##

## Using Your Voice for Effect

### Elements of Vocal Variety

A good speaking voice should be balanced between extremes of power, pitch, pace, while having a pleasing quality

### Power (volume)

Your power should be varied within your speech to add emphasis or dramatic impact: louder to reflect anger, drama, stress…; quieter to reflect suspense, fear, intrigue, suspicion…

Whatever power you are using for effect, you should always aim for your voice to bounce off the wall behind your speakers.

Speaking loudly does not mean shouting. Proper use of your diaphragm – speaking from your stomach rather than your throat – will enable even the quietest whisper to be projected to the back of the room.

### Pitch

Also called modulation, pitch is the term for the high and low sounds your voice makes. Examples of how it can be used in a speech are, for instance, when your speech needs to be expressive and exciting, your pitch needs to be changeable; when the speech needs to convey more seriousness, then your pitch should be smooth and pleasant to listen to.

At times, when you want to bring the audience into your thinking, you can use conversational tones, but make sure not to overdo it, because a conversational style can suggest a lack of preparation and structure.

### Pace (rate)

Like power, your rate can vary to reflect mood changes or for emphasis. For example, fast talk reflects excitement or anxiety, while slow speech can reflect fear or anticipation.

### Pauses

Pauses allow the audience to catch up and absorb what you have just said. It can also be used to add drama, emphasis, intrigue and passion, by letting the audience fill in their own gaps, continue the speech in their own heads, without your words.

For you, it can also be an opportunity for a memory prompt: you play what you’ve just said in your head and remember your practising, until you remember what you want to say next. Done right, the audience will never know that you were finding your way; they will just think you were adding pause for effect.

Finally, pauses are also a great way to signal the transitions between your speech: from the opening to the body; between the examples within your body; from the body to the conclusion.

**Quality**

Quality expresses the emotional “colour” of your voice: conveying your feelings, which need to be positive when speaking to an audience.

The relationship you establish with the audience is achieved through the quality of your voice. A relaxed, natural, enthusiastic quality in your voice will create friendship and acceptance with your audience. Tension in your voice can break those bonds with the audience.

Remember the emotions you convey in voice can arouse similar emotions in your audience.