

Grade & Proficiency Theory Student Guide

Working in conjunction with grade and proficiency theory guidelines.

Irish Board of Speech & Drama

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Preliminary Grade 1

Learning My Poem

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem and say it from memory. Speak clearly, use a loud voice and have fun sharing it!

Talk About the Poem

Answer some simple questions about your poem.

- 🤔 What do the words mean?
- 😊 How does the poem make you feel?
- ⭐ What is your favourite part?
- 🎯 Who or what is the poem about?

Preliminary Grade 2

Learning My Poem

Share Your Poem

Learn your short poem by heart and say it with a clear, confident voice. Enjoy sharing it with others!

Tell the Story

Tell the story of your poem using your own words.

- 🤔 What happened in the poem?
- 👤 Who is in the poem?
- 🎯 What is the poem about?
- 😊 How do you think the characters feel?

Grade 1

Speaking & Sharing

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem by heart and perform it with a clear, confident voice.

Tell the Story

Tell the story of your poem using your own words.

- 🤔 What happened in the poem?
- 👤 Who are the characters?
- 🎯 What is the poem mainly about?
- 😊 How do the characters feel?

Share About Yourself!

Give a short talk about **yourself** or **a favourite toy or book** that you have brought with you. Speak naturally, as if you are chatting with a friend.

You could talk about:

- 👨‍👩‍👧 Your family
- 🏫 Your school
- 🎨 Your hobbies or favourite activities
- 🧸 Why your toy is special
- 📚 Why you enjoy your book
- ⭐ Your favourite part or something interesting about it

Grade 2

Speaking, Sharing & Learning

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem by heart and perform it with a clear, confident and expressive voice.

Show Your Artwork

Create and share a drawing, painting, collage or model inspired by your poem, explaining how it connects to the poem.

You Could Talk About…

- 👤 The characters in your poem
- 📖 What happens in the story
- 🎯 The main idea or theme
- 💡 Why you chose these colours, pictures or materials
- ⭐ Your favourite part of the poem
- 😊 How does the poem make you feel?
- 💡 Why did you create your artwork this way?
- ⭐ Which part of your artwork matches the poem best?

Organs of Speech

Learn the names of the organs of speech and where they are.

- 👅 Tongue
- 🦷 Teeth
- 👄 Lips
- 🪨 Hard Palate *(the hard roof of your mouth)*
- ☁️ Soft Palate *(the soft part at the back of the roof of your mouth)*
- 📍 Alveolar Ridge *(the bumpy part just behind your top front teeth)*

✏️ Can you name all the organs of speech used for each letter below?

P =	L =
F =	C =

Grade 3

Reading, Speaking & Learning

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem by heart and perform it with a clear, confident and expressive voice.

Read Your Book Out Loud

Remember to:

- 🗣️ Speak clearly
- 😊 Show expression
- 📢 Project your voice
- 👀 Look up often
- 📖 Bring the story to life!

Let's Talk About Your Book

- 🤔 What is your book about?
- 👤 Who are the main characters?
- ⭐ Why did you choose this book?
- 😊 What is your favourite part?
- 💡 Would you recommend this book to someone else? Why?

Vowels & Consonants

What is a Vowel?

A **vowel** is a sound made with **a free flow of air** through your mouth.

The five vowel letters are:

🅰️ A 🇪 E ℹ️ I 🅾️ O 🇺 U

What is a Consonant?

A **consonant** is a sound where the airflow is **stopped or interrupted** by your lips, tongue or teeth.

Examples: B • P • D

Using Pauses

A **pause** is a short stop while speaking.

There are two important types of pause:

> 🌬️ **Breath Pause**
>
> Take a pause when you need to breathe so your speech stays clear and relaxed. Breath pauses are often found at the end of a sentence eg. full stop
>
> 📖 **Sense Pause**
>
> Pause to help your audience understand your meaning; so that your speech makes sense.

You often use a sense pause at a comma, a full stop, an exclamation mark, a question mark

Good pauses make your reading easier to understand and more interesting to listen to.

☀️ My Book

📚 **My book is called** _____

✍️ **It was written by** _____

🌍 **The story takes place** _____

_____

👤 **The main character is** _____

_____

👥 **Other important characters are** _____

_____

📖 Understanding My Book

🎯 **This part of the story is about** _____

_____

_____

⭐ **My favourite part is** _____

_____

_____

😊 **This part of the story made me feel** _____

_____

_____

💡 I chose this book because _____

_____

_____

📚 I would recommend this book because _____

_____

_____

🗣️ Getting Ready to Talk

💬 One interesting thing I would like to tell the examiner is _____

_____

_____

🤔 A question the examiner might ask me is _____

_____

_____

⭐ I feel most confident talking about _____

_____

_____

Grade 4

Reading, Speaking & Learning

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem by heart and perform it with a **clear, confident and expressive voice**. Enjoy bringing your poem to life! 🎭

What is Mime?

Mime is acting without using words. Instead, you tell a story or show an idea using:

- 😊 Facial expressions
- 🙌 Gestures
- 🚶 Body movements

Perform a 1 minute story mime of your choice.

Types of Mime

🎭 **Character Mime**
Pretend to be a different person or character.

Examples: an old woman, a pirate or a wizard.

📖 **Story Mime**
Tell a whole story from start to finish without speaking.

Examples: Little Red Riding Hood, walking a tightrope or losing your keys

Speaking Expressively

Speaking expressively means using your voice in different ways to make your words more interesting and meaningful. You can change:

- ⏱️ **Pace** – speaking faster or slower
- ⬆️ **Pitch** – making your voice higher or lower
- 🎵 **Tone** – the feeling in your voice (happy, sad, excited or serious)
- 📢 **Volume** – speaking louder or quieter

Grade 5

Speaking, Performing & Learning

Share Your Poem

Learn a short poem by heart and perform it with a clear, confident and expressive voice.

Perform Your Character

Choose a character from a book, story or play and perform a short dramatic solo or monologue. Remember to use:

- 🎭 Characterisation – show us who your character is
- 🗣️ Your voice – speak clearly and expressively
- 😊 Facial expressions – show your character's feelings
- 🚶 Movement – move in a way that suits your character
- ⭐ Bring your character to life!

Understanding Your Character

To perform a character well, you need to understand them. Use the prompts below to complete your character chart. You should know:

- 👤 **Who** your character is
- 📖 **Where** they fit into the story
- 👥 **Who** they know and how they relate to others
- 🕰️ **When** and where the story takes place
- 👗 **What** they wear
- 🚶 **How** they move
- 💬 **How** they speak
- 😊 **How** they feel and behave
- 💡 **What** makes your character special

Your character chart will help you organise these ideas and prepare for questions about your performance.

Stage Directions

Stage directions tell an actor **where to move on the stage**.
Stage directions are named from the actor's point of view, not the audience's.

The Nine Main Positions

	⬆️ Upstage Right	⬆️ Upstage Centre	⬆️ Upstage Left	
Exit Right	➡️ Right of Centre	⭐ Centre Stage	⬅️ Left of Centre	**Exit Left**
	⬇️ Downstage Right	⬇️ Downstage Centre	⬇️ Downstage Left	

Examiner/Audience

Knowing your stage directions helps you move confidently and purposefully during your performance.

☀️ My Character Chart

🎭 Meet My Character

👤 **My character's name is** _____

📚 **My character is from** _____

✍️ **The author is** _____

🎂 **My character's age is** _____

🏠 **My character lives** _____

_____

👨‍👩‍👧 **My character's family is** _____

_____

👥 **My character's important relationships are** _____

_____

_____

🌍 My Character's World

🕰️ **The story takes place** _____

_____

👗 **My character would wear** _____

_____

🚶 **My character moves** _____

_____

💬 **My character speaks** _____

_____

😊 **My character feels** _____

_____

💡 What Is My Character Like?

⭐ **Three words that describe my character:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

💡 **My character is special because** _____

_____

_____

🎯 **My character's most important part in the story is** _____

_____

_____

👥 **My character's relationship with other characters affects the story because**

_____

_____

🎭 Bringing My Character to Life

🗣️ **I will use my voice to show** _____

_____

😊 **I will use my facial expressions to show** _____

_____

🚶 **I will use movement to show** _____

_____

⭐ **The most important thing I want my audience to understand about my character is**

_____

_____

🎬 My Stage Directions

🗺️ Can You Find Your Way Around the Stage?

Remember: Stage directions are named from the **actor's point of view**.

🎭 My Stage Map

✏️ _____	✏️ _____	✏️ _____
✏️ _____	⭐ **CENTRE STAGE**	✏️ _____
✏️ _____	✏️ _____	✏️ _____

👀 **The examiner and audience are in front of you**

🎬 Stage Direction Challenge!

Can you follow the directions?

1. 🚶 Start at **Centre Stage**.
2. ⬆️ Move to **Upstage Centre**.
3. ↘️ Move to **Downstage Right**.
4. ↖️ Move to **Downstage Left**.
5. ⭐ Return to **Centre Stage**.
6. 🚪 Exit **Stage Left**.

🌟 Now Try Your Own!

Write three stage directions for a partner to follow.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

🎭 Can your partner follow all three correctly?

Grade 6

Theory

Understanding and Performing a Poem

Understanding Your Poem

When you perform a poem, you need to understand:

- 💡 What the poem is about
- 😊 How the poet wants you to feel
- 📝 How the poet's words create meaning and mood (be able to talk about both)

Learn About the Poet

It can help to find out:

- ✍️ Who the poet is/was
- 📅 What was happening in their life
- 📝 The topics they liked to write about
- 💡 Why they wrote the poem

Knowing this background can help you understand the poem better and perform it with more feeling.

Sight Reading

- 💭 To be a good sight reader, you must look through the piece, thinking about its **meaning, mood and any difficult words**
- 🧍 When you begin, announce the **title and poet**, use good posture and hold the page so the audience can see your face.
- 🗣️ Speak clearly and at a steady pace.
- 🎭 Use expression, character voices and pauses where appropriate.
- 👀 Make natural eye contact with your audience.
- ⭐ If you make a mistake, keep going confidently!

Remember: read naturally, tell the story and bring the words to life.

Using Your Voice

Pitch

Pitch means how **high or low** your voice sounds. We all have a natural speaking pitch, but we can change it to match the poem.

🔻 Low Pitch	🔹 Middle Pitch	🔺 High Pitch
😢 Sadness 😡 Deep anger 😔 Worry or despair 🤫 Secrets or mystery	🗣️ Used for normal speaking 📖 Best for most poems and stories	😄 Excitement 😲 Surprise 😨 Fear 😠 Some kinds of anger

Changing your pitch helps bring your performance to life.

Project Your Voice

Projection means using your voice so that **everyone can hear you clearly**, even people sitting at the very back of the room.

✅ Good projection involves a mental and physical process:

Physical	Mental
🫁 Breathe deeply 🚶 Stand tall with good posture 👀 Look towards your audience	💭 Be aware of the size of your audience 🎯 Imagine sending your voice to the person furthest away 🗣️ Project your voice upwards and outwards

Don’t Shout!

Shouting is **not** the same as projecting.

🔊 **Projecting** = a clear, strong voice that is easy to hear

📣 **Shouting** = a loud voice that can sound harsh and make your words harder to understand

The goal is to make every word clear, not just loud!

🌟 My Poetry Detective Page

☀️ Exploring My Poem

📖 **My poem is entitled**

_____

✍️ **It was written by the poet**

_____

🤔 **My poem is about**

_____

_____

_____

😊 **The poet wanted the listener to feel** _____

_____

💡 **The poet used words and phrases such as**

_____

_____

_____

_____

to create this mood.

✍️ My Poet

📝 **The poet,** _____, **is/was** _____

_____

📝 **He/She often wrote poems about** _____

_____

💡 **This poem was written to show, explain or inspire**

_____

_____

_____

Grade 7

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Learning

Let's Talk About Your Dramatic Scene

Be ready to discuss your character from your dramatic performance. Look back on the prompts and information on character attributes in Grade 5.

🤔 Who is your character?
📖 How does your character fit into the story?
👥 How does your character relate to the other characters?
🕰️ When and where does the story take place?
💡 How did these things help you perform your character

Using Inflection

Inflection is the way your voice glides up or down to add meaning to your words.

⬆️ Rising Inflection	⬇️ Falling Inflection
Use a rising inflection when: ❓ Asking a question 📖 Beginning a new idea or stanza ➡️ Continuing a thought into the next line (enjambment)	Use a falling inflection when: ✅ Finishing a thought 💬 Making a statement 🎯 Giving a command 😊 Showing confidence or certainty

Remember:

🗣️ **Pitch** is how high or low your voice is.

🎵 **Inflection** is the way your voice moves up or down while you speak.

Although they work together, they are not the same thing.

What is Mime?

Mime is acting without using words. Instead, you tell a story or show an idea using:

- 😊 Facial expressions
- 🙌 Gestures
- 🚶 Body movements

🧤 Different Types of Mime

🎭Character Mime
Pretend to be a different person or character.
Examples: an old woman, a pirate, a superhero or a wizard.

📖 Story Mime
Tell a whole story without speaking.
Examples: Little Red Riding Hood, walking a tightrope, losing your keys or going on a treasure hunt

💼 Occupational Mime
Act out a job or an activity.
Examples: fixing a car, baking a cake, walking a dog or being a firefighter

🎩 Pantomime Blanche
Pretend an object is there when it isn't. Draw it in the air with your hands, then use it as if it were real.
Examples: putting on an invisible hat, looking in an invisible mirror or opening an invisible door

💭 Abstract Mime
Show a feeling, emotion, or idea using only movement.
Examples: happiness, fear, excitement, the wind or even a colour

☀️ My Character

🎭 My character is

📚 My character is from

👤 My character is

💬 My character's personality is

❤️ My character's feelings change because

🌍 My Character's World

🕰️ The story takes place

👥 My character's relationships are

🎯 **My character's most important job in the story is**

💡 **To perform this character well, I will**

🎭 My Performance

🗣️ **I will use my voice to show**

😊 **I will use my facial expressions to show**

🚶 **I will use my movement to show**

⭐ **One thing I want my audience to remember is**

Grade 8

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Learning

What is a Lyric?

A **lyric** is a short poem that expresses a person's feelings, thoughts or emotions.

🎵 The word *lyric* comes from the **lyre**, an ancient musical instrument that was used to accompany poems.

When performing a lyric:

❤️ Understand the feelings in the poem.
🗣️ Use your voice to express those feelings.
🎵 Vary your tone, pitch and volume.
🌱 Keep your performance natural and controlled.
🪷Display delicacy and restraint.

Remember: **You are telling the poet's story and feelings, not your own.**

Rate & Pace

🗣️ What is Rate?

Rate is the overall speed at which you speak.

A comfortable speaking rate is usually around **140–180 words per minute**, but this can change depending on the subject matter, language, mood and technical ability.

⏱️ What is Pace?

Pace is how you change your speed during a performance.

You should not speak at the same speed all the way through.

🐢 **Slower pace** can show:	🐇 **Faster pace** can show:
😔 Sadness 💭 Reflection 😌 Calmness ⚠️ Seriousness	😃 Excitement 😨 Fear ⚡ Danger 🎉 Happiness

⭐ **Remember!**

Rate = your overall speaking speed.
Pace = how you change your speed to create meaning and mood.
Changing your pace keeps your audience interested and helps them understand what your character is feeling.

Using Pauses

A pause is a **short, purposeful stop** when you are speaking.

Pauses are not empty spaces. They can help you:

- 💡 Make meaning clear
- ⭐ Emphasise an important word
- 😮 Build tension
- ❤️ Show emotion
- 🎭 Create atmosphere

There are three important pauses you need to know.

Suspensive Pause/Enjambment

A **suspensive pause** is used when your thought **continues into the next line** of a poem. To achieve this, take a slight upward inflection at the end of the line, linger on the final word to create a suspensive pause, and then, without taking a breath, continue directly into the next line.

🎤 **Try this:**

> *I thought I knew what I would say...*
> *but then I saw her standing there.*

The pause helps the audience follow the thought into the next line.

In the poem ‘Mid-Term Break’ by Seamus Heaney, a clear example of a suspensive pause occurs in the following line.

"At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived // with the corpse, stanched and bandaged by the nurses."

or

"I was embarrassed by old men standing up to shake my hand // and tell me they were sorry for my troubles.”

⭐ **Remember:**
The thought continues → the voice stays strong.

Emphatic Pause

An **emphatic pause** is used to draw attention to an important word or phrase.

You pause **just before or just after** it.

🎤 **Try this:**

> “There was one thing I wanted... **the truth.**”

Or:

> “I will **never** // do that again.”

The pause makes the important word stand out.

⭐ **Remember:**
Pause + important word = emphasis.

Caesural Pause

A **caesural pause** is a deliberate pause **in the middle of a line of poetry**.

It can break up the rhythm and give an important idea or feeling more impact.

🎤 **Try this:**

> *I wanted to run // but I stayed.*

The pause creates a moment for the audience to take in the change of thought.

A caesural pause may be shown by punctuation, but **it doesn't always have to be**.

⭐ **Remember:**
Caesura = a pause in the middle of a line.

Why Use Pauses - Additional Information

Think about what you want your audience to feel.

⏸️ **Pause before an important word** → creates emphasis.
⏸️ **Pause before a reveal** → creates suspense.
⏸️ **Pause between thoughts** → makes meaning clearer.
⏸️ **Pause in the middle of a line** → can change the rhythm and mood.

🎭 A good performer doesn't just read the words — they use pauses to make the words mean something.

☀️ My Performance Plan

🌼 My Lyric

📖 **My lyric is called** _____

✍️ **It was written by** _____

💭 **My lyric is about** _____

_____

😊 **The mood of my lyric is** _____

_____

🎭 My Dramatic Selection

📚 **My selection is from** _____

👤 **I am playing** _____

😊 **My character is** _____

_____

🎯 **The most important feeling I want to show is** _____

_____

⏱️ Rate & Pace

🗣️ **My overall rate will be**

☐ 🐢 Slow ☐ 🙂 Medium ☐ 🐇 Fast

🐢 **I will slow down when** _____

_____

🐇 **I will speed up when** _____

_____

💡 **Changing my pace will help me to** _____

_____

⏸️ My Pauses

➡️ Suspensive Pause

I will use a suspensive pause when _____

_____

⭐ Emphatic Pause

I will pause to emphasise _____

_____

🎵 Caesural Pause

I will use a pause in the middle of the line when _____

_____

🌟 My Performance

🎭 I want my audience to feel _____

_____

⭐ One thing I will focus on is _____

_____

Grade 9

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Learning

📖 Perform a Prose Extract

Choose a short piece of prose from a **novel or short story by an Irish author**.

Learn it by heart and perform it for up to **2 minutes**.

Remember to:

- 🗣️ Speak clearly
- 😊 Use expression
- 🎭 Show the meaning and feeling of the words
- ⏱️ Use an appropriate pace
- ⭐ Bring the writing to life

🎭 Perform Your Dramatic Selection

Choose a dramatic selection from a **well-written play** that has interesting characters and ideas and perform it as a solo or monologue (maximum **2 minutes**). Think about what your character wants, feels and thinks.

Use:

- 🎭 Characterisation
- 🗣️ Your voice
- 😊 Facial expression
- 🙌 Gesture
- 🚶 Movement
- 💡 Interpretation

🎭 Getting Ready to Perform

Before you begin your solo:

- 📣 **Announce** the name of your selection.
- 🔄 **Turn away** from the examiner and get into character.
- 🎭 **Turn back** and face the examiner.
- ⏸️ **Pause for a moment** before you begin speaking.
- ⭐ Use this moment to establish your character.

During your performance:

- 👀 Speak to the character you are addressing, not directly to the audience.
- 🚫 Avoid turning your back to the audience when you are speaking.
- 🪑 If you sit down, sit in a way that suits your character.
- 🎭 Stay in character from the beginning to the end.

🧤 Perform a Mime

Mime is acting without using words. Instead, you tell a story or show an idea using:

- 😊 Facial expressions
- 🙌 Gestures
- 🚶 Body movements

Prepare and perform a **2-minute mime**.

Choose either:

- 🎭 **Character Mime** – become another person or character.
- 💭 **Abstract Mime** – use movement to show an emotion, idea or feeling.

Remember: **no words!** Let your face, gestures and body tell the story.

🌬️ Breath Control

Your breath is what supports your voice when you speak and perform.

Good breath control helps you to:

- 🗣️ Speak clearly
- 📢 Project your voice
- ⏱️ Control your pace
- 🎵 Change the power and tone of your voice
- 😌 Stay relaxed
- 🎭 Perform for longer without becoming tired

🌬️ Try a Simple Breathing Exercise

1. Stand tall and relax your shoulders.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose.
3. Feel your stomach gently expand.
4. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.
5. Repeat several times.

6. Try making a gentle **“ssss”** sound as you breathe out.

⭐ **The aim is to make your breath steady and controlled.**

🎭 Understanding Your Character

Before performing your dramatic selection, make sure you understand your character.

👤 **Who** is your character?
🎂 **How old** are they?
🏠 **Where** do they live?
🕰️ **When** does the story take place?
👥 **Who** are the important people in their life?
👗 **What** would they wear?
🚶 **How** would they move?
💬 **How** would they speak?
😊 **How** do they feel?
⭐ Choose **three words** that describe your character.

For example:

🦸 **Harry Potter** – brave, loyal, determined
🧙 **Hermione Granger** – intelligent, confident, caring
🕷️ **Spider-Man** – funny, adventurous, responsible

These qualities can help you decide how your character should **speak, move and behave**.

🚶 Movement & Gesture

Your movement should match your **character, story and emotions**.

Think about:

🚶 **How does your character walk?**
🧍 **How do they stand?**
🙌 **How do they use their hands?**
😊 **What does their face show?**
😌 **Are they relaxed or tense?**
⚡ **Do they move slowly or quickly?**

Your movement should feel **natural**, not like you are simply adding movements because you think you should.

⭐ **If a movement doesn't help your performance, leave it out.**

Remember: **Your body can speak too.**

😊 Facial Expression

Your face can show the audience what your character is feeling.

Practise showing:

- 😊 Happiness
- 😢 Sadness
- 😠 Anger
- 😨 Fear
- 😮 Surprise
- 🤔 Doubt
- 😟 Worry
- 💪 Determination
- 😍 Excitement
- 🎭 Try practising your expressions in a mirror or record yourself on video.

Ask yourself:

💡 **Can the audience understand how my character feels without me explaining it?**

🎬 Using Movement on Stage

When you are performing, make sure your movement has a purpose.

⭐ **Don't move during an important line.**

If you move while saying something important, the audience may watch your movement instead of listening to your words.

🚶 **Move first, then speak** when possible.

🎭 Let your movement come naturally from what your character is thinking or feeling.

Remember: **Modern drama usually needs less gesture than older or period plays.**

🎨 Tone Colour

Tone colour is the quality or feeling in your voice.

Your voice can sound different depending on the mood you want to convey.

- 😊 **Warm** – friendly or caring

😠 **Harsh** – angry or aggressive
😢 **Soft** – gentle or sad
😨 **Shaky** – nervous or frightened
😎 **Confident** – strong and assured

🎭 A good performer changes their tone colour to help the audience understand the character and the meaning of the words.

⭐ **Try It!**

Say the sentence:

> **"I didn't expect you to come."**

Now say it in different ways:

😊 Happily
😠 Angrily
😢 Sadly
😨 Nervously
😎 Confidently

💡 Notice how the **words stay the same, but the meaning changes because of your voice.**

🎭 Getting Ready to Perform

Before you begin your solo:

📢 **Announce** the name of your selection.
🔄 **Turn away** from the examiner and get into character.
🎭 **Turn back** and face the examiner.
⏸️ **Pause for a moment** before you begin speaking.
⭐ Use this moment to establish your character.

During your performance:

👀 Speak to the character you are addressing, not directly to the audience.
🚫 Avoid turning your back to the audience when you are speaking.
🪑 If you sit down, sit in a way that suits your character.
🎭 Stay in character from the beginning to the end.

Grade 10

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Presenting

What is a Recital?

💡 A **recital** is a complete performance made up of different pieces that are connected by a **theme or idea**. Think of it as one big story made up of different parts.

Create Your Recital

Prepare and perform a **10-minute recital**.

Your recital should include:

🌼 **Introduction**

- 📖 Verse
- 📚 Prose
- 🎭 Drama
- 🗣️ Linking Script – connects your pieces together

⭐ **Conclusion**

Your recital can be based on a **theme** or the work of **one author**.

💡 **Remember!**

The pieces should work together to create **one continuous performance**. You can use **props, furniture, music or costume** if they help create the atmosphere.

Your linking script should:

- 🎯 Introduce your theme or author
- 🔗 Connect each piece
- 💭 Help the audience understand your choices
- ⭐ Bring your recital to a strong conclusion

Resonance

Resonance is the way your voice is made fuller, richer and stronger as the sound vibrates through spaces in your body. The sound produced by the vocal cords is changed and strengthened by the hollow spaces in the neck and head, known as resonators.

Your main resonators are:

- 👄 Mouth
- 👃 Nose
- 🗣️ Throat (pharynx)
- 💭 Sinuses
- 🫁 Chest (thorax)
- ⭐ Remember: Resonance is not shouting!

🎤💭 There are **two important things to remember** about resonators:

- 🔹 The effectiveness of a resonator depends on the **size of the cavity**.
- 🔹 It also depends on the **size of the opening (orifice)**.

🎹 For example, if you sing a note towards a piano with the **pedals released**, you may notice that the piano string producing the same note begins to vibrate. Other strings, including those an **octave above and below**, may also vibrate.

🌟 These extra vibrations add **overtones**, creating a sound that is **fuller, richer and more resonant**.

🥛 A Simple Experiment

Take an **empty glass** and hold the open end towards your mouth.

🎵 Sing a note while moving the glass slowly from side to side across your mouth. Each time the opening of the glass passes your mouth, you should hear the sound **suddenly become louder**.

💡 This is an example of **resonance**.

🏛️ A similar effect can be heard when speaking or singing in a **hollow room, cave or bathroom**, where the sound is reflected and strengthened.

🧠 Resonance in the Head

🎭 The hollow **cavities in the head** also act as resonators. This helps to create the **roundness, richness and quality of the voice** and is an important part of producing a good vocal tone.

🥛 You can demonstrate how the **size of a resonator affects pitch** using a glass.

💨 Blow across the top of an empty glass and you will hear a particular note. Add some water and blow across it again.

📈 As more water is added, the note becomes **higher**.

✅ This shows that the **size of the resonating cavity affects the pitch**:

🔺 **Smaller cavity = higher note**
🔻 **Larger cavity = lower note**

👄 **The Orifice**

The second important factor is the size of the **opening, or orifice**, of the resonator.

🪞 Try whispering **“WOW”** several times while looking in a mirror. Notice what happens as you open your mouth wider.

📈 As the mouth opens wider, the pitch becomes higher.

✅ This demonstrates that the size of the opening also affects the pitch:

🔺 **Larger orifice = higher pitch**
🔻 **Smaller orifice = lower pitch**

⭐ **Remember:** Both the **size of the resonating cavity** and the **size of its opening** help to modify the sound and pitch of the voice.

(as cited in ‘A Guide to Practical Speech Training’ Gordon Luck, 1978)

Keeping Your Audience Interested

A good speaker makes the audience want to **listen**.

Try these techniques:

👀 **Eye contact** – look at your audience.
🗣️ **Clear speech** – make every word easy to understand.
⏱️ **Vary your pace** – slow down or speed up when needed.
🎵 **Vary your voice** – use changes in pitch, tone and volume.
⏸️ **Use pauses** – silence can create impact.
⭐ **Emphasise key words** – make important ideas stand out.
❓ **Ask questions** – rhetorical questions can make people think.
🔁 **Repeat important ideas** – repetition helps your message stick.
🙌 **Use gestures carefully** – movement should support your words, not distract from them.
😊 **Be natural and sincere** – let your personality come through.
🌟 **Most importantly** - know your material and practise your delivery in order to connect with your audience.

🎭 A confident performance is not about saying every word perfectly. It's about **communicating your ideas and making your audience want to listen.**

Grade 11

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Presenting

📜 The Sonnet

💡 A **sonnet** is a poem made up of **14 lines**. Traditionally, sonnets were written in **iambic pentameter** and followed a particular **rhyming pattern**.

The sonnet originated in Italy in the 13th century. One of the most famous early sonnet writers was Petrarch, after whom the Petrarchan sonnet is named.

There are two important types of sonnet you need to know:

📜 Petrarchan Sonnet

📖 The Petrarchan sonnet is divided into:
🌼 **Octave** – the first 8 lines, made up of two quatrains
⭐ **Sestet** – the final 6 lines, made up of two tercets

💭 The **octave** usually introduces a **question, problem, idea or situation**.

✨ The **sestet** then develops or resolves the idea.

The change in mood or direction usually happens at the beginning of the ninth line. This change is called the **volta**.

💡 Petrarchan Rhyme Scheme

ABBA
ABBA
CDE
CDE

📜 Shakespearean Sonnet

The Shakespearean sonnet also has **14 lines**, but its structure is different.

It is divided into:
🌼 **Three quatrains** – three groups of four lines
⭐ **One final couplet** – two lines

💭 The three quatrains often develop different aspects of the same idea or argument.

✨ The **volta** or change in thought usually comes in the **final couplet**.

💡 Shakespearean Rhyme Scheme

ABAB
CDCD
EFEF
GG

💡 Remember!

When discussing your sonnet with the examiner, you should be able to explain:

🎯 Which type of sonnet it is
📖 How its structure follows – or differs from – the traditional form
🔤 Its rhyme scheme
💭 How the theme develops throughout the 14 lines
🎭 The mood and meaning of the poem
⭐ Where the **volta** occurs and how it changes the poem

What is Imagery?

💡 **Imagery** is the use of words and descriptive language to help the audience **see, hear, smell, taste or feel** what the writer is describing.

Writers use imagery to create a picture or experience in the reader's imagination.

Imagery can appeal to our **five senses**:

👀 **Visual** – what we can see
👂 **Auditory** – what we can hear
👃 **Olfactory** – what we can smell
👅 **Gustatory** – what we can taste
✋ **Tactile** – what we can feel or touch

👀 Visual Imagery

💡 **Visual imagery** appeals to our sense of **sight**.

It helps us to picture a person, place, object or scene in our minds.

🌼 When a writer describes colours, shapes, size, light or appearance, they may be creating visual imagery.

👂 Auditory Imagery

💡 **Auditory imagery** appeals to our sense of **hearing**.

It helps us imagine the sounds happening in a scene.

🔊 Writers may use words which suggest sounds such as **whispering, banging, ringing, hissing or ticking**.

👃 Olfactory Imagery

💡 **Olfactory imagery** appeals to our sense of **smell**.

It allows the reader to imagine familiar or unusual smells.

🌿 Writers may describe smells such as **fresh grass, smoke, flowers, rain or damp earth**.

✋ Tactile Imagery

💡 **Tactile imagery** appeals to our sense of **touch**.

It helps us imagine how something feels.

🖐️ Writers might describe something as **soft, rough, smooth, hot, cold, wet, sharp or sticky**.

👅 Gustatory Imagery

💡 **Gustatory imagery** appeals to our sense of **taste**.

🍓 It allows us to imagine how something tastes, for example **sweet, bitter, sour, salty or spicy**.

💡 Remember!

When performing a poem or dramatic piece that contains strong imagery, give your audience **time to create the images in their own minds**.

🎭 Avoid rushing through descriptive words.

💭 Think about the image you want your audience to experience.

⭐ Use your **voice, pace, pauses and expression** to bring the imagery to life.

🖋️ Figurative Language

💡 Writers often use **figurative language** to make their descriptions more vivid and imaginative.

You should understand these important examples:

🌼 **Simile** – compares two things using **like** or **as**.

🌼 **Metaphor** – describes one thing as if it were another.

🌼 **Personification** – gives human qualities to something that is not human.

🌼 **Onomatopoeia** – a word that imitates a sound.

🌼 **Idiom** – a familiar expression whose meaning is different from the literal meaning of the words.

💡 Remember!

Figurative language helps the writer to create stronger **images, emotions and ideas** for the audience.

Preparing Your Solo Dramatic Selection

🎭Refer to Grade 9 for more information on how to use movement and gesture

For your solo dramatic performance, you need to show that you have thought carefully about your **character, movement and gesture**.

Before performing, consider:

🎭 **Who is my character?**
💭 What is the character thinking and feeling?
🎯 What does the character want?
🗣️ How does the character speak?
🕺 How does the character move?
👋 What gestures would help communicate the character?
⭐ How can I use the performance space effectively?

🕺 Movement & Gesture

💡 **Movement** is the way your character uses their body and moves through the performance space.

💡 **Gesture** is a movement of part of the body that helps communicate an idea, feeling or meaning.

Your movement and gestures should be:

🎯 **Purposeful** – they should have a reason.
🎭 **Appropriate** – they should suit the character and situation.
✨ **Natural** – they should not feel forced or unnecessary.

💡 Remember!

Good acting is not about **moving constantly**.

Sometimes, stillness can be just as powerful as movement.

⭐ Use movement and gesture to help your audience understand your **character, emotions and intentions**.

Grade 12

Theory

Speaking, Performing & Presenting

Vocal Modulation

💡 **Vocal modulation** means changing the way you use your voice to communicate meaning, mood and emotion. It helps to make your performance interesting, expressive and believable.

You should be able to discuss the following elements of vocal modulation:

🎵 **Pitch** – how high or low your voice sounds.

⏩ **Rate and Pace** – how quickly or slowly you speak, and the speed at which your words are delivered.

⏸️ **Pause** – a moment of silence used to create emphasis, suspense or allow an idea to register.

🎭 **Tone and Tone Colour** – the sound and quality of your voice, which help to communicate emotion and character.

📈 **Inflection** – the way your voice rises or falls while speaking.

🎯 **Emphasis** – giving particular words or phrases extra importance.

🔊 **Power and Intensity** – using vocal strength and emotional force to communicate conviction, sincerity, passion or strong dramatic feelings.

💡 **What Is Vocal Tone?**

Vocal **tone** refers to the sound of your voice. It is influenced by several parts of your vocal system, including:

🌬️ Breath
🗣️ Vocal cords
🎤 The structure of the larynx (voice box)
🎵 The resonators in the head and neck
👄 The organs of speech, such as the tongue, lips and teeth

💭 **Tone colour** refers to the distinctive quality of a voice. It helps us recognise different voices and allows a performer to communicate different feelings and characters.

For example, your voice might sound warm and gentle when reassuring someone, sharp and harsh when expressing anger, or breathy and nervous when portraying fear.

💡 Power and Intensity

🔊 **Power** is the strength and force behind your voice.

🔥 **Intensity** is the emotional strength or energy you communicate through your voice.

These qualities can help you express excitement, anger, determination, sadness or passion.

🎭 For example, a character defending someone they love might speak with great conviction and intensity, while a character revealing a secret might use a quieter but emotionally intense voice.

⭐ Remember!

Power and intensity should be used carefully. If every line is delivered with maximum force, the performance can become tiring for both the performer and the audience.

✨ Effective vocal modulation involves choosing the most appropriate vocal quality for each moment.

💡 Discussing Vocal Modulation in Your Performance

The examiner will expect you to explain how you used vocal modulation to improve your performances.

When preparing, choose several lines from your poem, prose and dramatic selection. Practise explaining why you delivered each line in a particular way.

Ask yourself:

🎯 Which words did I emphasise, and why?

📈 Where did I change my pitch or inflection?

⏸️ Where did I use pauses, and what effect did they create?

🎭 How did my tone and tone colour help communicate the character's feelings?

🔊 Where did I use power or intensity to communicate an important emotion?

💭 How did my vocal choices help the audience understand the meaning of the piece?

⭐ **Remember!** It is not enough to say that you used vocal modulation. You should be able to explain **what you did, why you did it and what effect it had on your performance**.

Mime Preparation

🎭Refer to Grade 7 for more information in preparation for your performance

Choreographing Movement to Music

💡 **Movement to music** involves expressing the feelings, mood and ideas of a piece of music through your body and facial expressions.

Unlike a dance routine, the emphasis is not on learning dance steps. Instead, you interpret the music and communicate its meaning through movement.

💡 **How Do I Prepare My Piece?**

🎵 **Choose your music.** Select music that inspires you and gives you ideas for movement. Pay attention to its mood, tempo and any changes throughout the piece.

💭 **Think about the theme.** Decide what you want your performance to communicate. You might explore an emotion, tell a story or represent an idea.

🕺 **Experiment with shapes.** Use different body shapes and positions to reflect the theme and feeling of the music.

📈 **Change levels.** Move between high, middle and low levels to create variety and respond to the music.

🔄 **Vary your movements.** Use changes in direction, speed, size and energy to reflect changes in the music.

🗣️ **Listen to the words, if there are any.** If you choose a song, you can structure some of your movements to reflect its lyrics.

📖 **Tell a story.** You could take a familiar story, such as *The Pied Piper*, and use music and movement to communicate important moments without speaking.

✨ **Explore freely.** Sometimes, simply listening to the music and responding naturally to the images and emotions it creates can be an excellent starting point.

💭 **Questions to Ask Yourself**

🎯 What does the music say to me?

💭 What images or feelings does it create in my mind?

🎭 What mood am I trying to communicate?

🕺 How can I use my body and facial expressions to express this mood?

⭐ How can I make my movements meaningful rather than simply moving around?

💡 **Remember!**

Movement to music:

🎵 Is **not mime**.

💃 Is **not simply dance**.

✨ Is about expressing emotions, feelings and ideas through your body and face.

⭐ Your movements should have a purpose and connect with the music.

Rhyme in Verse

💡 **Rhyme** occurs when words have the same or similar sounds, particularly at the ends of words or lines in poetry.

For example, **cold** and **fold** rhyme because their ending sounds are the same.

🎵 Rhyme can create rhythm, make poetry memorable and produce pleasing or musical effects.

📖 Rhyme Schemes

💡 A **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhymes at the ends of lines in a poem. Letters are used to show which lines rhyme with one another.

⭐ If two lines rhyme, they are given the same letter. If they do not rhyme, they are given different letters.

Common rhyme schemes include:

🌼 **Rhyming Couplets** – two consecutive lines that rhyme.

AA, BB, CC

📖 **Alternate Rhyme** – the first and third lines rhyme, and the second and fourth lines rhyme.

ABAB, CDCD, EFEF

🎭 **Limerick** – a five-line poem that commonly follows this rhyme scheme:

AABBA

📜 **Petrarchan Sonnet** – commonly follows this pattern:

ABBA ABBA CDE DCE

Some Petrarchan sonnets use different rhyme patterns in the final six lines.

📜 **Shakespearean Sonnet** – follows this pattern:

ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

🎵 Assonance

💡 **Assonance** is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in nearby words.

It draws attention to particular words and can help create rhythm, mood and atmosphere.

🌼 For example: **late** and **cake** share the same long vowel sound, even though their ending consonant sounds are different.

📖 In poetry, assonance can help words flow together and make particular phrases more memorable.

🎵 Consonance

💡 **Consonance** is the repetition of consonant sounds in nearby words, often towards the middle or end of the words.

🌼 For example: **pitter-patter** repeats consonant sounds and creates a rhythmic effect.

✨ Writers use consonance to add musicality, rhythm and emphasis to their writing.

🎵 Alliteration

💡 **Alliteration** is the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in nearby words.

🌼 For example: **Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.**

👂 When spoken aloud, the repeated sounds create a noticeable rhythm and draw attention to the words.

📖 In poetry, alliteration can help emphasise an idea, create atmosphere and make a line more memorable.

👀 Eye Rhyme

💡 **Eye rhyme** occurs when two words look as though they should rhyme because of their spelling, but they are pronounced differently.

🌼 For example: **cough / bough**

👀 These words may appear to rhyme when written down, but their sounds are different.

⭐ **Remember!** Eye rhyme is about how words **look**, rather than how they sound.