

Verbal Style / "Mix and Spice"

A. Goal of the lesson

By the end of the session, the students must be able to:

- replace words in a sentence so that the sentence holds the same meaning but has a different emotional undertone. (rephrase the sentence)
- deliver a set of written sentences / a written speech whilst deliberately expressing an emotion of their choice
- construct a visual description of a situation

B. Activities

1. Demo speech (10 min)

Deliver two 1-minute speeches containing the same information but with different words and delivery (transcript below). Then ask the debaters to discover the two components that changed between the two speeches: words and para-verbal/non-verbal language, the emotion in each of them, two elements of verbal control, 2 gestures and 2 items expressed differently.

Speech one: Civilians should not be allowed to carry firearms. When they are allowed, sometimes, in moments in which they are less emotionally balanced, they use them to kill other people. Laws exist to protect everyone. That is why they are changed when they allow for situations in which people are less protected to happen. This is why they must be changed to not allow civilians to carry firearms.

Speech two: It is paramount that we stop the access of civilians to death-bringing weapons. When we don't we let lunatics cause terrible massacres. The state and its laws are there to ensure all of our safety. Whenever the laws fail at that, they must be scraped and changed for the better. We need new laws that stand between us and the doom that any individual with a pistol can bring.

2. Word change (10-15 min)

Give the debaters a hand-out with a 2-sentence paragraph (example below). Throughout it there are 3 words highlighted. Under the paragraph there are sets of 4 replacements for each word. Alone, they have to choose a preferred replacement. Then we discuss the pros and cons of each choice. The replacements will all be valid options that evoke different emotions.

*Example: The natural resources beneath our feet **are owned by** everyone. We must make sure we don't allow **anyone** to **use** them for their own benefit.*

are owned by: belong to/are the treasure of/are in the service of/could be legally claimed by

anyone: opportunists/bad people/powerful people/individuals

use: exploit / deplete / monetize / destroy

3. Word change freeform (10-15 min)

Give the another similar hand-out with a 2-sentence paragraph. This time they must replace the highlighted words with words of their choice.

***Drug addicts** that are **deprived** of their drug live in pain. It is **not ok** to punish them for alleviating their pain.*

4. Team mix-up (15 min)

Pair the debaters into teams of two. They will practice delivering their version of the 2-sentence paragraph with a specific emotion. They will be encouraged to give each other feedback, to discuss how best to express those paragraphs and to help one another. They will have to determine: the emotion they need to transmit, 2 elements of vocal control and 2 gestures.

5. Eye-candy (20 min)

Debaters are given a motion (*ex. THBT the state should take away from the rich and give to the poor*). They are tasked with finding the statement of an argument they would make and an illustration of that argument and with writing down that illustration. Then they again pair-up and practice short speeches with the statement and illustration they created. They again need to fill in a checklist in which they state the emotion that they wish to use for their delivery, 3 elements of voice control and 3 gestures. Optionally they can switch pairs and as one holds the speech, the other tries to identify the desired effect.

C. Preparation

Prepare delivering the example speeches from the first activity, with different intonations, emotion, gestures and so on. Other motions and example texts can be used in the activities in order to illustrate the impact of language.

D. Hints

Perspective is key in a debate and the words we use can completely change the meaning and impact of an idea. When talking about, for example, the difference between women and men's parental rights, the male can be labeled as either 'the man', 'the husband' or 'the father'. They all mean the same thing in the context of the debate, but they each carry a different emotional significance. It is important for debaters to understand that the choice of words, which is generally referred to as "style", is an important element of persuasive debating.

E. Verification

Try to gauge with each activity how well the debaters understand and use language. For example, in the first activity, if they can identify emotion and tone based on the words used. In the second and third activity, why they choose certain words and what emotion they convey.

