

# Voice Inflection

## What Is Voice Inflection?



Voice inflection means changing your voice. You can change your voice in one of three ways. Listen to these three examples.



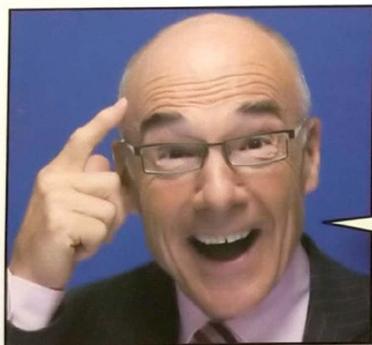
### 1. Stressing a word or phrase

I have a **LOT** of experience.



### 2. Stretching a word or phrase

No ... I have a **LOTT** of experience.



### 3. Pausing before a word or phrase

No ... I have a ( ) **... LOT** of experience.

## Why Is Voice Inflection Important?

Using inflection is a lot like using gestures. Without gestures your physical message is flat—there is no variation, no action, no energy. Similarly, without inflection your verbal message is flat—there is no variation, no color, no emphasis. Inflection emphasizes key words to add interest and help the listener understand your speech—just as gestures do.



Listen to the two radio advertisements. Which announcer uses voice inflection?

- Advertisement 1       Advertisement 2

## How to Identify Voice Inflection



We've just heard an example demonstrating stressing, stretching, and pausing. Now, listen to these sentences and check the type of inflection that is used.

1.

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

"I will not raise taxes."



2.



"Climate change is a real danger!"

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

3.

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

"It's been a long time."



4.



"There are more than 400 different birds in the jungle."

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

5.

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

"It's bigger, better, and more exciting."



6.



"There is no down payment."

- Stress
- Stretch
- Pause

## How to Use Voice Inflection

- In the previous exercise you listened to the CD and were able to identify three types of voice inflection. Now it is time for you to decide for yourself which words to emphasize by stressing, stretching, or pausing.
- Which are the best words to inflect?
- Usually the inflected words are from one of the following five word groups: numbers, action words, descriptive words, comparison words, and negative words.



**Step 1** Listen to the CD and underline the inflected word or words for each of the five word groups.

### Numbers

"This is a \$19,999 car."



1.

^ Stressing

"The universe is only 6,000 years old?"



2.

↔ Stretching

"The universe is billions and billions of years old."



3.

( ) Pausing

### Action words

"We have cut prices in half."



4.

^ Stressing

"We can decrease pollution."



5.

↔ Stretching

"The price of gas has shot up again."



6.

( ) Pausing

**Descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs)**

"Do you still drive a big car?"



7.

^ Stressing

"Attitudes are slowly changing."



8.

↔ Stretching

"You can quickly increase your income."



9.

( ) Pausing

**Comparison words**

"We build more efficient cars than before."



10.

^ Stressing

"We have the most experienced teachers."



11.

↔ Stretching

"Nobody gives better service than us."



12.

( ) Pausing

**Negative words**

"And remember, there's no down payment."



13.

^ Stressing

"Sorry, tax is not included."



14.

↔ Stretching

"You should never drink and drive."



15.

( ) Pausing



**Step 2** Now, listen again and repeat after each sentence. Emphasize the inflected words that you underlined.

## Practice: Inflection Pairwork

### Student A

(Student B: Please turn to pages 34 and 35.)



China has the world's largest population.

China has the world's **LARGEST** population!



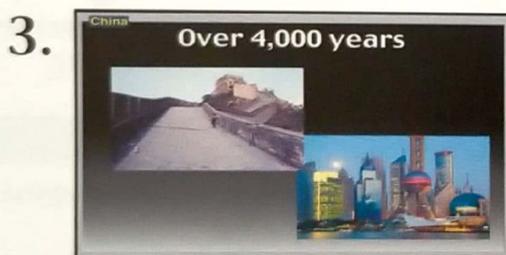
**Step 1** Read the following 10 sentences one at a time to your partner. Your partner should repeat the sentence and add voice inflection and gestures.



- *China has the world's largest population.*
- *About one-fifth of the world's population is Chinese.*



- *There are over one billion people in China.*
- *That's more than double the population of all the countries in the E.U.*



- *China has a very long history.*
- *It is over 4,000 years old.*



- *Its history is divided into many periods.*
- *The first period was the Xia dynasty in the 20th century BC.*



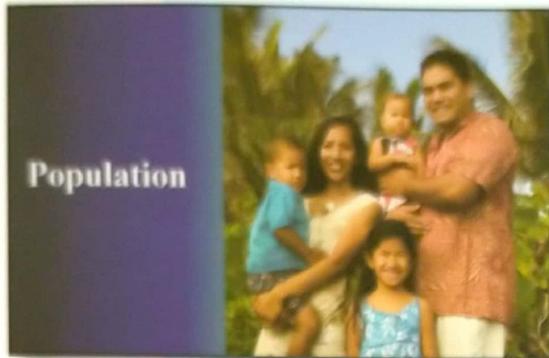
- *It was the first country to use gunpowder.*
- *The Chinese invented fireworks.*

**Step 2** Look at the slides below. Your partner will read two sentences for each slide. Listen to the sentences your partner reads. Repeat the sentences and add voice inflection and gestures.

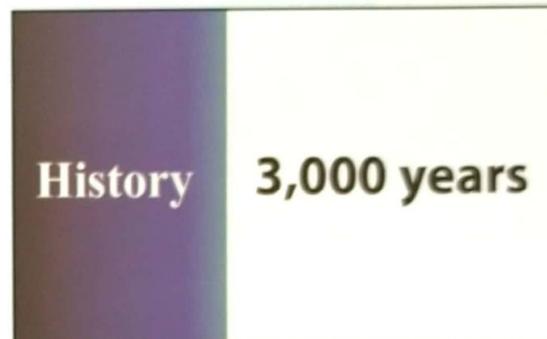
1.



2.



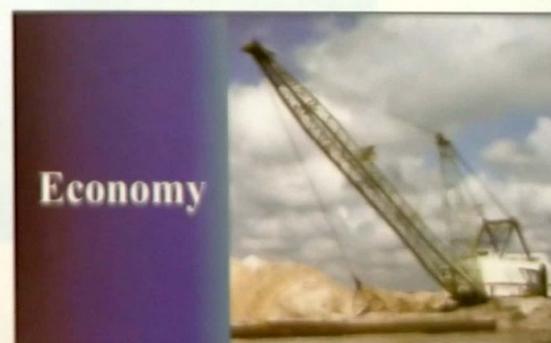
3.



4.



5.



**Practice: Inflection Pairwork**

**Student B**



China has the world's largest population.

China has the world's **LARGEST** population!



**Step 1** Look at the slides below. Your partner will read two sentences for each slide. Listen to the sentences your partner reads. Repeat the sentences and add voice inflection and gestures.

1.



2.



3.



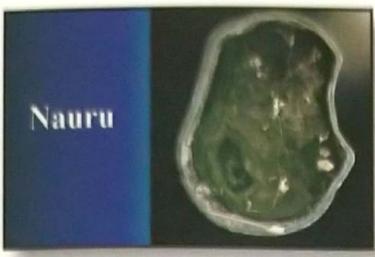
4.



5.



**Step 2** Read the following 10 sentences one at a time to your partner. Your partner should repeat the sentence and add voice inflection and gestures.

1.  Nauru

- *Nauru is one of the world's smallest countries.*
- *It is only 21 square kilometers in size.*

2.  Population

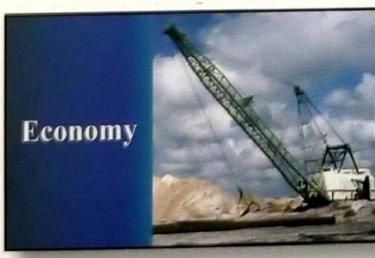
- *There are fewer than 15,000 people in Nauru.*
- *Ninety percent of the people are unemployed.*

3.  History **3,000 years**

- *The first people arrived in Nauru 3,000 years ago.*
- *Traditionally there are 12 clans or tribes.*

4.  Established **1968**

- *Nauru was administered by Australia, Britain, and New Zealand until 1968.*
- *It declared independence on January 31st 1968.*

5.  Economy

- *Nauru's economy was based on the mining of phosphates.*
- *It used to be one of the richest countries in the world, but now it is one of the poorest.*

## Demonstration Speech



### SPEECH TYPE:

In Episode 3 of the *Speaking of Speech* DVD, Terri demonstrates how to make a tuna sandwich. A demonstration speech is a type of informative speech. But in a demonstration speech we aren't just trying to inform the audience—we are trying to teach them how to do something. If, at the end of your speech, the audience can perform the activity you demonstrated, your speech has been a success.



### SPEECH SKILL:

All the elements of the Physical Message are essential to a good demonstration speech. You need good posture to show your confidence. You need good eye contact to confirm that the audience understands the steps you are demonstrating. You need good gestures to demonstrate each step clearly. Finally, you need good voice inflection to emphasize the key words the audience should remember at each step of the demonstration.



### SPEECH PREPARATION:

For this speech, you will use a storyboard to help you prepare, and then use photos or drawings to illustrate each step.

# Model: Demonstration Speech



## FIRST VIEWING:

Watch Episode 3 of the DVD. Close your textbooks and enjoy the speech! After viewing, answer these questions:

1. What is she demonstrating?
2. How many steps are there?

## SECOND VIEWING:

Watch again and complete the evaluation form below. Write the steps and the warnings. The first one is done for you.

### Demonstration Speech Evaluation Form

Speaker's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Terri \_\_\_\_\_

What did the speaker demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

Steps	Warnings
1. Toast the bread	Don't burn

Did the speaker use voice inflection?  Yes  No

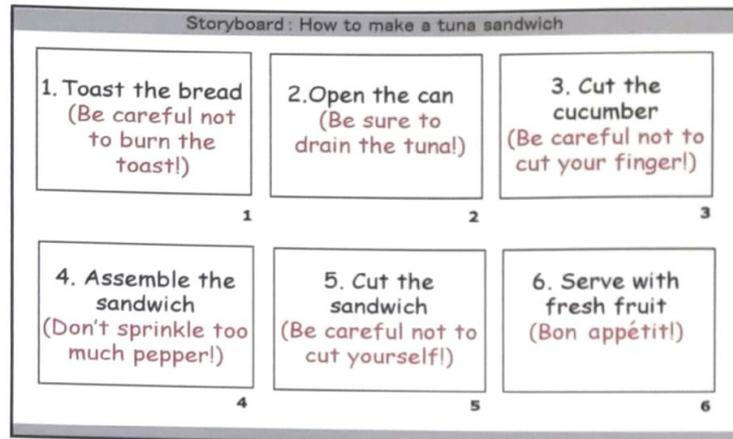
## Speech Preparation

**Assignment:** Prepare a demonstration speech on how to make a favorite dish.

### Step 1

#### PLAN:

Use a storyboard to break the process into easy "bite-size" steps.



### Step 2

#### PREPARE:

Illustrate the steps using photos or drawings.



### Step 3

#### PRACTICE:

Be sure to practice all the physical skills, especially voice inflection!

### Step 4

#### PERFORM:

Speakers, use your visual to explain. Listeners, use the evaluation form on page 102.