

# PUPPET CHARACTER VOICES

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**INTRODUCTION:** Developing a voice for a puppet is a major part of establishing the character of that puppet. How he/she speaks will exaggerate their looks and mannerisms and will help establish how that puppet will be best used. Learning the basic types of voices and paying attention to those you hear in public and life situations (TV, radio, etc.) will broaden your battery of voices that you can utilize.



## 1. BASIC STEMS – Most puppets stem from the following six voices:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ – produced in the back of the throat
  - \* Rolling “R” sound behind all the speech.
  - \* Also called a raspy or growling voice.
  - \* Use it sparingly; it can be harmful to your voice if used too much; it’s not pleasing to hear.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ – “Duh” must stay relaxed
  - \* Low pitch and slow tempo with sloppy diction.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ – lots of breath over your own natural voice.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ – tightened sound squeezed up into the nasal passages. “NG” sound
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ – voice with excessive vibrato, “O”
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ – voice unnaturally forced into a higher register
  - \* Head voice “ee eu” pucker

## 2. BRANCHING OUT – Combine the following to enhance the voice.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ – loudness or softness of the voice.
- B. PITCH – to move up and down the scale.

C. **TIMING** – how fast or slow a character speaks, also utilizes “pause” “thinks” etc.

D. \_\_\_\_\_ – the way certain words or parts of words are stressed

E. **VOICE QUALITY** – proper or poor

F. \_\_\_\_\_ – accents – British, Italian, Scottish, Australian, Chinese, Spanish, Western, Southern, etc.

G. \_\_\_\_\_ – puns, regionalisms, young, cocky, etc.

### **3. BROADEN YOUR BATTERY – Refine this voice till your puppet comes to life.**

A. **PUPPET** \_\_\_\_\_ – Listen before you speak.

1. Cartoon voices, puppet voices or exaggerated voices
2. Animal voices – start with the sound the animal makes or with the quality of voice that defines the character of the animal.
3. People’s voices – Hollywood actor voices are often exaggerated and make a good starting point.

B. **PUPPET** \_\_\_\_\_ – (Size does matter)

1. Big or older – deeper voice and slower
2. Small or younger – higher and faster voice

\* Not a fast rule, sometimes a reversal of voice can be defining; smaller puppet can have a deeper voice especially if you are working with two puppets and the second is large with a higher voice.

C. **PUPPET** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Needs a trigger line or sound
2. Use a word or phrase that defines that character

### **CONCLUSION:**

The voice chosen for a puppet can make or break that character. By choosing the right voice stem, branching out and using your imagination your puppet will flourish into a brilliant lifelike personality.

**ANSWER KEY:** A. GUTTERAL B. GOOFY C. WHISPERED D. NASAL E. MELODIC F. FALSETTO

A. VOLUME D. EMPHASIS F. DICTION G. CHARACTER TAGS

A. PUPPET SOUNDS B. PUPPET SIZE C. PUPPET SIGNALS