



PITCH IN

Purpose

Learn to control your voice to create special effects and learn the power of pitch for creating interest in what you say.

Materials

None

Group Size

Pairs

Background

When you're excited what happens to your voice? What do you do with your voice to indicate you are serious?

We get meaning from the tone of voice as much as we do from the words spoken. Some voice experts would suggest that we even get more meaning from the tone of voice than we do from the words.

Do you ever send a mixed message, sending one thing but getting back the unexpected?

This activity will help you work on getting across what you really want to communicate.

Activity

1. Read each sentence to yourself.
2. Now practice with another person. Person one reads the first sentence while person two listens for the mood and the pitch that is requested.
3. Person two can read the next sentence. Person one listens for the mood and the pitch that is requested.
4. Complete all the sentences, taking turns a speaking and listening.



Mood To Create	High Middle Low	Sentence to Say
• Excited	High	Do it immediately? At once ? Do you hear?
• Inform	Middle	We've had a wonderful holiday!
• Question	High	Did you know about John?
• Fear	Middle	I don't know what I'm going to do.
• Excited	High	Oh no! How can you say such a thing?
• Informative	Middle	Mary is very capable and will make a good member.
• Thinking	Low	To be or not to be. That is the question.
• Serious	Low	This is a very serious moment in the history of our country.
• Love	Low	I really love that dog. He's the best friend I've of right now.

Debrief

- Can you say a question without raising your voice at the end of the sentence? Some punctuation marks already give us clues as to what to do with our voices.
- Make up your own sentences including the kind of mood you want to create.



PRESS CONFERENCE

Purpose

Develop agility to think on your feet and develop confidence in your speaking abilities.

Materials

None

Group Size

4 to 6

Background

What makes a singer a great singer?

They practice. What singers do to practice varies greatly. A great singer may practice singing scales, may sing with others, may spend time on memorizing the words of songs, may try to write her own songs, may practice by watching others, or may hire a coach to help her develop her vocal abilities.

To help you become better at speaking, here is one practice idea. It works at helping you to think on your feet. Every speaker needs this ability. You never know what may happen during your speech. You might forget a part, drop your notes, or get asked questions.

Being prepared can in part be done through exercises like the one you are about to engage in.

Activity

1. Imagine that you are a well-known soccer player, farmer, writer, singer, actor, teacher, artist, or computer inventor.
2. Announce to your group who you will be. Give the group about two or three minutes to come up with some questions for this famous person.
3. Now hold a press conference. You are at the head of the group - sitting in an interview chair. The others are around you, members from the press and ready to ask you some questions about yourself.
4. Give each member of the group the opportunity to ask you at least one question.
5. Respond to each question as briefly as you can. This is a pretend press conference, so you can make up your responses as you go. The point here is to get your answers out quickly and briefly.
6. You always have the right to not answer a question. You may want to reply with "no comment". Try to avoid using this too much.
7. After your press conference, another member may want to hold their press conference.



Debrief

- What was the easiest question you were asked? What made it so easy?
- What was the hardest question you were given? Why?
- What do you need to work on to become better at this?



PROP TALK

Purpose

Develop your ability to convince others and how to use a prop in your talk.

Materials

Prop

Group Size

4 to 6

Background

Have you ever tried to sell something to someone?

When you come to think about it, we're selling all the time. We may be not selling products like computers or cars, but we do attempt to sell our idea to others. For example, when you want a particular gift for your birthday, you sell your suggestion to your parents. When you want to go to a pop, western or rock concert, you try to convince your friends to join you. When you need more time on your assignment, you try to convince your teacher to give you the time you need. We're selling our ideas all the time!

What is most important in the selling of your ideas? You guessed it, effective communication. Your idea may be a great one, but convincing the buyer to buy your idea depends on how well you present yourself. Do you prepare your thoughts before you open your mouth? Do you think of the buyer and not just about yourself? Do you use a variety of voice skills like different pitch and power levels? Do you look at your buyers with a friendly face?

When you are selling ideas, it's always more effective if the buyer can see the idea. In this exercise we will use props.

Activity

1. Choose a common object you might find around the home, school or club. It might be a pencil, lamp, compass, watch, hat, purse, box, milk carton, or whatever.
2. Now think of two or three creative uses this object might have for which it is presently not being used.
E.g. milk carton: cutting one side off - this side can be used as a memo pad cutting the top off of the carton to make into a pencil storage container.
3. With your creative ideas, think how you might present them. Plan your talk to include a brief introduction, your key ideas and how you will conclude your talk. For example, you might want to start with a question to pique their curiosity. Then follow with the three creative uses of your object and conclude with a challenge for the audience to use your object.



4. Include a prop in your talk. (E.g. the milk carton, pencil, etc.). You may want to demonstrate how your prop can be used creatively. Remember, to use your prop appropriately. Don't let you or the audience get distracted by it and make sure everyone can see it.
5. Give your prop talk. Your objective is to sell the audience on the creative uses of your prop.

Debrief

- Did you sell your prop ideas? What gave you the feeling that you did or didn't?
- How did you feel about using a prop? Would you change how you used your prop?



SKETCH TALK

Purpose

Learn how to communicate accurately and become dependable and reliable in your observations.

Materials

Pencil and paper

Group Size

2

Background

Has anyone ever given you mixed up instructions or directions? Maybe it was someone trying to tell you how to get to his or her house? You got the first part okay, but by the time they were done telling you, you were both lost!

Giving clear, concise and careful instructions is something we have been or will be called upon to do. It might be an occasion where you have to describe a highway accident to the police officer that is depending on you to tell him quickly and accurately. Or perhaps it will happen when you have to give instructions to a friend on how to complete a 4-H project.

When it does happen, will you be able to respond with clarity and clearness? This activity will help you to develop your ability to communicate accurately and with the confidence that you can be relied upon to do a good job.

Activity

1. Think of a topic you would like to speak on. Choose a topic where you have some personal experience or you have read about it. It might be on some aspect of a club project, on computers, on one of your hobbies, etc.
2. In pairs, number off 1, 2. Person 2 will interview person 1. Person 1 is the appointed speaker and person 2 is the introducer.
3. In the interview, person 2 is to find out the topic of the speaker and then to answer the four why's guys questions, namely:
 - Why this topic?
 - Why to this audience?
 - Why at this time?
 - Why this speaker?
4. You can make up stuff if you have to. This is practice for when it becomes real. Plan what you can say to introduce person 1.



5. After person 2 is done planning, then they can introduce person 1. Did you mention all four why's guys?
6. Now reverse roles. Person 1 interviews person 2 and will eventually introduce person 2 as a speaker.

Debrief

- Did you get all four why's guys answered in your introduction?
- Note that you leave the name of the speaker till near the end of your introduction. The audience has a better chance of remembering their name.



STORY LINE

Purpose

To increase verbal dexterity, group development, precursor to creative writing.

Materials

None

Instructions

Ask 5 or 6 players to stand in a line and tell a story, each player adding one word at a time. They are all telling the same story together. Encourage the players to speak the first word that comes to mind, while maintaining the continuity of the story. The story continues until the players find their own ending. If getting started is difficult-suggest a title for the story.

When players understand this concept, move on to the variation: Story begins as above, with each player inserting one word at a time. After several rounds the leader calls out "Continue, but add one sentence." The story continues and each player adds exactly one sentence. After several more rounds the players are told to add as many sentences as they like, but they must stop in the middle of a sentence, thought, or even a word.

Players continue the story in this manner for several rounds. The leader calls for players to act out the story, at which point they continue the story, acting it out as fully as possible while continuing the narrative. The players then find the end of the story.

HINT

Tell the same story and work together to ensure it makes sense. Don't think about what you say and look for the ending.



SPEAKING NON-SENSE

Purpose

To reduce poor speaking habits and improve good ones.

Materials

None

Instructions

Choose a 4-H member and give them a topic. Things that you are learning about work great as topics. Have the member talk for 1-2 minutes straight about their topic. They cannot say "um", etc. or use the word "and" more than twice. They must also keep eye contact with the audience at all times and use all public speaking skills. The winner or winners are those who can complete this task using all the rules.



TELL ME ABOUT THE TIME

Purpose

To increase the ability to speak in front of a group with confidence.

Materials

Chair or stool

Instructions

A chair or stool is placed in front of the assembled group. The leader then points to a player and asks him to "Tell me about the time" that some absurd or fantastic thing happened to him.

E.g. "Tell me about the time you sold bird cages on the moon," etc.

The chosen player has a count of five to get from his seat to a position standing behind the chair (he's not allowed to touch, lean against, or sit in it) and to begin telling everyone the story of the time he did whatever the leader has asked about. He keeps talking, expanding on the story until the leader releases him. The leader may ask shy players additional questions to draw them out and to keep the story moving along.