

Drama. Year 9 autumn term: Characterisation.

How to further develop and improve performance work

This piece of work will help you to consider the importance of VOCAL SKILLS, in particular in preparation for the monologue you will perform this term.

Voice and Elevator monologue.

1. Watch this clip (5 mins): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/drama-gcse-using-your-voice-in-performance/znkfbdm>

2. Task: Annotate the monologue below with vocal skills.

A monologue is a speech by one actor. Please read the monologue below about someone getting trapped in a lift and think about how you would use your **vocal skills** to enhance the performance and show how the character is feeling. There is a yellow box at the bottom of this with a list of possible vocal skills you can consider.

Please add labels in another colour, **see my example in red** on the monologue below. Try and aim for adding/labelling vocal skills for every sentence.

Monologue - Trapped in an Elevator

- Genre: Comedic
- Description: A terrified person is trapped in an elevator.
- (Stage directions are actions in italics and brackets - these are suggested actions to do)

(Actor mimes getting into the elevator, pushing the button, and having the elevator start up and then lurch to a stop.) (pause, quietly, in disbelief) No. (pause) This isn't happening (quicker, with more urgency, getting louder). This is it. My nightmare has come true. I'm going to die (emphasise 'die' - saying it loudly and in a high pitch to show panic). The cable is going to snap and I'm going to fall hundreds of stories. *(Rapidly breathing.)* I'm running out of air (quick pace, panicked tone of voice). I've got to get out of here. Which button do I press? This red one is for emergencies, right? Or is it the blue one? NO. Probably the red one. Use your head. Think. Think. Oh heck, I'm just going to press all of them. *(Presses the buttons. Waits.)* Nothing's happening. There should be a siren or something. Help! Help! I'm trapped in here! Anyone? Where's my cell phone? *(Digging through bag, checking pockets.)* Oh my God, I left it charging in the car. Okay, calm down. Just calm down. What do I have to eat or drink. *(Rifling through bag.)* Two sticks of gum. Gum covered in lint. I'm going to die. *(Slumps to the floor.)* No one knows I'm in here. They're not going to find me until my rotting corpse starts stinking up the building. This is a dream, right? *(Pinches himself/herself.)* Nope. I'm awake. I'm having a nightmare, but I'm awake. So, this is the way it ends for me. I'll never get married, or have children, or finish my snake skin collection or fulfill my life-long dream of being a fortune-cookie writer. *(Lies down on the floor.)* Okay God, take me know. I'm ready. *(Hears noise.)* I can hear the angels. They are coming to get me. Wait a minute. *(Sits up.)* That doesn't sound like angels. It sounds like a blow-torch. *(Jumps to feet.)* Hello! I'm in here! I'm still alive! *(Elevator doors*

open. Actor leaps out, pantomimes hugging rescuers.) You found me just in time! I've been in there for days! What? It couldn't have been just five minutes! Fine. If you say so. But from now on, I'm taking the stairs.

Vocal skills you could include:

- **Pause/silence** - to build tension
- **Tone of voice** - the feeling in your voice e.g. worried/excited/firm/nervous/assertive etc
- **Volume** - e.g. loud/soft/whisper
- **Pace** - how slowly/quickly you speak e.g. fast, slow, controlled, stilted
- **Emphasis** - any words you want to stand out/emphasise for impact?
- **Pitch** -E.g. high, low, husky, deep, whiny, grating
- **Accent** - do any of the characters have an accent?
- **Projection** - to project your voice is to speak loudly so everyone can hear. Teachers have to project their voice all the time!