
VOCAL IMPACT



On Your
FEET.
present • pitch • persuade

DO YOU LIKE THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN VOICE?

If you don't like the sound of it, then why would anyone else?!

The next few pages give some tools to help you improve how you sound.

There are many ways in which we can vary our voice in a presentation to prevent ourselves from sounding monotone.

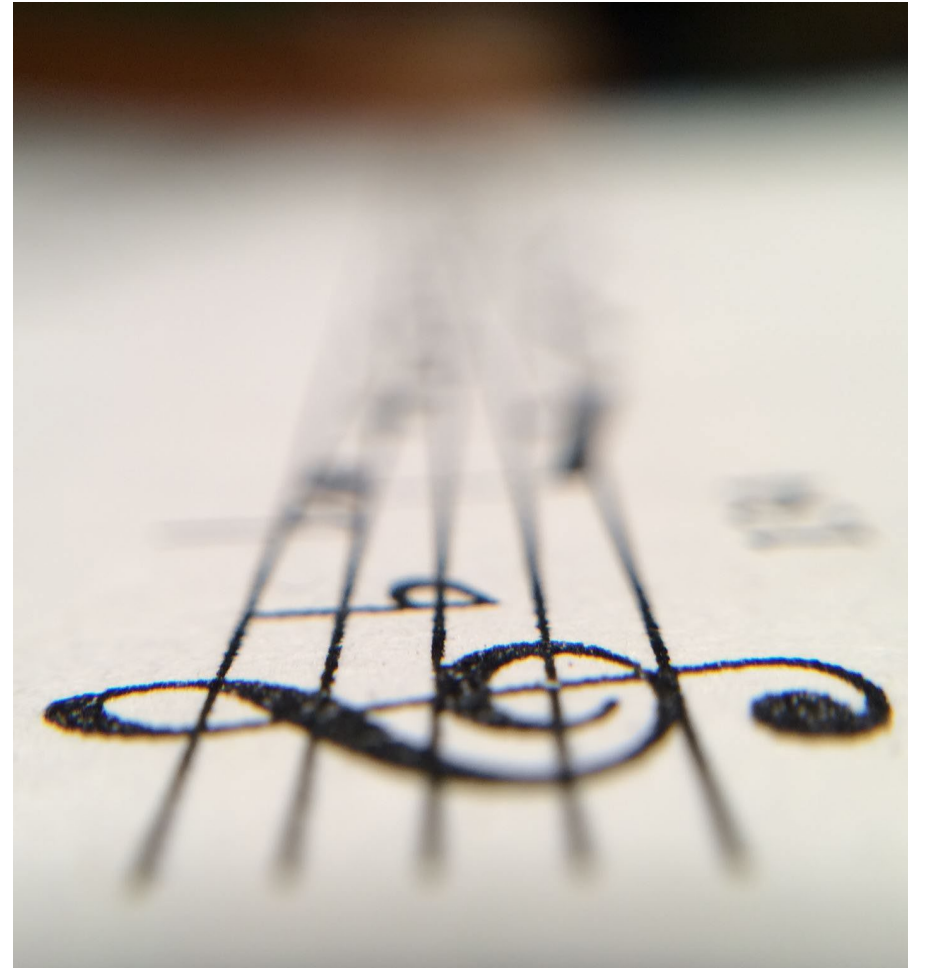


PITCH

Think of pitch as musical notes – high & low. We all have a pitch range that we naturally use and unfortunately for most of us it is not very varied and so we sound monotone.

Pitch Exercise:

Take a deep breath and start talking about any subject you like until you run out of breath. It could be about what you did this morning, your favourite programme, anything at all – remain on the same note all the time. Note the pitch and repeat this exercise at the highest pitch you can reach, then repeat at lowest pitch you can reach. Note the differences not only in sound but also physically as you change the pitch. Next take an article from a newspaper and read it aloud see-sawing between your high & low notes.



TONE

Tones can be used to express our emotions our attitude to what we are saying. We can speak in many tones ranging from hard to soft and many others in between. Our tone can be happy, sad, angry, incredulous, shocked, sly, shy, confused, bemused, suspicious.

Tone Exercise:

Try saying the words “Thursday Morning” in as many tones as you can. Next build a whole emotional state around the word making a sentence where the only words used are “Thursday Morning”. For example, you have just won the lotto and you are calling your best friend to tell them. Try this exercise with as many different emotions as you can. Take the 2 words and 2 opposite emotions saying one word in one tone and the other word in the other tone, repeat again with as many emotions as you can.



TONE EXERCISE

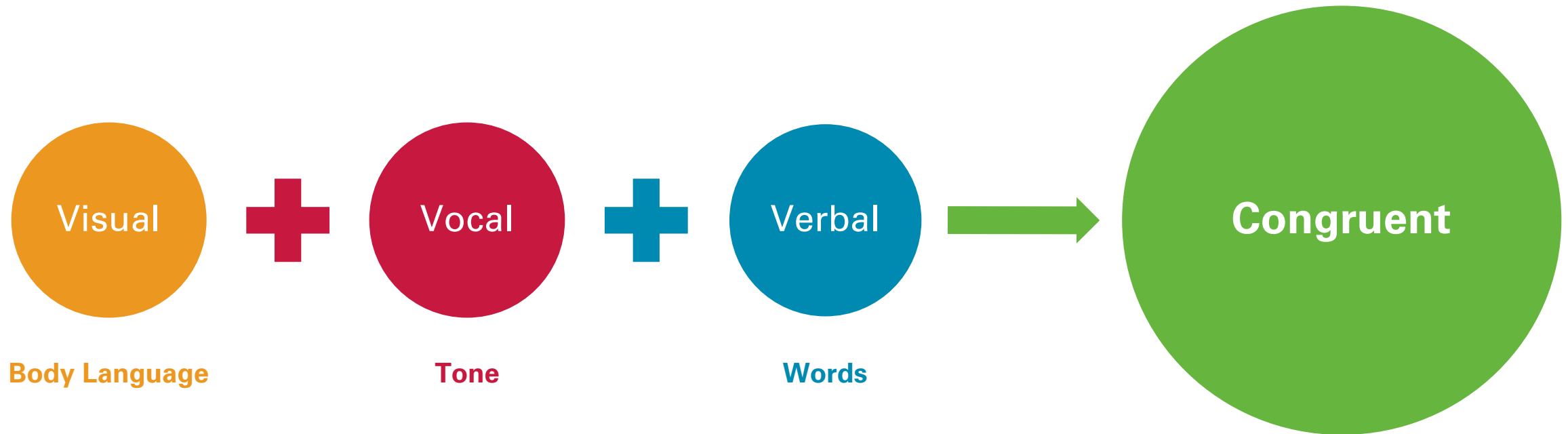
Take the phone book and read in one tone or in the style of a tv or other personality and then after a full minute change to another style or tone.

By doing it for a full minute it allows you to get into the role – make sure you are using emotion with each word.

Finally take a children's story book and read it with all the tones and emotions to a small child – if no small child is available, use an imaginary one!



CONGRUENCY



When the 3 V's are in synch you are **CONGRUENT**

When you are **CONGRUENT** you are **CREDIBLE**

SPEED

Speeding up or slowing down are 2 elements of vocal variety that are often overlooked. Speeding up, slightly, at an exciting part adds impact. The effect of slowing right down at parts that are serious, complicated or vital can be enormous.

In normal speaking terms the average words per minute can range from 130 to 300. In presentations it is best to speak at the lower end of this scale, some would suggest speaking at closer to 120 wpm.



SPEED TEST

Time yourself reading from the heading of the previous page, “Speed”, to the end of this paragraph. It is exactly one hundred and twenty words. Aim to read it in exactly 1 minute.

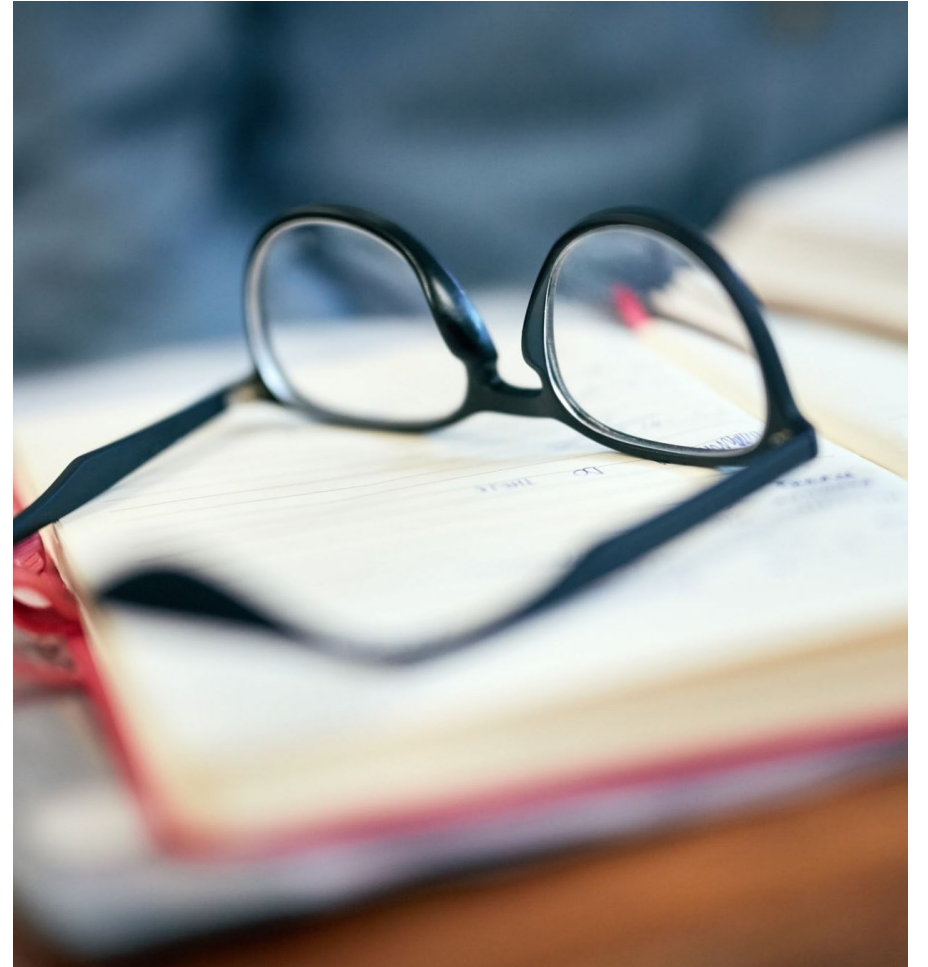
You will probably find that on your first attempt you finish it before the minute! Most people speak too fast rather than too slow. When you can read at 120 wpm proceed to the next exercise to practice changing your rate of speech.



SPEED EXERCISE

Take a piece of text from a book, newspaper etc., start reading at 120 wpm pace.

Next read as fast as you can then as slow as you can. When changing from one rate to the next add in a long pause, note how pausing can allow you consciously prepare for the next few words.



VOLUME

Posture is very important in relation to volume. Poor posture can result in the capacity of the lungs being reduced by up to **30%**.

Good breath control is also vital to allow you to project, while at the same time, maintain pitch and tone.

When we attempt to project from our throats rather than our diaphragms the effect is shouting and can also raise the pitch to a screech.



VOLUME EXERCISES

Stand in front of a mirror & breathe in then out. If your shoulders rise & fall you are probably not breathing using diaphragm. Breathe in again, this time consciously breathing into diaphragm and notice your stomach rising, then falling when you exhale.

Say “Hello Bill” in a friendly tone, take a step back, repeat louder ensuring to maintain tone and project from diaphragm. Step back, repeat until you have reached the far side of the room.

Next, stay at the far side of the room and take a piece of text from a book, newspaper etc. Read aloud from your text, making sure you maintain your relaxed state, project from diaphragm. While reading apply some of the techniques from the pitch, tone and speed exercises to ensure you use the full range of vocal variety.



PAUSING

Remember to pause.

Use punctuation when you speak – especially full stops and new paragraphs.



PAUSE

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