**Voice/Diction**

*by Casey Greenwood*

**Objective:**

Students will demonstrate their ability to use their voice effectively by performing a performance piece for a classmate, incorporating projection and diction.

**Materials needed:**

“Hunger Games” district papers, tribute/sponsor cards, vocal quality sponsor number key, Drive-through video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-2QpiNNyKk>

**Preparation:**

On sheets of paper, write a district number (1-12).

On index cards, write the following:

Tribute

Sponsor (and a number 1-12)

Vocality key:

1. Whisper
2. Shout
3. Mumble
4. Speak quickly
5. Speak slowly
6. Low-pitched
7. High-pitched
8. Elongated shouts
9. Thick accent
10. Speak softly
11. Mumble
12. Breathy tone

**Hook:**

“Hunger Games” activity. Place papers with different districts written on them in various locations throughout the room. On these district papers will be two index cards, one with “tribute” written on it, and one with “sponsor” and a number written on it.

After choosing a district (roughly two per district), the students will each pick a card (extras can also be tributes. Only one sponsor per district). Have a code of numbers to yourself with a vocal quality assigned to it, such as “yell,” “whisper,” or “high-pitched.” Match the vocal quality to the sponsor number.

Have the sponsors gather in the center of the room and the tributes close their eyes. The sponsors will watch the teacher hide or place an object in the room and the tributes will have to wander around to try to find it with their eyes closed. Sponsors will instruct their tribute (saying their district number before giving instructions each time so no one gets confused) of where to go to find the object, but they can only speak with their assigned vocality.

**Step 1**

*Transition*—Ask the students what was difficult about the activity. Ask questions such as: What were some of the obstacles you encountered? How do you think these obstacles could be avoided? Answers may include by speaking louder or more clearly.

**Step 2**

*Discussion*: What does it mean to project? Is it different than yelling? How so? How do you get that kind of power when you speak? Answers may include using your diaphragm, breath control, etc. What do you do if you need/want to speak softly in your performance piece but still need to project?

**Step 3**

*Transition:* Have the students lie down in an open space. Have them take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly. With each breath in, have them breathe out differently, getting louder/more powerful each time. For example, have them say “tssss” as they breathe out. Other exhaling ideas include sighing, counting as a group for as long as possible before running out of air, and saying “HA” (using up all air in a single short syllable. Repeat and get louder/more powerful each time). Incorporate vocalized exhaling that will help the students to determine their lung capacity, projection ability, and vocal range. Have students hum at various pitches until they find a note that resonates and feels the best. Have the students pick a line from their performance piece and repeat it. Next, have them say it with as much vocal power as possible. This is best achieved when the student is speaking in his or her true tone or range. Do it once more, trying to be even bigger.

**Step 5**

*Assessment:* Have the students stand up in a circle and perform a line from their piece as powerfully as possible.

**Step 6**

*Checking for Understanding:* What made you feel the most power in your voice during the activity? When was it easiest to be loud? When was it hardest? How could applying proper breathing have helped the sponsors in the “Hunger Games” activity? Besides projecting, what else could have helped you to understand what your sponsor was trying to say? Answers may include diction, speaking slower, etc.

**Step 7**

*Model:* Show a video clip of an incomprehensible fast-food drive through experience. Ask the students why it was difficult to understand him? What could he have done to be more clear? Answers may include annunciating and speaking more slowly.

**Step 8**

*Individual practice:* Have the students practice incorporating projection and diction in their piece.

**Step 9**

*Group practice/Assessment:* Have the students perform their piece for a partner, who should comment on how the student can improve his or her projection and/or diction. Have them perform for a new partner if there is time, incorporating the notes his or her previous partner gave.