

Speech Qualities: Part 2

The following four speech qualities involve various aspects of the voice, and are grouped together. In good speakers, these qualities become instinctive as though they were speaking to a group of friends gathered to discuss some favorite topic.

D. Volume – Unless others can readily hear you, the value of what you say will be lost.

1. Loud enough to be comfortably heard
 - Audible in the back of the room
 - Not irritably loud at the front of the room
 - Note audience reaction
2. Volume to fit circumstances
 - Appropriate for size of room
 - Proper use of microphone, if applicable
 - Alter volume to fit changing circumstances during the talk
 - Note audience reaction
3. Volume appropriate to material

E. Modulation

Modulation is intermittent variation of pitch, pace and power of speech. It is related to, but different than volume. It makes listening more enjoyable and is the opposite of monotone. Your modulation should cover the full range of color that the material allows. For example, in the upper range would be excitement, enthusiasm and keen interest in diminishing degree. In middle range is mild interest; while in the lower range is seriousness and solemnity. Avoid theatrical extremes or histrionics. Modulation is the spice of a talk.

1. Variety of power
 - Building to climaxes and stressing main points
 - Volume versus intensity
2. Variety of pace
 - Rate of speaking
 - Moderate pace for main current of talk
 - Speed up through illustrations or less critical material
 - Slow down for main points; pause = total change of pace
3. Variety of pitch
 - Higher pitches indicate excitement and enthusiasm
 - Lower pitches for seriousness, sadness, etc.

4. Modulation to fit thought or emotion
 - Do not modulate simply for the sake of variety, make appropriate variation
 - May make extemporaneous adjustments as you go based on audience reactions

F. Pausing

- Pausing is essential to a good presentation. Without pauses meaning is often obscured and the main points do not make a lasting impression.
 - Pauses give you confidence and poise, permit you to breathe properly, and allow you to compose yourself at difficult points in a presentation.
 - Proper pausing indicates that you are in control of the presentation, that you are not unduly nervous, and that you are saying something worth remembering.
 - Allow time in your outline for pausing. It is part of the material.
1. Pausing for punctuation
 - For clarity of thought
 - Pause at punctuation (commas, periods, colons etc.)
 2. Pausing for change in thought
 - Transitions from one main point to another should be separated by pauses
 - Usually longer than punctuation pauses, but should not be overdone
 3. Pausing for emphasis
 - Before and after significant points
 - Do not overdue pausing or significance is lost
 4. Pause when circumstances require it
 - Interruptions or disturbances

G. Sense Stress

Sense stress is used in combination with modulation to emphasize words or phrases (thoughts) in such a way as to convey accurate meaning and to indicate their relative importance.

1. Thought-conveying words stressed
 - Recognizing those words that convey the meaning, and, by proper stress (emphasis), making them stand out in relation to the words around them.
 - Accomplished by:
 - Variation in volume (greater or lesser)
 - More intensity or felling
 - Lower tone, Higher pitch
 - Increasing/decreasing pace
 - Pausing, gestures and facial expressions
2. Principal ideas or points stressed

