

Drama Knowledge Organiser: *Vocal Skills*

Key Terms and Techniques

Skill	Definition	Purpose	Examples
Pitch	The highness or lowness of the voice.	Helps convey emotions, character traits, and create tension or atmosphere.	High pitch for excitement, low pitch for seriousness.
Pace	The speed at which.	Sets rhythm, builds intensity, and reflects character's mood or urgency.	Fast for tension, slow for calm or suspense.
Tone	The quality or "colour" of the voice that conveys emotion.	Communicates emotional layers, subtext, and character dynamics.	A warm, soft tone for kindness; a harsh tone for anger.
Volume	The loudness or softness of the voice.	Creates emphasis, controls audience attention, and reflects power or vulnerability.	Loud for commands; soft for secrecy or intimacy.
Accent	The distinct way of pronouncing words associated with a region or character type.	Adds authenticity, depth, and realism to characters.	British, American, Southern, etc.
Articulation	The clarity with which words and sounds are pronounced.	Ensures audience understanding and enhances character precision.	Crisp pronunciation in formal settings, slurred in informal.
Intonation	The rise and fall of the voice in speech.	Adds variety, conveys questions, statements, and emphasizes meaning.	Rising intonation for questions, falling for statements.
Pause	The intentional silences between words or phrases.	Builds tension, allows audience reflection, and emphasizes key lines.	Pausing before a big reveal or dramatic moment.
Emphasis	Stressing certain words or phrases for impact important ideas, emotions, and character intentions.	Emphasizing "not" in "I did <i>not</i> do that!"	
Projection	The ability to make the voice carry across a performance space without straining.	Ensures audience can hear the performance in any venue, large or small.	Projecting voice for outdoor scenes.
Resonance	The depth and richness of the voice, achieved through vocal placement.	Adds fullness and variety, enhancing voice power and quality.	Using chest resonance for a deep, grounded voice.

Register	Range of voice pitches, from low (chest) to high (head).	Shows vocal flexibility, expresses range of emotions, and differentiates characters.	Low register for authority, high for excitement or vulnerability.
Expression	Using voice to reflect emotions beyond words.	Engages audience emotionally, making performances more compelling.	Sighs, exclamations, laughter integrated in dialogue.

Techniques for Practicing Vocal Skills

1. **Warm-Ups**
 - *Breathing Exercises*: Controlled breathing to strengthen projection and support.
 - *Tongue Twisters*: Improve articulation and clarity, e.g., "She sells seashells by the seashore."
2. **Pitch and Volume Control**
 - *Pitch Ladder*: Move voice up and down scales to practice pitch control.
 - *Volume Gradation*: Practice speaking a line from a whisper to a shout, adjusting as needed.
3. **Pace and Pause Practice**
 - *Metronome Exercise*: Practice lines with a metronome to control pace.
 - **Pause and Emphasis Exercise* and emphases, testing the effect on meaning.
4. **Intonation and Expression**
 - *Emotion Exercises*: Try saying neutral lines (e.g., "I see you") with different emotions like happiness, sadness, or anger.
 - *Question & Statement Practice*: Practice lines with varied intonation to differentiate between statements, questions, and exclamations.
5. **Accents and Characterisation**
 - *Accent Practice*: Mimic accents and dialects through listening exercises to ensure authenticity.
 - *Character Vocal Profile*: Develop a specific tone, pace, and accent to distinguish each character.

Tips for Effective Use of Vocal Skills in Drama

- **Know Your Space**: Adjust projection and resonance based on the size of the venue.
- **Stay Consistent**: Maintain vocal choices that align with character and scene objectives.
- **Use Silence**: Pauses can be powerful—use them to let moments “breathe” for effect.
- **Practice Emotional Authenticity**: Ensure that vocal expressions feel natural to build audience connection.
- **Experiment and Adapt**: Vocal skills should be flexible; try different combinations to find what best suits each scene.