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Your voice

You play an amazing instrument, almost certainly without ever having had any training. Your voice is unique, to the point where you can be identified from your voice print. This is because your physiology is unique: the exact configuration of the vocal cords and the resonating chambers in your body, not to mention the habits you have developed over the years in using your vocal toolbox (explained in chapter 7 of this course), create a unique sound.

It may be unique, but is it optimal? Almost certainly not if you haven't done any formal voice work. This is the time to take stock, as you start the process of becoming a master of speaking.

Exercise #1: Get a device to record yourself with. Most smart phones and computers can do this with free or inexpensive apps, or you can get something more specialised like a simple Zoom digital recorder.

Choose a book, ideally a novel rather than a dry textbook. Sit comfortably and read a few pages as you record yourself.



Exercise #2: Playback. Now put on some good quality headphones and listen back. Pay attention to every aspect of your voice and write a description of your voice, using as many adjectives as possible.

Exercise #2: Reflection. Now write a list of your vocal strengths and weaknesses on a sheet of paper.

Check this description with anyone you know well enough to be able to solicit an honest answer. Explain the context of this course and your intention to master speaking skills, and they will hopefully give you a useful second opinion. Sometimes, we may be too hard on ourselves, or we may miss something as we are so familiar with our own sound.

Synthesise the two inputs and then keep this description. You can repeat this exercise at the end of the course to see how far you've come!