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# Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

## Level 1 Project



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# Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

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## About Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

You hold within you the most powerful tools to succeed as a public speaker. Recognizing when to raise or lower your voice, how to use silence to add impact, and the power of movement and gestures to leave an impression on an audience are fundamental skills that, when developed, can bring any type of content to life.

## About Project Resources

This project includes 3 resources. This project includes 3 resources. You can view and print the evaluation resources or review the tools provided to support the successful completion of your assignment.

Every project in Pathways includes resources that are always found in the first section. Watch for references to the Research Worksheet and Speech Outline Worksheet as you work through your learning.

An interactive version of the Project Checklist can also be found in the Complete Your Assignment section of each project. An interactive, digital speech evaluation form is available on Base Camp for your convenience as well as that of your evaluator. You will find a tool to send a link to both the digital and downloadable and printable versions of the evaluation form for your speech directly from the Complete Your Project section in every project.

**Project Checklist**

**Evaluation Resources**

**Speech Profile**

# Part 1: Introduction

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**In Part 1, you will find an introduction to the project, your assignment, an activity to assess your current skills, and the project competencies. Review each section below for more information.**

## Introduction

In this section, you will find an introduction to how vocal variety and body language can combine to make the delivery of any speech extraordinary.

## Complete Know-Wonder-Learned

This activity will help you think about what you already know about using your voice, how much you understand about the impact of gestures, and what you wonder about using body language to communicate.

## Learn From Others

As you spend more time in Toastmasters club meetings and work through your Level 1 projects, you have the opportunity to observe other speakers. Pay attention to the vocal variety and body language of the speakers you admire.

Outside your club meetings, seek out speakers or videos of speakers, including the Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. Every presenter can be your teacher as long as you are willing to learn.

# Introduction and Assignment

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## Introduction

An outstanding public speaker is very engaging. These people make you forget where you are and what you were thinking before they took the stage. They are intriguing, entertaining, and interesting, and in the end, you gain from what they share with you, even if it is just a funny story.

Body language is the nonverbal expression of emotions, feelings, and ideas. Your posture, movement, position, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions all contribute to the message you send when you speak.

Aside from delivering a well-crafted speech, compelling speakers take full advantage of their voices and movement.

## Your Assignment

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to practice using vocal variety or body language to enhance a speech.

**Overview:** Learn or review the importance of vocal variety and body language. Present a 5- to 7-minute speech on any topic at a club meeting. The primary focus of the evaluation is your vocal variety or your body language and gestures. You will identify the skills you are working on for your evaluator before you deliver your speech and be evaluated on those skills.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



**Video:** Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



**Interactive Activity:** Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



**Resource:** Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



**Weblink:** Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the [Project Checklist](#).

# Learning in Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

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## Assess and Reflect

To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

## Know

**For example:** I know the importance of understanding body language.

## Wonder

**For example:** I wonder how to effectively adjust pitch, tone, volume, and pace to emphasize different sections of a speech.

## Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Recognize the impact of vocal variety on audience members' reception of a presentation.
- Identify changes in pitch, tone, volume, and pace when listening to a speaker.
- Effectively adjust pitch, tone, volume, and pace to emphasize different sections of a speech.
- Use vocal variety to enhance a speech.
- Understand how body language expresses emotion and attitude.
- Recognize the body language used when speaking publicly.

## Part 2: Vocal Variety

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In Part 2, you will find an introduction to vocal variety. Review each section below for more information.

### Using Your Voice

In this section, you will learn how to use your voice to engage your audience and deliver your message with impact.

### Pitch, Tone, Pace, and Volume

Vocal variety is made up of pitch, tone, pace, and volume. In this section you will find a practice activity that can help you warm up your vocal cords and extend your vocal range.



#### Watch an Expert

This section includes a video taken from a winning speech delivered at the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® that demonstrates an excellent use of vocal variety.

## Introduction to Vocal Variety

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Vocal variety is more than sound or quality. It is how a speaker uses silence and pace to build tension or add impact. Each presenter has a unique way of varying their voice. The variations are components of vocal variety.

Specifically, vocal variety is made up of pitch, tone, volume, and pace. When you present a speech, effective use of vocal variety is essential to connect you with audience members and make every word impactful.

### Pitch

The pitch of your voice is how high or low it sounds. While there is no absolute correct pitch for public speaking, it can be helpful to extend your pitch.

This is particularly important for individuals with a narrow range who may sound monotonous. When a speaker sounds monotonous, it means the pitch of their voice is always the same. Accomplished speakers often have a wide range in pitch.

Try this exercise to extend your pitch.

## Practice Scales

### Move in Increments

This exercise is much like a musical exercise on the piano. You will practice sounds that have a lower pitch or note, moving in increments to a higher-sounding pitch or note.

### Learn Your Range

The goal is to understand your comfortable range for speaking from the low end to the high end. Once you know your current range, you can begin to practice and possibly extend your natural range.

### Be Comfortable

Always keep your practice within your comfort zone. If a pitch feels uncomfortably high or low, stop and begin again.

## Start Low

### Go Up in Increments

For your first practice, use the “ahh” sound. Start at a low pitch and slowly go up the scale in increments from the low pitch to a higher pitch.

### Notice the Movement

Notice how it feels like your voice comes from your chest when you are at a low pitch and moves up to feel like it is coming from your head when you're up at a high pitch.

### Take Your Time

Take your time on each pitch and listen to the incremental changes in your voice.



### **Be Gentle**

Be gentle while slightly pushing the top or bottom of your range. Try to increase the range a bit each time you do the scales.

### **Repeat**

Repeat a few times and then reverse direction, going from head (higher pitch) to chest (lower pitch). Repeat using other vowel sounds such as “eee” or “ohh.”

## **Broaden Your Range**

### **Practice Often**

For your first practice, use the “ahh” sound. Start at a low pitch and slowly go up the scale in increments from the low pitch to a higher pitch.

### **Vary Your Voice**

The broader your range, the easier it will be for you to vary your voice as you speak.

## **Tone**

Your tone is the emotion behind the sound of your voice. It is the quality that tells an audience how you feel about the words you are saying. Your tone will tell the audience when you are happy, sad, excited, or any number of emotions you can have about the material you are conveying. Tone is also used in some languages including Mandarin, Igbo, and Navajo to distinguish words.

## **Volume**

When you speak, your volume affects many things. First and foremost, your volume impacts the ability of the audience to hear you. When your voice is too quiet for the room or setting, your audience will struggle. If you tend to speak in a loud, booming voice, audience members may be too distracted to listen to the content of your speech.

## **Emphasis**

Your volume can be a tool used to emphasize words or sections of your speech. Shouting in the middle of a speech with an otherwise consistent volume can have an impact—a whisper may be even more powerful.

Achieving the best volume level for each speech takes practice and feedback. Outstanding public speakers practice volume levels to make sure they can be heard and to make effective use of the loudness or softness of their voice.

## Pace

A speaker's pace is the speed at which they speak. A speaker whose pace is too fast is difficult to understand. Speakers who tend to speak at a slow or plodding pace often lose audience members' interest in their speech.

Like the other forms of vocal variety, a speaker's pace can create or enhance emotion in audience members and add to the overall quality of a presentation.



Watch as Mike Carr, the 2020 World Champion of Public Speaking, delivers a part of his winning speech. Pay attention to how he uses pace, volume, and even silence to tell his story and engage the audience.

# Part 3: Body Language

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**In Part 3, you will find an introduction to body language. Review each section below for more information.**

## Stance and Movement

In this section, you will learn about the many components of body language, including stance and movement. Where a speaker chooses to stand on the stage or in the room when they begin speaking can have an impact on how their audience perceives them. How and when they move can change the trajectory of a speech or help them deliver a lasting message.

## Gestures

You will find information about the ways speakers can use their bodies, their hands, even their facial expressions to impact the success of a speech. Simple changes in the way a speaker moves or gestures can have a profound impact.



### Watch an Expert

This section includes a video taken from a winning speech delivered at the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® that demonstrates an excellent use of body language and gestures.

# Introduction to Body Language

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When you present a speech, effective body language is an essential tool in building credibility and connecting with your listeners. Appropriate gestures focus your audience on you and your message. Your body language can enhance your communication or undermine your message.

Acceptable gestures can vary widely between cultures. An innocuous gesture in one culture can be inflammatory in another. Because of this, you must be aware of cultural differences when planning body language in your presentations.

## Posture

How you carry yourself when you speak communicates a strong visual message to an audience. Proper posture helps you breathe well and effectively project your voice. Proper posture includes head held high with chin up slightly, back straight, shoulders squared, chest out, and stomach in.

## Stance

When standing, your stance is the way you position your body. Practice your stance by standing with your knees relaxed, feet shoulder-width apart, and shoulders squared.

## Position

Practice in front of a mirror, with a friend, or with a mentor. Adjust your position until you see the message you want to communicate reflected back to you in the mirror. The best position will always be what feels natural and comfortable.

## Movement

When you present in person and if you are physically able, movement adds energy and variety to your presentation. Changing your position or location by stepping out from behind the lectern during a speech is the most visible kind of physical action you can perform.

When your presentation is remote, try using different parts of the space captured by your video.

A speaker's gestures can suggest very precise meaning to an audience. To be effective, a speaker's gestures must be purposeful—even when they are performed without conscious thought. Gestures must support a speaker's words, as well as the meaning behind the message.

**There are four types of effective gestures.**

### Descriptive Gestures

Descriptive gestures indicate position, location, or anything tactical. For example, use your hands to specify a number of objects.

## Emphatic Gestures

Emphatic, or emblematic, gestures are culturally specific, though some are universal such as nodding and shrugging. Emphatic movements underscore strong emotion such as earnestness and conviction. Placing your hand on your heart in many cultures communicates a powerful belief in your message.

## Representational Gestures

Representational, or suggestive, gestures include movements that give information about what a speaker is doing. For example, a speaker may use their hands to suggest chopping, throwing, or picking something up. Suggestive movements are symbols of thoughts and emotions. An open palm can suggest giving or receiving ideas or a tangible item.

## Prompting Gestures

Prompting, or pantomime, gestures are movements that demonstrate an action a speaker would like audience members to take. For example, a speaker might ask for a show of hands to answer a question. In this case, the speaker would raise their own hand to encourage audience members to contribute feedback.



This section includes a video taken from a winning speech delivered at the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking® that demonstrates an excellent use of body language and gestures.

## Part 4: Plan Your Presentation

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In Part 4, you will go through the steps to complete your project, including Assess Your Skills—After. See each section below for more information.

### Review the Evaluation Resource

The planning of this speech is unique. As a speaker, you have choices to make about your evaluation before you begin. You are always welcome and encouraged to share your goals and/or the skills you are working on with your evaluator. In this project, you are required to share your choices up front, so the evaluator knows which areas of the evaluation resource to focus on when you speak.

You can choose to ask your evaluator to focus on your body language or your vocal variety. If you are an experienced speaker, you may choose to focus on both, but keep in mind it is a lot to ask to excel at both early in your Toastmasters journey.

### Meet With an Experienced Member

Whether you are comfortable making decisions about your evaluation or not, there are members of your club who are there to help you succeed. Take the time to speak with a friend, mentor, your evaluator, or the Vice President Education to answer any questions you may have about the assignment or your upcoming evaluation.

### Extend Your Learning

Take your time and be sure you are comfortable with the concepts in this project before you give your presentation. Look for more examples, share concerns, and build your comfort level with the use of your voice and body language when delivering a speech.

### About Your Evaluation

If you choose, your evaluator may use a speech profile to evaluate your vocal variety when you present your speech. The Speech Profile resource is designed to identify vocal variety skills you use effectively and those that can be improved.

You may also choose to use the evaluation resource designed for this project, which will include scores for both vocal variety and body language.

The evaluation you choose is up to you. Consider what will bring the most value to you as a speaker and help you progress the skills that are most important to you.

## Review and Apply

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Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- In what ways can you use vocal variety to express emotion?
- Describe how tone can be used to change the meaning of a sentence.
- Why is it important to consider your volume when you speak?
- In what ways can body language express emotion?
- How can facial expressions enhance the content of your message?
- Why is it important to be aware of cultural differences in the use of body language?

# Complete Your Assignment

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## Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

### This project includes:

- A 5- to 7-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education.

Write your speech.

Decide the focus of your evaluation. You can select vocal variety, body language, or both.

Rehearse your speech.

If possible, have your mentor, a friend, or family member video record your speech. If you do not have access to a recording device, perform your speech in front of a mirror.

Email, post to feedback, or print your chosen evaluation resource. If you know who your evaluator will be, send it directly. Always prepare for a change by having the resource ready to add to chat, email, or hand to the evaluator at the start of your Toastmasters meeting.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

## Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

There are two evaluation resources available in this project. If you would like to focus on your vocal variety alone, choose the Speech Profile. Refer to the digital project resources for additional information.

### Speech Profile

For an evaluation that focuses on body language, choose the Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language Resource.

## Evaluation Criteria – Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary   4 – Excels   3 – Accomplished   2 – Emerging   1 – Developing

### Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

### Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

### Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

### Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures



### Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

### Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

### Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

### Purpose Clearly Defined

- 5 – Both the general and specific purposes were well-defined and met during the speech
- 4 – Both the general purpose and the specific purpose were well-defined and one was met during the speech
- 3 – Both the general and specific purposes of the speech were defined
- 2 – The general purpose was clear, but the specific purpose was missing.
- 1 – Neither the general or specific purposes were clearly defined

## Speech Profile – Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary   4 – Excels   3 – Accomplished   2 – Emerging   1 – Developing

### Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

### Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
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- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

### **Eye Contact**

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

### **Gestures**

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

### **Audience Awareness**

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

### **Comfort Level**

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

### **Interest**

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

### **Unintentional Movement**

- 5 – Every movement is purposeful and enhances the speech
- 4 – Most or all movements appear intentional
- 3 – Unintentional movement is limited and rarely noticeable
- 2 – Unintentional movement detracts from speech
- 1 – Unintentional movement is highly distracting

### **Purposeful Movement**

- 5 – Speech is an exemplary example of the effective use of body language
- 4 – Speech is enhanced and improved by purposeful choices of movement
- 3 – Speech is strengthened by purposeful choices of movement
- 2 – Some movements appear purposeful
- 1 – Few movements appear purposeful

## Part 5: Reflect on Your Learning

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In Part 5, you will go through the steps to complete your project, including the Learned section of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

### Prepare and Practice

To prepare for the speech in this project, it is important to practice your delivery. Record yourself. Deliver the speech in front of a mirror. Ask friends and family to watch you practice your speech and listen to your delivery. Take feedback and apply it before you ever get to your Toastmasters club meeting to make your presentation.

### Complete the Learned Section of Know-Wonder-Learned

Once you have completed all the work in this project, take a moment to consider what you learned and add it to the Learned column. Completing this activity will help you solidify your knowledge and support you as you consider what you might like to learn in the future.

### Complete Your Project

- Know-Wonder-Learned activity
- Careful review of the Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language project
- Deliver your Speech
- Receive your speech evaluation by a fellow club member

# Complete Your Project

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Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

## Learned

**For example:** I learned how to enhance my message with gestures.

# Before You Move On

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## **Review Your Learning**

Review all the material in this project.

## **Deliver Your Speech**

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

## **Receive Your Evaluation**

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

## **Assess and Reflect**

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

## **Congratulations!**

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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