

Fall Semester 1- Voice Lesson Plan

1. The entire class sits in a circle
2. **Diction / Articulation TELEPHONE GAME:** “This shrimp pizza is delicious!”
 - a. Students sit in a circle. One student whispers a sentence in the ear of the student sitting next to him. This student whispers it to the next student and so on until the sentence has gone the whole way around the circle. Ask the student at the end to repeat the sentence out loud.
 - b. Why was the sentence different from the sentence that started this round? What could we do to fix this communication problem?
3. **Teach Breathing:**
 - a. show on your torso where diaphragm is in abdomen (just below the ribs, almost tucked up under the ribs), push hands down showing how the lungs push the diaphragm down
 - b. Sit in circle and breathe in for 8, hold 16, breathe out. Where do you feel that?
 - c. Lie on backs with books on abdomen, breathe in, make books move up and down.
 - d. Stand up – create a noisy breathe inhaling quickly on the count of 3. Create a silent breath inhaling quickly on the count of 3. Blow on your hand creating first a cold breath then a hot breath. Ask students where they feel the breathe with noisy and silent, cold and hot breaths.
 - e. (Scroll down the page to see attachment to help the instructor understand breathing technique.)

Name _____

Period _____

Date _____

Breathing Activity

Breathing is involuntary. Unlike many of life's other necessities, one can only live without breath for a few short minutes. A single simple breath supplies the blood with oxygen, which is then carried to the various organs. Even the skin benefits! By breathing fully and properly, the body works better, the organs are healthier, and the actor can be heard!

When we think of breathing, we often think of someone taking a deep breath while raising his shoulders and then lowering his shoulders as he releases his breath. This is incorrect. The shoulders are not involved in the act of breathing. Try the activity below, repeating each bullet three times or until the activity has been mastered. By incorporating this into your daily warm-ups, you will experience proper breathing and an increased amount of energy. You will strengthen your diaphragm breathing and will find yourself projecting with greater ease.

The Hot Air Balloon

- Stand and face your partner with your hands loosely hanging to your sides and your shoulders back (not stiff, just in good posture). Your knees should be directly under your shoulders, and your chin should be parallel to the ground. This will be referred to again as "perfect posture." Take a slow, natural breath in through your nose and let it out naturally and slowly through your mouth. Did your partner's shoulders move? Probably a tiny bit, because when the lungs fill, the expansion of the chest cavity will cause some slight movement. If they appeared to move too much, as though the shoulder muscles were involved, let your partner know and try again until you are both satisfied with the results.
- Now place one hand on your diaphragm (the muscle that pushes air out of the lungs). It is between the stomach and the rib cage. Press in slightly and repeat the natural breath. Not much should happen except that you should be able to feel a little tightening of the muscle.
- With your hand over your diaphragm, take a slow, deep breath through your nose while counting to ten. Hold for five seconds and release through your mouth over the same ten count. This time you should have really felt some tightening of the diaphragm muscle. Find some space away from your partner and the others. With your feet shoulders' width apart, drop the top part of your body over so that you are bent at the hips — not the waist. Your arms and head should hang with no muscle control, and your knees should be slightly bent. Imagine you are a hot air balloon: your legs are the sturdy basket and from the waist up is the empty balloon, sagging to the ground. Now repeat the slow breathing activity above minus the hand on the diaphragm and, as your lungs fill with air, your body starts filling, too. Like a hot air balloon, you will fill from the base (your waist) up to the tips of your fingers — all in ten seconds. You will then reverse the process while exhaling. Keep the body thoroughly involved in the activity. (For variation, try the balloon activity for longer and/or shorter periods of time.)
- Assume the "perfect posture" described above. Moving only your mouth (and the muscles around your mouth), say "he \ he \ ha \ ha \ ho \ ho \ huh." Each syllable gets its own small breath (note the breath mark: \), and the entire line should be done in about three seconds. It's a bit like the deep breathing mark: \), and the entire line should be done in about three seconds. The last syllable, "huh," gets a thrust (like a punch in the women do when they take childbirth classes. The last syllable, "huh," gets a thrust (like a punch in the stomach would sound). Start very shallow and unvoiced. Continue to "breathe" the line, getting deep-er each time until you are as loud as you can be without voicing the syllables. Now add a quiet voice (a stage whisper), then a louder voice, and so on, until you are as loud as you can be without yelling.

4. **LONGEST BREATH GAME:** On the count of three each person hits a note using the syllable “ah” and holds the note for as long as they can. Make sure to take a deep breath, expanding the lungs. Then keep the lungs and rib cage expanded like a big balloon as you speak. Don’t push the air out.

5. **Teach Vocal Cords:**

- a. Why breathe that deeply? Describe vocal cords, how they work, and healthy use.
- b. Blow between two pieces of paper and notice how the air sucks the paper together (the Bernoulli effect). The paper represents vocal folds, and if air travels between the folds it helps them to come together to make a sound. For more info on the Bernoulli effect watch the video on this page:

<http://joygardnerteaches.blogspot.com/p/phonation-vocal-fold-production.html>

6. **PROJECTION: “YEAH! YEAH!”** Eric Morris “No Acting Please”

the most important thing in your life.

22. **Yeah! Yeah!**

“yeah . . . Yeah . . . YEah . . . YEAh! . . . YEAH! YEAH!! YEAH!!!”
Starting small and building to a crescendo, you say the one word over and over, bigger and bigger until it becomes a gigantic shout from the soles of your feet to the top of your head. The force of that positivity will fill your whole being and excite everyone around you. The exercise makes you want to go out and push down walls.

23. **Feel the Affirmation**

7. **VOICE PRACTICE (handout)** - Go over the voice exercises as a class and practice.

- a. The teacher demonstrates and one student repeats as an example, or the whole class repeats.
- b. Tomorrow the students will review the voice practice exercises with a partner.
- c. Translation for Hamlet’s speech: *“Please repeat the speech just as I said it to you, smoothly and easily. If you exaggerate it, the way so many current actors do, I’d rather have the town crier say the lines.”*

8. **Voice Technique:** Use the same sentence for the circle telephone game to demonstrate these techniques: "This shrimp pizza is delicious!"

- a. **Project Volume/Dynamics** – Loudness of a given sound. (loud or soft...using diaphragm, breath, & vocal cords). By breathing fully and properly the body works better and the actor can be heard.
- b. **Diction/Articulation-** The clear and precise pronunciation of words.
 - 1. **'WHAT A TO-DO'** Oh what a to-do to die today at a minute or two to two A thing distinctly hard to say but a harder thing to do For they'll beat a tattoo at twenty to two With a rat-tat-ta tat-tat-ta tat-tat-ta too And the dragon will come when he hears the drum At a minute or two to two today At a minute or two to two.
 - 2. Her whole right hand really hurts
 - 3. I was born on a pirate ship
 - 4. A gentle judge judges justly
 - 5. A pessimistic pest exists amidst us.
 - 6. Betty better butter Brad's bread
 - 7. If Stu chews shoes, should Stu choose the shoes he chews
- c. **Pitch** – Where the voice lies within the possible range (high or low).
- d. **Tempo** – The speed with which words or sounds are expressed (fast or slow).
- e. **Tone** – The quality of a voice, such as shrill, nasal, raspy, breathy, booming, smooth, and so forth.