

LYLE V. MAYER

FUNDAMENTALS OF

Voice and
Articulation

THIRTEENTH EDITION

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Fundamentals of

VOICE AND ARTICULATION

THIRTEENTH EDITION

Lyle V. Mayer



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Higher Education

FUNDAMENTALS OF VOICE AND ARTICULATION

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Preface

A textbook should be judged by the results it gets, and *Fundamentals of Voice and Articulation*, in the years since its first edition was published in 1953, has worked successfully for an astonishing number of students and teachers. The book earns a space in the *Guinness Book of Records* for being on the market longer than any other textbook in the field of speech communication—approximately half a century.

The book is aimed primarily at people who want to improve their speech and voices. It can be used by the nonspecialist for whom a course in voice and diction/articulation might be the only contact with the speech communication area. It can be used as readily by the specialist—the communication arts or drama/theater major.

It has also been used successfully in many special, nonacademic, three-day seminars or weeklong crash courses in voice and speech improvement for businesspeople, executives, lawyers, doctors, and entrepreneurs. And it's been popular with individuals not enrolled in any kind of class, but who are working for vocal improvement "on their own."

Whatever the background of the student, the book's practical, nontechnical approach sets specific goals and targets for anyone interested in developing effective voice and speech habits. The student and the instructor are told in precise and "reader-friendly" language how to reach those goals and targets.

A lot of textbooks are harder to read than they must have been to write. This one, I sincerely hope, will be enjoyable.

Drill material and exercises, as always, have been updated, augmented, and enlivened. A few, having outlived their usefulness, have been consigned to the shredder.

There are numerous colorful and relevant quotations from contemporary celebrities, ranging from rock stars to Olympic champions, from movie and TV personalities to politicians. Noncontemporaries are represented, too, but in most cases their quoted wisdom is deliberately chosen from the less familiar.

Many of the exercises in the book, in one form or another, have been tested for several decades. They've worked successfully for thousands of human beings—the majority of them college students—but also major generals, grandmothers, baby boomers, nonboomers, and CEOs.

A wise, anonymous quotation says, "The most wasted day of all is the day on which we have not laughed." In other words, "He who laughs, lasts."

Drill material, even when it's serious, is lively. And much of it is fun. I am grateful to the anonymous genius who coined this one: "There's no fun in medicine, but there's lots of medicine in fun. Fun can help recharge our mental, emotional, and physical batteries. Fun can lead to longevity."

In my more than 45 years of teaching experience, I've rarely found a student who resisted humor in drill material, but I've known many students and instructors who dislike intensely the dreary and unimaginative material found in a majority of voice and articulation textbooks. Two examples: *Mary read the classified ads* and *John said "Hello" to Tiger, his cat*. This kind of stuffiness is guaranteed to put an average class into deep hypnosis within 15 minutes. And it certainly won't fire students with enthusiasm or foster voice and speech improvement. There are always, of course, individuals who object to any kind of humor in academia. George Saintsbury says it well: "Nothing is more curious than the almost savage hostility that humor excites in those who lack it."

Regardless of whether students want to work on their own or take the course, the book will help them acquire better voice and speech. In a sense, as one authority says, "All speech ought to be conversational."

THE 13TH EDITION

Chapter 1, “A Preview,” addresses the not infrequently asked questions “Why should *I* take a course in voice and articulation? What’s in it for me? What’s the payoff?” It also analyzes the ingredients of effective voice and speech, and it offers a few suggestions and comments about stage fright, delivery, and listening.

Chapter 2, “Sound Off! The Beginnings of Voice,” discusses good breathing habits and the mechanics and production of sound.

Chapter 3, “Put Your Best Voice Forward! Quality,” details how a pleasant quality is developed, and it takes a head-on approach to such problems as breathiness, stridency, harshness, nasality, throatiness, and hoarseness.

Chapter 4, “Speak Up! Loudness,” focuses on how to project your voice energetically while avoiding vocal abuse.

Chapter 5, “Articulate!” introduces the student to the subject of articulation and provides practical warm-up exercises for the articulatory mechanisms.

Chapter 6, “Conserve Your Consonants,” describes the correct manner of producing all English consonants and of achieving clear, distinct, intelligible speech.

Chapter 7, “Varnish Your Vowels,” concentrates on the correct production of all English vowels.

Chapter 8, “Discipline Your Diphthongs,” suggests how to make acceptable diphthongs.

Chapter 9, “Be Varied and Vivid—Expressiveness,” emphasizes acquiring a well-pitched and colorful voice and speaking with animation and spontaneity.

Appendix A looks at pronunciation and vocabulary and includes sound symbols, 149 commonly mispronounced words, and correct use of the dictionary.

Appendix B includes suggested checklists for every assignment given in the text. Students may use the checklists as guides and for help in self-evaluation. Instructors will find them valuable for pinpointing specific voice and speech problems.

Appendix C contains a voice and speech profile and analysis charts. The instructor may use these to evaluate students. Students may use them to appraise themselves or other speakers.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

The staggering number of exercises gives the instructor the power of selection. Most important, the instructor should take advantage of the book’s variety and flexibility and *assign material on the basis of individual needs and differences*.

There are obviously far more exercises in the book than any one class will be able to or needs to cover. Nor is it possible to do all 18 assignments.

A comparison is in order: If you do your Christmas shopping in a large department store—Saks, Mervyns, or Macy’s—you don’t buy everything in the store. But the advantage over a small mom-and-pop operation is that you have a lot more stock to choose from.

I’ve used every possible combination of assignments. Here is a basic, suggested outline. It contains all of the essentials but permits options.

- A. *Quality*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **1, 2, 3, 4, or 5**.
- B. *Loudness*. Assignment **6**.
- C. *Consonants*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **7, 8, 9, or 10**.
- D. *Vowels and diphthongs*. Assignment **11** or **12**. Choose one or both, as needed.
- E. *Expressiveness*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **13, 14, 15, 16, or 17**.
- F. *Spontaneity/final oral performance*. Assignment **18**.

One reviewer of a previous edition said, “This book is a pleasure to teach. It celebrates the joy of speech.” I’ve tried to let those words guide me in preparing the new edition.

I'll conclude by stealing from myself. There is a paragraph from the preface of several earlier editions that I wish to repeat:

Some time ago, a distinguished professor addressed a conference of educators. He caused some academic eyebrows to vault upward when he commented, "It's about time that writers of textbooks write for their students and stop writing to impress their colleagues."

That statement has also guided me in preparing the 13th edition.

TO ESL STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS OF ESL STUDENTS

This section will be of most interest to ESL students. Placing it at the end of the preface should not be misconstrued. It's not an attempt to isolate these students. It's simply a matter of expediency for all students. There are some colleges and universities in which few ESL students are enrolled. And in others, only a few ESL students are enrolled in Voice and Articulation courses.

IS ENGLISH YOUR SECOND LANGUAGE?

Then, welcome to American English.

There is an old joke: If you speak three languages, you're trilingual. If you speak two languages, you're bilingual. If you speak one, you're American.

Count your blessings. You're ahead of most of your American friends, because you're probably bilingual.

The chances are, however, that you have an accent. And you probably want to lessen or shrink it. You'd like to speak clear, intelligible English. You want to sound like Americans who have good speaking voices.

This textbook will help you.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 deal with articulation, the making of speech sounds. The sounds will be divided into families.

For example: **p, b, t, d, k, and g** are PLOSIVES.

Do you have difficulty with any of these sounds? If you do, you'll find useful information and exercises at the *end* of the section covering plosives. Similarly, if one or two of the glides or fricatives give you a hard time, check the ESL pages at the ends of those sections.

This special material is on designated and easily identifiable, highlighted pages.

Also, headings are printed in bold caps. Going back to the plosives, for example:

§ § § CONFUSING [p] AND [b]

Two things that most voice and articulation textbooks rarely mention to ESL students:

1. To improve your English, *think*, as much as possible, not in your native language, but in English. And this isn't easy!
2. Are you a glutton for punishment? Go to a few American movies, but sit through them two or three times. By the time you finish the third viewing, if rigor mortis hasn't set in, you'll comprehend a lot of dialogue that you may have missed the first time around. And you'll have a better feeling for the intonation and rhythm of our language.

Good luck!

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

The new edition of *Fundamentals of Voice and Articulation* offers resources that will help instructors to teach and students to learn.

An updated Instructor's Manual and Test Bank includes teaching strategies, 30 test questions for each chapter, and numerous practice exercises and activities.

A **Student CD-ROM**, packaged free with every copy of the book, includes:

- *Pronunciation Flashcards*—practice drills for the sounds presented throughout the book.
- *Video Clips*—six segments that illustrate the material covered in Chapter 2, *Sound Off! The Beginnings of Voice*, and Chapter 5, *Articulate!*
- Icons in the margins of the text direct students to the flashcards and video segments on the CD-ROM.

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chapter 1

A PREVIEW

WOULD YOU BELIEVE THAT

... People who have poor speaking voices—the kind that set your teeth on edge—are almost always unaware of this? We are our most enchanted listeners, and it's human nature for each of us to believe that nobody speaks as well as we do.

... Being tall, strong, and well-proportioned doesn't necessarily guarantee you a deep, rich, or booming voice? Movie star Tom Selleck confesses, "I don't have a six-foot-four voice."

... Political experts now agree that most successful candidates are elected not on the basis of *what* they say, but *how* they say it?

... The 10 most persuasive words in English, according to a Harvard study, are *you, money, free, easy, love, save, new, guarantee, health, sex*?

... Men are far more likely to dominate conversation than women? They do so by interrupting, changing the subject, or refusing to participate.

THE COURSE

If you decide to buy a new car, you must be prepared to invest quite a bit of money. Generally, before you close the deal, you listen to the salesperson at some length. This person spends quite a bit of time telling you not only about the outstanding features of the product, but also why you should own it. If you're a good buyer, you'll ask questions. You're tying up a substantial amount of cash, and you have a right to know all about the product.

If you're reading this page, it probably means you're enrolled in some kind of a course in voice and speech improvement. Perhaps you've elected the course; perhaps you're required to take it. Whatever, this course, like that new car, represents a significant investment of your money as well as your time.

As you read this sentence, are you experiencing the **WIIFM** syndrome? (**WIIFM**: What's In It For Me?) Probably.

Or maybe your first question is, "What will I be able to do after I finish the course that I can't do pretty well right now?"

Here are some answers.

What is a course in voice and articulation?

It's a course that deals with talking, conversation. It doesn't concern itself so much with *what* you say, but *how* you sound when you're saying it. It's a course that will help you talk more comfortably, efficiently, and effectively.

Do you realize how much talking you do? About 30,000 words a day, averaging four sounds per word: 120,000 sounds!

In general, do the people you talk to daily react favorably to your voice? Can they understand you easily? Can they hear you? Do they find your voice pleasant and agreeable? Do they find you animated and interesting to listen to?

Do I really need a course in voice and articulation?

The chances are excellent that you'll profit from this course. Most people will. Here are some interesting but alarming examples that explain why.

Thirty percent of 1,100 people, according to a research study at the University of Arizona, are unhappy with the sound of their voice.

Every spring, many companies and industries send representatives to college campuses to interview prospective employees. Eight large state universities and 10 smaller colleges recently asked various firms to state their reasons for not hiring the students they had rejected. In approximately two-thirds of the cases, the reason given was that the job seeker did not speak effectively during the interview. A General Motors vice president stated in a letter to me,

I hire, fire, and promote people, and I find it quite appalling that the reasons I don't hire too many of them in the first place is not so much *what* they say during the interview as *how* they say it. I have very little time for mumblers—those with a mouthful of mush and a dumpling in the throat. And then there are the ones who come in with the Minnie or Mickey Mouse voices—so weak and thin that, even though I sit about 4 feet from them, I can't hear half of what they say (and my doctor tells me I have 20–20 hearing). Maybe worst of all is the hopeful young person with the harsh, raw, and grating voice. It is like running your fingernails up and down the chalkboard; it sets your teeth on edge.

Speech communication instructors contact and listen to many students each year. Over a period of years, the total figures may run into the hundreds. Most teachers agree that at least two-thirds of their students will benefit from a voice and articulation improvement course.

What about the postcollege years? You may spend approximately 5 percent or less of your life in college before you enter the professional world. Poor speech habits will definitely not increase your chances for success and advancement in your chosen occupation.

Listen to Dr. Arnold Aronson, head speech pathologist at the Mayo Clinic: "The higher one ascends the socioeconomic scale, the greater the emphasis placed on pleasant, effective voices. With few exceptions, the greater the dependence on voice for occupational and social gratification, the more devastating the effects of a voice (or speech) disorder in a person."

I taught in a midwestern college for 25 years. We kept careful track of dozens of job-hunting graduates. This we learned: Students who had participated in dramatics and debate and who had taken one or more public speaking or voice and articulation courses landed jobs much faster than did other students. Many colleges have done follow-up surveys and found the same results.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., says bluntly that for 8 out of 10 jobs, you have to be able to talk. Carhop or carpenter, data processor or doctor, nurse or nuclear physicist, lawyer or librarian, teacher or tambourine player, actor or archbishop, you had better plan to do a lot of talking—more than 11 million words a year. That's equivalent to 110 novels!

Recently a woman was hired by an employment agency in a large western city. Every day she called as many as 150 corporations, firms, or small businesses to seek job listings. She discovered that approximately one-third of the receptionists—those who provide the first business contact with a company—had unpleasant vocal traits or were totally unintelligible and mangled the names of the companies who paid their salaries. *Ears Ickle Armen*, she learned, was *Sears Optical Department*. The *Oh Noy Lassner Vision* was discovered to be *Owens-Illinois Glass Container Division*. These same Sloppy Joes and Josephines pepper their business dialogue with such gems as "Gimme yer name agin" and "Woncha hang on a mint?"

Do you travel by plane? Visit airports? How about some of the word-choppers who call flight departures? "Flifivoursev fo Norkn Scnekdy now reayfodepartr agate thireigh, concourB." Care to translate?

How a person says something rather than *what* the person says forms a lasting and almost permanent impression. Your voice is the sharp cutting edge of your personality. First impressions *do* count. As the old saying goes, you never get a second chance at a first impression.

We all want to have friends. We all want to be liked. We all want social approval. But many people persist in thinking that an unpleasant speaking voice always signifies a disagreeable personality. A shrill, strident, grating voice, for example, is supposed to belong to an individual who is tense or neurotic—a person to be avoided. A weak or too-soft speaking voice suggests that its owner has a cotton candy personality and is completely lacking in strength of character and guts. Such stereotypes are not always fair, of course, but nevertheless our listeners often jump to hasty conclusions about our personalities on the basis of listening to our speech for only a few minutes. Agreeable speech habits obviously increase our chances of social and professional success.

A popular columnist, an expert on etiquette and behavior, warns us, “If you are single, your speech may decide whether you will ever marry. If you are married, your speech may decide whether you stay that way.”

A University of California researcher has determined that approximately 7 percent of any message is communicated with words, but almost 40 percent of any message is communicated by the voice—the way we sound.

Dr. Lillian Glass, a prominent Beverly Hills voice and speech consultant, who has worked with many actors, such as Julia Roberts and Dustin Hoffman, has decided that the way we talk is actually far more important than the way we look. She conducted an interesting experiment. The results are startling.

She selected two groups of people, 10 individuals to a group. Each group was to be judged on a scale of 1 to 10. They weren’t told how or why they were being judged. One group consisted of people who were considered to be relatively attractive but who had poor speaking voices and speech: abrasive, nasal

qualities and sloppy articulation. The jury rated this group a 2 (unattractive).

The second group consisted of people who were average-looking, but who had melodious voices and clear-as-a-whistle articulation. The same jury rated this group a 10 (attractive).

Beauty, it seems, isn’t necessarily in the eye of the beholder. Much of it is in the ear of the listener.

This isn’t a personality improvement course, but it is a course that improves personality. I’ve seen dozens of shy, quiet students blossom and open up.

After all, I’ve been talking for 18 years, more or less. If there’s something wrong with the way I talk, why haven’t I found out about it before now?

The truth of the matter is that you’ve been told quite a few things about your talking. Your parents started giving you advice when you were a year old: “Speak up!” “Don’t mumble!” “Don’t talk so fast.” “Sh-h-h-h!” “Don’t talk with your mouth full!” Like a lot of other parental advice, it may have gone quite unheeded, maybe because you heard it so often. And you probably reacted the same way to the advice of your teachers.

You should remember that your parents, siblings, friends, or spouses hear you a great deal. They become accustomed to the way you speak. You may be a terrible mumblor. You may have clogged speech, a galling, whiny, or one-half-decibel voice. The people closest to you, however, like you in spite of these faults. As far as your friends are concerned, they wouldn’t be your friends if they continually harped at you about your faults.

Popular magazines bulge with advertisements that warn us about body odor, morning-after breath, gray teeth, zits, and dandruff. But bad speech habits? As the old advertisement says, “Even your best friend won’t tell you.”

Maybe my voice isn’t as good as it should be, but I’ve been communicating successfully with other people for quite a few years. What’s also important: I can certainly hear myself when I talk. Doesn’t that count for something?

As one expert says, “Talking is like walking. Both are taken for granted. We know how to do both rather well, and we think we understand the relatively simple basic mechanisms of both.”

Were you startled the first time you heard a tape of your own voice? “That can’t be me,” you said. “I don’t sound like *that*!” Indeed, you don’t sound like *that*, at least, not to yourself.

When you’re speaking in a conversational situation, or even when you’re speaking in front of the class, how *do* you hear yourself? Other people can hear you only via sound waves that reach their outer ears. To them, your voice is entirely airborne. You hear yourself partly by the same waves; but don’t forget that your voice is also amplified by the bones in your skull. And you are, of course, much closer to the sound of your own voice than anyone else. Furthermore, not only are you used to the sound of your voice, you’re fully aware of what you’re thinking, so that as a rule you give little thought to how you sound as you speak.

The sad fact remains: You *do* sound like that!

This course will help you to cultivate an educated ear, an ear that not only listens to, but hears critically, the world of sounds—speech or otherwise—around you. In the process of accomplishing this, you will become a far better critic of your own voice.

Why is it that some people are born with good voices?

To be born with the *potential* for a great voice is certainly an advantage, but you don't have to own gold-plated vocal cords to make a success of your life. Abraham Lincoln, for all his backwoods ruggedness, had a rather high-pitched and reedy voice. Winston Churchill had a slight lisp. Bill Clinton has a croupy voice. Popular sexologist Dr. Ruth Westheimer has a little girl's pipsqueaky voice.

Speech is a learned skill. You learned to speak when you were a small child, just as you learned to walk. You imitated your parents, brothers, sisters, friends, and later, your teachers. The good voices you occasionally hear in TV, radio, movies, or plays were generally acquired by their owners only as the result of extensive work and training. Good voices are rarely acquired accidentally.

Who should not take this course?

A frequent comment in student course evaluations: "Don't take this course unless you're prepared for a lot of constructive criticism, both give and take. This course isn't just physically and emotionally challenging, it's sometimes painfully so."

Can I actually change my voice?

Definitely yes! Perhaps *improve* is a better word. Your Adam's apple won't suddenly get bigger or disappear. You can discover, however, ways and means of taking the basic equipment you already have and using it with greater efficiency. Golfers can better their strokes, sopranos can learn to hit high notes without screeching, and sprinters can shorten their running time. This course will help you—if you're willing to work hard—develop a voice that is more likable and appealing than your present speaking voice. This course may give your voice a little "class"—in other words, *refinement* and *polish*. Sound snobbish? It is. But wouldn't you rather travel first-class than economy class?

How do I go about improving my voice and articulation?

We ain't as good as we should be;
And we ain't as good as we're going to be;
But we're better than we was!

The largest room in the world is the room for improvement! The most important thing is practice, practice, and then more practice! And remember this: Practicing isn't always exciting fun. Neither is dieting or bodybuilding. You won't notice any results immediately, but if you discipline yourself and hang in there, you will eventually.

The eye-popping performances of the Green Bay Packers and the Denver Avalanche are not spur-of-the-moment inspirations. They're the result of grueling, endless hours of practice long before the season starts.

Olympic gold medal winner Carl Lewis was asked how many years he'd spent developing his tremendous athletic skills. He replied, "The day I stopped crawling, I took up running."

Or as Itzhak Perlman, said to be the world's finest violinist, once told a class of beginners, "Before you march onto the stage at Carnegie Hall to tackle the Beethoven Violin Concerto, you'd better learn how to tune your instrument."

Experience has taught that few of us can make substantial progress with less than 30 minutes of daily practice. In many cases, 45 to 60 minutes would be better. It's a good idea to break up your practice into two or three quarter-hour sessions or half a dozen five-to-eight-minute periods rather than one long session.

Take your time! Be patient! You can't rid yourself of a vocal fault overnight or by doing one or two assignments. Change takes place slowly. Remember, you've been talking the way you do for at least 18—maybe more—years. And it'll take a while to modify or eradicate any bad speech habits that you might have.

Concentrate! Learn how to listen critically and objectively to yourself as well as to others. Take charge! You are your own best investment.

With intentional irony, somebody has said, “There is absolutely no substitute for a genuine lack of preparation.”

Many students tape themselves daily, not just to prepare for classroom assignments, but also to monitor their own voices and check their progress. Excellent idea!

If, however, at any time you feel vocal strain or a sore throat developing, stop! And see your instructor.

WHAT KIND OF SPEAKING VOICE TURNS PEOPLE ON?

PLEASANT QUALITY

A top-notch speaking voice has a pleasing quality.

Quality is the *timbre, tone color, or texture of a voice*. If a clarinetist, a trumpet player, and a violinist stand behind a screen and play “Dixie” in the key of C at the same rate of speed and the same degree of loudness, you’ll have no problem recognizing which is which. Each instrument has its own personality or timbre. Similarly, if you overhear two friends talking in an adjoining room, you can invariably tell one from the other.

As one expert says, “Like fingerprints, each of us has a one-of-a-kind voice.”

You already know a great deal about yourself, but primarily from the inside out. It may come as a bit of a shock to you to be told that you come across to others as arrogant, cranky, sarcastic, or bitchy, especially when you really don’t have the slightest desire to create that kind of an impression.

“There is no index of character so sure as the human voice,” British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once remarked.

Here is a list of undesirable vocal qualities:

Breathy	Feathery, fuzzy, and whispery. Breath seems to be escaping noticeably. The voice is almost always too soft and doesn’t carry well. The late Marilyn Monroe had a downy, wafer-thin little voice. In most of her cozier scenes, Sharon Stone readily slips into breathiness. And one TV reviewer described an award-winning soap opera actor as “having a voice so soft that it sounds like a gas leak.”
Strident	Hard, tense, brassy, and sometimes relatively high-pitched. The voice seems tight, as if it were produced by a pressure cooker. To some, Barbara Walters is acid and abrasive. ABC News Commentator Carole Simpson has springy articulation, but a steel-edged voice. Both Kelsey Grammer and David Hyde Pierce elect to use strident voices in their “Frasier” TV characterizations.
Harsh	Rough, raspy, gravelly, and sometimes quite low-pitched, reminding you of rusty hinges and creaky doors in slasher movies. Numerous actors use a barbed-wire voice to great effect playing Scrooge in Dickens’s <i>A Christmas Carol</i> .
Nasal	Talking through the nose—a nasal clang. The voice has a foghornlike and sometimes a wailing or whiny quality. Singers of country music, such as George Strait and Dwight Yoakam, like it. Jay Leno is nasal.
Denasal	A cold-in-the-nose, stuffy quality. The voice sounds bottled up. Actors use this one to play plug-uglies or the boxer with the too-often-broken nose. Robert DeNiro uses it occasionally and Sly Stallone bases most of his characterization on denasality.
Throaty	Hollow, muffled, dullish. A voice-from-the-tomb quality. A throaty quality appeals to some actors playing the darker characters in slice-and-dice horror movies and the <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>Lord of the Rings</i> films.
Hoarse	Noisy, scratchy, raw, strained. The voice suggests that its user either has laryngitis or needs to clear the throat. Ubiquitous election-year politicians often become hoarse.

Quite a few actors and entertainers owe some of their fame and fortune to rough, twangy, or squeaky voices. Some of these voices are apparently natural, but in other cases they are deliberately acquired. Oscar-winning actors have admitted to using negative vocal traits to enhance their performances: a cigarettes-and-cognac quality or a soft, hoarse purr.

Do not, however, use most of these people as role models! Evidence shows that many of these unusual voices prematurely fail or “give out.”

CLEAR ARTICULATION

A first-rate voice is distinct, intelligible, and easy to understand.

Articulation involves movements of the lips, jaw, tongue, and velum (soft palate) to form, separate, and join individual speech sounds.

Articulation must be as sharp and incisive as a laser beam. (*Articulation, enunciation, and diction*, for all practical purposes, mean the same thing.)

Feeble articulation is our numero uno problem as far as voice and speech are concerned. Lazy lips! The word *mumbling* is often used to describe careless, sluggish articulation. The more you gobble your words, the more indistinct you become. Mumbler's don't open their mouths. Their lips, which have as much spring and bounce as two pieces of stale liver, never move. These wordwreckers drop or omit sounds:

A reporter specializing in small businesses called a real estate broker.
Receptionist:
"Gummenendawanda."
"Would you repeat that, please?"
"Whoja wanna talkta?"
"No one at your firm, thank you."
Potential loss to firm—\$5,000 in commissions.

Give me is heard as *gimme*.

Thinking becomes *thinkin'*.

Going to changes to *gunna*.

Understand turns to *unerstan*.

Or as Rambo tells it, "*I just gotta do what I gotta do*."

Garblers are first cousins of mumbler's. They mangle sounds or add extra, unwanted sounds:

These, them, with are heard as *deze, dem, wit*.

Length, strength alter to *lenth, strenth*.

Athlete, across become *ath-a-lete, acrost*.

An *iggle* is an *eagle*. A *paramour* is a *power mower*. *Arnjoos* is *orange juice*. *Orals* are a baseball team.

The most saluted man in America? Richard Stans: "I pledge allegiance to the flag and to the republic for Richard Stans."

The only aquatic reptile to be honored in a hymn? "Lead On, O Kinky Turtle." ("Lead On, O King Eternal.")

APPROPRIATE LOUDNESS

An outstanding speaking voice is easily heard.

Loudness refers to intensity (sound level), volume, projection, or force.

"What did you say?" Do your friends often ask you that? Maybe you're muttering. It's more likely that you're not talking loudly enough.

Ever attend a student government or a city council meeting? There are almost always a number of underprojectors at these sessions who insist on asking questions, making comments or speeches—and who simply can't be heard. Microphones and PA systems aren't always available or aren't functioning, and the would-be orators are greeted with choruses of "Louder! Louder! We can't hear you." And many individuals with vocal mufflers show up in classrooms—on both sides of the lectern, too.

You might have beautiful enunciation and still be unable to reach your listeners. A voice that is excessively faint or frail annoys most people. It also labels you as timid and weak-kneed.

EXPRESSIVENESS

A superfine voice is animated, expressive, and well-pitched.

Expressiveness means vocal variety: the pitch level at which we speak, our vocal movements from pitch to pitch, our rate of speaking, phrasing, emphasis, and contrast. Overall, it refers to the successful communication of meanings and emotions.