
Preface

A textbook should be judged by the results it gets, and *Fundamentals of Voice and Articulation*, in the years since its first edition was published in 1953, has worked successfully for an astonishing number of students and teachers. The book earns a space in the *Guinness Book of Records* for being on the market longer than any other textbook in the field of speech communication—more than half a century.

The book is aimed primarily at people who want to improve their speech and voices. It can be used by the nonspecialist for whom a course in voice and diction/articulation might be the only contact with the speech communication area. It can be used as readily by the specialist—the communication arts or drama/theater major.

It has also been used successfully in many special, nonacademic, three-day seminars or weeklong crash courses in voice and speech improvement for businesspeople, executives, lawyers, doctors, and entrepreneurs. And it's been popular with individuals not enrolled in any kind of class, but who are working for vocal improvement “on their own.”

Whatever the background of the student, the book's practical, nontechnical approach sets specific goals and targets for anyone interested in developing effective voice and speech habits. The student and the instructor are told in precise and “reader-friendly” language how to reach those goals and targets.

A lot of textbooks are harder to read than they must have been to write. This one, I sincerely hope, will be enjoyable.

Drill material and exercises, as always, have been updated, augmented, and enlivened. A few, having outlived their usefulness, have been consigned to the shredder.

There are numerous colorful and relevant quotations from contemporary celebrities, ranging from rock stars to Olympic champions, from movie and TV personalities to politicians. Noncontemporaries are represented, too, but in most cases their quoted wisdom is deliberately chosen from the less familiar.

Many of the exercises in the book, in one form or another, have been tested for several decades. They've worked successfully for thousands of human beings—the majority of them college students—but also major generals, grandmothers, baby boomers, nonboomers, and CEOs.

A wise, anonymous quotation says, “The most wasted day of all is the day on which we have not laughed.” In other words, “He who laughs, lasts.”

Drill material, even when it's serious, is lively. And much of it is fun. I am grateful to the anonymous genius who coined this one: “There's no fun in medicine, but there's lots of medicine in fun. Fun can help recharge our mental, emotional, and physical batteries. Fun can help you achieve longevity.”

In my more than 45 years of teaching experience, I've rarely found a student who resisted humor in drill material, but I've known many students and instructors who dislike intensely the dreary and unimaginative material found in many voice and articulation textbooks. Two examples: *Mary read the classified ads* and *John said “Hello” to Tiger, his cat*. This kind of stuffiness is guaranteed to put an average class into deep hypnosis within 15 minutes. And it certainly won't fire students with enthusiasm or foster voice and speech improvement. There are always, of course, individuals who object to any kind of humor in academia. George Saintsbury says it well: “Nothing is more curious than the almost savage hostility that humor excites in those who lack it.”

Regardless of whether students want to work on their own or take the course, the book will help them acquire better voice and speech. In a sense, as one authority says, “All speech ought to be conversational.”

NEW TO THE 15TH EDITION

A new section about articulation entitled “Potpourri” invites students to review and practice sounds from our language with a light and precise touch.

Focus on studying language definitions and pronunciation has been revamped to reflect alternate search tools like Smartphones and Google.

All examples have been updated with contemporary pop culture personalities to strike stronger resonance with today’s students.

Statistics have been updated to reflect 2010 Census results.

In each chapter:

Chapter 1, “A Preview,” addresses the not infrequently asked questions “Why should *I* take a course in voice and articulation? What’s in it for me? What’s the payoff?” It also analyzes the ingredients of effective voice and speech, and it offers a few suggestions and comments about stage fright, delivery, and listening.

Chapter 2, “Sound Off! The Beginnings of Voice,” discusses good breathing habits and the mechanics and production of sound.

Chapter 3, “Put Your Best Voice Forward! Quality,” details how a pleasant quality is developed, and it takes a head-on approach to such problems as breathiness, stridency, harshness, nasality, throatiness, and hoarseness.

Chapter 4, “Speak Up! Loudness,” focuses on how to project your voice energetically while avoiding vocal abuse.

Chapter 5, “Articulate!” introduces the student to the subject of articulation and provides practical warm-up exercises for the articulatory mechanisms.

Chapter 6, “Conserve Your Consonants,” describes the correct manner of producing all English consonants and of achieving clear, distinct, intelligible speech.

Chapter 7, “Varnish Your Vowels,” concentrates on the correct production of all English vowels.

Chapter 8, “Discipline Your Diphthongs,” suggests how to make acceptable diphthongs.

Chapter 9, “Be Varied and Vivid—Expressiveness,” emphasizes acquiring a well-pitched and colorful voice and speaking with animation and spontaneity.

Appendix A looks at pronunciation and vocabulary and includes sound symbols, 150 commonly mispronounced words, and correct use of the dictionary.

Appendix B includes suggested checklists for every assignment given in the text. Students may use the checklists as guides and for help in self-evaluation. Instructors will find them valuable for pinpointing specific voice and speech problems.

Appendix C contains a voice and speech profile and analysis charts. The instructor may use these to evaluate students. Students may use them to appraise themselves or other speakers.

TO THE INSTRUCTOR

The generous number of exercises gives the instructor the power of selection. Most important, the instructor should take advantage of the book’s variety and flexibility and *assign material on the basis of individual needs and differences*.

There are obviously far more exercises in the book than any one class will be able to or needs to cover. Nor is it possible to do all 18 assignments.

A comparison is in order: If you do your food shopping in a large grocery store—Safeway, Kroger, or Whole Foods—you don’t buy everything in the store. But the advantage over the corner 7–11 is that you have a lot more stock to choose from.

I’ve used every possible combination of assignments. Here is a basic, suggested outline. It contains all of the essentials but permits options.

- A. *Quality*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **1, 2, 3, 4, or 5**.
- B. *Loudness*. Assignment **6**.

- C. *Consonants*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **7, 8, 9**, or **10**.
- D. *Vowels and diphthongs*. Assignment **11** or **12**. Choose one or both, as needed.
- E. *Expressiveness*. Choose one or more, as needed, from Assignments **13, 14, 15, 16**, or **17**.
- F. *Spontaneity/final oral performance*. Assignment **18**.

One reviewer of a previous edition said, “This book is a pleasure to teach. It celebrates the joy of speech.” I’ve tried to let those words guide me in preparing the new edition.

TO ESL STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS OF ESL STUDENTS

This section will be of most interest to ESL students. Placing it at the end of the preface should not be misconstrued. It’s not an attempt to isolate these students. It’s simply a matter of expediency for all students. There are some colleges and universities in which few ESL students are enrolled. And in others, only a few ESL students are enrolled in Voice and Articulation courses.

IS ENGLISH YOUR SECOND LANGUAGE?

Then, welcome to American English.

There is an old joke: If you speak three languages, you’re trilingual. If you speak two languages, you’re bilingual. If you speak one, you’re American.

Count your blessings. You’re ahead of many of your American friends, because you’re probably bilingual. The chances are, however, that you have an “accent.” And you probably want to lessen or shrink it. You’d like to speak clear, intelligible English. You want to sound like Americans who have good speech.

This textbook will help you. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 deal with articulation, the making of speech sounds. The sounds will be divided into families. For example: **p, b, t, d, k**, and **g** are PLOSIVES.

Do you have difficulty with any of these sounds? If you do, you’ll find useful information and exercises at the end of the section covering plosives. Similarly, if one or two of the glides or fricatives give you a hard time, check the ESL pages at the ends of those sections.

This special material is on designated and easily identifiable, highlighted pages. Also, headings are printed in bold caps. Going back to the plosives, for example:

§ § § CONFUSING [p] AND [b]

Two things that most voice and articulation textbooks rarely mention to ESL students:

1. To improve your English, *think*, as much as possible, not in your native language, but in English. And this isn’t easy!
2. Are you a glutton for punishment? Go to a few American movies, but sit through them two or three times. By the time you finish the third viewing, if rigor mortis hasn’t set in, you’ll comprehend a lot of dialogue that you may have missed the first time around. And you’ll have a better feeling for the intonation and rhythm of our language.

Good luck!

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

The new edition of *Fundamentals of Voice and Articulation* offers resources that will help instructors to teach and students to learn.

The Online Learning Center, www.mhhe.com/mayer15e, offers an updated Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank, which includes teaching strategies, test questions for each chapter, and numerous practice exercises and activities. Students are able to interact with video resources designed to help illustrate material covered in the text as well as practice skills.