

I am Using My Voice!

to explore vocal expression, character traits & emotions

This warm up uses rhythmic, call & response to explore vocal choices, emotion & character in unison, building expressive skills & confidence.

Planning

Choose the vocal choices, character traits or emotions that you want to prompt your students to explore.

Tips for choosing your prompts:

Consider what your class is “warming up” to do.

- **Do you want them to build their vocal expressive skills** when they speak, read aloud or enact dialogue through puppetry or as actors? Choose vocal prompts to familiarize them with the vocal choices they can make about volume, speed, pitch and quality.
- **Will you be asking them to express character traits or emotions** using their puppets, as actors or through writing? Choose character trait prompts that you want them to have concrete understanding of.
- **Do you want them to explore characters from a book?**

Options:

Vocal Volume, Speed & Pitch:

loud, quiet, slow, fast, high, low

Vocal Quality:

soft, harsh, smooth, staccato, shaky, rough, melodic, sing song, robotic, whiny, growly

Core emotion words:

happy, mad, sad, scared, surprised, confused, disgusted.

Advanced emotion vocabulary:

See the [Advanced Emotion Vocabulary Resource](#)

Social Character Traits:

friendly, sweet, kind, helpful, grouchy, impatient, aggressive

Energetic Character Traits:

brave, powerful, confident, meek, timid, energetic, relaxed, stuffy

Archetypal Character Traits:

mysterious, wicked, sneaky, tricky, bossy, silly, goofy, clever

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Preparation

How will you support visual, kinesthetic & multi language learners in your class?

Options to consider

- Use a visual aid like an [emotion mapping tool](#).
- Use an instrument such as a drum keep the rhythm and encourage participation and unity.
- Use a puppet to lead the game.
- Have students use puppets they've created to play the game.

Before the activity, practice...

- **using your voice to express each prompt you choose in a variety of ways.** Try out different ways to express each word vocally (quiet, loud, soft, harsh, gentle, melodic, shaky, gravelly, fast, slow). Remember that there is not one right way to express the same prompt. Find a few different ways, so that you can repeat each prompt and vary your interpretation a bit each time.
- **saying the words in a rhythm or beat** (keep it simple! You can tap your hands to your thighs, alternating hands). Adjust the speed of the rhythm to express different vocal choices. For example, you may speed up to express "excited" or slow down to express "bored".

Visit the Bridges Vocal Expression Activities webpage to see video of what this looks like in a classroom. QR code below.



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Timing

3 minutes

(to explore 4 prompts)

Additional supports

Visit

TeachwithArtsConnection.org



1. Model the game:

Sample script (1 minute or less)

- **SET UP A RHYTHM** by tapping alternating hands to your thighs.
- **TEACHERS MODEL-** “I am using my voice.” (*neutral voice*)
- **CUE KIDS-** point, nod, or lean toward students for their turn
- **KIDS REPEAT-** “I am using my voice.” (*neutral voices*)

Tips

- **Repeat along with the students** to help model and build confidence as they learn the game.
- **Don't stop the flow!** If students don't get the rhythm right away, keep repeating it until they get it. Don't stop to explain.

2. Play the game:

Vocalize each of the prompts you've chosen in the rhythm you established.

Sample Script (1 minute or less per word)

- **TEACHERS MODEL-** “I am using a *miserable* voice.” (*in sad voice*)
- **CUE KIDS-** point, nod, or lean toward students for their turn
- **KIDS REPEAT-** “I am using a *miserable* voice.” (*said in sad voices*)

Tips

- **Repeat the same word a few times, varying your interpretations** each time. Example: 1) Sobbing 2) quiet & shaky 3) whiney tone.
- **Repeat it again if kids don't express the word fully.** Don't stop the flow to explain the word.
- **Some kids might express the word differently than you-** that's ok!

3. End the game

Sample Script (1 minute or less)

- **TEACHERS MODEL-** “I am using my voice.” (*neutral voice*)
- **CUE KIDS-** point, nod, or lean toward students for their turn
- **KIDS REPEAT-** “I am using my voice.” (*neutral voices*)

Facilitation tips for...

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Return to “I am using my voice” to regulate.

If the class gets too excited, returning to a neutral voice will keep the game running smoothly. You can also return to “I am using my voice” if you forget your next prompt or get flustered and need a second to remember or regulate yourself.

Give yourself support & be kind to yourself!

Have your prompts written down. Practice expressing them vocally beforehand. If you don't feel happy with how you say the word the first time, repeat that one again to give yourself another chance!

Repetition is fun!

Have everyone keep the beat together and repeat words, only to give kids a chance to “get it”, but also because it's really fun!

Allow for different modes of participation

It's okay if kids don't copy you exactly! Validate kids who are making unique choices by copying how they express a word the next you repeat it in the game. It's also ok if some kids don't engage vocally. They are still learning from listening and watching.

Have fun!

Perfection isn't necessary! No choice is too ridiculous! If you're having fun, your kids will too!