

Thanks and acknowledgment go to the workshop participants

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VOWELS :YOUR VOCAL VEHICLE

THE AH SOUND

(As in father)

These exercises will help you to become comfortable with opening your mouth more when speaking, which is fundamental for clear, articulate speech.

To produce a rich, round AAHH sound:

- Open your mouth as if you were going to yawn so that your jaw is dropped low but relaxed.
- Check for the 'two-finger' rule.
- Flatten the tongue in the bottom of your mouth and let the sound come forward.
- Use a mirror when practising.

Compare the following mouth configurations. Aim for the **second** one. Notice that the **tongue is flatter** and the back of the **throat more open**.



Every time you find the **AAHH** sound in the exercises on the next page, relax and drop your jaw, open your mouth and the back of the throat and draw the tongue down. A lot to remember at once but it will soon become second nature.

Practise the exercises following this process:

- Slightly elongate the AAHH sound.
- Using a mirror watch your jaw drop on the AH sound.
- Draw your tongue down so that you create a larger cavity in the mouth in which the sound is amplified.
- Place two fingers side-on into your mouth. Drop your jaw to this extent when doing these exercises.
- Do not be self-conscious about this. Becoming comfortable with opening your mouth more than usual is often the first step to clearer speech.

Words with the AH sound: Carcass, father, master, bath,

Now try this rhyme:

The carnival in Castle Park
Is a gala children's event.
With arcades, cars and movie stars
Pa's money is fast spent.

Carl's favourite part of the carnival
Is the fast little dodgem cars.
He loves to dart past Arthur
And charges towards Bart.

Sentences

1. Mark sent a postcard to Lara's Aunt Martha.
2. These dark glasses make it hard to see the path.
3. We'll part when we reach Taree at half past one.
4. Talia bought a rather revealing dress for the party.

Extra Practice Sentences

1. The teacher can't pass anyone in this class.
2. The King Charles spaniel barked and barked at the other dogs in the park.
3. The sparkling fireworks at the gala opening lasted nearly half an hour.
4. Last night a classy, brass plaque was awarded to Karl for his brilliant pass in the exam.
5. The charming and suave actor calmly smoked a cigar.
6. Bart carved the turkey and the potato tart with hardly a glance.

THE OW SOUND (As in house)

This vowel has two parts to it. It is therefore called a *diphthong*. The word means literally ‘two sounds’. First say AH then say OO. Now smoothly slide from the first to the second. Remember to *finish* it with a clear OO. Bring the sound forward.

Sentences:

1. **How**ard joined the **scouts** to go **mountaineering**.
2. The **owl** swooped **down** on the **cowering mouse**.
3. “Please **allow** me to go to **Howard’s house**” he **howled**.
4. He **shouted loudly** from the **tower**.

Additional Practice Exercises

1. She was proud of her brown gown.
2. She bounced the ball up and down.
3. The scow bobbed around and around.
4. They found a mouse in the house.
5. They found the hound on the ground.
6. The outlaw prowled around the house.
7. Get the cow out of the flowers.

THE I SOUND (As in eye)

This vowel also has two parts to it. Relax your jaw and then glide quickly and smoothly from the short 'a' to the 'e' sound. Most important of all, do not let the sound go up your nose.

Sentences:

1. Nigel, do try to smile at the crying child.
2. He tried rhyming as an exercise.
3. He cried over Ida's demise.
4. Hiram took only a tiny bite.
5. Mike got tired of trying.
6. Eileen dried her eyes and sighed.
7. He described the frightful crime.
8. Cy might like to take a drive.

Additional Practice Exercises

1. I've been invited for five nights.
2. Why did she hide the ivory?
3. His wife will fly to the island.
4. The kite was high in the sky.
5. What kind of pie shall we buy

THE OH SOUND (As in Joan)

This vowel also has two parts to it. Start the vowel with an ‘uh’ sound right at the back of the mouth then slide forward to an ‘oo’ at the very front of the lips. Don’t drop your jaw too much but keep the space between your teeth open. Keep the lips relaxed and *round*. Keep the tongue relatively flat.

Sentences

1. **J**oan swallowed her **c**ocoa drink very **s**lowly.
2. Let’s have **r**olled **o**ats for breakfast.
3. Don’t use **s**oap on that **o**ld **c**loak.
4. He **s**howed the **r**oan before he **s**old it.

Additional Practice Exercises

1. He was told to blow his nose.
2. The old man went home slowly.
3. Don’t use that tone to Joe.
4. The load of stones rolled over.
5. Joe’s microscope was sold.
6. I won’t go home with Flo.

USING THE NEUTRAL VOWEL TO ACHIEVE SMOOTH, CONNECTED SPEECH

The neutral vowel is used on unstressed vowels so that **speech flows smoothly and fluently**. It is called the *neutral vowel* because it sounds rather like a short, simple ‘er’ or ‘uh’. Any vowel which is in an unstressed position takes this sound. So it is really just a *sound* and not a letter. It helps to think of it as a stepping-stone between important sounds.

For example with the phrase *bread and butter* we say *bread'ndbutt'r* so that it sounds smooth and connected as if it was one word instead of three.

Identifying the neutral vowel in individual words

In the following words the neutral sound is in small, italic print. Say it as a short ‘uh’ that is hardly there at all. At the same time put a very firm and definite stress on the stressed syllable identified in bold.

Glam*ou*t treas*ur*e offer tortoise connect pict*ur*e

Sentences: (*Say these sentences as smoothly as possible. It helps to think of each as one long word rather than a collection of separate ones*).

1. Sooner or later the balloon will ascend.
2. He fell asleep during the solemn lecture.
3. The popular magazine has a new editor.
4. He was unaware of the accident.
5. The pilot’s parachute never opened.
6. Bertha and Anita were uncommunicative.
7. He said he *had* had his bacon and eggs.
8. They applauded the excellent performance.
9. She suffered from claustrophobia.

Additional Practice Exercises

1. The meeting was postponed at short notice.
2. The advocate handled the delicate matter.
3. The orchestra performed in the afternoon.
4. It was a terrible moment for the lawyer.
5. His benevolence was unbelievable.

FLEXING THE SPEAKING MUSCLES: ACHIEVING CLARITY BY TONING THE ARTICULATORS

ARTICULATION IS:-

- The production of speech sounds by moving and using parts of the mouth and throat area.
- Accurate formation of the consonants and vowels.

Clear, crisp, precise, firm production of **consonants** is the most important aspect of clear articulation. For example, look at the sentence below.

Get six people inside the taxi.

Say the sentence with clear consonants but with neutralised vowels. It would sound like this:

Guht suhx puhple uhsuhd thuh tuhsuh.

Although not pleasant to listen to, the sense of the sentence can still be conveyed.

Now try to convey the sense by just saying the vowels without the consonants.

e - i - ee - uh - i - ie - uh - a - i

It just can't be done no matter how beautifully formed the vowels. Thus clarity of speech depends on accurate consonant formation. Fortunately this can be improved by strengthening the moveable organs of articulation, especially the lips and the tongue which are the ones to which we will be paying particular attention. These organs are muscles and as with any other muscle in our body, they can be toned up, strengthened and made more agile and flexible by exercise. The exercises on the following pages are designed to do just that.

TONGUE TWISTERS

Tongue twisters are often amusing but their effectiveness should not be underestimated when it comes to developing **clarity of speech**. Practice the following tongue twisters in the progression outlined below. When you've mastered these you'll find many more on the internet.

- (a) Whisper the twisters.
 - (b) Speak them through clenched teeth (this makes the tongue and lips work more vigorously).
 - (c) Speak them with good tone and firm articulation slowly but clearly. (Initially exaggerate the movements of the articulators to give them an extra work-out.)
 - (e) Speak the "twisters" more and more quickly while still retaining clarity of articulation. Remember to use the neutral vowel to make delivery smooth. (Note: Do not go straight to this step)
- P Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, a peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked, if Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, where is the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked.
- B Betty Botter bought some butter, but she said this butter's bitter. If I mix it with my batter it will make my batter bitter. So she bought some better butter and she mixed it with her batter, and she made her batter better.
- D Donald the duck liked to dance a jig daily. Donald the duck liked to dress up to dine. Dutifully Donald would wear his white dicky, and then with the lady ducks waddle in line.
- S To sit in solemn silence in a dull dark dock, in a pestilential prison with a lifelong lock, awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock, from a cheap and chippy chopper, on a big black block.
- P-G Five plump peas, in a peapod pressed, one grew, and two grew, and so did all the rest, grew and grew and grew and grew, and grew, and never stopped, till they grew so plump and portly that the peapod popped.
- R-L Red leather, yellow leather. Red lorry, yellow lorry.
- T A tutor who tooted the lute, tried to tutor two tooters to toot. Said the two to the tutor, "Is it easier to toot, or to tutor two tooters to toot?"
- R Around the rugged rock ruthless Robert ran. He ran around and round the rock until he met a man. The man was really very rude and he to Robert said, "Run right down to Richmond Park," away then Robert sped.
- S-SH Sheila is selling her shop at the seashore, for shops at the seashore are sure to lose. At her shop on the seashore should Sheila sell shellfish? Or should she sell, sandpaper sherry and shoes?

EXERCISES FOR THE LIPS

When doing these exercises try to work the lips much harder than you would in everyday conversation. This will help to strengthen and tone up the lip muscles, which will in turn promote clarity of speech.

1. Peter please pass the pens and pencils.
2. Pack your port promptly.
3. The apples appear to be ripening prematurely.
4. The spider disappeared into the potato patch.
5. The pianist performed perfectly on the old piano.
6. Betty Boo baked a batch of better buns.
7. Bobby burst the big blue balloon.
8. Please pack and post the parcel.
9. Why will you worry?
10. Wendy the weasel watched Walter the walrus walking weirdly.
11. The windmills whirled in the wild wind.
12. Where are the watches we wanted?

Additional Practice Exercises

1. You are too good for such a fool.
2. Do try not to lose your new shoes.
3. We will choose the new spoons soon.
4. When will you be going to see Una?
5. William please tell Winnie that the balloons and bags are to be collected.

EXERCISES FOR THE TONGUE

Again for the purpose of the exercise, be more deliberate with your articulation when practicing than you would be in ordinary conversational speech. These exercises will promote strength and agility. The tongue is the strongest, most flexible muscle in the body and is very responsive to these exercises.

1. Leonard the lazy lion lay alone.
2. Don't delay or we'll be late.
3. Take the tarts to Terry at ten o'clock.
4. Making the toffee took too much time.
5. William got wet while he was out walking.
6. The Tewkesbury train is always tardy.
7. Eating tomatoes tempts Timothy's taste buds.
8. Do update your diary while waiting for dinner.
9. He didn't want to admit that Dimity did the dastardly deed.

Additional Practice Exercises

1. Quick, catch the ball and kick it to Kevin.
2. Please tell Laura that the lollies and the dolls are ready for the party.
3. They got lost because the street directory they used was so old.
4. Shane was shot in the shoulder.

Final Consonants

A common speech fault is the omission of hard consonants at the ends of words. It makes for sloppy speech and can lead to mumbling. Practicing deliberate placement of end consonants will remedy this fault, promote good diction and keep speech crisp and clear. Use the vowel progression exercises below for this purpose.

Oot (as in boot) oht (oat) awt (ought) aht (art) ayt (ate) eet (eat)

Ood ohd awd ahd ayd eed

Ool ohl awl ahl ayl eel

(To complete the 'L' sound flick the tongue off the gum ridge behind the upper front teeth)

Additional Practice Exercises

Oop ohp awp ahp ayp eep

Oob ohb awb ahb ayb eeb

Ook ohk awk ahk ayk eek

Oog ohg awg ahg ayg eeg

Sentences to practice firm placement of final consonants

1. Take a seat right at the back of the bus.
2. Don't forget to take the felt for your new black hat.
3. Pete's excitement about the trip was apparent.
4. The meat he bought at that shop was excellent.
5. Last night Mabel felt quite ill after eating at that restaurant.
6. The cute cat was called 'Spot'.
7. Put some of that sweet marmalade tart away to eat later.

When speaking combine the two strategies of :

- **Elongating vowel sounds and**
- **Smoothing out speech by joining the words together WITHOUT LOSING CLARITY.**

If you do this then :

- **Your speech will acquire a very eloquent quality.**
- **You will sound -**
 - **Confident,**
 - **Professional**
 - **Unhurried**
 - **In-control**
 - **Self-assured**
 - **Supremely credible**
- **It will bring a greater level of authority to your speaking manner.**

It will trigger a higher level of RESPECT in listeners.

It is the voice of LEADERSHIP!!

DO YOU NEED A:

- Dynamic, inspirational and motivational speaker to transform your next conference or event?
- Workshop leader to take your sales or training team to a new level of empowered, professional communication?
- Personal coach to tailor make a program for a time poor executive?
- Retreat facilitator to create a refreshing, enjoyable, educational experience for your valued staff?
- Emcee to lift the energy at your next function?

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“.... riveting”

Irena your course was so riveting. I actually listened to every word you said (I have a tendency to switch off). By far the best course I've ever done.

Steve Dalton - Dalton Technology Pty Ltd

“... delivered so professionally...”

Irena thank you so much for a great workshop. It was delivered so professionally in all aspects and demonstrated great respect for us as adult learners. You model so well what you teach. The format of the workshop was excellent with the right blend of theoretical information and practical exercises. You were able to make participants feel safe while getting them to move out of their comfort zones. Particularly useful was the way you helped the participants to plan strategies to transfer the learning to everyday situations. When I attend workshops I always learn not only from the content but also from the way the workshop is conducted. This was such a very positive experience. Thank you.

Ritva Eronen – Program Educator, ACT Community Care

“....I saw their improvement....”

I sent my staff on Irena's Speaking Course to help improve their speech so they could provide better customer service to our clients. When I saw their improvement following the course I booked myself in. The course has dramatically improved my clarity of speech and confidence.

James Malone, Managing Director – Label Power

“..... profound results....”

I've spent almost ten years training public speakers and presenters all over the world from Las Vegas to London and spent a heap of time with the 'greats' such as Zig Zigler, Tom Hopkins, Brad Sugars and other amazing presenters. Recently, I asked Irena to speak at one of my functions and I must say I can't remember the last time I was so thoroughly entertained and educated! What's more, those in the audience are STILL using Irena's strategies, WEEKS after the presentation and are getting their messages across FAR more effectively than before.

So, if you want an entertaining, educational program on speaking, that has long-lasting and profound results, give Irena a call and do whatever she suggests!

*Steve Leach - ACTION Business Coach & Global Trainer
Managing Director BIZLINX Australia & New Zealand*

“... so MANY relevant skills...”

Rarely have I been able to learn so MANY relevant skills and techniques in a one day course.

Sarah Vandebroek – Management Accountant

“.... excellent speaker and presenter”

Since completing the Confident Speaking Course the average evaluations of my presentations have improved from 8.5 to 9.3 out of 10, which I believe is directly related to my improved speaking skills since completing training with Irena. She practices what she preaches and is an excellent speaker and presenter.

Ken Warren –Counsellor & Trainer, Director Ken Warren and Associates

“..... a milestone experience...”

Irena’s engaging style, professional expertise as well as the excellent content made this course a real milestone experience for me. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Shane Allen - CPA

Fantastic!

Irena has consistently scored amongst the highest of any trainer we partner with. She is a true professional and she brings a freshness and enthusiasm to the workshops she runs. She confidently handles groups of 20 senior executives with ease and has them in awe with the unique way she approaches her topics. She gets people out of their comfort zone in a way which is non-threatening. All attendees agree her workshops are fantastic and they recommend them to colleagues and friends.

John Gleeson - Director Acorn Training and Consulting

“..... original and extremely funny”

Irena thank you for the outstanding job you did as MC for our event! You were a total professional from start to finish and handled all the last minute extras with graciousness and style. The audience absolutely loved your wonderful sense of humour. Your comedy material was both original and extremely funny. It kept just the right level of energy in the room and was integral to making our event such a success.

Curtis Chappell -Project Director

“..... a delightful experience...”

As a professional speaker, I’ve found the skills that Irena delivers are invaluable. Working with her is a delightful experience – she is a powerhouse of energy and ideas. Her expertise brings out my best.

Lindsay Adams, National President, National Speakers Association of Australia

“....a very supportive environment.”

Irena is a wonderfully encouraging and colourful personality who perfectly exemplifies the professional speaking skills and poise to which one aspires, within a very supportive environment.

Rowena Bell-Bradbury - Regional Manager – AusIndustry