions.

Furthermore, to this day studies continue to demonstrate 'well-spoken'

individuals are often perceived to be more educated, affluent and respectable than their less well-spoken peers. It seems therefore the voice subconsciously commands a form of respect or disdain depending on the enunciation and diction of the speaker. You therefore now have the opportunity to capitalise on a great asset you already own!

Thankfully, these claims are not mere speculation. For in scientific circles, such as a study to identify the 'perfect voice' by the University of Sheffield, it was found that subconsciously, those with strong and powerful voices enforce a much greater sway of authority and believability over their peers. It is therefore an uncomfortable truth in modern society that those with weaker voices are often seen as being less successful.

During the preparation for a meeting of a famous Fortune 500 company, when the sound technician asked a member of staff if the vice president and CEO needed microphones, the staff member enthusiastically replied

# "...not at all, when you hear them speak, you'll know why they are in charge!"

Researchers from the University of Miami in Florida and Duke University in Durham, North Carolina also found how politicians with strong, impactful voices tended to win votes regardless of their views. Some studies even showed how a candidate with a deep or powerful voice was often viewed as being trustworthy, despite them having well known criminal convictions! For those with especially high-pitched voices, knowing this may be interpreted as a hinderance. It should not be. Your voice can be developed to resonate with others regardless of pitch and still be impactful. In most cases it matters not *what* you say but *how* you say it.

Education aside, there are many reasons as to why someone could be hindered by their voice. Some may be hampered by a limited vocabulary, others may suffer from slurred speech or a monotone form of delivery and there may be those whose voices are strained from misuse. Others may be handicapped by muscular weakness or be hindered with a croaky or nasal voice. It may even be a particular dialect which causes ineligible twangs to listeners from outside home county. Yet despite all this, studies have found how approximately only one out of a thousand individuals required surgery to correct a vocal malady. It was instead a dedicated practice to correct poor or weakened technique which restored the majority of voices. Should you be one of those nine-hundred and ninetynine people, rest assured that all these imperfections can probably be either improved or abolished entirely through your own efforts. All it will take is the will to change through a stalwart dedication of practice and a constant, unwavering acceptance that your voice is nothing more than a series of muscles which can be improved. Although it is true that not all of us are born equal, your own unique voice can be transformed into one of your greatest assets, and while this book may not turn you into an extempore speaker who is capable of coining aphoristic phrases at will, it shall enable to you to communicate clearly. If you look back at an aspect of your life which was once limited and is now flourishing, why couldn't you do the same with your own voice? Socrates once said "...no man has the right to be an amateur in the matter of physical training. It is a shame for a man to grow old without seeing the beauty and strength of which his body is *capable*" and the same could be said about your voice. Why not train your speech to become the finest it possibly could be, and one day be regarded as having a beautiful voice people enjoy listening to?

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#### **Lessons from Demosthenes – tongue dexterity:**

Say each of these sounds with an open mouth using only the tip of the tongue. Ensure not to use the lips or jaw. Repeat this exercise until you can recite it from memory:

la

le

li

lo	
lu	
nah ne	
ni	
no	
nu	
dah	
de	
di	
do	
du	
rah	
re	
ri	
ro	
ru	
tah	
te	
ti	
to	

tu

# Lessons from Demosthenes - lip dexterity:

As above, ensure only the lips move when reciting these exercises.

The jaw should remain loose, but the tongue should remain still at the bottom of the mouth:

bah
be
bi
bo
bu
mah me
mi
mo
mu
pah
ре
рі
ро
ри
vah
ve

vi		
VO		
vu		
fah		
fe		
fi		
fo		
fu		
13		

#### Lessons from Demosthenes - jaw dexterity:

As above, allow the jaw to drop open freely when vocalising these sounds. You should not force the jaw open, it should fall naturally and cause no strain on your facial muscles. The jaw must therefore be completely relaxed: massaging the muscles at either side of your face will help and specific target areas are detailed in the chapter on 'vocal warmups and exercises' later. The tongue should be frozen in place at the bottom of the mouth:

gah ge gi go gu sah

se		
si		
SO		
su		
zah		
ze		
zi		
zu		
zu		

# **Lessons from Demosthenes – combined dexterity:**

Now you should aim to combine all sounds into one fluid and relaxed movement with added clarity. Remember, relax the jaw and do not force it to move:

lay pay tay quay fay ko bro mow kow tow rim

tim

limb gimb

boom room tomb zoom loom

bah

pah

tah

fah

jar

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## THREE CONCEPTS THAT WILL GIVE YOU A

#### **GREAT VOICE**

BREATH (Muscles)

MECHANICS (Enunciation)

✤ TONE (Emotion)

Given what you have learned thus far on the importance of building oratory skill, along with reinforcing tongue, lip and jaw dexterity, you will no doubt understand how strong and clear speech requires layers of technique working in harmony. It is best, therefore, to quote a discussion offered in A. C. Sutherland's work "*Dramatic Elocution and Action*" (1908) on the matter. It told the story of a young girl who was said to have played the part in a theatrical play so naturally an audience member afterwards remarked to the child's director:

"Ah! Anyone can see that the child's acting was nature, not art!"

"My dear fellow," replied the director, "I have devoted two hours a day, every day, for three long months to teach that child how to appear natural for merely five minutes. I assure you Sir, it is an art!"

This chapter is therefore especially important as it explains why you should focus on first mastering the breath, mechanics and only then adding emotion to your voice in that particular order.

Training the voice is similar to learning to play an instrument.

Before a pianist may recite a sonata, they first stumble across the keys, fumbling as they attempt to imprint a muscle memory upon their clumsy fingers (*breathing*). Later, once they are able to subconsciously place their hands upon the correct keys, they will move to the practice of reinforcing

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scales (*mechanics*) and it is only after they have mastered both muscle and scale, they are able to impart tone (*emotion*) onto their performances.

Therefore, only once you have mastered the control of the breathing muscles and enunciation to the point which it is automatic, would it be worthwhile to focus on the improvement of your emotional tone. It is unfortunate that unlike a musical instrument, the voice box is located inside of the body and cannot be removed for fine tuning! However, your voice can be improved through earnest practice and it is far simpler than you think.

When approaching vocal improvement, many self-taught students believe they need only change one specific aspect of their voice; be it the speed, tone or accent so as to satisfy their demands. Yet, the journey of vocal improvement is reliant upon the strengthening of a great number of muscles located in the stomach, chest, collarbone, throat, mouth and even the back, rather than the oral cavity alone. If you sincerely wish to improve your voice, you must first strengthen all of these muscles used in producing speech and not just focus on the removal of an accent or mechanic imperfection. Now, this is not to say you need train your body to resemble an Adonis, you simply need to consciously ensure that when breathing you utilise your chest and diaphragmatic muscles until they engage naturally and without effort. Examples on achieving this will be explained later and once again, it is far easier than you might first expect.

For a primer on what you are going to improve, in the simplest terms, the human voice-box or *larynx* is a series of mucus covered muscles and tissue manipulating the passing of air to produce sound. Inside the voice box are two folds of muscle arranged in a V shaped structure named the *glottis*. These two folds vibrate as air passes through them and in turn produce sound. You can feel these muscles vibrating by placing your fingers gently on your throat while speaking or singing. You will notice that as the pitch of your voice changes, so too do the vibrations of the muscles within your voice-box and the position of the voice-box itself.

Both men and women's voices go through varied changes throughout their lifetimes, with vocal cords stretching from some 3mm to over 20mm.

Unfortunately, this book cannot lengthen or shorten your vocal cords to the ideal sound you would prefer, but it can help you learn to control your voice with much greater proficiency than you currently are capable of.

As mentioned before, just like any muscle, the vocal folds can be reinforced, strengthened or damaged. Therefore, keep in mind the process for improving your voice is essentially the same as it would be to improve

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any other part of your body. If you wish to become a proficient longdistance runner, you do not set off to run a marathon before first spending months preparing your legs and lungs in order to run twenty-six miles. Likewise, to manage any major changes in your voice; time, effort and earnest practice must be invested to achieve results. Alas, this said, it would be foolish to one-day hope to sound similar to grand bass James Earl Jones if you were born with a voice such as screaming <u>Gilbert</u> Gottfried's. While it may be possible to both lower and higher the tone of your natural speaking voice, you cannot lengthen or shorten your vocal cords without extremely risky surgery. However, if you have a weak or croaky voice, or struggle with the pronunciation of *L*'s or *R*'s, these types of issues can be corrected through persistence and regular practice using this book.

Finally, although placed at the end of these key concepts, emotion is still a vitally important necessity for speaking well. A voice without emotion is akin to a fire without a flame. A strong passion for your chosen topic is therefore a crucial part of your daily speech. Unfortunately, many people inflict upon their audiences a sense of disparity between their chosen words due to a lack of poor emotion control and are left being judged negatively not by what they said, but how it was poorly delivered.

A lack of emotion is where a large majority of problems begin; when reading aloud from a book or text, the heart and mind become misaligned and almost machine-like. Even the most monotonous public speaker, when placed with friends, has a voice filled with tone, volume, pitch and energy. Reading aloud is often difficult as the act of reading another's words aloud detract from the natural ability to think before speaking.

When talking amongst friends it is the thoughts which come before the words leading to a rich and vibrant use of emotion enthused into the voice.

Even the finest actors are rarely able to produce a compelling scene upon a blind reading from a script. The text must first be meticulously internalised and can only then be given life through emotion. Should you wish to read more on the topic of utilising emotion through daily conversation, the book *'How You Can Have Confidence & Power in Dealing with People' (1956)* by Les Giblin is highly recommend.

With regards to your own vocal ideals, although you may not reach the lofty heights of celebrity status (or want to), you have the potential to bring to those around you a voice which shines like the first rays of sunlight after an eternity of darkness. You can bring a voice which is clear, strong and reflective of your own emotion and passion which carries not only a message but also a part of your personality. Through your voice you can command respect or woo a lover - all through the simple act of saying words, much as you have done your entire life.

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#### THE GOLDEN RULES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

There are three golden rules to public speaking which if followed will immediately improve both your gravitas and effectiveness when communicating. Classic orators used these same methods and continue to be remembered for their masterful command over both their voice and their ability to mesmerize their audiences. Great speakers were even seen as some of the pinnacles of human intelligence and pillars of society.

Given this knowledge, where would you wish to be upon this spectrum?

Now this is not to say being able to speak well would instantly make you seem intelligent to all! Nor do you need to be one of the aforementioned pillars of society to be seen as a great speaker. You simply need to understand a small number of simple rules and concepts regarding to truly make use of one of your greatest assets and capitalise on the virtue your voice can bring your way. But rather than dedicate several pages to the esoteric thoughts behind them, these rules can instead be summarised as: 1. Energise your main point by adding a strong emotion or inflecting a change in volume. People tend to listen when you drop to a whisper.

2. Pause for emphasis before announcing key points to captivate your audience.

3. Go down in pitch at the end of a sentence to make a statement, unless asking a question.

If you follow these rules, your public speaking technique will improve overnight. This is one of the vary rare instances which do not require hours of methodical practice to see improvement. However, there is potentially a

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fourth, often secret, rule which is overlooked by many as it is not such a simple matter as descending in pitch at the end of a sentence.

To learn this, you must first identify some common public speaking problems.

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#### **Common public speaking problems:**

When most people are put in front of a microphone or a crowd, their individual personality vanishes and a social mask takes its place. This is unfortunate, as people are often chosen to be public speakers due to the appealing nature of their personality!

In the world of audio recording, voice actors and audiobook narrators often struggle with what I refer to as '*Shatnerism*' after the great ham himself. They see a microphone or script before them and affect a jarring personality which is not their own, often overemphasising or placing stress upon unimportant words such as 'and', 'is', and 'the'. It is imperative when you are either placed before a microphone or an audience you communicate with your own emotions and speak as naturally as you would as if talking to a close friend. If you are passionate and educated on your topic, your audience will no-doubt be spellbound by what you have to say if you deliver it in a natural manner. However, if you attempt to aggrandise your voice by affecting a tone or style which is stereotypically stentorian in effort to impress your audience, it shall not be convincing. Therefore, by following the previous statements on breath, tone and then emotion, you can ensure you prevent yourself from creating a predictable cadence or rhythm when following your speech-notes.

Similarly, by imagining you are having a conversation with your audience you will also eliminate the possibility of affecting a Shatner-esque delivery.

One point of note is resonance. When attempting to make their voice resonate, unexperienced speakers often raise the pitch and volume of their voice in effort to speak *over* their listeners rather than directly *to* them. Not only does this sound amateurish, but it frequently results in injury and

inflammation of the vocal cords along with other symptoms of exhaustion. To use a metaphor: when a steam train's whistle is blown prior to moving into a tunnel it can sound weak. Yet despite putting out no-less air, the whistle increases in volume tremendously when inside a tunnel. This is due to resonance, which in vocal terms would be the ability to match the natural echo of your voice and the room you are speaking in.

Of course, the latter part is not always possible, but creating vocal resonance is often merely a matter of ensuring that when talking your teeth are not touching. It may take some practice, but the natural cavity of your mouth is a purpose made resonance chamber. If you are unsure how to produce a resonating sound: yawn. You will notice how your voice suddenly becomes deeper and more 'rounded' in sound due to the extra

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space available for the soundwaves to resonate within. Practicing creating this resonance in the echo chamber of a shower is ideal, as it allows for your voice to sound louder than it actually is.

Another common trait adopted by some public speakers is 'pulpit tone'. This common affliction is heard amongst even the most experienced newscasters, journalists or audiobook narrators who deliver words with a predictable sing-song cadence, as they tend to focus too much on the sound of their voice rather than what they are saying. Actors, narrators and similar professionals can struggle for years to remove this predictability, due to often spending years building the habit in attempt to sound similar to an old-fashioned newscaster. Much like ' *Shatnerism*', pulpit tone seems to only arise when the individual is put before a microphone or a script. One of the best cures for this is a form of vocally detached practice. Practice by breaking the speech down into its key points and summarising them with your own words to aid familiarity with understanding. Only then should you practice by taking the script one part at a time and eventually reciting the speech in its entirety until you gain a natural fluency.

Yet why do so many become afflicted with 'Shatnerism' and

'pulpit tone'? One potential explanation may be anxiety. As previously mentioned, anxiety when speaking in public ranks amongst the highest fears worldwide, even above death! If you feel anxious about public speaking, realise this is now considered to be 'normal' and should not bring shame upon yourself. A change of mentality may help. I personally have the mindset that *fear is simply your own mind believing it can expect what will happen in the future*. However, if this were true, you would be playing the lottery with the numbers your mind expects to arise rather than worrying!

Of course, anxiety can be justified; just as you would feel fear if you stepped into the ring with Muhammed Ali, so too would you feel fear speaking in public for the first time. Consider that if you were to watch two mechanics take apart a car, one a master and the other an apprentice, the master would act in a way which allowed him to confidently deconstruct the vehicle without secondary concern. The apprentice on the other hand would be hesitant due to a lack of experience. Public speaking is exactly the same. With confidence comes competence and you should attempt to speak in public or read aloud as often as you can if you truly wish to free yourself from anxieties over public speaking. Anxiety can often cause some speakers to subconsciously wish to deliver all the information as quickly as possible leading to a rapid delivery of words in a jumbled mess. To prevent this, you must first be well versed with your

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topic. Anecdotally, I am sure you all know of someone who has once delivered a speech on something they clearly had not prepared, leading to a disastrous performance. You should therefore ensure you can competently answer questions regarding your topic to help free yourself from any worries. Of course, knowledge of your topic does not automatically free you from fear! One tip would be to count '1, 2, 3' slowly in your mind, or keep time by tapping your fingers together as you talk.

This will help set a mental pace for you to follow when speaking.

However, there are those who are exceptionally well-versed on their chosen topic and yet still feel frightened when speaking in public. If this is the case, I would recommend you consult some of the excellent books on countering

anxiety caused by public speaking. *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking (1962)* by Dale Carnegie is a particularly fine example.

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#### DON'T FORGET YOUR VOICE WORKS ON

#### AIR

Everyone breathes – at least, everyone who is alive does. Yet it is amazing to note how many people forget their voice is completely reliant on air! If you try to speak without pushing air through your voice box you will find that it is impossible. Yet you can hear this when people attempt to talk but fail to even take an adequate breath - resulting in vocal fry, gasps for air or a general timidity of the voice. If there were one technique necessary to correct a poor voice, it would often be to correct the breathing. This chapter will teach you how to breathe in the most natural and efficient way, just as you did from birth.

Now, if you do not believe you need to practice your breathing technique, take a deep breath, open your jaw and vocalise the word 'ahh'

for thirty seconds. Many will notice one or more of three weaknesses: their voice immediately begins to quiver after five or ten seconds; later the tone begins to weaken and faulter; and finally the body is exhausted of all air at around twenty seconds. Breath is therefore vitally important to speech. When speaking, air rises from the lungs and passes through a gap only a few millimetres wide between the vocal cords which causes them to vibrate. This vibration creates sound, which reverberates inside the cavity of your mouth, which is then shaped by your tongue, teeth, cheeks, palate, nasal cavity and lips, finally exiting as sound. The human voice box is a wonderful creation and perhaps only second in complexity to that owned by the Lyre Bird, the owner of one of the most complex musical instruments ever created by Mother Nature. Given we now know the voice is reliant on air, it would be prudent to check on your own breathing:

First, stand before a mirror and take a deep, sharp and sudden breath, then hold it and your intake-breath body posture for three seconds.

When attempting this exercise for the first time, many people often stick out their chest, pull in their stomach and wrench their shoulders high up into the air without even a second thought to their form.

This is a poor technique and is often referred to as a taking 'chest' or

'collarbone breath'. If you found yourself breathing in this way, don't worry! I would estimate more than half of the population do exactly the same and in essence what you are doing is 'normal' when it comes to detrimental practices.

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To visualise the limitations of this breathing style, imagine inflating a balloon whilst restricting two-thirds of the base. It would bulge in a manner reflective of the available volume. Yet, no matter how hard you try, it cannot be filled to its full potential. Your lungs experience exactly the same issue when subject to a chest breath. Tests using a spirometer, a device used to measure the amount of air expelled from the lungs, shows the average person gains an extra 25 cubic inches of air when switching from a chest breath to a diaphragmatic breath. It can even increase to 45

cubic inches in some especially shallow breathers! Thankfully, this poor technique can be unlearned to give you more lung capacity. More-so it should be, as this type of breath will not help with strengthening your voice as it is especially weak and unsupported. To speak with strength, you must learn to breathe like you did when you were a new-born baby or a person at rest. Have you noticed how when someone it at rest their entire torso rises and falls with each breath? This is the subconscious of their mind overriding the conscious decisions to take a weak breath. It was found this form of weak chest breath often starts in childhood after being scolded. Children adopt this way of breathing as a counter against stress by tensing up the body. This psycho-cybernetic paradigm stays with many into their adulthood. Thankfully, it can be unlearned through an understanding of the diaphragm and its natural movements.

If the lungs are the bellows behind the soul, then the diaphragm is the muscle working tirelessly to keep things moving. There are excellent books

available on the anatomical workings of the human voice. However, this book is dedicated to helping you reinforce muscles rather than being able to identify them on a surgeon's dummy. Put simply, the diaphragm is a large sheet of thin muscle which lies just below the lungs and is stretched across the bottom of the twelfth rib. When breathing using your diaphragm (often erroneously called 'breathing from the diaphragm'), your chest and abdomen expand which causes the diaphragm to contract. This contracting of the diaphragm creates a miniature vacuum, which in turn allows more air to enter the lungs. When exhaling, the chest and abdomen contract and the diaphragm relaxes. This relaxation forces air out of your lungs at a variable rate depending on the muscle strength used. You can demonstrate this muscle strength by placing a hand on the lower abdomen and vocalising a loud 'Hoh! or Hah!' sound. The diaphragm muscles cause your abdomen to be rapidly contracted, further increasing the force behind the produced sound. A weak diaphragm, especially one of a speaker who is consciously limiting their natural diaphragmatic breathing can seriously hinder their speaking volume and intake of breath. Therefore,

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breathing exercises should be undertaken on a daily basis. As a matter of fact, musicians who play brass or woodwind instruments tend to have some of the strongest diaphragmatic muscles purely due to the sheer volume of air necessary to play their instruments!

For you to return to the more natural and supportive form of breathing using the diaphragm you must teach yourselves to do so on command. Here is a simple way to find out how to take a diaphragmatic breath:

✤ Lay down.

Put this book on your stomach.

Breathe in and out in such a way the book rises and falls.

♦ You are now utilizing your diaphragm muscles to support your breath, rather than your chest muscles.

Try the deep and sudden breath exercise again, ensuring to breathe naturally.

Eventually you will be able to combine both the chest breath and a diaphragmatic breath in one combined motion, allowing for a mastery over your own breath. This does take time, however.

Once you feel comfortable with this breathing pattern, you will notice this is how you breathe when at rest. The most common cause of a weak voice and fumbling one's words when speaking is a lack of breath support.

This relaxed and natural form of breathing should help you on your journey to eliminate a number of speaking problems you may have. You can demonstrate how a lack of breath can have a negative effect on your speaking performance through the following examples:

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Start by taking a shallow chest breath, breathing without supporting your diaphragm.

Try to push out your stomach. You'll find you have a large amount of pressure built up behind your vocal cords (in the area known as the glottis) and difficulty moving the diaphragm.

Still feeling this pressure, try to speak. Attempting this, you will find it is difficult to reach both the lower and higher tones of your voice.

This pressure is caused due to a lack of support from your diaphragm when you inhale, especially when taking deeper breaths. The base of your lungs is filling with less air than would be capable with a diaphragmatic breath. Thus, if you ensure to take a diaphragmatic breath, you will have more air to push through your vocal cords which will in turn help you to have a stronger voice. When learning the importance of the diaphragm in speaking, some students may believe that before uttering a word, they must first take a breath so deep that they begin to practice what is known in the scubadiving hobby as 'packing'. This is the over-inflation of the lungs to the point of discomfort and involves repeated intakes of breath before speaking (or diving). This type of breathing is detrimental to producing a natural tone as it places much pressure on the lungs. Diaphragmatic breathing should come naturally and you need only take a single in-breath through the mouth or nose before speaking. This natural breath should lead to the diaphragm being pushed downwards, causing the lower abdomen to expand in all directions without excess effort.

If you are lucky enough to already have a pre-existing knowledge of the importance of diaphragmatic breathing, you will find this form of breathing comes natural to you. However, one common fault is students understanding the utilisation of muscles on the in-breath, many still immediately expel all their breath within a couple of words. For proper speech, the air must be limited, as if expelled through a valve through the conscious control of the diaphragm. Therefore, simply being able to breathe deeply or hold your breath for a long time isn't sufficient — you

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need to also be able to expertly control the breath whilst speaking or singing.

To improve the control of your breath, attempt to recite one or more of the tongue twisters at the end of this book in one breath, practice limiting the air you use when speaking or try reading this section aloud in a strong voice. A fantastic breath building exercise involves holding a piece of tissue paper against a wall with a solid stream of air. When trying this, time yourself to see the differences between deep diaphragmatic breathing and shallow upper chest breathing. You'll be surprised at the difference!

For those of you who are working on the radio, television or delivering speeches, you should be wary of wearing overly tight clothing, especially when delivering a public speech. Some radio hosts often loosen their trousers as one would after a large meal to maximize their ability to speak in a bombastic manner and opera singers often spend many sessions with their tailor refining the waistline of their cummerbund, dress or trousers before a performance, with one singer even demanding an elasticated waistcoat much to the tailors chagrin! Although it wouldn't be advised to loosen your belt in public, ensure you do not wear a garment which is

particularly restricting to the natural expansion of your diaphragm when breathing as this will hinder your speaking capability.

### Finding the correct posture for speaking:

As we have seen, natural use of the diaphragm is necessary for a strong voice. Continuing from the previous exercise, a better understanding of the proper posture necessary to best utilise diaphragm will help you maximise your practice and speech

Have you ever noticed opera singers seem to produce a monumental amount of sound almost effortlessly? This is all thanks to years of vocal and diaphragmatic training to both strengthen their muscles and learn the ideal position of their airways in order to allow the maximum movement of air with each note. Now, you need not train for years to sound like an operatic singer whilst you speak, but it is important you help your body work effortlessly by aligning your airways. To achieve this, you must first unlearn any bad habits you may have. Stand by a mirror and check your posture. Do you slouch or hunch over, are your

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shoulders tense and raised high, or do you look to the floor when speaking? All these little imperfections change both the power available to your voice and your ability to breathe naturally. To reinforce your airways and all the muscles involved in producing sound you should on a day to day basis, place an emphasis on standing tall and straight. You need not strain your back so it arches; simply ensure you are not hunched over or slouched. When you are in the correct posture, your body will naturally rest at the ideal relaxed posture, allowing your diaphragm and windpipe to work at their best. In fact, Pavarotti once recorded an entire opera whilst lying on his back to help in relaxing and aligning his gargantuan airways!

To find the correct posture, stand by a mirror and imagine your windpipe were shaped like a bendy straw, with the straw being in your chest and the crinkled bend being at your neck. You should aim to find the ideal angle of your neck and head positioning to allow for the maximum airflow and minimum discomfort. Perhaps when speaking you subconsciously drop your jaw down and crush your windpipe, or maybe a lack of muscle strength in your neck pulls your head back in a straining manner. Maybe you jut out your jaw and place tension on the larynx which limits the moment of air. Thankfully, all these bad habits can be rectified, but remember, when conducting any of these exercises there should never be any form of discomfort. If so, stop, relax and try again later.

✤ First, imagine there was a puppet string attached to the crown of your head, gently pulling your entire body towards the sky.

Now, raise your head so it aligns to naturally open your airways.

Do not allow your chin to touch your neck or strain your head upwards.

✤ When you find a comfortable position say 'ahh' whilst moving your head up and down. You will notice you are unable to hold the same note as your voice box is squeezed and stretched by the movement of your head and neck.

Whilst saying 'ahh', feel for the position allowing the most freedom of air and a natural, pleasant tone.

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When you find the most natural alignment, practice keeping your head in this position whilst vocalising the examples in this book.

You will find as you move your head up and down there will probably be moments where your voice cracks and pops. Some people tend to speak in the areas where their voice breaks, which may be exactly what you need to improve upon. If not, congratulations, you have ideal head placement when talking!

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#### The announcer's test:

The following test is often given to prospective broadcast and radio announcers without prior practice. It aims to test not only the talent's articulation and diction, but also concentration, memory and linguistic capability. You should aim to eventually recite it entirely by memory in one controlled breath.

✤ One hen.

Two ducks.

Three squawking geese.

✤ Four Limerick oysters.

✤ Five corpulent porpoises.

Six pairs of Don Alverzo's tweezers.

Seven thousand Macedonians in full battle array.

Eight brass monkeys from the ancient sacred crypts of Egypt.

Nine apathetic, sympathetic, diabetic old men on roller skates, with a marked propensity towards procrastination and sloth.

Ten lyrical, spherical, diabolical denizens of the deep who all stall around the corner of the quo of the quay of the quivery, all at the same time.

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# HOW DEHYDRATION IS DAMAGING YOUR

## VOICE

Given that the human voice consists of a plethora of delicate mechanisms, it is prone to several common problems and requires lubrication to function at its best. The most common problems speakers face today would be dehydration and a resulting hoarseness of voice which prevents your voice from having a rich, full and warm tone. In short: to speak well, you must be hydrated. Personally, I drink a minimum of 1,400ml of water per day along with several cups of tea on the side.

However, a good rule to follow is that if you feel thirsty then you are already dehydrated.

But lubrication aside, why is hydration so important? If you read respectable news reports you will learn how the rising pollution filling the air we breathe is damaging to your health. Fossil fuels, carcinogens and even pollen wafting overseas due to global warming is leading to an increase in the number of destructive particles that are becoming trapped in the mucus lining your inner throat and lungs. Should this mucus dry out then damage is easily inflicted upon your organs. Although this cannot be avoided entirely, it is beneficial to avoid walking in areas of high pollution such as main streets or industrial sites directly prior to public speaking. In some Asian countries, people have taken to wearing face-masks to avoid breathing contaminated air. The benefit of these masks is debatable, but in the Western world you should hopefully need not go this far. Simply aim to avoid areas rife with pollution, such as a smokers' corner. On that

note; smoking is especially bad for your health and is probably one of the most damaging actions to your lungs. The concept of cigarette smoke giving smokers a 'smooth voice' was created by 1950's marketing men and has no basis in fact. Lung and throat cancer from tobacco smoke is very real, however.

Another common source of vocal cord irritation would be those who breathe mainly through their mouth rather than through their nose.

When breathing through the nose, dry air is moisturised before touching the vocal cords. Whereas mouth-breathing results in dry air touching the vocal cords. Mouth-breathing is particularly damaging as it can result in snatched chest breaths rather than filling, diaphragmatic breaths and could also potentially be linked to dramatic changes in jaw structure. If you notice you breathe primarily through your mouth, it may be worth

consulting with an Otorhinolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat doctor) to confirm if an obstruction is hindering natural breathing technique. In his work "*Malrespiration and its Effects Upon the Enjoyment of Life and Man*"

George Catlin wrote "...if I were to endeavour to bequeath to posterity the most important motto which human language can convey, it should be three wise words, 'shut your mouth': when you read, when you write and especially when you listen! There is no person who will find and acknowledge improvement in health and enjoyment from even a temporary attention as this." Now, this is not to say you should never breathe through your mouth. Your body will naturally respond as to the ideal breathing technique dependant on the activity you are partaking in at the time, which will result in a mixture of nasal and oral breathing.

Furthermore, scientists currently recommend you should consume 1.9 litres of liquid per day to meet hydration demands. Importantly, this is not to say you should consume large amounts of water as many of the healthy foods such as fruit have their own natural liquids. However, given the vocal cords function best when lubricated by a coating of mucus, it is especially beneficial to stay properly hydrated. In this aspect, it is better to sip water over short periods of time rather than imbibing large amounts in one sitting. This is especially the case for voice actors and public speakers.

Speakers of this nature should also avoid ice water, as the temperature of the water can cause the vocal cords to shrink, in turn raising the pitch of one's voice. Note that also, it takes at least twenty minutes for hydration to take effect and caffeinated drinks such as tea and coffee have the potential to dehydrate your vocal cords.

On the market there are several snake oil drinks, lozenges and spray products claim to be beneficial for your vocal cords. If this were the case, you would choke! No liquid ever touches the vocal cords as a muscle named the epiglottis closes before swallowing to prevent any water or food being deposited into the lungs. What may be beneficial to the voice are lozenges, sprays and liquids which remove excess mucus from the mouth and thus prevent vocal clicks when speaking or reduce inflammation and pain. Home-remedies of these could include: hot honey and lemon; mouthwash; and even whiskey (claimed to have been swilled or atomised into the mouth by BBC radio announcers during the reign of King George VI!). Other beneficial items may include menthols and herbal remedies which help clear the sinuses. Saline washes for sinus clearing are also becoming more popular. However, I personally do not recommend using these so-called 'neti-pots' due to the potential for (sometimes lethal) sinus infections.

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#### **IDENTIFYING POOR TYPES OF VOICE AND**

#### HOW TO FIX THEM

In this section we will look at some of the common types of poor voice and how to remedy them. It is important to note that even if you identify with having many of these maladies, they can all be unlearned.

Your voice is a muscle. It can be trained, strengthened and your subconscious can have bad habits replaced with excellent technique through practice.

One of the first steps to identifying if you have one of these hindrances is to either record yourself or better yet, take the Socratic method and ask yourself as to why you sound as you do. Was it an injury, a scolding in childhood or simply a lack of practice which has detracted your voice from it's potential? Identification of any ailments are the first step to improvement. It is especially common to struggle with the voice.

Perhaps then this suggests a poor voice is a 'natural' affliction brought about by a lack of societal criticism or education. Yet there is nothing natural about the afflictions some speakers place upon their own voices which end the day croaking, red raw and in pain. Many thousands of public speakers, actors and day-to-day people must suffer due to poor habits of the voice which could be easily remedied if identified. If you are lucky enough to not identify with any of these problems, please read them anyway. It is important to educate yourself on these matters to prevent the formation of bad habits in the future. You may even be able to help others simply from what you learn! Sadly, this book shall not address stuttering and stammering given their potential neurological origin. I believe it would be a disservice to the reader to give improper advice on that issue. However, the methods detailed below may help in alleviating the condition alongside consulting a professional speech therapist.

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## Monotone voices which go on and on and...

Nothing is staler to a listener than a voice completely devoid of life and musical character. Every statement the monotonous speaker makes is seemingly an utterance of disinterest and indifference. A monotone nature is often found by those who are unable to impart emotion towards what they are reading rather than a neurological affliction. Whereas the truly monotonous speaker could confess the words

'*I love you*' and spitefully state '*I despise you*' with an equally unenthusiastic nature.

### Solution

Sing when you speak! Imagine your words are on an impossible staircase, with each word dropping down and then stepping back up to differing pitches. Consider how the tonality of your voice could be interpreted by your listeners. Consider ending each phrase on an upward or downwards inflection, depending on whether you are making a statement or asking a question. Perhaps create a change in speed and pitch.

Try rushing and adding a higher pitch for moment of excitement or slowing down and dropping your voice to a lower tone for when you truly wish to capture your audience's attention. Once you are comfortable with this exercise, be careful not to overemphasise your tonality. There is a difference between emphasising radical pitch changes when practicing in comparison to normal pitch changes when speaking. Ensure you stay

'conversational'.

### The dejected Eeyore

I am sure that at least one point in life you have come across a longsuffering individual whose voice is so mired by disappointment they have an almost uncanny ability to bring everyone around them down to their miserable level. These are the people for who enthusiasm seems to have been replaced by a complete and utter shell of self-pity and misery.

Perhaps this is the result of misfortune, or more seriously poor mental health. The Eeyore's voice often sinks to the lower tones and slurs lethargically from one word to another, only to raise ever so slightly upon a moment of surprise, immediately to be shot down.

#### Solution

Seeking professional help may be the first course of action as mental health issues may be the cause that no amount of positive thinking or mindfulness may solve. For others, this voice is purely reflective of their philosophical mindset and cannot be changed through simple vocal tutoring.

If this is not the case yet you still struggle, you should start with attempts to mimic the rapid-fire delivery of professional motivational speakers such as Les Brown, Zig Ziglar and Bob Proctor. Furthermore, experiment with raising the tone of your voice and deliver your words in a staccato nature or consult the later section on slurring in this chapter.

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#### Yes, I can hear you!

A study was conducted by the US army in the 1950's to discover the ideal volume to issue orders to cadets. The results found soldiers were often incapable of replying to an order at a different volume than they were spoken to. If shouted at, the soldiers shouted back and if whispered at, they whispered in response. Unfortunately, we all know someone who lacks an 'indoor voice', the Sergeant Major with a gruff, overbearing voice which

would be more suited to barking gravelly orders to soldiers rather than delivering a quiet eulogy. Regrettably, these people don't realise their speaking volume is set at high levels. If you notice you tend to have a personal space almost twice as wide as those around you, your listeners may have retreated to protect their eardrums.

## Solution

As said, overbearing speakers often do not realize the volume they are producing is painful to their listeners. The constant high volume can also be interpreted as anger or an unapproachable nature. Many feel as if they are being spoken 'at' rather than spoken 'to'. If you have found you are often being informed your voice is too loud, practice whispering and reducing the volume at which you speak. Do not be worried you are speaking too quietly in public, for if this is the case people are far more likely to ask you to speak up than to be quiet.

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### Oh sorry, I said-

These are the words of the especially weak-voiced speaker.

Constantly repeating themselves, they spend half their speaking lives in a perpetual loop of reiterating something which it said clearly in the first place they would already be onto the next topic. Weak voices are nothing to be ashamed of, however. Studies have found quieter people are often from households which experienced strict rules or punishment. Your actions may be the result of past emotional distress, especially if as a child you were told to be 'be seen and not heard'. Therapy may help with this, but for now attempt the solution below.

### Solution

A weak voice is hindered by a lack of support from the diaphragm while speaking. If you find people are often asking you to speak up and repeat what you are saying, consider investing some time in cardio exercise. Also, pay particular attention to the exercises in previous chapters on breathing from the lower lungs and strengthening breath support along with the following chapters on strengthening diaphragmatic control. For this condition you need to ensure each sentence begins with a full diaphragmatic breath which can allow you to project your voice across a room. Also ensure when speaking you speak towards your listener's ears, not towards their feet. It may make you feel uncomfortable to speak loudly at first, but by consistent practice your confidence will grow with every word, resulting in a stronger voice and more interest from your listeners.

## 37

#### The ventriloquist

There are some people whose lips are so tightly pursed when speaking, we barely see the whites of their teeth. Others have a habit of speaking out of only one side of their mouth. Often, every sound which manages to escape this vocal prison is a mumbled mess, but once again this can be improved through practice.

#### Solution

Observe yourself in a mirror; do you talk with an open mouth or are your lips brought tightly together?

Do your words form with a lilt, your mouth being drawn towards the left or right side of your face?

Do you talk with only your bottom lip, by forcing your top lip against your teeth?

If you do notice any of these symptoms, pucker your lips as if you were to make an exaggerated kiss, ensuring you are facing directly towards the mirror. Then, attempt to talk. Although this does look rather silly, it will force the muscles previously ignored into action. Once you feel a fluidity of movement returning, slowly bring your lips back and ensure you form each word with an over enunciated movement. Repeat this every day for ten minutes until you notice an improvement.

### The 'machine gun' speaker

Have you ever heard a person who speaks so quickly every word they say begins to blend into one?

Ifweweretowriteastheyspokeitwouldlooklikethis

(If we were to write as they spoke it would look like this)

### Solution

When speaking, a pause is often one of your most powerful tools.

It is akin to a vocal comma or bold emphasis. Fast speech often leads to a lack of clarity and a weakness of the voice, it also can suggest to your listeners you are nervous or even worse, untrustworthy. Adding pauses between your words both aids enunciation and enables you to bring about dramatic effect to what is being said. It also enables the listener to consider what is being said and to contemplate on the situation and form a useful opinion, rather than an off the cuff remark. If you find people are asking you to slow down, or to repeat what you are speaking; record yourself for 60 seconds and count the total number of words you said.

Research has shown how sad, serious or complex conversations are ideally between 60 to 110 words per minute (wpm). Descriptive, instructional and statements of fact should average 125 wpm. Daily conversation should average no more than 164 wpm. Of course, the more pauses added, the slower the speech will be. Taming the speed of your speech is easily achieved by practicing the exercise on lengthening words in the previous chapter. Although it may seem worrying you are speaking too slowly, you will eventually find speaking at around 130 wpm leads to more engaging conversations and greater clarity of thought.

39

#### The drunk soundalike

38

We all know of one person who sounds as if they have drunk a little too much before preparing a speech. Unfortunately, slurred words are a common hindrance to clear speech, with words becoming an agglutination of sounds into one amorphous group.

"Ifyoutaykea 'ook ove'rere, you'llbeableto seea' talltawaa..."

(If you take a look over there, you'll be able to see a tall tower...)

# Solution

Care must therefore be taken to identify which particular sounds, words of phrases are often joined together. Ask a friend to point out when you are slurring your words or record yourself and listen to any phrases which sound slurred. To improve, ensure you add a brief pause to emphasise the gaps between each word or check the speed of your speech.

Practice the exercise on adding a staccato nature to your words, making the sounds crisp and clear. Also remember not all who slur are speaking too slowly. Some slur because they speak too quickly. If this is the case, focus on the exercise covering taming rapid speech in the chapter on

'Vocal and Muscular Warmups'.

# 40

## The pained speaker

Some speakers find they are unable to talk for short periods of time without going red in the face or they lose their voices after speaking for extended periods of time. Yet, why is it a baby can scream for hours on end without fatigue? The reason is a baby has yet to learn poor techniques of breath support or is engaging in conscious vocal restraint.

## Solution

To guarantee you can speak for long periods, you need to ensure you are using diaphragmatic breaths rather than chest breaths. A chest breath places great strain upon the vocal cords due to the limited amount of air available. Once you have corrected your breathing, another tip once recommended in antiquity was to 'speak on the end of a yawn'. This is as simple as it sounds; simply practice vocalising a yawn and when you feel your voice is most relaxed, continue to speak. You will eventually feel your voice is almost incapable of being strained as you are no longer forcing your volume or tensing the muscles in your throat. Consult the relaxation exercises in the chapter on 'Vocal and Muscular Warmups' later in the book for inspiration.

If you struggle with this exercise due to tension, attempt to add a silent 'h' to the beginning of certain words, such as the old American accent which vocalised a silent h in words such as '(h)when' or

'(h)Wednesday'. This is especially important for strong words which utilise a glottal attack, such as 'at' 'and' and the movie directors favourite:

'action!'

### 41

#### The 'mask' speaker

There is much debate amongst voice and acting tutors as to the benefit or detriment of 'speaking from the mask'. You can find the 'mask'

by humming '*mmm*' until you feel the area between your nose and lips (named the philtrum) beginning to vibrate, rather than your chest. At this point, you will notice if you shift your voice from the back of your throat to the mask by lowering and rising your larynx the pitch will increase due to a lack of resonance in the mouth.

It is my view, speaking from the mask can be hindrance to both breath control and pleasant speech, as it is reliant on nasal speaking and should therefore be avoided.

### Solution

Speaking from the mask is often caused by forcing the larynx to rise in the throat and adopting a nasal voice (as explained on the next page). Mask speaking can be the result of stress, a forced high pitch or a lack of breath support. To prevent yourself from speaking from the

'mask' it is vital you relax the muscles in your larynx, neck and throat. First, place a hand upon your neck and feel exactly where your voicebox is in your throat and hum '*mmm*'. Then, slowly lower the tone of your voice until you feel your chest vibrate; this is your 'relaxed' state. Experiment until your voice naturally sits in this relaxed area.

## 42

#### The nasal speaker

Have you ever heard someone who sounds similar to a train conductor speaking over a loudspeaker? Their voice lacks a rich warmth or depth. This is a 'nasal' voice and is caused by the air in the speakers'

voice being expelled through their nose rather than their mouth. Nasal voices often have two qualities, either shrill or weak dependent on the pitch of your voice. Male nasal voices are often considered as juvenile or effeminate and conjure images of *Pee-wee Herman*. Whereas female nasal voices are often considered as shrill due to the ear-splitting frequencies they produce, especially if the owner has a strong set of lungs behind them such as the actress *Fran Drescher*. It is impossible to have a warm and sonorous nasal voice as there simply isn't enough resonance in the nasal cavity to produce pleasant tones.

#### Solution

Hold your nose and read this paragraph out loud, but rather than pushing your voice towards your nasal cavity try and make all the air exit your mouth. (Note this will not be possible with words which utilize the nasal cavity to form, such as closed mouthed 'm' and 'p' sounds). Once you can ascertain the difference between your nasal and spoken voice, release your fingers from your nose and speak naturally. You should feel far less pressure behind your nose as a majority of the air and sound is now exiting your mouth. This is known in some circles as speaking with the 'chest voice' and is vital for a warm, sonorous voice.

# 43

### The glottal attacker

Does your voice ever crack or pop when you say a series of short words in quick succession? This is due to a building of pressure behind the vocal cords and is often referred to as a 'glottal attack'. The words 'at',

'cat' and 'tat' are excellent examples of potential glottal attack words.

Attempt to say them in a quick, staccato manner and feel for the pressure behind your vocal cords causing your larynx to jump. Now imagine what damage this jumping and cracking could do to your voice on a daily basis with the many thousands of times it is repeated! Recent studies have shown it only takes two minutes of incorrect glottal speech to cause the vocal cords to redden due to bruising. Therefore, you must be wary of how glottal attacks can damage your voice.

### Solution

As previously mentioned under the section concerning 'strained'

speakers, affecting a silent 'h' to the beginning of glottal words is a beneficial way of training yourself out of these bad habits. Certain sounds, such as the 'm' in 'mother' do not produce a glottal attack therefore it would be beneficial for you to attempt to say the words 'mother cat' until you can identify the difference between a soft sound and a glottal attack.

### 44

### The contortionist

A trait often found in thespians is the exaggerated movement of the mouth and lips when reciting their lines. On stage, this is often mandatory as their un-amplified voice needs to carry to the back of an auditorium and remain clear and precise. Others have the habit of speaking only from one side of the mouth, perhaps due a childhood paradigm stemming from stress, stutters or similar. If you find you are speaking from one side of your mouth by tugging your cheeks, you will struggle to enunciate your words clearly. Thankfully, this issue can be addressed, but remember even the most professional of speakers won't be able to mirror each side of their lips when they speak.

# Solution

Look at yourself in the mirror and question as to exactly why you speak from one side of your face. Is it a learned habit which can be unlearned or a matter of weakened muscles which can be trained? For both maladies, it would be best to begin to over-enunciate words slowly and meticulously when practising to build muscle tone and eradicate past habits. A simple exercise would be to methodically repeat the vowel sounds 'A E I O U' in a slow and steady manner. Do this for two minutes every day, as often as possible until you notice a more balanced and natural movement of the lips.

### 45

### The unnaturally pitched

I am sure you have heard someone who is noticeably forcing the pitch of their voice to either artificially high or low levels. Not only does this sound unnatural but it is also potentially damaging to the vocal cords.

Just as any muscle should never be constantly tensed, the vocal cords also require moments of rest and relaxation. By artificially changing the pitch of your voice you are not only unconvincing, but you are also liable to develop painful and damaging vocal polyps which can only be removed via invasive surgery.

This trait is commonly found amongst teenage boys who wish to sound more mature than their voices would suggest and women who are affecting a faux-feminine tone. Nature never intended you to force your voice box to move up or down when you speak therefore you should relax and speak at a normal tone. However, if you have been forcing your voice to an altered pitch for a long period of time, you may have forgotten your natural tone. Try the solution below to help regain control of your natural voice.

### Solution

Imagine you were agreeing with someone by humming or saying the words 'uh-huh'. The 'uh' is often vocalised at the lowest relaxed pitch you can produce without any extra effort, whereas the 'huh' is placed at just above your natural speaking pitch. Repeat the 'uh-huh' phrase several times, ensuring you do not artificially change the pitch of your voice. You should eventually establish a natural speaking pitch just below the 'huh'

part of this exercise.

### **46**

#### The iron jaw

If you wanted to better hear a conversation in another room, you wouldn't listen through the keyhole - you would open the door. Much the same could be said about speaking. To properly enunciate your words, a freedom of movement must be allowed to the jaw. Occasionally this is a hindrance to individuals conscious of their teeth or a similar personal matter. Therefore, this can also be an experiment in building confidence.

### Solution

If you find you rarely part your teeth when speaking, remember how clear diction is reliant on a natural freedom of the mouth. By consciously choosing to speak with a clenched mouth or solid jaw, you are hindering not only your diction but also the expression of emotion capable. To begin with, allow the jaw to drop and then open the mouth as if comedically surprised. Hold the expression for five seconds and then return to a gently closed mouth. Repeating this several times along with gently sliding the jaw from side to side will be beneficial in releasing tension.

It is not unusual to hear some cracks and pops when first attempting this exercise, but as with all efforts there should never be any pain or

discomfort. If you are struggling, you should also practice the exercise on loosening the jaw using the words 'OO – OH – AH' as detailed in the 'vocal and muscular warmups' chapter for a few minutes, several times a day.

47

## Lisps

As someone who was mocked for many years due to having a prominent lisp as a child, I can sympathise with others afflicted by this condition. A lisp may be a matter of a lack of muscular control which is allowing the tongue to protrude past the teeth when speaking. In especially rare cases it may be the tongue is too large for the mouth and therefore a specialist should be consulted as little muscular training can alleviate this. A lisp can also manifest in old age due to a fattening of the tongue thanks to a lack of communication and general muscle degradation.

This is unfortunately prominent amongst those who live isolated lives.

## Solution

The tongue is yet another surprisingly powerful muscle which can be trained and strengthened. To alleviate a lisp, the tongue must be restrained back into the mouth when speaking rather than being allowed to protrude past the teeth (with the exception of producing the 'th'

sound). Rolling the tongue in your mouth, forming different shapes and performing tongue stretches as outlined in the chapter 'vocal and muscular warmups' should be practiced daily. Thankfully, most of these exercises can be conducted in public with a closed mouth for an extended period of time, assuming the jaw is kept shut! For closed mouth exercises, imagine you were rolling a boiled sweet inside your mouth or attempting to tie a knot in a piece of string using your tongue. For open mouth exercises, stick the tongue out to the far left, far right or flap it back and forth in private company!

**48** 

### The perfectionist

Richard Burton was often been acclaimed as being the finest speaker of the English language in modern history. His mellifluous baritone pitch and near-perfect enunciation graced the ears of millions across the world. His vocal routine involved climbing mountains whilst reciting poem and verse to his mentor, who would slowly walk away from him whilst still demanding vocal clarity. Yet even Burton, a master of his trade, was known to occasionally fib lines or trip over his tongue; you can hear this for yourself by listening to the narration outtakes of Jeff Wayne's

' War of the Worlds' album.

There are many speakers who are crippled by the worry of mispronouncing their words. Some hesitate to say anything and others even stutter when approaching trigger words. If you hope to never mispronounce a word again then you will be disappointed, such is the fickle nature of the detachment between the voice and the brain.

### Solution

Accept that both the brain and your voice are not infallible. No matter how much you practice you will still make mistakes. In fact, it is probably those very moments when you wish to quit practicing that you are making the most progress. At first, you will struggle with these exercises as you are placing a majority of your focus on correcting whatever problems you have. At this point you have yet to learn the automatic, subconscious control over your vocal abilities. However, with each word will come improvement, clarity and an eventual subconscious reinforcement.

Remember, with competence comes confidence.

### **49**

### **COMMON VOCAL ILLNESSES**

There are many different maladies, injuries and common illnesses which can lead to poor speech. Detailed below are the most common culprits along with generalised tips to aid with recovery. There are also other problems connected to the voice such as polyps, ulcers and cancers of the throat and voice but these require specialist attention and diagnosis from a medically trained professional.

### **Hoarseness of voice:**

A hoarse voice is caused by overuse leading to the vocal cords becoming inflamed and bruised. It often leads your voice to sound artificially deep, croaky, or mired with vocal fry. Vocal fry, often referred to as a 'gritty' sound is a moment when all smoothness of the voice is lost leaving the speaker sounding coarse. Although some people wish they could sound as if they were gargling whiskey and rocks, vocal fry is damaging to the vocal cords as outlined in earlier chapters. Other symptoms of a hoarse voice would be a sensation of swelling, tightening or major pain in the throat. It is advisable all speakers visit a doctor specialising in the throat should these symptoms persist for two weeks or more. However, treatment for a hoarse voice would be to inhale the vapour of hot honey, water and lemon juice, or to rest the voice for several days. Should you need to speak, do not whisper but use a less defined, soft and breathy voice.

## Laryngitis:

Laryngitis is an inflammation of the larynx often caused by the rhinovirus (common cold). The resulting pain from this inflammation causes sufferers to attempt to clear their throat of excess infected mucus, which in turn causes more pain and inflammation. Unfortunately for those of us in a working environment which requires daily professional use of the voice, laryngitis leads to a negative spiral of further problems.

## 50

Therefore, all speaking should be avoided when suffering, as attempting to speak puts further pressure on the vocal cords which in turn results in more damage and a longer recuperation time. Consistent abuse of the vocal cords during this illness can result in permanent damage and changes to the voice. Therefore, under these circumstances you should only talk when absolutely necessary and should never engage in any strenuous exercise such as whispering, shouting or mimicking a character voice.

#### Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease:

Also known as GERD or laryngopharyngeal reflux, this illness causes a backwash of stomach acid into the oesophagus. This can cause a severe burning of the vocal cords and the other delicate mechanisms in the throat, leading to pain and reduced performance ability. Avoiding acidic foods, especially a few hours before sleeping is paramount. Alcohol consumption should also be restricted or ideally removed entirely. For further treatment, consult with an Otorhinolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat doctor) or a similar medical specialist as speaking during a GERD

flareup can be excruciating.

### 51

### VOCAL AND MUSCULAR WARMUPS

As mentioned earlier, a professional athlete would never attempt to run a marathon without first performing their warmups. Therefore, in this chapter we will focus on how to warmup the muscles located in your face, back, mouth, neck and diaphragm. If you are going to be spending a notable amount of time speaking behind a microphone, on stage, or in person it is vital you warm up your voice.

It is not necessary to attempt all these exercises at once - simply find one which works best for you and practice it diligently. The earnest student will spend one to two hours each day on all relevant exercises if they wish to see rapid progress. However, I must stress it is often the warmups which take the longest, such as the *spinal rolls, an exercise to remove constriction* and the '*WAOW' warmup* which are the most effective. It is therefore vital you are patient and allow your body to relax and become accustomed to using muscles which may possibly be undeveloped. Simply reading this book without vocalising the exercises will not elicit any change: you must earnestly vocalise all words.

Importantly, do not worry if you struggle with these exercises at first. It is perfectly normal to stumble as you will be using muscles which are possibly underdeveloped. Just remember, as with all forms of self-development you will notice gradual change as the weeks go by.

52

# Spinal rolls:

When considering warming up for speaking, many people are perplexed by the notion you should first stretch your entire body. However, I have found this exercise is one of the finest methods to put yourself in a comfortable mental-mindset and relax your diaphragm. It is an adapted exercise demonstrated by the exceptionally qualified voice and speech coach Jay Miller from *VoiceAndSpeech.com*.

Slowly empty your lungs and gently lean forwards. First lower your head and then your back as if you were attempting to touch your toes.

◆ Let the weight of your body pull your torso downwards, do not force yourself to go any further than feels natural.

✤ When you feel gravity can carry you no further, breathe in deeply, while remembering to use your diaphragm. You will feel your back expand.

Now breathe out slowly. You will notice with each breath your body will relax to the point where you may even be able to touch your toes.

Slowly and deliberately sigh whilst breathing in and out each time, noticing how your body relaxes.

At your discretion, slowly raise your body to a natural standing position, ensuring to keep your face facing the floor as you stand (do not jerk your head upwards).

53

#### **Relaxing the sternocleidomastoids:**

The sternocleidomastoids are two especially large muscles stretching from the bottom of each ear to either side of your clavicle.

Tension in these muscles can cause painful jolts when turning the neck, restricting your jaw and cause generalised vocal issues when attempting to relax the larynx.

Make two fingers and gently slide them from the side of either ear down your neck to your collarbone.

✤ After several passes you may wish to apply pressure to massage the sternocleidomastoids — do not use force, simply apply a constant pressure.

After thirty seconds of massaging either sternocleidomastoid, allow the muscles to relax for a further thirty seconds.

Now, slowly raise the chin until you are looking directly upwards with an aim to stretch the chin and neck.

• Whilst looking towards the ceiling, slowly open and close the mouth by jutting the chin forwards and backwards in slow, one second intervals.

Be especially careful with the chin stretches as overexertion can cause severe pain. If you feel any discomfort stop immediately.

#### 54

#### The 'tongue pull' warm up:

Gruesome fact; the sternocleidomastoid muscles are used when vomiting. They are also the same muscles you need to relax when speaking.

This exercise focuses on relaxing them via internal manipulation rather than external massaging as detailed previously. However, please practice this warm up with caution!

To identify the muscles in question, pretend to slowly and gently dry heave. You will notice when you attempt this, your tongue will naturally

move forward in your mouth and it as at this point your neck will widen slightly as the clavicle muscles push outwards.

◆ If you place your fingers at either side of your voice box during this exercise you will be able to identify how these muscles are being used.

Once you have identified these muscles, practice gently pulling your tongue back into your mouth and holding the muscles open and then relaxing them.

After a minute or so, the muscles in your throat will naturally loosen. You can also vocalise a comfortably pitched hum to aid with relaxation.

✤ If you are practising this correctly, you will also find your diaphragm tenses and relaxes.

#### 55

#### **Relaxing the tongue base and root:**

It is possible to relax the base of the tongue by manipulating the tongue root muscles externally. This method may leave your jaw feeling strange in the first instance, as it is not an area that is often stimulated over extended periods of time.

Rest your head at a relaxed, forward-facing angle.

Grip your lower jaw with your index fingers whilst gently pressing the thumbs underneath the jawline in the fleshy area between your jaw bones. Ensure you keep the mouth closed.

◆ You should feel a hard spot of muscle by the front of the jaw and then a soft spot closer to the neck. Place gentle pressure on this soft spot for thirty seconds.

Whilst attempting this relaxation method, you can also move your tongue around inside your mouth to aid with relieving tension.

#### **Relaxing the masseters:**

The muscles used for chewing, also known as the masseters, are phenomenally powerful. Estimates say the average adult can place upwards of twenty-five kilograms of force on the incisors and ninety kilograms of force down on the molars using these muscles! Anyone who has been bitten by an animal (or human) will testify that a bite can be extremely painful due to the sheer strength behind the jaw. In fact, these muscles are so powerful, two surgeons are often required to manhandle the jaw back into place should it require surgery.

• Open your mouth and using your index and middle fingers (pressed together) find the soft spot on your cheeks between the jawbones.

Apply gentle pressure and massage the masseter muscles in a smal circular motion.

Should you have trouble using your middle and index fingers, it may help to use the palm of your hand or your knuckles.

Repeat this for ten seconds then close the jaw for five seconds and repeat once again for ten more seconds.

Once again this may result in your jaw feeling unusual due to the rarity of stimulating these muscles directly.

## 57

### **Relaxing the temporomandibular muscles:**

The word 'temporomandibular' may be difficult to pronounce but the muscles in question are especially easy to relax! These muscles are also involved in chewing and as such are often overlooked when stretching.

However, they are also easily damaged: you should never apply too much pressure when massaging this area.

Close your jaw and bite down then release.

Run your fingers from the base of your ears till you feel a muscle which protrudes just above the base of your jaw, whilst biting and releasing.

Gently massage these muscles in a circular motion with either your palm or index and middle finger for approximately thirty seconds.

Release and repeat for two minutes or however long you feel necessary.

One again, do not apply too much pressure to this area.

**58** 

#### The WAOW warmup:

Have you ever seen a chimp open its mouth as wide as possible?

When doing so, it almost curls its lips back over themselves until you can see the top of its gums. In this exercise, we shall attempt something similar whilst saying a highly exaggerated 'wow'. This can also be used as an excellent muscle building technique if repeated slowly and steadily for two minutes.

Make a 'W sound' shape by protruding the lips and then making them as round as possible. You may wish to hold this for five seconds and then release to warm up the muscles involved.

Secondly, slowly open your mouth to a large 'A sound' shape. You should aim to be stretching both your jaw and pulling back the muscles either at side of your mouth, once again hold for five seconds then release.

Now, make a large 'O sound' shape; as if you were an opera singer on stage. Once again, hold and release for ten seconds.

Slowly, return to the 'W sound' shape then relax.

Now, say the word 'WAOW' twenty times in a slow and deliberate manner, opening your mouth as wide as possible.

## **59**

## QEQR:

This is an especially simple warmup that exercises the jaw, lips and tongue. It should follow the WAOW exercise and takes no more than two minutes.

✤ Make a 'Q sound' shape by slowly protruding the lips and making them as round as possible. You may wish to hold this for five seconds then release to warm up the muscles involved.

Secondly, slowly open your mouth to a large 'E sound' shape. You should aim to be stretching both your jaw and pulling back the muscles at either side of your mouth. Once again hold for five seconds then release.

Now, make a large 'Q sound' shape again. As always, hold then release.

Slowly, return to the 'R sound' shape by opening the jaw as wide as possible. Hold for a further five seconds, then relax.

Repeat this exercise for as long as you feel necessary. You should also vocalise these sounds from a high to low pitch.

#### 60

#### An exercise to remove throat constriction:

Throat constriction is one of the most common afflictions to hinder speakers. A constricted throat is often frustrating to the speaker as they find their vocal range and pitch is especially limited. This affliction can even continue for days at a time which is especially detrimental to public speakers and voice actors. Thankfully, it is easily remedied through an exercise first attributed to Emil Bhenke, one of the earlier Western scholars of vocal anatomy. Ensure your body is properly hydrated. This is a crucial step.

◆ Slowly recite the sounds "OO – OH – AH".

Purposefully allow the jaw to stretch and then relax with each utterance of the sound.

You will notice it is almost impossible to constrict the throat when saying 'OO', whereas 'OH causes the throat to close slightly and

'AH' results in a tightening of the throat.

♦ Now, slowly recite the sounds "AW – EI – OI".

Once again ensure to allow your mouth and jaw to relax when repeating these sounds.

Repeat this for two minutes or as long as necessary.

61

### **Relaxing your larynx:**

No doubt you will have noticed in the morning your voice is deeper than normal. Often called the 'morning voice', this phenomenon is due to your body being in a state of natural relaxation which causes your vocal cords to lengthen slightly. Many people enjoy this deeper voice yet are disappointed to find their voice becomes higher as the day goes along.

Thankfully it is possible to keep your vocal cords in such a state through daily muscle training.

Smile! You want to produce the largest smile you can possibly muster.

Close your teeth together holding this smile, whilst keeping your lips wide open.

From your lowest possible tone, very slowly slide up to your (non-falsetto) highest tone. Ensure you keep the volume the same at all levels.

✤ If you find the volume drops at a lower tone, you have found the current lowest point you can comfortably vocalize. Attempt to hold the lowest note for a comfortable five seconds.

Repeat step three, only with a wide-open mouth, and repeat al steps, five times.

## 62

### Lip fluttering:

When warming up the voice an often-overlooked area would be the lips. This is an excellent exercise to both warmup the lips and practice your breath control. Many students have found they struggle with this at first (sometimes due to embarrassment) as the movement required is not part of any standard language!

Purse your lips.

Blow air between your lips until they begin to flutter.

Time yourself and see how long you can keep the fluttering going at the same vibratory speed.

When you feel confident in your ability, practice with varying levels of flutter speed and tone.

Then vocalise sounds whilst fluttering your lips (hum and flutter).

♦ Finally, at the end of each flutter, transition your fluttering to vowel sounds such as: "Brrrrrttttt  $\rightarrow$  Iiiiii".

### 63

#### Strengthening the tongue:

In this exercise you will learn just how strong your tongue muscle is. It is important to strengthen the tongue to prevent 'tripping over' it mid speech. By having a strengthened tongue you will also increase your fluency in shifting from different sounds.

Bite down.

Tense the sternocleidomastoid muscles in your neck.

Roll your tongue back into your mouth and attempt to keep it flat.

Now rock your tongue from side to side rapidly, ensuring to keep it folded and flat in the mouth.

✤ If you do this correctly, you will notice that your head will begin to involuntarily rock from side to side due to the power of your tongue muscle stretching down your throat.

Repeat this for ten seconds over the space of one to two minutes several times a day.

✤ Follow with the 'tongue base and root' relaxation exercise detailed earlier to remove any tension generated.

### **64**

## Identifying the diaphragmatic muscles:

It is important you are able to identify the different diaphragmatic muscles used when breathing and speaking. By being able to do so, it will allow you to recognise weaknesses in breath support. One simple way to identify these muscles is to notice the changes when differentiating between an 'sss' and a 'zzz' sound.

Place your fingers at the bottom of your ribs, slightly above your navel.

Vocalise a 'sss' sound and notice how the diaphragm moves as the air is easily expelled.

Now vocalise a 'zzz' sound and notice how the diaphragm tenses slightly. This is due to the 'zzz' sound requiring more diaphragmatic effort to expel the air.

Practice for two to five minutes by saying each letter of the alphabet in a slow and stretched manner.

Notice on how on how with some sounds such as the vocal kick used in creating a 'k' sound, you will feel a staccato push from your diaphragm.
You can use this to easily identify sounds you struggle to vocalise clearly.

### 65

#### **Increasing breath recovery:**

The longer you can speak between breaths, the quicker you will be able to recover your breath. This exercise will not only improve your breath duration but also your breath recovery.

As with the previous exercise, take a natural diaphragmatic breath and vocalise a 'zzz' sound.

Whilst exhaling and vocalising the 'zzz' sound, pay particular attention to the stability of tone. If you find the tone is wavering, this demonstrates weak breath support.

Vocalise the sound until you notice your lungs beginning to become exhausted. For this exercise you wish to be using the full amount of air present. However, be careful not to become lightheaded!

Aim to be able to vocalise the sound for ten, twenty, thirty and if possible, forty seconds. This may take several weeks of daily practice to achieve.

A harder variant of this exercise is to replace the 'zzz' sound with a

'hah' sound. This will often cut your lung capacity by half but is also beneficial for building overall strength.

## Building diaphragmatic core strength:

If you watch old movies closely, you will be able to see the actors'

lower abdomen push and pull when delivering their lines, especially when shouting or adding a strong emotion to their voice. This was to both cater to early microphones and to evoke the days when diaphragmatic core strength was necessary to reach the back of a theatre. For public speaking, core strength is necessary as it allows you to place emphasis on key words or to capture your audience's attention.

Place your fingers above your lower abdomen and say the words

'hoh – hah!' with emphasis.

Feel how your core is pulled in to your body as you do so. This is the diaphragmatic muscle at work at its strongest.

To exercise this muscle, hum a flat toned 'hmm' for two seconds and on the third, vocalise a loud 'hoh!'.

On the second attempt, replace the 'hoh!' with a 'hah!'

Repeat this set for two to five minutes at the most. Then take a thirtyminute break as this can be quite straining on both the diaphragm and vocal cords.

Ensure you do not shout the 'hoh – hah' as this is damaging. You should only say those sounds at a lower, yet emphasised volume.

### 67

### Strengthening the tone of your voice:

Theresa May was made famous not only due to her political choices but also the constant cracking of her voice due to poor tone support. To prevent a similar affliction, try this exercise to focus on improving a strong tone of voice free from wavering notes.

◆ Take a natural diaphragmatic breath.

Hum the sound 'mmm' at a gentle speaking tone.

Pay particular attention to the tone your voice is producing. You should aim to ensure the tone is flat and free from moving up or down in pitch (also known as going sharp or flat in musical terminology).

✤ To improve your tone, ensure you start each hum with a ful diaphragmatic breath.

✤ When humming you will feel your diaphragm collapse as the air eventually runs out. At this point ensure to end each tone at the same volume as you started.

◆ After two minutes of 'mmm' tones, switch to an open-mouthed

'ahh' sound for another two minutes. (This requires stronger tone control and is quite taxing, do not exert your voice).

Practice this exercise for thirty days and you will notice a great improvement in the strength of your vocal tone.

### 68

### Advanced speaking tone strengthening:

Although you may have the air capacity to talk without a breath for fortyfive seconds or more, you may lack the support to keep a strong tone for such a length of time. This exercise allows you to expand upon the previous example by placing specific focus on the diaphragm being tense whilst vocalising.

◆ Take a large diaphragmatic breath.

Vocalise the 'zzz' sound, similar to a bee buzzing, at your natural speaking volume.

Attempt to keep the buzzing sound as flat as possible. You will notice how wavering qualities which were not heard during the previous exercise are now exposed.

• On the second set, replace with a purse-lipped 'v' sound.

Practice holding a flat tone for at least twenty-five seconds.

Repeat for two minutes.

Do not attempt this exercise for more than several minutes at a time due to the stress it places upon the core muscles.

### **69**

#### Strengthening nasal to oral tones:

As mentioned in the previous exercise, this section will strengthen the tones used in nasal – oral words, such as the shift from 'm' to 'other'

in 'mother'.

Gently focus on saying the letter 'm' of 'mother'.

Slowly and deliberately string out the letters of 'mother', so it sounds similar to an exaggeration of 'mah-thah' & 'moh-there'.

Next, lengthen the time between the switch from 'm' to 'other'. If written, it would read 'mmmother'.

Ensure when practicing this exercise you do not allow the tone to waver as outlined on the previous example.

Finish this exercise with five minutes of diaphragmatic pushes where you attack the 'mah' / 'moh' sound at increased speed. Do not shout, simply expel the air forcefully with the diaphragm.

### 70

### **Increasing breath recovery:**

A key factor in confident speech is the control of the breath. Many public speakers often snatch a weak breath whenever they can due to fear of running out of air mid-sentence. To prevent this, you should focus on strengthening the diaphragmatic muscles involved in breath recovery. This is a long process and involves many hours of training and practice but can have monumental benefits in public speaking and in later life. Do not tense your body when attempting this exercise.

✤ You must first be able to identify the difference between a chest breath and a diaphragmatic breath. If you are unsure, review the earlier chapter entitled ' your voice works on air'.

Stand up straight, then tighten your lips as if you had tasted something sour.

Now exhale all the air from your lungs in a gentle stream.

Forcefully inhale as much air as you can through your tightened lips, ensuring to use your diaphragm. You want to be able to hear a loud intake of breath as you do so.

✤ If you find your body shaking slightly as you attempt this, it is normal, as you are exercising underused muscles. However, do not overexert yourself.

Repeat this exercise twenty to fifty times, spaced throughout the day.

71

### Speaking on the exhale:

One common problem speakers face is expelling almost all air in the first few words and then speaking on the last remaining remnants.

This often results in the speaker's body shaking as they feebly try to finish a phrase. This is a poor habit which has to be unlearned but is thankfully easily rectified.

Ensure you start each statement with a relaxed but full diaphragmatic breath.

✤ You should aim to begin and end each phrase with a similar tonal strength. Do not allow your words to trail-off or produce vocal fry as previously detailed.

If you catch yourself running out of breath, simply pause and breathe.
Speaking at a slow or casual pace should allow for this opportunity.

Placing an emphasis on training the diaphragm to exhale at a controlled rate will substantially improve your breath control.

Ensure to keep your speech at a similar volume throughout the phrase as an increase in volume often requires and increased amount of air.

The exercise on '*pinning a tissue to the wall with your breath*' would also be exceptionally beneficial for improving your breath control.

# 72

## **Preventing hesitation:**

Take a breath and then read this sentence aloud. Did you perhaps go ' breathe – hold – read'? This micro-holding of breath often induces a moment of hesitation, which can in turn cause you to question what you were going to say. Now this isn't to say you shouldn't think before speaking! Occasionally a pause before speaking is necessary, especially when considering complex topics or attempting to hold back strong emotions. However, the constant holding of breath before speaking on lesscrucial topics can eventually become a hinderance as it allows for doubt to set into your mind.

Focus on paying attention to any hesitation you place between breaths.

Self-investigate why you hesitate before making a statement. Is it because you have been harshly criticised in the past for your words?

If this is the case, although it is difficult, reassure yourself that not everyone is as ignorant or abusive as those who have insulted you previously.

• Wholeheartedly believe people want to hear what you have to say.

Often people enjoy listening to your point of view or opinion, which is exactly why they are speaking with you!

✤ Meditation, wherein you focus solely on the breath naturally entering and then leaving the body is also an especially beneficial exercise to remove hesitation. Fast your mind by ignoring any images that form and focus only on the breath.

## 73

### **Taming rapid speech:**

To ensure your audience is able to hear you clearly, you must first speak at a speed they can follow. Practice this exercise to tame your speaking speed if you find yourself rushing when talking.

Create a short phrase which contains both a mixture of multiple and monosyllabic words for this exercise. The phrase 'Happy Birthday to you, Elizabeth' is a perfect example.

Stretch every syllable and aim to make the phrase last for 8, 10, 12, 15 and then 20 seconds without air gaps between the words. It may sound a little silly at some point but continue regardless.

Slowly and deliberately string out the letters with exaggerated mouth shapes and movements. You want to treat them as if they were made from rubber and were being stretched as long as possible.

It may feel uncomfortable at first as you are training muscles you don't normally use. If you have a speech to deliver, practice it using this technique. If possible, record yourself speaking and focus on any parts where you found your speaking speed to have increased.

74

## **Pressure-build speaking:**

This is a particularly strange exercise people often find embarrassing, but it works wonders for deepening and relaxing the voice!

Close your mouth and inflate your cheeks for five seconds.

Release the air and repeat this with increasing amounts of pressure.

Now begin to inflate your cheeks whilst vocalising a low tone, keeping the mouth tightly closed. A high-pitched tone does not provide the same effect.

✤ You should aim to inflate the cheeks with a vocalised tone for approximately three seconds before releasing the air.

✤ With each inflation, attempt to lower the tone of your voice till it reaches a comfortable bottom range.

♦ You may need to clear your throat after this exercise as it also frees trapped mucus in the throat linings.

As with all exercises, do not over-exert your voice. Once you reach the bottom of your vocal range, do not attempt to push past it as you will only damage your voice.

75

## Strengthening the glottis:

The glottis is a tiny opening above and below the vocal cords.

Unlike the similarly named 'epiglottis' which prevents food from passing down the windpipe, the glottis is responsible for the formation of sounds via expansion and contraction. It is also one of the most easily damaged areas of the vocal mechanism due to 'glottal stops' or 'glottal attacks' as mentioned in the earlier chapter on *common vocal problems*. Practicing this exercise for two minutes will help strengthen control of the glottis.

Pronounce the word 'up!' with emphasis, do not shout, simply imaging calling out to someone.

Now whisper the letter 'u' three times but with the same emphasis as if calling out to someone.

Immediately after whispering, sing the word 'Ahh' at your normal singing or speaking tone.

Repeat this exercise with the word "Ohh" replacing 'Ahh' after one minute.

✤ You should aim to feel the sensation of the glottis tightening when whispering the 'u' sound and relaxing when saying 'ahh'.

Up! u, u, u Ahh~

(spoken) (whispered) (sung)

**76** 

#### Slow exhale and inhale:

A mastery of speech and breath requires you to be able to breath at a paced rate tailored to whatever you have to say. Breathing in order of difficulty from easiest to most demanding is as follows: 1. Inhale slowly, exhale quickly.

2. Inhale slowly, exhale slowly.

3. Inhale quickly, exhale slowly

Therefore to train both your diaphragm and the lungs on exhale and inhale strength:

Take a normal diaphragmatic breath through the nose.

◆ Allow the air to exit through your mouth as slowly as possible.

You should aim for a minimum of thirty seconds. After two minutes of practice switch to another breathing style.

✤ You may find you are unable to expend all the air at an especially slow rate before feeling uncomfortable, this suggests you already have an extensive lung capacity and would benefit from slow inhalation and quick exhalation.

Do not allow yourself to become light-headed at any point!

## 77

## Preventing dropping sounds and voice trail-off:

If you find your voice becomes weaker at the end of a sentence or your voice is trailing off due to an insecurity of the matters being discussed, you may lose credibility amongst your audience. A voice trail-off can also lead to a lack of impact amongst your audience as they will expect you to emphasise both the key and final point. Attempt this exercise to prevent dropping sounds and voice trail-off:

Ensure you start each phrase with a confident diaphragmatic breath through either the nose or mouth.

Use effective pauses to take necessary breaths. By utilising these pauses, you can ensure you have the breath available to carry your message effectively.

Unless emphasising a key word, ensure the amount of breath exhaled on the first word is the same as exhaled on the final word. Start each phrase on a mid-range pitch, which will allow for your voice to drop to a deeper pitch when finishing the statement.

Starting at a low pitch will only induce detrimental vocal fry.

Ensure you open your mouth slightly wider than normal when saying the final word. This will subconsciously empower your voice.

78

## **Preventing vocal fry:**

Vocal fry is a croaking of the voice when speaking. It is often misidentified as the gravely tone produced by chain-smokers and heavy drinkers which has resulted in damage to the vocal cords.

Vocal fry is actually caused by a near total lack of breath support, which causes the vocal cords to vibrate at the slowest rate possible for the speaker. This generates a deep but rough tone that sounds harsh and unrefined. In the research paper '*Vocal Fry May Undermine the Success of Young Women in the Labour Market*', Anderson and Venkatachalam (2014) found the phenomenon of vocal fry was especially common in American teenage girls and ultimately linked vocal fry to worsened career prospects.

It is therefore important that you prevent vocal fry from affecting your voice.

Ensure you breathe diaphragmatically when speaking. Vocal fry occurs due to a lack of breath support.

Speak at a natural pitch for your voice. Artificially lowering your voice is not only noticeable by all around you but also induces vocal fry.

✤ When adding a downwards inflection to key words vocal fry can often be induced. Unfortunately, this cannot always be avoided but slightly raising the pitch of those particular words will help.

## Strengthening the palate:

This exercise will enable you to confidently increase the clarity of openmouthed tones that utilise the upper palate such as the shift from 'a'

to 'ahh'.

Whisper the word 'ahh' and notice how the breath leaves the throat effortlessly.

Now whisper the word 'a' but before the word is vocalised, halt the sound and notice how there is a small build-up of pressure at the back of the throat.

◆ The aim is to strengthen the muscles creating this pressure.

In moderate succession recite the words 'ah', 'a', 'ah', 'o'.

♦ When reciting these words, ensure to prevent the 'a' and 'o' from being vocalised. They should be silent due to the pressure of the breath being contained by the palate muscle.

♦ You will notice that the pitch of the palate words 'a' and 'o' will be slightly higher than your normal speaking tone.

✤ You can also try closing the palate and silently reading passages from this book whilst over-enunciating with the tongue, lips and jaw.

Repeat this exercise for two minutes several times a day.

80

## Tip of the tongue:

This is an exercise often practiced by brass instrument players as it allows them to tongue their musical notes in quick succession. It is especially difficult for some people, therefore don't be discouraged if you cannot reach proficiency or you struggle to continue the sound for more than five seconds without faltering in pace.

Gently bite the tip of the tongue between the teeth to make the sound 'th' as in 'the'.

Now attempt to say 'th' as quickly as possible.

Place an accent on the fourth 'th' as thus: Th th th, Th th th th-

Experiment with making the 'th' sound as clear and prominent as possible whilst ensuring to keep the tongue moving at a steady rhythm

Practice also tonging the 'th' sound by placing the tip of your tongue behind your top teeth. You can also alternate to 't' sounds with this positioning.

♦ You can also replace the 'th' sound with the sounds 'P, t, k'.

Some students find this simpler given the ease of switching between these sounds.

## 81

## Whistling:

Although whistling does not directly utilise the vocal cords in the production of sound unless you are skilled enough to talk whilst whistling (known as multiphonics), it is an especially beneficial exercise for the reinforcement and control of both your breathing muscles those involved in the production of speech.

✤ A whistle is produced by the passing of air over a curved tongue which is often propped up slightly behind the bottom teeth. The air is passed through rounded 'puckered' lips.

The tone of a whistle is changed by both the movement of the tongue and the changing of lip diameter. Those with poor enunciation often struggle to whistle due to a lack of mechanical control over their oral muscles and would benefit from practicing.

Whistling fast, independent tones akin to Morse-code is known as

'staccato whistling'. This is especially beneficial for reinforcing the diaphragmatic muscles.

✤ You could also attempt to add *vibrato*, also known as a vibrating tone to your whistling by rapidly moving the tip of the tongue back and forth to aid with strengthening the tongue.

## 82

### The detached tongue:

This is an especially difficult exercise even for the most vocally dexterous of students. It involves the identification and mental detachment of various muscles within the mouth and throat to aid with increasing precise muscular control. Do not be disappointed if you struggle with this exercise as it often takes many weeks to notice progress.

✤ Face a mirror and curl your tongue ensuring the groove goes from root to tip.

Place your finger on the lowest part of your larynx.

♦ Move the tongue back and forth in the mouth whilst curled, noticing how the larynx moves up and down in response.

Now, attempt to curl the tongue from tip to root without allowing the larynx to ascend or descend. Do not move it back or forth.

Mastering this exercise will allow for a quick mental identification of tense muscles in the throat, along with increased fluency when shifting from various sounds. Once again, this is a particularly difficult exercise which even the most experienced students often struggle with.

# 83

**An exercise to strengthen the lungs and diaphragm:** As previously mentioned, having strength behind the lungs and diaphragm is extremely important to producing a strong and pleasant voice. Practice the following exercise twice a day for five minutes, once at night and once before retiring to bed for the most beneficial results.

This is the most strenuous exercise in this book and should not be attempted without caution, especially for those recovering from surgery of any kind.

Create a fist and put the opening by your thumb to your mouth.

Relax your fist slightly and take a sharp intake of breath through your closed fist. You should feel quite a bit of resistance.

Try to fill your lungs completely within three seconds, ensuring to use a diaphragmatic breath. If you are struggling release your grip slightly.

• With a strong exhale, blow out all the air through your hand.

Repeat this process for five minutes.

(Should you find yourself becoming light-headed at any point, take a break immediately!)

## 84

**Warm down by sighing to relax the jaw and throat:** Sighing is an excellent warm down method. It allows for the voice to relax and unwind any tension that may have been generated by both overexertion or poor form.

✤ For this exercise when you sigh, you should not aim to produce a breathy sound but to naturally allow the breath to be forced out of your lungs by the

strength of your diaphragm alone.

✤ If you do this correctly by fully relaxing the lungs, diaphragm and voice you should produce a strong 'hahhhhhh' sound that descends in pitch.

The amount of breath used in creating this sound is in tune with the natural vibration rate of your vocal cords. Your voice should not be forced to be higher or lower pitch than what is natural.

✤ You can also reinforce this warmup by holding onto a strong tone for as long as possible. Aiming for a minimum of twenty thirty seconds is more than achievable with practice.

## 85

## RECAP

Enunciation and breath control are the key aspects that will grant you a stronger voice. Both these strengths will enable you to capture the attention of a wider audience, and by this measure people will often give you more of their time if you can keep them interested in your every word.

Daily practice therefore is the key to vocal proficiency.

Ensure that your body is hydrated.

Speak slowly; it is very difficult to speak well when you are firing off syllables at machinegun rate.

Ensure to complete your favoured warm up exercises each morning and each evening.

Try stretching slowly and exaggeratedly the shapes vocalizing A, E, I, O, U for a couple of minutes after waking. Doing so will both improve your pronunciation and loosen the muscles necessary for proper diction during the day.

Recite tongue twisters once you reach sound formation fluency.

You will find a selection near the end of this book.

Avoid glottal attacks as these can damage your vocal cords within five minutes of daily speech.

Practice whispering. The quieter you can whisper a phrase whilst making it legible the more clarity there is to your diction. However, be sure to not practice this for more than a few minutes each hour, as whispering puts a large amount of strain on your vocal cords.

## 86

String your words out for as long as possible. Take the phrase

'Happy Birthday to you, Elizabeth' and try and stretch each syllable.

You should aim to make this last for twenty seconds without gaps between the words.

✤ When forming words ensure to enunciate with the entire mouth, especially the lips. The late Richard Burton, arguably one of the finest speakers of the English language was a master at this technique and his works are worthy of observation.

✤ You naturally breath through your nose when at rest and you should aim to continue to do so even when taking a diaphragmatic breath if possible.

✤ Investigate as to what words you struggle with. Some struggle with words beginning with w's, other's p's. Therefore, you should focus on those particular sounds. I once had a student who struggled with the sound 'ng'. I therefore had her recite: rising and leaping, sinking and creeping, swelling and sweeping, showering and springing, etc... to great benefit.

You must believe in yourself for your audience to also believe in you. Only once you have sold yourself on an idea will your audience be also interested in what you have to say. You will never improve unless you practice. Innate skill you have naturally; talent is only developed by spending hours upon hours improving your capability.

✤ Remember that some of history's greatest speakers were once afflicted with stammers, stuttering issues and all manner of troubles with the voice. They overcame these maladies by years of effort and an earnest desire to improve.

## 87

The purchase of a spirometer (also known as a 'peak flow meter') is not necessary but will allow you to clinically measure your improvement with regards to lung capacity.

#### 88

### **ENUNCIATION AND ARTICULATION**

### **EXERCISES**

There is no one true way to articulate a specific word, and any tutor who advises otherwise will soon find the passage of time will leave their work antiquated and forgotten.

British and American readers will eagerly dispute the pronunciation of many of the specific examples which follow. However, this work is not a pronunciation dictionary and these exercises should be regarded not as a specific set of rules, but a tool to improve your current muscular and vocal skills. They should be undertaken every day for as long as necessary until you notice permanent improvement. For some speakers this may be a period of weeks, some months and others possibly years.

Improving articulation and enunciation can be a lifelong journey.

However, it should always be enjoyable. No amount of persistence in learning will suffice should you not enjoy your moments of study. If you find you are becoming frustrated with a certain sound, take a break for a few days and with a fresh mind attempt the exercises once again until you notice an improvement.

I would personally recommend you follow these exercises in the order printed and then identify any personal weak points. Only then should you focus on that particular exercise. If you are diligent, you should expect a noticeable improvement over a four-week period. However, it is important that during everyday speech you do not start to over-emphasize words as this will sound strange to your listeners. Nor should you ever correct another individual's enunciation or pronunciation without permission as this will only serve to irritate the listener. What is important is to maintain a gentle concentration on your speech habits and to keep note of any laziness of the tongue or the dropping of certain sounds.

If you are unable to position your tongue in the exact manner described, do not worry: this is a common problem due to the unique nature of the variation between individual anatomies. Find the position most comfortable to you which produces the clearest and most distinct sound described and then reinforce the enunciation via practice.

Another important note; it is not necessary to understand the meaning of all the following words. Many have been taken from antiquity to provide a comprehensive list to practice with and some of the more archaic words may not be part of your daily vocabulary unless you are a

#### 89

Shakespearian actor or English literature student. Regardless, all these words should be practiced as the sound involved in their vocalisation reinforces muscular control. You may find at first the pronunciation of certain common words may sound strange — this is once again your body attempting to override past poor habits. Secondly, by working through this text you will not only increase your speaking ability but also your vocabulary. It should be an enjoyable learning experience!

#### **Important notes:**

The drill concerning ' g' on page 107 should receive frequent attention given the strain it puts on the tongue and rear oral muscles.

Native speakers of English should also pay attention to the drill on '*st*' on page 112 as this causes a large number of problems. The word 'wrists' is a prime example due to the shift from the consonant '*t*' to the consonant '*s*'.

Also, pay close attention to ensuring you do not drop the final consonant as that is one of the more common faults and is especially detrimental to clear speech. For example: the phrase 'to have known mercy' can become

'to have no mercy'!

For native speakers of Asian languages the drill on ' *th*' on page 141

would be of particular benefit to aid with pronunciation improvements.

It is often beneficial to use visualisation when practicing.

Therefore keep this image in your mind: imagine you are attempting to communicate with someone who is deaf and only capable of reading your lips. This will remind you to exercise the muscles involved and overemphasise some particular movements in a slow fashion. Be wary of turning '*-ness*' into '*-niss*' or '*nss*' (*bleakness*), '*-tion*' into '*shin*' or '*shn*' (*elocution*) and '*ed*' into '*id*' (*carried*). Consultation on the chapter concerning '*difficult sound combinations*' on page 145 address this matter extensively.

Furthermore, all speakers should consult the *whispering exercises* on page 157

as they are among the best aids to clear enunciation. However, this kind of drill should not be prolonged as it is fatiguing and over-repetition may damage your vocal cords.

Finally, you may have a particular voice or person in mind you wish to imitate on a daily basis. I would advise you to not attempt this as quite simply, your voice is unique. You will never be able to speak as well using someone else's voice as you could in comparison to your own. Be proud of your voice – no-one else has one like it.

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## **KEY TO PRONUNCIATION**

Long a
= ā as in
fāce
Half-long <i>a</i>
= ā as in
surfāce
Short <i>a</i>
= ă as in
făct
Obscure short <i>a</i>
= ă as in
ă ffect
Italian <i>a</i>
= ä as in
fär
Intermediate <i>a</i>

= å as in

åfter

Obscure intermediate a = a as in a fire Broad *a* = ã as in cãll Long *e* = ē as in bē Half-long *e* = ē as in bēgin Short *e* = ĕ as in bĕg Obscure short *e* = ĕ as in basemĕnt Neutral *e* = ě as in bakĕr

Long i
= ī as in
fīne
Short <i>i</i>
= ĭ as in
fĩn
Long o
= ō as in
bōne
Half-long o
= ō as in
ōbey
Broad o
= ô as in
bôarder
Short o
= ŏ as in
bŏnnet
Obscure short <i>o</i>
= ŏ as in

c ŏ nnect

Doubtful o

= õ as in

lõng

Long oo

 $= \overline{o}\overline{o}$  as in

bōōt

Short oo

= ŏŏ as in

bŏŏk

# 91

Diphthong oi

= oi as in

boiling

Diphthong ou

= ou as in

bound

Long *u* 

=  $\bar{u}$  as in

mūse

Half-long *u* 

= ū as in

mūsician

Mixed *u* 

= û as in

mûrky

Short *u* 

= ŭ as in

mŭst

Obscure short *u* 

 $= \breve{u}$  as in

circ ŭ s

Diphthongal *ch* 

= ch as in

chair

Hard g

= g as in

get

Nasal *n* 

= ŋ as in

iŋk

Voiceless *th* = th as in thin Voiced *th* = th as in then

92

### Common mistakes to avoid:

The Italian a (ä) as in 'fär' when not followed by an r is often mispronounced. Avoid turning 'balm' into 'barm' or 'calf' into

'carf'.

The short *o* (ŏ) as in 'bŏnnet' is often mistaken for a broad *a* (ô) as in 'all'. Do not mistake 'dog' for 'dawg' or 'often' for 'awfton'.

The long u ( $\bar{u}$ ) is often mistaken for a long *oo* ( $\bar{o}\bar{o}$  or  $\hat{o}$ ). Avoid turning 'lurid' into 'loorid' or 'Tuesday' into 'Tooseday'.

Remember when vocalising these examples it is expected you overemphasise each word and phrase. Do not rush through them; dedicate a short moment to each word and focus on the formation of the sound via studying your own mouth, tongue and lip movements. It is vitally important you do not judge yourself too harshly if you struggle with any of these exercises at first – simply accept how some areas will be easily vocalised and others will take practice. When you struggle with a particular sound it may help for you to speak whilst biting on a wine cork. It should be placed approximately a quarter inch behind your front teeth and held gently enough to stay in place. This will force your jaw to be unable to form the shapes required to vocalise the word, thereby placing an extra emphasis on the tongue and lips. It will also force you to slow down on your vocalisation, thereby adding extra concentration to the formation of sound.

# 93

### The Sound of 'f ' as in 'Beef '

Put the lower lip against the edge of the upper teeth and force the breath out between lips and opening mouth.

turf
wife adrift
proof
calf
scuff
self
grief
wolf
roof scoff
relief
aloof
refuge
strife
deaf

defeat
staff loaf
chaff
off
thief
reef
leaf
waif
skiff stuff
foot
wharf
farm
life
fife
fife chief
chief
chief knife
chief knife cuff

half

scarf

The thief ran off with the fowl.

His wife will scoff at his belief.

The scuff and fife lay on the turf.

The chief held aloft the staff.

Half his life was spent in grief.

Finding himself adrift, he took refuge on the reef.

Offer him the sheaf and the loaf.

The wolf was victorious in the strife.

#### 94

### The Sound of 'v' as in 'Live'

Position as for '*f*' with voice instead of breath.

dive

save

behove

resolve

love

behave

stove

absolve

rove

rave

survive

revolve

reserve

every

derive

heavy

leave

prove

strive

five

heave

dove

connive

bereave

believe

lava

sieve

arrive

twelve

remove

receive

achieve

Resolve to approve the event.

Strive for a decisive victory.

He cannot survive the excessive exposure to cold.

Do you believe that he will revive?

Have ever a desire to live well.

Reserve five out of every twelve.

Remove the sieve from the stove.

I believe the boys resolved to free the doves.

Contrive to reprove in a way that will prove effective.

95

## The Sound of 'p' as in 'Pipe'

Place the lower lip against the upper lip and explode the breath.

rope

trip

hope

turnip

harp

vamp

soap

peep

mishap

group

strap

tiptop

sup

skip

loop

ship

chirp

type

рор

trap

flap

wrap

equip

gap
slip
lamp
people
entrap
creep
shop
роре
lump
whip
leap
clap
chap
sleep
parsnip
sloop
keep
It was proof to the people that the pope was in the ship.
We hope to sup and sleep after our long tramp.

The frost will nip the tops of the turnips and parsnips.

The captain of the ship is asleep.

Make a long loop in the rope or the strap.

The chap held the pen between his lips.

Let us keep the harp forever.

Do not weep at a mishap.

A group stood on the steep hill, ready to entrap the fox.

## 96

## The Sound of 'b' as in 'Rub'

Position lips as for '*p*' with voice instead of breath. Explode the sound with a quick expelling of breath.

babe bribe rib absorb cube babble blab cherub dub barb rubbers daub belief curb member imbibe fibre globe fob noble rhubarb superb garb herb disturb shabby wardrobe The babbling babe was placed in the tub. The noble boy will take no bribe. Salt imbibes moisture from the air. Rub the brass until it is bright. We will not leave the sabre in the cabin. The brown bowl is broken. The behaviour of the boy was beautiful and commendable. The shabby old rubbers are under the wardrobe.

Any member will feel at liberty to leave the club.

The birds were building their nests by the babbling brook.

97

## The Sound of 'm' as in 'Hum'

Position as for '*p*' or '*b*' with the sound forced through the nose.

rim

fame

roam

commend

pilgrim

vim

perform

cream

move

farm

room

tame

mum

thump

reform

numbers

home

torment

loam

blame

dream

grammar comb

diagram

name

succumb

rhyme

conform

time

bomb

form

diadem

come

plum

thyme

inform

The pilgrim will dream of home.

Name and fame do not mean the same.

He will come to the farm in time.

The loom will move with vim.

His thumb was on the rim of the cup.

The bomb burst in the room.

The memory of his home will torment him while he roams.

Some blame, others commend him.

You may diagram a number of sentences from the grammar.

**98** 

### The Sound of 'n' as in 'Man'

Place the tip of the tongue at the base of upper teeth and hum the '*n*' sound through the nose.

knife raven surgeon raccoon fin morn between clean nine

mourn

sardine

green

join

noun

raisin

children

combine

adorn

learn routine

main

thorn

stone

fashion

fine

drown

throne

grown

pain

alone

brown

scorn

crown

coin

borne

govern

The sun will crown the morn.

Combine a noun with a verb.

He bore the pain without a groan.

The burden of much care made him mourn.

We will remove the fin with a fine knife.

Nine or ten men will come then.

He is a person who would adorn a throne.

Fashion should not govern our actions.

A coin was given to each of the children.

The man came alone, and he was un-known.

#### **99**

### The Sound of 't' as in 'Bit'

Position as for '*n*' with explosion of the breath.

tart shout write upset skirt gilt gait excite heart meat basket almost fret strait raft reject boat habit account scarlet

fort

fruit

suggest

invent

shut

current

persist

exult

tent

accident hesitate

elevate

light

movement meditate

patent

Repeat chant after chant.

Fret not your heart.

Don't you upset my boat.

Too much light will affect his sight.

Go straight to our fort and greet him by giving a shout.

Do not hesitate to do right.

Put my hatchet and your basket on our raft.

One student wrote a short account of each event.

His patent came as a result of patient and persistent labour.

#### 100

#### The Sound of 'd' as in 'Bad'

Position as for '*t*' with voice instead of breath.

road load added errand wood bribe forehead dreaded deck cord grand bedding dead ballad

vivid

divided

guide

aboard

morbid

pictured

cloud

word

lucid

discard

lad

salad

answered

multitude

trod

admit

exceed

instead

fade

reward

splendid

slender

feed

obeyed

demand

laundry

The road led through the dark wood.

He will receive a reward if he signs every word of the ballad.

The lad trod the deck and gazed a t the cloud.

A cord of wood is a heavy load.

The dead trees were burned on the hard ground.

He laid his hand on the forehead of young Richard.

The bedding was soon divided among the multitude.

## 101

# The Sound of 'k' as in 'Luck'

Separate the teeth and expel the breath by clicking the tongue.

tick

smoke picnic

bleak

come

dark

kink

Patrick

black

provoke class

creek

make

spike

hillock

quick

track

spark

attack

hemlock

evoke

retake

talk

jerk

mistake

joke

cook clerk kind kick critic speak

The rock broke when struck with the spike.

Do not make the mistake of attacking work.

Black smoke came from the hemlock grove.

Pave the track with dark-red brick.

Come and make the clock tick.

Patrick will cut down some of the muck.

The lark flies high in the azure sky.

The critic will speak to a large class at one o'clock.

#### **102**

## The Sound of 'g' as in 'Nag'

Position as for '*k*' with voice instead of breath.

flag

grey

egg

70 đ
rag
brig
dog
wig
great
give
iceberg clog
bag
drag
vague dregs
colleague
beg
agog
gig
mug
vogue
frog
frigate
wag
bug

drug

catalogue

ground

begin

befog brag

leg

The brig struck an iceberg one league away.

I beg you to give me the flag.

The catalogue will be found in the bag.

A vague glimpse through the grey fog began.

The frigate was lost in the fog.

The egg will be placed in the mug.

The rogue will gag his victim when the others have gone.

The frigate was lost in the fog.

The dog could not reach the frog under the log.

#### 103

#### The Sound of 'l' as in 'Fowl'

Place the tip of the tongue against the upper gum and flick downwards whilst speaking.

hotel

bell

initial

malice

smile

still

trivial

article

furl

roll

critical

mantel

trail

dwell coral

chisel

jail

marshal people

removal

light

allows piecemeal

conceal

boil

appal animal shovel until gilt kennel waddle wool chenille criminal control The bell will peal and the thunder roll. He will dwell at the hotel until fall. The trail led to the jail. A smile is always better than a scowl. The jewel shone by the light in the hall. The criminal tried to conceal a chisel and a shovel. The martial array will appal the people. They will assail the man in an article full of malice. The bright light came from a lamp on the low mantel. 104

The Sound of 's' as in 'Sad'

Send the breath through the closed teeth with a hissing sound.

seem

loss niece firmness peace faults fierce excess sense boldness advice brass this cease stress space glass pierce bless horse

guess gladness tense oppress yes else miss slice pass message lattice slice dress preface malice sentence speed remiss kindness reverse

Place some stress on the word 'guess'.

Will you pass the glass to me? Yes!

They feel the loss of your firmness and kindness.

This would be a false test of speed.

The last fruits are the sweetest.

Cease to give advice about the message.

Outside the office stood a horse.

The swift messenger had made a grievous mistake.

Cease from malice; do only kindness.

Her niece noticed her gladness.

#### 105

#### The Sound of 's' as in 'Nose'

Position as for 's' in 'sad' with voice instead of breath.

prize

blaze

because

baths

does

gaze

president

paths

please

those

confuse

tears

result

breeze excuse

cheese

was

easy

preside

amaze

phrase

trapeze wisdom

honours

reason

visit

husband

dozen

lose

freeze

herdsman

loaves

Does the prize please you?

The breeze will make the fire blaze.

The boys chose a dozen loaves.

The president presided wisely.

The result of the trails for honours was known at the close.

He holds to the trapeze by his teeth.

Close the windows, or the flowers will freeze.

The herdsman was always praised for his wisdom.

There was reason for his visit.

#### 106

## The Sound of 'r' as in 'Rough'

Place the tip of the tongue toward the roof of the mouth and the back of the upper gums. Then pout the lips. Force the breath through the aperture made.

The tongue vibrating produces a rolled ' *r*'.

rope compare perish emery roll before future emerge far stir creature

orator

here

turn

verdure

narrator

blur

write moisture

error

hour

raise

rapture

creditor

bore

raspberry venture

mirror

start

ravine

emerald

corrupt

The grass is green.

Roll the coil of rope.

This work will not compare with that done before.

In an hour we shall see the start.

Beware! The rapids are below you.

The orator stood in the arbour at the corner.

He will recite and write in the future.

The error of the clerk caused horror among the creditors.

The creature ventured into the ravine.

#### 107

# The Sound of 'j' or 'g' as in 'Judge'

Position as for '*d*', voicing the combination '*djh*'.

margin

fragile

refuge

nudge

barge

junior

frigid

surge

join

journal

region

dungeon

merge

giant

budge

gently

large

major

regent

engine

discharge

jam

gypsy

jolly

oblige

germ

gymnast

journey

gem January coinage misjudge jump jaundice dodge unjoin George June aged rejoice John will jump from the barge to the shore. He will discharge George. They will join him on the journey. The gem is fragile, but it is large. The journal has a wide margin. The aged gypsy was sent to the dungeon. The joyful junior wore jewels of jade. The major rejoiced that the giant was paid in January. The jolly man was formerly a gymnast. We were in that frigid region in June. 108

The Sound of 'h' as in 'Harp' or 'Help'

Separate the teeth widely, smile and force the breath forward. harp hard harness rehearse held hew half inherent hill hide hazel unhinge home ha! ha! heal unheard her had hand behave

hood

heat

harm

apprehend

hurt

herring hammock

hinder

horn

hair

haggard

OceanofPDF.com

wholly

hum

heavy

hideous

heaven

Her home is halfway up a hill.

Harry heard hoofs of horses striking hard on a road.

He kept his had on his head while he was in his hut.

Hunters' horns were heard from hill to hill.

He has hurt his hand on a hedge.

A halter and harness were hanging on a large hinge of a door.

Her heavy hair hung halfway to her waist.

Henry did not apprehend his danger.

#### 109

#### The Sound of 'bs' as in 'Clubs'

Explode the breath after the shift from '*b*' to '*s*'.

fibs

ribs

verbs

fobs

clubs

lobes

cabs

describes

snobs

cubes

globes

shrubs

rubs

robes

orbs

garbs

cobs

globes

knobs

inscribes

tubs

crabs

gibes

chubs

cribs drubs tribes snubs barbs grubs imbibes throbs curbs slabs hubs proscribes disturbs tubes daubs dubs He curbs the playfulness which disturbs him. The men in the tribes are armed with clubs. The tubs are hidden in the shrubs.

The painter daubs the hubs of the cabs.

'Inscribes' and 'proscribes' are used only as verbs.

He describes the garbs of the tribes.

The globes are as large as the cubes.

She rubs the knobs with oil from the tubes.

The robes were hidden under the slabs.

## 110

## The Sound of 'ds' as in 'Clouds'

Position as for 'd' voicing the combination 'dz'.

lads

goods abodes

heads

clouds

boards succeeds

herds

floods

eludes creeds

swords

tides

woods gilds

fluids

words beholds yards frauds worlds birds moods spreads beads loads ballads blades The best grades of goods are on these two sides.

The best grades of goods are on these two sides.

Herds of cattle wandered from the roads into the woods.

He reads the clouds, floods and tides.

Hoods are worn by the maids on the sleds.

He succeeds in levelling the yards round their abodes.

The blades of the swords are tarnished by the fluids.

In such moods she sang the words of the ballads with expression.

The birds fill the woods with melody.

He boards the boat before it glides down the stream.

The clouds burst over their heads.

## 111

# The Sound of 'ps' as in 'Maps'

Explode the breath after the shift from ' $p$ ' to ' $s$ '.
caps
chops
envelopes
shops
laps
pumps grasps
usurps
trips
lamps
gapes
maps
ropes
stops
escapes
gossips
keeps
loops
lips

reaps

perhaps

soaps

tips

entraps

steps

hopes

slips

stoops

crops

capes drops

leaps

relapse

collapse limps

flaps

We caught a glimpse of the caps and the wraps on the steps.

Perhaps he stops to light the lamps.

No malice escapes from the lips of the gossips.

He hopes the crops will be heavy.

The envelopes and maps are in the shops.

The wind flaps the ropes against the pumps.

He leaps from the window and drops to the ground.

He grasps the whips by the loops.

The words 'reaps', 'leaps' and 'flaps' end like the word 'keeps'.

# 112

# The Sound of 'st' as in 'Wrist'

Push the breath after the shift from '*s*' to '*t*'. Care should be taken to give each letter its full and distinct sound.

fist strangest ghosts insists post nests cost resists ghost greatest hosts feast masts frosts

thirst

streets

twist

wrists

posts

subsist

joists

truest

burst

desists

insist

finest

divests

abstain

guests

largest

exhaust

digest

Request them not to give up the contest without protest.

His hunger and thirst made the repast a feast.

A host of the savages burst in upon the almost exhausted men.

It was stated that most of the guests had granted his requests.

They breast the wildest, fiercest blast.

"Amidst the mists and coldest frosts,

With barest wrists and stoutest boasts,

he thrusts his fists against the posts

And still insists he sees the ghosts."

Curt Siodmak (Donovan's Brain).

#### 113

#### The Sound of 'sh' as in 'Ash'

Come close to biting the teeth, place the tongue at the top of the palate then expel the air in a strong stream.

dash rash lavish shameful rush sham shine cherish sheet

trash

crush

should

dish

wash bush

finish

flush

ship

shelter

shoulder

shelf

sharp shark

childish

crash

shepherd slush

brushes

shall

flash

splash

shellfish

refresh

sheep fiendish

selfish

nourish

bishop brownish

impoverish

The dish fell from the shelf with a crash.

A dash of rain will refresh the earth and nourish the plants.

We will cherish the wish.

Polish will make the shelf shine.

The old shepherd sought shelter for his sheep.

They hear the crash of thunder and see the flash of light.

A lavish use of water will wash away the brownish hue.

The ships were surrounded by sharks.

And he shall be their shepherd.

#### 114

## The Sound of 'ng' as in 'Song'

A nasal sound made by placing the tongue at the top of the palate.

sting

meaning

breathing

belong

strengthening

awning

clang

stocking

worrying

gong

roaming

incurring

"Rising and leaping,

Sinking and creeping,

Swelling and sweeping,

Showering and springing,

Flying and flinging,

Writhing and ringing,

Eddying and whisking,

Spouting and frisking,

Turning and twisting,

Around and around

With endless rebound!

Smiting and fighting,

A sight to delight in;

Confounding, astounding!"

The Cataract of Lodore by Robert Southey.

115

## The Sound of 'x' as in 'Flax'

Position as for '*eh*', voicing the combination '*eh*`*kss*'.

flax

lilacs

boxes

appendix

backs

relax

convex rooks

larks

stocks barracks

mocks

wax

oxen

antics

locks docks except tacks knocks flocks creaks Arctic's attacks looks bricks wrecks books ducks sacks racks vex marks hoax blocks prefix She shakes the sticks and strikes them on the bricks. Under the oaks are flocks of ducks.

All the oxen except one are loaded with packs of flax.

An earthquake shakes the docks.

"Six thick thistle sticks".

The barracks were built of bricks.

The larks sang in the lilacs on the boarder of the lakes.

Words like 'antics', 'Arctic's', and 'lilacs'.

When she speaks, she vexes nobody.

## 116

## The Sound of 's' as in 'Vision'

Place the tongue at the top of the palate and curl slightly. The sound should cause the tongue to vibrate slightly.

vision rouge azure allusion pleasure confusion seclusion division exposure decision incision profusion treasure precision

expression illusion

composure

usual

revision

adhesion

leisure

explosion

declaration elision

effusion

measure

usury

cohesion

enclosure

provision

infusion

delusion

At their leisure they looked at the treasure hidden within the enclosure.

They worked with their usual decision and composure.

He made careful provision to avoid an explosion.

In conclusion they made allusion to the division of the treasure.

The division of the people created much confusion.

Look up and learn the meaning of 'adhesion' and 'cohesion'.

The revision of the book required great precision.

The illusion gave him pleasure.

117

# The Sound of 'wh' as in 'What'

Slightly contract the lips into a circle and force the breath through them as if saying '*hwa*'.

whale

whisper whinny

whirl

wheat

whistle whence

what

wharf

whither whereby

whelp

why

whisk whippoorwill

wheel

whit

whine whimper wheeze whim whether when whet which whiff meanwhile whittle Why do you whistle, whisper, and whine? They saw the whale while they were standing on the wharf. Which has he, a whip or a whisk? The wheel turns with a whirl. Whither does his whim lead him? Meanwhile, wheel the cart wherever you wish. Whether the wheat is good, is the only question, and not whence it came. The horse whinnies when he nears home. In a whisper he asked whether I heard the note of the whip-poor-will. 118 The Sound of 'gs' as in 'Begs'

Similar to the sound ' *kz*'.

bags

brigs legs

bogs

slugs

rugs mugs

pegs

hogs

crags digs

wags

gigs

logs tugs

figs

begs

pigs hugs

twigs

drags

hags rigs

flags

gags

clogs dogs

wigs dregs nags lags kegs jugs sags frogs hags pugs tags bugs fogs She begs him for a basket of figs. Many flags were placed on the brigs. The dog's forelegs were white. The contents of two kegs will fill twenty jugs. The mugs were packed in bags. The rags hung on the pegs. The bugs were crawling over the logs and the twigs. The dogs that he brought were pugs. The crags were obscured by the fogs. The cogs of the wheel are broken.

## 119

## The Sound of 'ch' as in 'Such'

Explode the breath as one distinct sound. The tongue should be placed at the front of the top teeth.

latch
pitch
reach
thatch
crutch
starch
which
stretch
clutch
wrench patch
pinch
rich
wretch bleach
blotch
much
hatch
flinch

clinch fetch match stitch catch botch sketch Dutch inch touch preach witch orchards arch hitch perch scratch church search twitch merchant The merchant soon became rich. Do not touch the sketch. For how much will he bleach the hat? Let us search for apples in the orchard.

Fetch the starch and a match.

The Dutch soldiers did not flinch.

I will do your stitching and patching.

Can you reach to the top of the arch?

She will sketch the hills that stretch in the distance.

#### **120**

#### The Sound of 'a' as in 'Fāce'

Draw back the lips with an open mouth. Should have a familiar sound to that of ' *ay*'.

cāge gāve

frāil sāme

rāil māke

lāne āim

tāme

jāil wāit clāy lābor

lāthe sāve fāte creāte

clāim

rāisin bāit

pāid

bāse

wāges dāisy fāce āche māde plāte blāme māte fāith nāme spāde snāil bāke prāise sāy wāde Āpril cāne dāme cāve crādle opāque sāfe

#### grāy

māin bāil

The raisins came from Spain.

We will wait until you bring the bait.

Place the praise where it belongs.

You do right in claiming your wages.

He will be sent to jail if he does not procure bail.

We waited patiently, knowing we were safe.

The strangers were well repaid for their behaviour.

The matron waited to receive the aged patient.

#### 121

## The Sound of 'a' as in 'Făct'

A short and curt glottal sound made by smiling with the lips and a flattened tongue.

glād sănk hănd căli cāncel lămb lănd

dăsh	
răbid	
cāptive	
ănd	
bāde	
spăn	
tălly	
cāmel	
crăg	
hăck	
flăg	
hăve	
bărrel	
săsh	
răng	
lăsso	
cătch	
rāpidly	
drăb	
hăth	

bădge căbin scātter dămp plăn măn trăvel scrātch thăt cămp ănimăl chāpel lādder The hack is backed by the span of fine horses. That old man has muslin's and calicoes.

When the new flag rose, the camp rang with cheers.

The barrel rolled rapidly into the corner of the cabin.

According to plan they dashed into the enemy's ranks.

We will catch the cattle with lassos.

The captives camped in the valley.

I am glad that he received the badge of honour.

The camel will travel rapidly through the sandy desert.

# 122

# The Sound of 'a' as in 'Fär'

A long and sustained sound made by smiling with the lips, less glottal than  $\check{a}$ .

härd
stär
färm
cärgo
färce
cälm
cärd
lärk
äre
chärge
yärd
chärt
ärch
märk
spärse

därt
älms
cärt
bärs
pärticle
spärk
lärd
chärm
färther
bärn
härm
härp
tärt
märvel
stärt
cälf
scär
ärdor
märsh
bälm

därk

cärpet

gärden

embärk

smärt

The cart did no harm to the arch.

The larks are by the marsh.

She works hard on the farm.

We are charmed with your barn.

In the darkness darting stars were seen.

The sweet harp sounded through the calm night.

The marshy countries were only sparsely settled.

The carpet burned by sparks from the yard.

They started through the garden to the barn.

My calf darted into the marsh.

## 123

## The Sound of 'a' as in 'Cãll'

A long and sustained sound made by opening and rounding the mouth and lips.

wãll

cãll

hãwk
ãlmost
wãter
sãw
wãrd
wãrm
strãw
chãlk
bãlk
wãrp
sãlt
wãrn
dãwdle
gnãw
drãw
fãll
pãltry
rewârd
dãwn
bãll

fãlter
flãw
squãlly
wãlk
thãw
lãwyer
cãuldron
lãwn
clãw
gãll
rãw
hãlter
smãll
fãwn
hãlt
swārm
wãrble
Bãltic
The lawyer halted on the lawn.
Use small have balled by the wall

His small horse balked by the wall.

They were almost upset by the squall.

Do not fall into the water.

We saw the swarm of bees on our walk.

The lawn will be watered before dawn.

The old man refused the call.

The tall young soldier never returned from the war.

Warm water filled the cauldron.

While walking by the Baltic he saw the fawn.

#### 124

## The Sound of 'e' as in 'Bē'

Place the tongue at the top of the mouth and curl the tip down towards the front teeth.

shē hēat dēal concēdē shēēp rēap fēar kēēp lēgal shiēld

sēal

dēēm

chiēf

compētē

slēēt

fēēd

pēal

ēasily

agrēē

pēacē

sēat

dēēp

stēēp

swēēt

cēdar

thēsē

ēast

lēavē

sēason

slēēp

wēēd

sēēd

hērē

procēēd

mēans

lēan

ēach

ēvil

griēvē

accēdē

Our east room has too much heat.

I deem it easy to plant these seeds deep.

He has means for keeping sheep.

Weeds grow thick here this season.

Sweet sleep will cheer thee.

I fear he has no cheap seats.

We agreed to keep our proceeds.

He hears that she will compete.

We need to proceed to eat our meal.

A treaty of peace will please all.

125

# The Sound of 'e' as in 'Bĕg'

A medium length sound made by smiling and saying '*eh*'. Place the tongue at the front of the bottom teeth.

bĕst
tĕxt
kĕpt
instĕad
bĕlfry
wĕnt
mĕss
yĕllow
mĕtal
tĕnt
hĕlp
wĕst
drĕad
stĕalth
mĕsh
dĕa

whĕn
jĕalous
friĕnd
bĕll
jĕst
dĕath
lĕngth
thrĕad
gĕt
lĕft
rĕady
rĕady brĕadth
-
brĕadth
brĕadth dĕpth
brĕadth dĕpth nĕck
brĕadth dĕpth nĕck wĕpt
brĕadth dĕpth nĕck wĕpt cĕllar
brĕadth dĕpth nĕck wĕpt cĕllar mĕant
brĕadth dĕpth nĕck wĕpt cĕllar mĕant sĕnd

dĕaf

ĕffort

vĕssĕl

sĕt

Our old sexton rang that bell without any help.

I was almost yellow with jealousy.

I dread to tell you what I meant.

Our cellar will vary in length, breadth, and depth.

Do not jest with your friends.

This thread was sent to mend our tent.

Our friend wept when you left.

Ten dreadful men meant to get in by stealth.

Ned went to help and did his best.

Let us send vessels full of wood instead of bars of metal.

## **126**

## The Sound of 'i' as in 'Fīne'

A medium length sound made by smiling, pulling the tongue back and saying

*'eye'*.

hīgh

mīld

līfe		
īsle		
resīde		
nīne		
līne		
dīne		
smīle		
unbīnd		
wīfe		
kīte		
mīnd		
rīval		
devīse		
wīse		
wīld		
sīde		
guīde		
resīgn		
tīde		
fīfe		

traīl
sīze
untwīne
tīme
rīnd
fīnd
remīnd
confīde mīle
pīnt
sīgh
īdea
combīne
nīce
vīle
retīre
heīght
provīde
Make the most of time and tide.
I walked a mile on a wild height, alone, at night.

Untwine the line of the kite from the vine.

Find a guide to conduct us through the mine.

Mind your write to me at the time.

I remind you that the idea may brighten your entire life.

The five boys dived for the dime.

I cannot be resigned to a lonely life on the isle.

Retire at nine that you may rise at five.

I like to climb where they have a climate not too mild.

## 127

#### The Sound of 'i' as in 'Fĭn'

A short glottal sound made by placing the tongue at the top of the mouth and curling the tip down towards the front teeth.

grĭm mĭnt shĭp pĭnch fīlbert trĭp spĭn rĭng skĭllful rĭver kĭng

lĭquĭd

pĭck

dĭstance mĭssed

slĭm

flĭt

trĭm

bĭtters

clĭnch

wĭnd

mĭlk

crĭtĭc

ĭnstant

ĭncĭdent ĭnch

sĭnk

stĭng

mĭsts

crĭmson gĭft

quĭll

cĭty

kĭtchen

lookĭng

thĭs

wĭnk

vĭllage

fĭckle

accĭdent

This beautiful city is on a river.

The wind dissipated the mists.

This milk will be given to the children in the village.

That ship will sink in an instant.

At a distance the sky seemed crimson.

The king bestows many gifts.

This bitter liquid is intended for a tonic.

An ill-looking individual came into the inn in the evening.

Let us visit the mint in Philadelphia.

Try to distinguish the difference between incident and accident.

#### **128**

#### The Sound of 'o' as in 'Bone'

Position as for 'oh'.

bōth
lōne
snōw
hōld
pole
tōrn
hōle
grōw
rōad
ōak
bōne
pōrt
pōst
cōarse
sōfa
fōrth
hōst
tōad
mōte
arōma

cōne

hōme

yōke

sōar

sōda

mōre

glōw

vōcal

gōry

pōstage

zōne

lōaf

flōral

fōliage

fōrm

fōrt

cōax

pōet

swōrd

pōrtrait

The shadow cast by the oaks darkened the road.

The broken yoke caused the accident.

She sees her home near the port.

The sword was under the sofa.

More singers assisted in the chorus.

The score was told before we drove home.

The nose and throat are affected by cold.

The poet sent the postman a portrait.

No bones were broken, but both hands were bruised.

In that zone the foliage was luxuriant.

#### 129

## The Sound of 'o' as in 'Shop'

A short glottal sound with a wide-open mouth and flattened tongue.

dŏll

pŏnd

clŏck cŏmet

lŏzenge

frŏg

shŏp plŏd

ŏfficer

sŏnnet

mŏck lŏdge

hŏt

mödern völley ön flög

fŏlly

pŏcket mŏdest

plŏt

bŏnd

sŏlid cŏmmerce

mŏdel

flŏck

stŏp ŏffer

cŏmic

chŏp

drŏp lŏg

fŏrgŏt

förehead böther dödge döck

hŏnest

ŏstrich fŏrgive

Honesty is the best policy.

The antique shop had modern clocks.

She writes a sonnet on a doll.

The officer stopped on the dock.

A fable was written on the frog and the ostrich.

The honest man plodded onward.

He put the lozenge in his pocket.

We shall be dropped when the ship stops at the dock.

A frog sat on a log in a bog.

He makes honest profits in commerce.

**130** 

#### The Sound of 'oo' as in 'Boōt'

Purse the lips and flatten the tongue.

fōōd

whō

tōōth ballōōn

trōōp

hōōf

rōōf

nōōn

dōing

bōōt

hōōp mōōn

sōōn

remōve

spōōl tōmb

yōu

intō

bambōō

rōōst

lōse

whōse

schōōl lōōm

lōser

rōōm

tōō brōōm

bōōr

spōōn

dōōm

smōōth

mōve

undō

nōōse

prōve

slōōp

glōōm

sōōthe babōōn

The moon may be visible at noon.

Undo the fastenings under the balloon.

Will the food prove sufficient?

The bamboos were smooth.

The roof was removed too soon.

The bamboo chair was placed in whose room?

The troops had improved in discipline.

The foolish baboon sat gazing at the moon.

You will be reproved unless you do well at school.

What are you doing with that spoon?

## 131

## The Sound of 'oo' as in 'Bŏŏk'

A long and sustained sound made by opening and rounding the mouth and lips, similar to '*uw*'.

nŏŏk

cŏŏk

lŏŏk

butcher

pulpit

hŏŏd

bush shŏŏk

fully

stŏŏd

full hush

rŏŏk

bushel

pulley fŏŏt

wŏŏl

pullet

pudding

playful

gŏŏd

push

bŏŏk wŏŏlen

wŏuld

brŏŏk put bull mistŏŏk

shŏuld

hŏŏk cŏuld

tŏŏk

wŏŏdbine

armful tŏŏk

The rook alighted near the woodbine.

The hasty brook would linger in many a pretty nook.

Her playful puss was pulling at the woollen hood.

He mistook the butcher and the cook.

I shook the bush with my foot.

The cook took the pudding and put it a cooking.

The puss sat watching the bushes by the brook.

She took a look at the bookcase.

We put the hooks and pulleys where we could find them.

The hood would have been better if lined with wool.

### 132

## The Sound of 'oi' as in 'Boiling'

Pucker and round this lips whilst curling the tongue.

oil

foil

poise adjoin

boil

soil

join toil

anoint

joiner

coy avoid

coin

Doyle

pointed noise

spoil

noisy

cloister employ

joint

loyal

alley purloin

ointment broil

voice toiler

rejoice

turmoil

point royal

exploit

boiling

appoint coil

ahoy

loiter

boys voyage

soil

annoy

joyful destroy

The boys will avoid making much noise.

He employed us at the appointed time.

We rejoice that she has such a fine voice.

They were loitering near the cloister.

We will join them at a distant point.

The soil requires moisture.

The coin is twenty parts alloys.

The quoit was adroitly poised in the air.

They purloined and destroyed the joiner's saw.

133

# The Sound of 'ou' as in 'Bound'

A medium length sound made by rounding the mouth and saying 'ah-wo'.

loud

ground

recount

flower

flour

vouch

cloud abound

gout

found

vowel thou

noun

scour

devout redound

pout

shout

hour arouse

pound

mound

mount hound

mouth

bough

bounty surround

ounce

proud

count renown

sound

fount

sour round

shroud

rebound about thousand The boughs were placed at the mound.

In an hour the sky was filled with clouds.

The city was surrounded by thousands.

Flowers grew round the fount.

Round the mouth when you sound these vowels.

We will arouse them with shouts.

His renown made his friends proud.

Announce the hour distinctly and rather loudly.

Sixteen ounces make a pound.

## 134

### The Sound of 'u' as in 'Mūse'

Draw the lips back then pucker as if saying '*eww*'.

pūre amūse

hūmor misūse

statūe

hūge

dūty mūsic

būgle

mūtable

dūke refūse

endūe

view

costūme tūbe

cūbe

new

cūticle feūdal

mūle

dūring

excūse mūtiny

obtūse

few

beaūty ūnit

tribūte

dilūte

tūne stūdent

acūte

hūman

compūte fūme

imbūe

cūbic

infūse ūniverse

The new paint is in the short tube.

Few students can compute so rapidly.

The beauty of the statue infused her with new ideas.

He was excused from other duties during the afternoon.

The tones of the bugle were like softest music.

In feudal days the duke paid tribute to his sovereign.

The child was amused by the antics of the mule.

An obtuse angle is greater than an acute angle.

The story was imbued with humour.

# 135

# The Sound of 'u' as in 'Mŭst'

Draw the lips back as if saying '*uh!* ' when hit. bŭt dŭll rŭddy mŭddy hŭbbŭb sŭn flŭtter jŭstice

lovely

mother

dove rŭst

crŭsty

mŭscle

bŭtter drŭm

lŭmp

enoŭgh

some cŭstom

nŭmb

robŭst

yoŭnger rŭdder

stŭbborn jŭmp

bŭff bŭcket

cŭrrent

clŭster

one dŭst

ŭnjŭst

come

trŭmpet dŭsk

tŭmble

sŭllen

cŭstard sŭdden

trŭst

brother

ŭpright cŭtter

The custard and the butter were made by mother.

Suddenly the boat was struck by the current and upset.

The bucket and the cup were rusty.

Training the muscles will help to make robust healthy and a ruddy complexion.

The smuggler will become a just man.

The younger brother repaired the rudder of the cutter.

She will come between sundown and dusk.

The sudden excitement was enough for one summer.

The notes of the trumpet were dull.

### 136

### The Sound of 'ness' as in 'Goodness'

Care should be taken to give  $\check{e}$  instead of  $\check{i}$ .

goodness fitness

coarseness

wilderness

calmness

whiteness

boldness

stillness

clearness

business

darkness

roughness

weakness

lightness

toughness

profuseness

manliness

ghostliness

greatness

kindness

laziness

happiness

gentleness

uneasiness

dizziness

dumbness

comeliness

clumsiness

richness

fineness numbness roundness carelessness idleness smoothness stinginess The boldness of the plan caused some uneasiness. He acted with his usual kindness and gentleness. His fitness and manliness was reflected in his fineness. Scrooge knew nothing but stinginess and selfishness.

Greatness and gentleness are his business.

Her carelessness lead to surprise richness and comeliness.

Happiness is the result of goodness.

137

# The Sound of 'le' as in 'Simple'

Avoid giving *el* for '*l*'.

little

simple

sample

cradle

ample

brittle

dimple

cuddle

fondle

dangle

rattle

sickle

kindle

prattle

trickle

giggle

dazzle

couple

cackle

wrinkle

feeble

fiddle

muzzle

crumple

puzzle

settle

fickle

nimble

bugle

spindle

scuttle

struggle

bottle

shuffle

cattle

cobble

buckle

crumble

double

trample

Little bottles shuffle and tumble in the stable hand's bundle.

Cobble the shoes and settle the dues.

The muzzle is fickle so be wary of tinder brittle!

His struggle was a puzzle to all but death with the sickle.

Tim Wimble was once feeble yet nimble.

The rattle would dazzle the babe.

From cradle to grave her spirit would settle.

Shuffle the crumbles to scuttle the buckles.

### **138**

### The Sound of 'el' as in 'Travel'

Avoid giving 'l' for ' el'. novel label gavel gavel lintel fuel vessel hovel pommel model travel shovel funnel

duel

satchel

gruel

gravel

tunnel

revel

towel

minstrel

gospel

channel

cruel

quarrel

level

bevel

parcel

shrivel

laurel

kernel

chisel

sentinel

tinsel

trowel

easel

weasel

Novel new fuel powered the car through the tunnel.

A quarrel with the sentinel will lead to a cruel label.

The gospel is not always on the level.

The pommel was shaped like an African kernel.

The UK channel is an especially long tunnel.

Lintel and label do not rhyme with tinsel and stable.

Travel with revel and bring along your satchel.

His personality was such of a weasel.

The shrivel of his sneer was level when banging the gavel.

### **139**

## The Sound of 'y' as in 'Story'

Avoid giving *ě* for *ĭ*.

any

penny

story

naughty

shanty

glassy

cleanly

county

celery

factory

only

steady

treaty

comely

truly

swampy

very

pity

honey

fully

gaudy

lively

body

monkey roomy gayly carry lily duty hurry fairy dirty navy parsley empty quarry lightly mercy buggy worry Carry the child across the swampy field.

Give him a penny to take the parsley and celery.

Tell the story fully and truly.

The navy comprised of eight hundred and forty ships.

The treaty was signed only after a lively discussion.

Do not hurry, and never worry.

The buggy was made at the factory.

The peony is more gaudy than the lily.

**140** 

#### The Sound of 'u' as in 'Mūse'

This sound should receive special attention and daily drill.

The sound is similar to that of the word 'you' (  $y\bar{o}\bar{o}$ ).

beaūty

ensūe

indūce

cūre

excūse

assūme

stew

dūty

undūe

dūpe Lūna

steward

knew

stūpid

pew

stūpor

Tūesday

salūte

tūlip

tūne

news

stūpefy

neuter

fūme

view

sūit

edūce

acūte

nūmeral

redūce

sūitable

institūte

renew

abūsive

snooze

new

booze

dūrable

opportūne fūse

lūcid

pūre

refūte

dūplicate

The pure air will effect a cure.

He was induced to renew the excuse.

The institute will be held on Tuesday.

I assumed that the steward had a new suit of clothes.

A suitable salute ensued.

Stupor followed the acute pain.

The cupola was not suitable for the new institution.

He will assume the duties of steward.

## 141

# The Sound of 'th' as in 'There'

Stick the tongue between the teeth and bite gently whilst expelling the air. the loathe southern lathe those weather without writhe they father farther rather thither than seethe further fathom breathe withstand

wither

theirs

bother

smother

smooth

scythe

northern wreathe

hither

whither

brother

clothes

feather

farthing

that

bequeath

nether

thine

other

sheathe

bathe

They blithely travelled thither.

The boat sank six fathoms in the seething waves.

His uncle did not bequeath him a farthing.

The smoke was so dense that he could scarcely breathe.

They wear other clothes when the weather is fair.

Father has gone to the northern part of their state.

I had rather have the feather.

Whither is he going with his brother ?

The scythe is there by the lathe.

#### 142

### The Sound of 'sh' as in 'Action'

Place the tip of the tongue at the bottom of the front teeth and hiss.

faction commission

assertion

mission

precaution foundation

formation

possession

relation mansion

plantation

exultation

initial

conscription

recreation

ocean

distinction impression

pension

protection

separation ancient

creation

persecution

partial depression

perception

expression

direction meditation

emotion

completion

suspicion profession

objection

correction

ambition admiration

detention

musician

To procure a pension was his ambition.

He chose the profession of musician.

There was a suspicion that the foundation was not ancient.

Admiration was expressed at the great perfection of the work.

He took possession of the plantation.

There was no objection to the assertion.

### 143

## Silent 't' as in 'Castle'

Lengthen the previous sound to omit the ' *silent t*'.

often

gristle

crochet

jostle

christen

wrestle

hasten

hustle

wrastle

mortgage

epistle

glisten

soften

croquet

apostle

bustle

castle

Christmas

sachet

bristle

listen

nestle

whistle

fasten

bouquet

sobriquet

chasten

rustle

His younger child will be christened before Christmas.

She often walks near yonder castle.

All listened while he read an epistle of Paul.

We were jostled by a crowd.

When he whistled a landlord and hustler appeared.

She heard a softened sound like rustling leaves.

He was unhappy because of a mortgage which remained unpaid.

Moistening will freshen your bouquet.

Polly used a glistening needle in her crocheting.

If we hasten, we can play croquet.

#### 144

## WORDS DIFFICULT TO ENUNCIATE

test twelfths acts distinct perplexed fifths asked months next tenths risked shrewd betwixt sixths attacked shrinks taxed sevenths

tasked shrine

mixed

ninths basked

tracts

relaxed

eighths

masked thrusts

coaxed

elevenths

amongst spheres

fixed

thirteenths

amidst depths

boxed

hundredths

leagued

dismisses

government thousandths

rigged waxed

priests'

respects

dollar

deafened

strengthened shrimps'

lengths

dwarfed

hosts

prompt

gasps

gifts

shrieks

thwarts

lengthened colts

chasms

didst

changed blasts

punctuate

attempts

maddened writhes

sense and cents

close and clothes

dense and dents

tens and tends

mince and mints

prince and prints

tense and tents

axe and acts

instance and instants

relics and relicts

condemn and contemn

innocence and innocents

#### 145

### DIFFICULT SOUND COMBINATIONS

Although many of these words are either archaic and similar to something you would see in Shakespearian English as mentioned prior, they are beneficial to practice to aid with forming difficult sound combinations. Focus not on the meaning of the words but rather their formation.

**blz** – pebbles, gabbles, roubles, stubbles.

**blst** – humbl'st, nibbl'st, babbl'st, troubl'st.

**bld** – disable'd, trembl'd, doubl'd, dissembl'd.

- **bldst** stumbl'dst, disabl'dst, nibbl'dst, gabbl'dst.
- **br** breeze, brought, bridge, breath, bride.
- **bz** robs, webs, fibs, rubs, robes, sobs.
- **bst** rob'st, snubb'st, bobb'st, fibb'st.
- **dld** saddl'd, coddl'd, riddl'd, muddl'd.
- didst addl'dst, peddl'dst, fiddl'dst, waddl'dst.
- **dlz** bundl's, handl's, trundl's, meddl's.
- dlst saddl'st, peddl'st, fiddl'st, kindl'st.
- **dnd** sadd'n'd, wid'n'd, broad'n'd, madd'n'd.
- **dnz** burd'ns, hard'ns, sadd'ns, ward'ns, madd'ns.
- **dr** dread, dream, drink, drawl, meand'ring.
- dst didst, hadst, mad'st, add'st, couldst.

#### **146**

- **dth** breadth, width.
- **dths** widths, breadths.
- **dz** adds, buds, wads, leads, loads.
- **dzh** wedge, badge, judge, pledge, fudge.
- **dzhd** pledg'd, forg'd, manag'd, smudg'd, gaug'd.
- fld rifl'd, baffl'd, shuffl'd, sniffl'd, waffl'd.
- fldst stifl'dst, baffl'dst, ruffl'dst, trifl'dst.

- flz raffl's, muffl's, waffl's, truffl's, whiffl's.
- **flst** trifl'st, baffl'st, shuffl'st, ruffl'st.
- **fn** soft'n, stiff'n, rough'n, oft'n.
- **fnd** deaf n'd, stiff'n'd, soft'n'd, rough'n'd.
- **fnz** soft'ns, deaf ns, stiffns, rough'ns.
- **fr** free, fright, from, freckle, fresh.
- **fst** scoff st, puff st, miff st, cough'st, stuff st.
- fths fifths, twelfths, sixtieths.
- fts lifts, wafts, shifts, crafts, tufts.
- ftst lift'st, waft'st.
- **gd** rigg'd, leagu'd, begg'd, flogg'd.
- gdst flogg'dst, begg'dst, lugg'dst.
- **gl** gleam, glide, eagle, glove, bugle.
- 147
- **gld** juggl'd, haggl'd, struggl'd.
- **gldst** mingl'dst, strangl'dst, singl'dst.
- **glz** eagl's, struggl's, haggl's, juggl's.
- **gist** struggl'st, haggl'st, mingl'st.
- **gr** great, grow, growl, grizzly, grub.
- **gz** gigs, flogs, dregs, bugs, logs.

- **gst** wagg'st, begg'st, digg'st, flogg'st.
- **kid** circl'd, twinkl'd, buckl'd, sparkl'd.
- **kldst** twinkl'dst, sparkl'dst, sprinkl'dst.
- **klz** knuckl's, circl's, sparkl's, truckl's.
- **klst** buckl'st, freckl'st, encircl'st.
- **knd** black'n'd, wak'n'd, dark'n'd.
- **kndst** heark'n'dst, lik'n'dst, black'n'dst.
- **knz** dark'ns, thick'ns, falc'ns, tok'ns.
- **knst** wak'n'st, heark'n'st, beck'n'st.
- **kr** chromo, chronicle, crank, crisp.
- **kst** shak'st, look'st, wak'st, next.
- **kt** sect, walk'd, rock'd, work'd.
- **kts** respects, acts, sects, subjects, facts.
- **ktst** work'dst, thank'dst, lik'dst, act'st, mock'dst.

#### **148**

- lbz bulbs
- **ldz** wilds, folds, fields, builds, molds.
- **ldst** weld'st, fill'dst, hold'st, shield'st, told'st.
- **lfs** sylphs, elfs, gulfs, Guelphs, delphs.
- ft engulf'd, ingulf'd.

**lfth** – twelfth, twelfths. Twelve twelfths and a **ldzh'd** – bilg'd, indulg'd, bulg'd.

**lks** – silks, elks, whelks, bilks.

**lkst** – sulk'st, milk'st.

**lm** – elm, film, helm, realm.

**lmd** – whelm'd, film'd.

**lmz** – films, elms, realms, overwhelms.

**lmst** – overwhelm'st, filtn'st.

**lps** – Alps, pulps, whelps, helps.

**lptst** – help'dst, scalp'dst.

**lst** – fill'st, rul'st, fall'st, dwell'st.

**lth** – stealth, filth, wealth.

**lths** – tilths, healths.

lts – halts, melts, faults, bolts.

**ltst** – bolt'st, melt'st, halt'st, stilt'st.

149

**lvd** – involv'd, shelv'd, resolv'd.

lvst – dissolv'st, involv'st, solv'st.

**lvz** – elves, wolves, valves, shelves.

**lz** – pulls, steals, palls, tolls, calls.

**mdst** – flam'dst, bloom'dst, illum'dst, nam'dst.

- **mfs** lymphs, triumphs, nymphs.
- **mps** dumps, damps, lamps, bumps, limps.
- **mpst** thump'st, stamp'st.
- mz seems, psalms, gems, comes, tomes.
- **mst** dream'st, tam'st, seem'st, doom'st.
- **mtst** tempt'st, prompt'st, stamp'd'st.
- **ndz** bonds, blends, sands, finds, bounds.
- **ndst** send'st, ground'st, moan'd'st.
- **ng** singing, longing, swinging, ringing.
- **ngdst** wing'dst, hang'dst, twang'dst, wrong'dst.
- **ngz** sings, songs, wings, lungs, fangs.
- **ngst** hang'st, long'st, bring'st, bang'st.
- **ngths** lengths, strengths.
- **ngks** links, franks, sinks, danks, bunks.
- **ngkst** think'st, thank'st, wink'st.
- 150
- **ngkts** adjuncts, precincts.
- **ndzh** plunge, hinge, flange, range.
- **ndzhd** plung'd, chang'd, reveng'd, fring'd.
- **ns** dance, bounce, mince, tense, lance.

- **nst** against, canst, fenc'd, winc'd.
- **ntsht** blanch'd, lunch'd, trench'd, stanch'd.
- **nt** plant, tent, fount, blunt
- nths months, tenths, hyacinths, plinths.
- **nts** plants, flints, tents.
- ntst hunt'st, taunt'st.
- nz plains, moons, moans, lens, vanes.
- **pld** tramp'ld, tippl'd, toppPd, dappl'd.
- **pldst** rippl'dst, peopl'dst, rumpl'dst.
- **plz** mapl's, appl's, toppl's, stippl's, stapl's.
- **plst** trampl'st, rippFst, sampl'st, toppl'st, tippl'st.
- **pnd** rip'n'd, op'n'd, deep'n'd, happ'n'd, sharp'n'd.
- **pnz** op'ns, happ'ns, rip'ns, cheap'ns.
- **pr** pride, proper, prune, print, prey.
- **ps** tips, tops, props, tapes, mops.
- **pst** top'st, prop'st, heap'st, shap'st, hoop'st.

- **pt** wept, slipp'd, supp'd, stopp'd.
- **pts** intercepts, accepts, precepts.
- **ptst** hop'd'st, accept'st, intercept'st.

**pths** – depths.

- **rb** herb, verb, orb, curb, garb.
- rbd orb'd, curb'd, garb'd, disturb'd.
- rbdst barb'dst, orb'dst, curb'dst, disturb'dst.
- rbz barbs, verbs, orbs, disturbs.
- rbst absorb'st, barb'st, curb'st, disturb'st.
- rdz words, birds, cards, chords, herds.
- rdst reward'st, herd'st, guard'st.
- **rfs** serfs, dwarfs, turfs, scarfs.
- **rgz** bergs, icebergs, burgs.
- rdzh surge, forge, enlarge, gorge, emerge.
- rdzhd urg'd, charg'd, merg'd, forg'd.
- rks barks, corks, works, larks, storks.
- **rkst** mark'st, work'st, bark'st, cork'st.
- **rkt** work'd, mark'd, lurk'd, fork'd, jerk'd.
- rktst bark'dst, work'dst, fork'dst, lurk'dst.
- rid curl'd, snaiTd, whirl'd, furl'd, world.

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- rldst hurl'dst, snarl'dst, furl'dst, whirl'dst.
- rldz worlds, folds, holds.

rlz – hurls, pearls, snarls, twirls, churls.

**rmd** – arm'd, charm'd, form'd, harm'd.

**d** – arm'd, disarm'd, barm'd, farm'd.

**rmdst** – form'dst, storm'dst, charm'dst, worm'dst.

**rmz** – charms, forms, storms, terms.

**rmst** – form'st, charm'st, storm'st, alarm'st.

**rmth** – warmth.

**rnd** – scorn'd, earn'd, burn'd, warn'd.

**rndst** – burn'dst, turn'dst, scorn'dst, warn'dst, **rnz** – spurns, darns, mourns, urns.

**rps** – carps, warps, sharps, thorps, harps.

**rpt** – warp'd, usurp'd, harp'd.

**rs** – scarce, purse, fierce, source, farce.

rsh – marsh, Kershaw, harsh.

**rsts** – versts, bursts, thirsts.

**rtst** – smart'st, hurt'st, part'st, girt'st, report'st.

rths – earths, worth's, hearths, births, fourths.

rtsht – march'd, search'd, parch'd, perch'd.

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**rvd** – preserved, nerv'd, starv'd, carv'd.

rvdst - curv'dst, swerv'dst, carv'dst, preserv'dst.

- rvz nerves, starves, swerves.
- **rvst** curv'st, carv'st, preserv'st.
- **rz** stars, wars, bars, tears, stores.
- **sf** sphinx, sphere.
- **shr** shrill, shriek, shrine, shrink, shrunk, shrank.
- **sk** skill, scald, scold, scamp, scull, scum.
- **skr** scream, scratch, scrawl, screen, scribe.
- sks tasks, masks, frisks, desks, asks.
- **skst** mask'st, frisk'st, bask'st, tusk'st.
- skt task'd, frisk'd, ask'd, tusk'd, bask'd.
- **sld** whistl'd, wrestl'd, tussl'd, jostl'd, bustl'd.
- **slz** brisl's, bustl's, trestl's, thistl's, nestl's.
- **slst** rustl'st, jostl'st, nestl'st, bristl'st, bustl'st.
- **sm** smote, smile, small, smash, smack.
- **snd** glist'n'd, moist'n'd, list'n'd, less'n'd.
- **snz** list'ns, moist'ns, glist'ns, pers'ns.
- **snst** less'n'st, list'n'st, hast'n'st.
- **spl** splendid, splutter, spleen, split, splash.

**spr** – spring, sprung, sprain, spray, sprig.

- **sps** gasps, hasps, lisps, clasps, rasps.
- **spt** lisp'd, clasp'd, grasp'd.
- **st** stay, still, stamp, list, last, lost.
- **str** strength, strut, stroll, strive, strown.
- sts blasts, rusts, casts, mists, tastes, boasts.
- **stst** last'st, list'st, boast'st, tast'st, tdast'st.
- **thn** strength'n, length'n.
- **thnd** length'n'd, strength'n'd.
- **thndst** length'n'dst, strength'n'dst.
- **thnz** strength'ns, length'ns.
- ths youths, faiths, truths, swaths, wreaths.
- **thr** thrum, thrill, throb, thrush, throttle.

tht – betroth'd.

- **thd** seeth'd, sooth'd, bath'd; loath'd, breath'd.
- **thz** breath's, bath's, tith's, scyth's, loath's.
- thst writh'st, smooth'st, breath'st, bath'st.
- **thdst** breath'dst, writh'dst, smooth'dst.
- **tld** prattl'd, bottl'd, rattl'd, throttl'd.
- **tldst** startl'dst, bottl'dst, rattl'dst, throttl'dst.
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- tlz battl's, titl's, bottl's, turtl's, rattl's.
- tlst battl'st, throttl'st, startl'st.
- tnd sweet'n'd, whit'n'd, mitt'n'd, bright'n'd.
- **tnz** whit'ns, kitt'ns, mitt'ns, light'ns.
- **tr** truth, trim, tread.
- tsh church, chime, chubby, touch, wretch.
- **tsht** match'd, watch'd, touch'd, fetch'd.
- **tshtst** touch'dst, parch'dst, snatch'dst.
- ts huts, bets, lots, lights.
- **tst** start'st, shout'st, sitt'st, sport'st, smart'st.
- **vd** believ'd, liv'd, lov'd, brav'd, starv'd, sav'd.
- vdst deserv'dst, liv'dst, believ'dst, deceiv'dst.
- **vld** shrivl'd, shovl'd, grovl'd.

**vlst** – shriv'l'st.

- **viz** ev'ls, lev'ls, shov'ls, driv'ls, bev'ls.
- **vnz** ov'ns, crav'ns, ev'ns, sev'ns, heav'ns.
- **vnth** sev'nth, elev'nth.
- vz sheaves, waves, gloves, groves, saves, lives.
- **vst** liv'st, sav'st, prov'st, starv'st, shov'st.
- **znd** blaz'n'd, seas'n'd, reas'n'd, pris'n'd.

**znz** – seas'ns, pris'ns, reas'ns, impris'ns.

**znst** – seas'n'st, emblaz'n'st, impris'n'st.

# 157

# A WHISPERING EXERCISE

Whisper these sentences using slow and deliberate movements. Some are tongue twisters whilst others are mixtures of complex sounds.

Remember, this exercise will put a great strain on your vocal cords and should therefore not be attempted for more than several minutes.

In February I regularly take my bright red lorry to the rectory.

Abominable abdominals abrogate aborigines.

Change your digital veterinary itinerary regularly every February.

The rural restorative redevelopment of Redding is readily real, robust and reformative.

Take tape to tie the cape.

Eleven benevolent elephants.

The company accompanies a flunky rotundity in upcountry uppity Tuscany.

Lucy likes light literature.

The splendour falls on castle walls.

He told me that he tolled the bell.

# **158**

Hers was an eventful life.

The rain ceases, thus it ceased to rain.

Did you say a nice house or an ice house?

He spoke of it particularly, and peremptorily declared it inexplicable.

She uttered a shrill shriek and shrank from the shrivelled form.

The cell door opened as he ceased to speak.

Lemon, lime, liniment.

Did you say you saw the spirit sigh, or the spirit's eye, or the spirit's sigh?

I said I saw the spirit's eye; not the spirit sigh, nor the spirit's sigh!

A fine wine grows on a vine bound with twine is most certainly not mine.

He shrank from the shrill shriek of the un-shriven, who wildly wailed and wept before the shrine.

# 159

# **EXPERT PRACTICE**

Here are twenty-six tongue twisters with one for every letter in the English alphabet. I do not believe in placing an overemphasis on tongue twisters as they do not train specific focus on one particular phenome.

However, they are beneficial for increasing fluency in shifting between similar sounds and increasing concentration. These exercises should only be attempted once you feel comfortable with your vocal capabilities as they can easily frustrate those who are struggling with improving their voice, especially if a disability is at fault.

◆ Alex Alderman adjudicated with admirable ability.

Brother Ben boldly beat, battered, and bruised the beast with his bludgeon.

Columbus Capricorn was cross, crabbed, crooked, carbuncled, and a criminal.

Deborah Dewberry danced delightfully with a delirious and dexterous drummer.

Elizabeth Edmondson cooked eleven eggs excellently.

Frederick Firebrand fiercely fought a funny and fidgety fiend.

• Gregory Gilbreath gawked and gabbled like a goose or gander.

Hercules Halesworth hit a hawk on the head with a hatchet.

◆ Isaac Ingram inhabited an inclement and isolated island in Italy.

#### 160

◆ Jemima Juniper jumped with joy and joviality.

◆ Kate Kirkman kindly kissed her knowing kinsman.

Liam Lawless was a loudly laughing, lounging, long, lean, lank and a lazy loafer.

Maximilian Mettlesome magnanimously met a mutinous mountaineer.

◆ Nancy Nimble, with a nice new needle, netted neat nets.

Oliver Overall ordered Oscar Orion to overhear Owen Oldbuck.

Professor Punch and Paulina Polk performed the Patagonia polka perfectly.

Quincy Quinn quickly questioned a quizzical Quaker.

- Roderic Ranmore ran a ridiculous race on the Richmond railroad.
- Sophia Scribblewell was superlatively and surprisingly sentimental.
- Theophilus Thistle told tremendous, terrible, terrific, and tragic tales.
- Ulrika Uehara uninterruptedly and universally used an upright umbrella.
- Valentine Vortex victoriously vanquished a vindictive villager.

✤ Wilma Whirligig warbled with woeful and sometimes wonderful witchery.

\* Xylophones exhibit extraordinary and excessive excitability.

Young Yankee, a youthful yeoman, yawned at Yarmouth.

Zedekiah Zigzag zapped a zealous zealot.

# 162

# An Alphabetic Alliteration:

An Austrian army awfully arrayed,

Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.

Cossack commanders cannonading come,

Dealing destruction's devastating doom;

Every endeavour engineers essay,

For fame, for fortune fighting furious fray!

Generals 'gainst generals grapple gracious God!

How honours heaven heroic hardihood! Infuriate, indiscriminate in ill, Kindred kill kinsmen, kinsmen kindred kill. Labour low levels longest, loftiest lines; Men march mid mounds, mid moles, mid murderous mines. Now noxious, noisy numbers, noting naught, Of outward obstacles, opposing ought; Poor patriots, partly purchased, partly pressed, Quite quaking, quickly "Quarter! Quarter!" 'quest. Reason returns, religious right redounds, Suwarrow stops such sanguinary sounds. Truce to thee, Turkey! Triumph to thy train, Unwise, unjust, unmerciful Ukraine! Vanish, vain victory! Vanish, victory vain! Why wish we warfare? Wherefore welcome were, Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xavier? Yield, yield, ye youths! Ye yeomen, yield your yell! **163** Zeus', Zarpater's, Zoroaster's zeal, Attracting all arms against acts appeal.

- The Siege of Belgrade - Alaric Alexander Watts (1789)

## **164**

# **Comma Gets a Cure:**

Comma Gets a Cure is part of J.C. Wells' standard lexical set words and is often used as an examination script for linguistic analysis.

"Well, here's a story for you: Sarah Perry was a veterinary nurse who had been working daily at an old zoo in a deserted district of the territory, so she was very happy to start a new job at a superb private practice in North Square near the Duke Street Tower. That area was much nearer for her and more to her liking. Even so, on her first morning, she felt stressed. She ate a bowl of porridge, checked herself in the mirror and washed her face in a hurry. Then she put on a plain yellow dress and a fleece jacket, picked up her kit and headed for work.

When she got there, there was a woman with a goose waiting for her. The woman gave Sarah an official letter from the vet. The letter implied that the animal could be suffering from a rare form of foot and mouth disease, which was surprising, because normally you would only expect to see it in a dog or a goat. Sarah was sentimental, so this made her feel sorry for the beautiful bird.

Before long, that itchy goose began to strut around the office like a lunatic, which made an unsanitary mess. The goose's owner, Mary Harrison, kept calling, "Comma, Comma," which Sarah thought was an odd choice for a name. Comma was strong and huge, so it would take some force to trap her, but Sarah had a different idea. First, she tried gently stroking the goose's lower back with her palm, then singing a tune to her. Finally, she administered ether. Her efforts were not futile.

In no time, the goose began to tire, so Sarah was able to hold onto Comma and give her a relaxing bath.

Once Sarah had managed to bathe the goose, she wiped her off with a cloth and laid her on her right side. Then Sarah confirmed the vet's diagnosis.

Almost immediately, she remembered an effective treatment that required her to measure out a lot of medicine. Sarah warned that this course of treatment might be expensive-either five or six times the cost of penicillin. I can't imagine paying so much, but Mrs.

Harrison-a millionaire lawyer-thought it was a fair price for a cure."

*Comma Gets a Cure: Copyright 2000 Douglas N. Honorof, Jill McCullough & Barbara Somerville.* 

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# 165

# Gerard Nolst Trenité - The Chaos (1922)

What follows is an infamously difficult poem denoting the absurdities and irregularities of the English language. Remember even native speakers find this poem phenomenally difficult to read and recite. If you are brave enough to attempt it and I recommend you do, realise it could take a lifetime to master its numerous, notorious nuances!

Dearest creature in creation

Studying English pronunciation,

I will teach you in my verse,

Sounds like corpse, corps, horse and worse

I will keep you, Susy, busy,

Make your head with heat grow dizzy.

Tear in eye your dress you'll tear,

So shall I! Oh, hear my prayer,

Pray, console your loving poet,

Make my coat look new, dear, sew it! Just compare heart, beard and heard, Dies and diet, lord and word, Sword and sward, retain and Britain. Mind the latter, how it's written.

#### **166**

Made has not the sound of bade, Say said, pay-paid, laid, but plaid. Now I surely will not plague you With such words as vague and ague, But be careful how you speak, Say break, steak, but bleak and streak. Previous, precious, fuchsia, via, Pipe, snipe, recipe and choir, Cloven, oven, how and low, Script, receipt, shoe, poem, toe. Hear me say, devoid of trickery: Daughter, laughter and Terpsichore, Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles. Exiles, similes, reviles.

Wholly, holly, signal, signing.

Thames, examining, combining

Scholar, vicar, and cigar,

Solar, mica, war, and far.

#### 167

From "desire": desirable--admirable from "admire."

Lumber, plumber, bier, but brier.

Chatham, brougham, renown, but known.

Knowledge, done, but gone and tone,

One, anemone. Balmoral.

Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel,

Gertrude, German, wind, and mind.

Scene, Melpomene, mankind,

Tortoise, turquoise, chamois-leather,

Reading, reading, heathen, heather.

This phonetic labyrinth

Gives moss, gross, brook, brooch, ninth, plinth.

Billet does not end like ballet;

Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet;

Blood and flood are not like food,

Nor is mould like should and would. Banquet is not nearly parquet, Which is said to rime with "darky."

#### **168**

Viscous, Viscount, load, and broad. Toward, to forward, to reward. And your pronunciation's O.K., When you say correctly: croquet. Rounded, wounded, grieve, and sieve, Friend and fiend, alive, and live, Liberty, library, heave, and heaven, Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven, We say hallowed, but allowed, People, leopard, towed, but vowed. Mark the difference, moreover, Between mover, plover, Dover, Leeches, breeches, wise, precise, Chalice, but police, and lice. Camel, constable, unstable, Principle, disciple, label,

Petal, penal, and canal, Wait, surmise, plait, promise, pal. 169 Suit, suite, ruin, circuit, conduit, Rime with "shirk it" and "beyond it." But it is not hard to tell, Why it's pall, mall, but Pall Mall. Muscle, muscular, gaol, iron, Timber, climber, bullion, lion, Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, and chair, Senator, spectator, mayor, Ivy, privy, famous, clamour And enamour rime with hammer. Pussy, hussy, and possess, Desert, but dessert, address. Golf, wolf, countenance, lieutenants. Hoist, in lieu of flags, left pennants. River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb, Doll and roll and some and home. Stranger does not rime with anger.

Neither does devour with clangour.

#### **170**

Soul, but foul and gaunt but aunt. Font, front, won't, want, grand, and grant. Shoes, goes, does. Now first say: finger. And then: singer, ginger, linger, Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, and gauge, Marriage, foliage, mirage, age. Query does not rime with very, Nor does fury sound like bury. Dost, lost, post; and doth, cloth, loth; Job, Job; blossom, bosom, oath. Though the difference seems little, We say actual, but victual. Seat, sweat; chaste, caste.; Leigh, eight, height; Put, nut; granite, and unite. Reefer does not rime with deafer, Feoffer does, and zephyr, heifer. Dull, bull, Geoffrey, George, ate, late, Hint, pint, Senate, but sedate.

Scenic, Arabic, Pacific, Science, conscience, scientific, Tour, but our and succour, four, Gas, alas, and Arkansas. Sea, idea, guinea, area, Psalm, Maria, but malaria, Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean, Doctrine, turpentine, marine. Compare alien with Italian, Dandelion with battalion. Sally with ally, yea, ye, Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, key, quay. Say aver, but ever, fever. Neither, leisure, skein, receiver. Never guess--it is not safe: We say calves, valves, half, but Ralph. Heron, granary, canary, Crevice and device, and eyrie, 172

Face but preface, but efface, Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass. Large, but target, gin, give, verging, Ought, out, joust, and scour, but scourging, Ear but earn, and wear and bear Do not rime with here, but ere. Seven is right, but so is even, Hyphen, roughen, nephew, Stephen, Monkey, donkey, clerk, and jerk, Asp, grasp, wasp, and cork and work. Pronunciation--think of psyche--! Is a paling, stout and spikey? Won't it make you lose your wits, Writing "groats" and saying "grits"? It's a dark abyss or tunnel, Strewn with stones, like rowlock, gunwale, Islington and Isle of Wight, Housewife, verdict, and indict! 173

Don't you think so, reader, rather,

Saying lather, bather, father?

Finally: which rimes with "enough"

Though, through, plough, cough, heugh, or tough?

Hiccough has the sound of "cup."

My advice is--give it up!

(This author disagrees!)

## 174

If this book has helped you in any way, please share it with a friend or help someone else improve their voice by leaving a review online!

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# **Document Outline**

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