



# INTRODUCTION TO VOCAL VARIETY AND BODY LANGUAGE

LEVEL 1 PROJECT



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**TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL**

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## PART 1: OVERVIEW OF VOCAL VARIETY AND BODY LANGUAGE

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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

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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. With time and practice, every Toastmaster can become skilled at using their voice, gestures, and body language to inspire an audience.

## YOUR ASSIGNMENT

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**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. Your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or crafted in any style that appeals to you and supports your speech content.

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 on page 12.**

# ASSESS YOUR SKILLS



Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.

Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

**5**  
EXEMPLARY

**4**  
EXCEL

**3**  
ACCOMPLISHED

**2**  
EMERGING

**1**  
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize the impact of vocal variety.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am able to identify changes in pitch, tone, volume, and pace when listening to a speaker.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am able to effectively adjust pitch, tone, volume, and pace to emphasize different sections of a speech.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize the importance of understanding body language.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am able to enhance my message with gestures.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I am able to align my body language with my message.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

# COMPETENCIES

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**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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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, interesting, and in the end, you gain from what they shared with you, even if it is just a funny story. Aside from presenting a well-crafted speech, compelling speakers take full advantage of their voices.

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 monotone. Monotone means the pitch of a voice is always the same. Accomplished speakers often have a wide range in pitch.

Try this exercise to extend your pitch.

### Practice Scales

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.

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.

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

### Start Low

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.

### 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

Extend your range by completing this exercise and reaching higher and lower than you normally would. You will need to exercise your voice often and over time to make any noticeable changes. 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.

**Volume:** When you speak, your volume affects many things. First and foremost, your volume impacts your ability to be heard. When your voice is too quiet for the room or setting, your audience will struggle to hear you. 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.

## PART 3: BODY LANGUAGE

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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. 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.

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.

### 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. Those with physical concerns can practice in front of a mentor or friend and ask what appears more confident. The best position will always be what feels natural and comfortable.

### MOVEMENT

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.

# GESTURES

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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 unconsciously. 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.

## **Suggestive Gestures**

Suggestive, or representational, 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.

## PART 4: PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

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### PREPARE FOR YOUR EVALUATION

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.

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 more experienced member to answer any question you may have about the assignment or your upcoming evaluation.

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.

### REVIEW AND APPLY

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Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions on the screen. 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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Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech.

**Review:** Return to page 3 to review your assignment.



**Organize:** Use the Project Checklist on page 12 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

**Schedule:** Work with the Vice President Education to schedule your speech.



**Prepare:** Prepare for your evaluation. Review the Speech Profile on pages 17-18 and share it with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your Speech Profile online.

## ABOUT YOUR EVALUATION

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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.



## PART 5: COMPLETE YOUR PROJECT

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The speech for this project is one of the most 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.

## BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

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Be sure you have completed all components of this project. Once you do, it will show “Complete” in your transcript on Base Camp.

- ▶ Review all the material in this project.
- ▶ Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.
- ▶ Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.
- ▶ Respond to every statement on the “Assess Your Skills—After” screen. This project has seven statements. (When you are done, you will see a comparison of your responses to the “Assess Your Skills—Before” screen.)
- ▶ 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.

# PROJECT CHECKLIST

## Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

**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. Your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or crafted in any style that appeals to you and supports your speech content.

**This project includes:**

- ▶ A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

- Schedule your speech with the Vice President Education.

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- Write your speech.

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

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- Rehearse your speech.

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- After you have completed all components of the assignment, log in to complete the second portion of your self-assessment on the "Assess Your Skills—After" screen.

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# EVALUATION FORM

## Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title \_\_\_\_\_

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project is for the member to practice using vocal variety or body language to enhance a speech.

### **Notes for the Evaluator**

During the completion of this project, the member has spent time learning about and practicing their body language, including gestures and other nonverbal communication along with their vocal variety, including pace, tone, pitch, and volume.

About this speech:

- ▶ The member will present a well-organized speech on any topic.
- ▶ Watch for the member's awareness of their intentional and unintentional movement and body language. Note distracting movements as well as movements that enhance the speech.
- ▶ The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style the member chooses.
- ▶ Use this evaluation for speakers who have indicated they want to be evaluated on body language or body language and vocal variety. If the member has indicated they only want to be evaluated on vocal variety, please use the Speech Profile available on Base Camp.

### **General Comments**

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

## EVALUATION FORM – Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING	
<b>Clarity:</b> Spoken language is clear and is easily understood					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Vocal Variety:</b> Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Eye Contact:</b> Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Gestures:</b> Uses physical gestures effectively					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Audience Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Comfort Level:</b> Appears comfortable with the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Interest:</b> Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Unintentional Movement:</b> Unintentional movement is limited and rarely noticeable					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Purposeful Movement:</b> Speech is strengthened by purposeful choices of movement					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

**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

**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

# SPEECH PROFILE

## Introduction to Vocal Variety and Body Language

If you choose to only be evaluated on vocal variety, this is different from other evaluations in Toastmasters Pathways. For this evaluation, you will complete a speech profile. The Speech Profile resource is designed to identify vocal variety skills the speaker uses effectively and those that can be improved.

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title \_\_\_\_\_

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this project is to practice using vocal variety or body language to enhance a speech. This member has chosen to only be evaluated on vocal variety for their speech.

### **Notes for the Evaluator**

During the completion of this project, the member spent time developing or improving their vocal variety.

About this speech:

- ▶ The member will present a well-organized speech on any topic.
- ▶ Listen for how the member uses their voice to communicate and enhance the speech.
- ▶ The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style the member chooses.
- ▶ Use the Speech Profile resource to complete your evaluation.

### **General Comments**

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:



