

Reading Aloud like an Audible Star November 2017

From Communicative Reading by Elbert Bowen, Otis Aggertt and William Rickert

Component of Speech

Rate – the speed of your delivery

Exciting parts – quick somber/serious – slower

Light verse – quick contemplative – slower

Anger, fear, indifference are expressed in rapid rate

Contempt, grief are expressed in slower rate

Duration – length of sound

Stressing a word usually involves extending its length of sound

Words like stroll, hop, lazy, peppy have the duration built right into them

Pause –

“a purposeful ‘living’ silence that is charged with appropriate meaning. A good pause anticipates, reinforces, emphasizes and thrusts home meaning. “

Pause between thought groups.

Careful of speed. Keep the listener with you (they have to absorb the meaning)

Written punctuation and oral punctuation are not always the same thing. Writers use commas, periods, question marks etc. to help the reader chart through thought groups. I tell actors to find the “thought clusters.” What thoughts tie together even though punctuation is separating them.

Rhythm – anticipated pattern created by a more or less regular recurrence by some element: a word, a phrase, an idea, a pause, a sound or a grammatical construction.

In prose, parallel structure and alliteration can create rhythm.

Loudness – the volume of the voice

Breathing, projection

Touch –

Gentle, Conversational, Forceful

Pitch – the highness or lowness of the voice

High – fear/excitement/rage/delight

Medium (optimum pitch) – sincerity/calmness

Low – composure/aggression, tragedy/worshipped/hate/despair

“A healthy spoken voice can easily stretch over three octaves, if not four (20 to 20 notes). Most of us, however, employ only three to four notes as we speak every day. We only use the whole range when excited or happy or threatened.” – The Actor Speaks by Patsy Rodenburg

Inflection – changes the pitch within a syllable

Pitch and Persona

High pitch – female/younger

Reading Aloud Tips

Read through the story

Answer: What is the plot? Who are the characters? Who is narrating the story? What do the characters want? What are the relationships? Where are the beats in the story (turns, twists)? What are the important moments?.

Hold the book confidently.

Hold the book up so you can easily look at the other person

Use a thumb to keep track of your place.

Keep your index finger under the page to assist you with a quick page turn

Look up. A lot.

Spot memorize. Try to get some of the words of you line in your head so you can deliver them to the audience, not to the page.

“Sing on the vowels, but communicate on the consonants.”-

Memorize your first and last line. Deliver them to the audience.

Act.

Freeing the Body

1. **Neck** - While sitting, drop your head forward, without letting your shoulders go, and pull up slowly, feeling the muscles in the back of the neck pulling up.

Drop back and then lift, feeling your head lifting as you do so.

Drop to one side, stretch gently, and lift.

Drop to the other side, stretch gently, and lift.

Drop your head forward, roll around to the side, right back, to the other side, and then drop forward.

Repeat this movement, but rolling round the other way. Be careful not to turn the head as you roll – this is cheating.

Shoulders – lift your shoulder gently, about ½ an inch, then drop them. When you have dropped them let them go even more – they usually can. Repeat this two or three times. Then just sit there and remember the feeling of ease.

Breathing – rooting the voice. Breathe from your lower part of chest (bottom ribs loose, diaphragm expands)

2. Put your hands up behind your head, and let your elbows be wide to prevent tension as much as possible put the tips of your fingers on your ears to avoid pushing your head forward. This is a slightly tense position, so you have to keep as relaxed as possible – its advantage is that it opens out the rib cage. Breathe in fairly slowly through your nose, trying not to lift your shoulders. Open your mouth and sigh out – right out -and wait. Feel the need to breathe in, and in again slowly and out in the same way. Do this two or three times only, because it is tiring and tension comes quickly, but you will find it helps enormously to get the ribs moving.

Diction

1. Lips, teeth, tip of the tongue
2. Pepepe pepepe pepepe pah
3. Bebebe bebebe bebebe bah
4. Mememe mememe mememe mah
mmm-bbb-mmm-bbb
row, row, row your boat lips
Lah Lay Lee Li
Tah Tay Tee Ti
Dah Day Dee Di

Mah Maw Moh Moo
Pah Paw Poh Poo
Bah Baaw Boh Boo
Lah Law Loh Loo

Kekeke kekeke kekeke kah
Gegege gegege gegege gah

Voh Zoh Thoh
Vay Zay Thay

p-t-k

Range Exercises from The Actor Speaks by Patsy Rodenburg

Stand looking at a point above eye level.

Breathe

Hum from top to bottom vocal slide several times

Now use "ooo"

Now use "ha"

Now use "ha" and go up the vocal scale

Now use "ha" to go down and up the vocal scale

Try it at several different volume levels

Try coming down, then coming up with counting

Speak on your highest notes keeping sound forward, not tucking the head

Speak on your lowest notes keeping sound forward, not tucking the head

Count to 20 with odd numbers on the high notes and even numbers on the low notes

When you reach 20, take a breath and release "ha" on that note.