



# LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **10th Grade | Unit 7**

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# LANGUAGE ARTS 1007

## Oral Reading and Drama

INTRODUCTION | **3**

### **1. READING ORALLY** **5**

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VALUE | **6**

NATURE | **8**

ROLE | **9**

SKILLS | **10**

PREPARATION | **15**

SELF TEST 1 | **22**

### **2. UNDERSTANDING DRAMA** **25**

---

HISTORY OF DRAMA | **26**

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA | **32**

IRONY AND ALLEGORY IN DRAMA | **34**

SELF TEST 2 | **36**

### **3. READING DRAMA** **38**

---

ORAL INTERPRETATION | **39**

CHRISTIAN DRAMA | **40**

EVERYMAN STUDY GUIDE | **42**

SELF TEST 3 | **57**

GLOSSARY | **59**



**LIFEPAC Test is located in the center of the booklet.** Please remove before starting the unit.

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# Oral Reading and Drama

## Introduction

In this LIFE PAC® you will learn the value of reading aloud, the nature and role of oral reading, and the skills required for reading orally. You will learn how to use your voice properly, with correct phrasing, inflection, and eye contact. You will also learn how to select and prepare materials for presentation in speech contests and other public programs.

The second section of this LIFE PAC contains information to help you better understand drama. You will learn more about the development of drama in Greece and Rome. You will learn the characteristics of comedy and tragedy as well as become acquainted with some of the great writers of these two dramatic forms. You will study the elements of drama and learn more about dramatic irony and allegory. The second section will help familiarize you with some of the terminology used in discussing drama, preparing you for the actual reading of a play.

The third section of this LIFE PAC concerns interpretative reading of drama—the art of reading plays aloud. You will examine briefly the nature and the history of English drama, noting the characteristics distinguishing religious drama. You will read and evaluate *Everyman*, a classic Christian morality play.

## Objectives

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have completed this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of effective oral reading.
2. Define the function of oral reading.
3. Explain the effective use of the voice.
4. Describe the effective use of the body in oral reading.
5. Explain the preparation needed for reading orally.
6. List the rules for cutting material to be read orally.
7. Trace the early development of Greek and Roman drama.
8. Explain the history and the nature of tragedy.
9. Explain the history and the nature of comedy.
10. Explain certain elements necessary to drama.
11. Define and use certain literary terms pertaining to drama.
12. Explain the role of an oral interpreter of drama.
13. Trace the development of early English drama.
14. Describe three forms of Christian drama: the miracle, mystery, and morality plays.
15. Summarize the characteristics of the morality plays.
16. Describe *Everyman* as a morality play and as an allegory.

# 1. READING ORALLY

Training in oral reading is an asset. A student who has learned to read well to an audience has been freed from self-consciousness and fear when he appears before a group of listeners. He can read with competence and confidence a verse of Scripture in Sunday school, a poem in class, or a newspaper article to an elderly person with failing eyesight.

This LIFEPAK is designed to provide you with the composure, confidence, and skill necessary for effective oral reading.

In this section you will study the value, nature, and role of oral reading. You will learn more about the skills involved in reading orally. You will also learn to prepare your material carefully for reading orally.

## Section Objectives

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of effective oral reading.
2. Define the function of oral reading.
3. Explain the effective use of the voice.
4. Describe the effective use of the body in oral reading.
5. Explain the preparation needed for reading orally.
6. List the rules for cutting material to be read orally.

## Vocabulary

**Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.**

**enunciation**

**inflection**

**intonation**

**Note:** All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the glossary.

## VALUE

Because the written word becomes most meaningful when it is spoken or read, its importance is most evident in this age of communication. Today, the spoken word is used everywhere: in mass communication, entertainment, education, government, and religion—guiding, enlightening, and enriching man's life. Reading orally is a valuable form of spoken communication. Reading to others has value as social action. When one reads to inform, to instruct, to entertain, or to inspire another, he is engaged in a social situation. The oral reader enters into a shared experience with his listener and, to some extent, with the author of the material being shared. Reading aloud also increases one's enjoyment of the content and heightens his appreciation for the sounds of the language of poetry and drama. As a social action, reading aloud can help the listener formulate answers to daily problems, it can capture his wandering attention, and above all it can give pleasure to those who cannot read for themselves.

**In business.** Oral communication emerged as a business with the development of mass communication. Countless jobs, unknown in the Twenties, are now available in the communications industries to qualified men and women. Because most broadcasters must read aloud from a manuscript, a teletype, TelePrompTer, or a cue card, the ability to read well has gained new significance. More is demanded of the oral reader for radio projection, however, because he has no opportunity to use body language or gestures to help him convey meaning. In visual productions much also depends upon the oral reader's appearance and his stage presence. In any case, the aspiring career seeker in either medium should remember the advice given by Lowell Thomas, the narrator for the old *Movietone News* newsreels. When asked once how to read a radio script effectively, he replied, "Make it sound as if it were not being read."



Persons desiring to pursue reporting or acting careers in the communication media attend special schools where they learn the art of oral reading. They struggle through exacting training sessions so that they can go on the air with confidence. Some of them may work in advertising, but many of these students become well-known news commentators and interviewers. They are competent as oral readers.

**At home.** Reading aloud at home is just as important as reading aloud in public. A person's ability to read to his family can add joy and beauty to everyday living. The very act of laughing or weeping over a story with a loved one can enrich those moments. How precious, indeed, are the memories that often cluster around the reading of a child's bedtime story! Reading to children about the spiritual giants of the Old Testament or sharing with them one of the parables of our Lord has even greater importance. It will enlarge their understanding of the Bible and fill their minds with images of unforgettable heroes and with words and the lessons that Jesus taught. Moreover, such reading will also bring family members closer together. Reading well, with excitement and sensitivity, can implant in young minds the value of books as nothing else can.

**Complete the following activities.**

**1.1** List five ways oral communication is used every day.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.2** Explain the social value of oral reading.

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**1.3** Explain the place of oral reading in business.

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**1.4** Explain the importance of oral reading in the home.

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## NATURE

The nature of oral reading is practical, cohesive, and interpretive. Oral reading is practical because it provides a broad background for children, imparting information, providing mental images, and underlining principles that parents wish to instill in them. It is cohesive because it cements relationships between parents and children and between sisters and brothers and because it provides a common collection of memories that can be recalled at will. Oral reading is said to be interpretative. The **intonation** and **inflection** in the voice of the reader brings the writer's intention to artistic realization.

**Practical.** By nature, reading aloud is practical whether a mother is reading one of the Chronicles of Narnia tales to her child or whether a minister is reading the seventeenth chapter of John to his congregation. The printed page is vital to man's way of life. Sharing a delightful use of words or an interesting fact with a family member or a friend can add to the pleasure of both reader and listener.

Oral reading improves pronunciation. An oral reader must pronounce the words that he might skip over if he were reading silently. In all walks of life people are required to read reports in committee meetings or before governing boards; in such situations correct pronunciation and **enunciation** are of utmost

importance. To save embarrassment, one should carefully check anything that will be read and look up the pronunciation of all unfamiliar words. A person's ability to read aloud in a thoughtful, clearly understandable manner will bring personal satisfaction.

**Cohesive.** When people share an oral reading, their minds are brought into unison. All of them are listening; all are responding mentally to the message being projected. The reader must comprehend the author's meaning so that he can clearly express the thoughts of the writer to the audience. This comprehension requires conscientious effort to extract the essential meaning. For a minister of the Word of God, this searching period is imperative. He "breaks the bread" as a mother robin does for her little ones. He is proving Scripture with Scripture, categorizing it into known doctrines, and distilling from it principles to live by. This presentation helps bind a group together in fellowship around the Word.

**Interpretative.** Interpretative reading creates an illusion. For this reason the masters of interpretation make whatever they are doing seem fresh, new, and easy even though the audience knows they may have spent hours, days, or months in rehearsing. The interpretative reader attempts to express the full intent of the author.



### Answer true or false.

- 1.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Reading, by nature, is not a very practical pursuit
- 1.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Oral reading is cohesive because it causes everyone within hearing to be thinking of the same thing.
- 1.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Interpretative reading means expressing the author's meaning by voice intonation and inflection.
- 1.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Reading aloud never improves one's pronunciation of words.
- 1.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Oral reading at home is never practical.



## ROLE

Since oral reading is a form of communication usually social in nature, it also has an individual function. An individual's experiences filter through the prism of his unique perceptions and find expression in words and actions.

Speaking, or reading aloud, is highly individualized. A person's voice is distinctly his own—as unique as his fingerprints. Because no two persons have exactly the same quality of voice or read with the same inflection or expression, oral reading reflects an individual's reading characteristics. Having once heard the poet Dylan Thomas read “The Hunchback in the Park,” how could one fail to recognize the owner of that strong, rich voice? Who could attribute that distinctive voice to any other speaker?

**Social.** For students of oral reading, a knowledge of the best works of great writers, past and present, is helpful. The themes of life, love, and death are frequent subjects among great writers of prose and poetry. These expressions of human truths find an echo in every human heart. To read well from such literary masters as Shakespeare, Milton, Emerson, Dickens, T.S. Eliot, or Robert Frost, the student must gain sensitivity and depth. By cultivating “the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds,” to quote the poet Shelley, the student can acquire that sensitivity and depth of understanding; he can also draw from them, as from a reservoir of ideas, attitudes, sentiments, and values to energize, sharpen, and deepen his awareness and appreciation of life. Those who would read well before an audience, must possess depth and understanding. Oral readers must also possess the ability to express that depth and understanding with sensitivity. Hiram Corson in *The Voice and Spiritual Education*, written in 1896, said, “Some of the best readers I have ever known have been of the former class (having inner capital of emotional power) who honestly voiced what they had



sympathetically assimilated, and did not strain after effect.” Without that emotional power, he says, the reader is likely “to run into all kinds of extravagances which disgust people of culture and taste. The voice instead of being the organ of the soul is a betrayer of soullessness.”

**Individual.** What you read will affect what you think. Good literature will increase your vocabulary, and that in itself will modify your thought patterns. The more you read aloud, the greater your fluency will become. You can develop as a leader, for oral reading makes one stand out from the rank and file. To be able to read aloud before a group for an extended period with poise and self-command, without rushing through the reading or becoming self-conscious or affected, takes a great deal of practice. To be capable of reading moving passages without breaking down requires a composure that indicates emotional maturity. When a person can read aloud and know that everyone in his audience is listening to every tone, every pause of voice and every emphasis, he will experience a sense of confidence that will carry over to his next experience and will build with each successive one.



### Complete each statement.

- 1.10** Reading aloud has a a. \_\_\_\_\_ and an b. \_\_\_\_\_ function.
- 1.11** Since oral reading usually has listeners, it can be classed as a \_\_\_\_\_ act.
- 1.12** Prose and poetry writers of the past and present express ideas about such subjects as  
a. \_\_\_\_\_, b. \_\_\_\_\_, and c. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.13** A reader must gain a. \_\_\_\_\_ and b. \_\_\_\_\_ of understanding  
to be able to read well such writers as Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.
- 1.14** Hiram Corson implied that, to be a good reader, one must have a. \_\_\_\_\_  
capital of b. \_\_\_\_\_ power.
- 1.15** Reading good literature will a. \_\_\_\_\_ your vocabulary and will  
b. \_\_\_\_\_ your thought patterns.
- 1.16** A successful experience in reading aloud before an audience will give you a sense of  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## SKILLS

Reading well before a group requires two skills: the effective use of the voice and the effective use of the body. Emerson said, "And it is so plain to me that eloquence, like swimming, is an art which all men might learn, though so few do." The two skills cannot be separated; they depend on each other.

**Effective use of the voice.** Every speaker or oral reader must learn how to use his voice effectively. One's voice is affected by his attitude toward himself, toward his material, and toward his audience. Nothing unmasks the inner person so quickly as the voice. A person should learn to make the most of his voice. No *ideal* voice exists. The vocal sound produced depends on the length and thickness of a person's vocal cords. These sounds are amplified by the *resonators*: the throat, the nose, and mouth. The *articulators*, the lips, teeth, tongue, hard and soft palates, divide the stream of sound into syllables and into words. The sounds that result from a person's vocal

apparatus have a distinguishing quality that is unique. No one can change the quality of his voice, but he can practice to improve it.

The quality of one's voice is affected by both volume and rate. Proper breath control determines volume.

The reader should keep in mind the advice of the Apostle Paul. "Let your moderation be known to all men." This principle may be applied to volume control: A speaker should not shout at his audience, but he should speak so that he can be heard. A weak voice or a strong voice is not inherited; it is developed. Volume may not be a problem with an audience of two or three; it can be a problem in a roomful of people. A public speaker should test the room in which he will speak. A student may ask a friend to sit in the back of the auditorium or room before his speech to check on volume.

Oral reading suffers if the rate, or speed of utterance, is too fast or choppy. Haste in

speaking causes words to run together, especially in an auditorium or a gymnasium where the acoustics are poor. A hurried presentation is caused by stage fright or by lack of preparation. The purpose of reading to an audience is to share ideas; but if the words follow each other so rapidly that no one can understand what is being said, the speaker is wasting the time of the audience as well as his own.

In preparing a reading, follow this rule: Read the material as you would speak it to a friend, fitting the rate of speed to the requirements of the context. Pronounce the words carefully, paying special attention to the end consonants *-ing* for example. Separate your words; do not run them together. Finally, strive for a clear, smooth, interesting presentation.

**Pitch and resonance.** Voice quality is also affected by pitch and resonance. Pitch refers to the tone of one's voice. It is determined by the repetition of the vibrations of the vocal cords. Pitch ranges from high to low. The most comfortable tone usually occurs somewhere midway between those two points. To find this *optimum pitch*, repeat "ah" several times pausing after each sound as your voice moves up and down your range from the top to its lowest point. In this way you can find the tone of voice that is most desirable for you.

The controlled relaxation of one's vocal resonators produces a pleasant, full sound. Under stress the muscles of the throat will tighten. A tight throat will produce a thin sound. If the speaker's mouth is dry because he is tense, his resonators will be reduced in size and efficiency; and the quality of his voice will suffer. One must be sufficiently relaxed to use the resonators properly in amplifying the voice. Some exercises that will improve resonance include these five: (1) tightening the jaws and then relaxing them for an equal length of time; (2) standing in a comfortable, erect position and dropping one's lower jaw as far as it will

go and then yawning; (3) sighing several times quickly; (4) loosening the mouth and gritting the teeth; and (5) tightening the neck muscles while hunching the shoulders and putting more tension on the mouth and throat, holding and relaxing this position once or twice.

In any case, to attain clarity of utterance is vital for the oral reader. Nothing in his manner should call attention to his production of the speech sounds. Problems in enunciation, pronunciation, and articulation can all be improved with concentration and practice. The use of recordings, self-evaluation, and the criticism of "practice" listeners can be valuable aids in removing whatever faults or unattractive mannerisms a speaker might have. Any such problem should be corrected before a public appearance if possible.

Some problems of vocal quality are caused by physical difficulties. A person whose voice is gravelly, hoarse, strident, nasal, or breathy should have a physical checkup to determine the cause. A *gravelly* or *hoarse* throat is usually the result of overstrain, a throat infection that has been neglected, or perhaps a cold or sore throat. Medical attention and rest may relieve the condition. *Stridency* is the habitually shrill quality found in voices of some persons who whine or nag. Shakespeare had something to say about strident speech in his comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*. A *sotto voce* (sot' oa voa' chee), or stage whisper, uses a breathiness that identifies the utterance as a whisper. A *nasal sound* is caused by allowing too much air to escape through one's nose. Because stress is the source of many speech problems, relaxation is the key to their removal. Experiment with your voice to see how many different imitations you can produce without straining. Some artists and entertainers have perfected this simulation to an art and have made international reputations by impersonating famous people.



**Match the following items.**

- 1.17 \_\_\_\_\_ resonators
  - 1.18 \_\_\_\_\_ articulators
  - 1.19 \_\_\_\_\_ pitch
  - 1.20 \_\_\_\_\_ *sotto voce*
  - 1.21 \_\_\_\_\_ stridency
- a. habitually shrill voice quality
  - b. a nasal sound
  - c. stage whisper
  - d. one's speed in speech
  - e. amplify sound
  - f. one's tone of voice
  - g. divide sound into words and syllables

**Write the letter of the correct answer on the line.**

- 1.22 Optimum pitch refers to the point at which \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. the voice "breaks"
  - b. the voice is comfortable
  - c. the voice is pleasant
  - d. the voice becomes strident
- 1.23 Faults of enunciation, pronunciation, and articulation may be improved by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. surgery
  - b. practice and mannerisms
  - c. concentration and practice
  - d. medical attention
- 1.24 The key to relieve stress related speech problems is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. psychotherapy
  - b. sleep
  - c. physical fitness
  - d. relaxation
- 1.25 An \_\_\_\_\_ exercise that can improve the resonance of the voice is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. bending forward and back
  - b. tightening and loosening the throat muscles
  - c. deep knee bends
  - d. jogging
- 1.26 One of the problems that accompanies articulation is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. pronouncing the final consonants carefully
  - b. never being affected in the speech
  - c. enunciating perfectly
  - d. poor or improper pronunciation
- 1.27 One difficulty in vocal quality is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- a. smooth flow of sound
  - b. stridency
  - c. sounds
  - d. careful articulation

**Effective use of the body.** The art of communication involves the use of the language of the body as well as the sound of the voice. The face transfers emotional meanings in many ways:

by a smile, a frown, a sneer, a raised eyebrow, or a trembling lip. The way one holds his head may suggest either arrogance or its opposite, humility. Shoulder movements can accentuate

# SELF TEST 1

**Match these items.** (each answer, 2 points).

- |      |       |                   |    |  |
|------|-------|-------------------|----|--|
| 1.01 | _____ | descriptive prose | a. | memorization                                 |
| 1.02 | _____ | narrative prose   | b. | sticking together                            |
| 1.03 | _____ | cutting           | c. | physical motions                             |
| 1.04 | _____ | expository prose  | d. | graphic discourse that describes             |
| 1.05 | _____ | gestures          | e. | careful shortening of a reading              |
| 1.06 | _____ | cohesion          | f. | beneath the conscious level,<br>subconscious |
| 1.07 | _____ | enunciation       | g. | language that uses the senses                |
| 1.08 | _____ | eye-contact       | h. | prose that tells a story                     |
| 1.09 | _____ | voice-print       | i. | prose that explains or persuades             |
| 1.10 | _____ | paraphrase        | j. | clear articulation                           |
|      |       |                   | k. | looking up at audience regularly             |
|      |       |                   | l. | summarizing passage in your own<br>words     |
|      |       |                   | m. | poise, self-command                          |
|      |       |                   | n. | like fingerprint, unique to its owner        |

**Answer true or false** (each answer, 1 point).

- 1.011 \_\_\_\_\_ Oral reading is not so important today as it was 100 years ago.
- 1.012 \_\_\_\_\_ Lowell Thomas said, "Make it sound as if it were not being read."
- 1.013 \_\_\_\_\_ One's ability to read aloud will have little effect on his business or profession.
- 1.014 \_\_\_\_\_ Reading aloud does not necessarily require one to understand what he is reading.
- 1.015 \_\_\_\_\_ Those who read aloud best make it look easy.
- 1.016 \_\_\_\_\_ One's voice is affected by his attitude toward himself.
- 1.017 \_\_\_\_\_ The resonators are the mouth, nose, and lips.
- 1.018 \_\_\_\_\_ The articulators are the tongue, teeth, palates, and lips.
- 1.019 \_\_\_\_\_ One inherits a strong or weak voice.

**1.020** \_\_\_\_\_ Speaking rapidly in a large gymnasium causes your words to run together; making them hard to distinguish.

**Complete these statements** (each answer, 3 points).

**1.021** When you read something too fast, you rob the material of its a. \_\_\_\_\_ , and the listener of b. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**1.022** Optimum pitch is \_\_\_\_\_ .

**1.023** You can relax your sound-producing mechanism before a performance by  
a. \_\_\_\_\_ , b. \_\_\_\_\_  
and c. \_\_\_\_\_ .

**1.024** A person whose voice is hoarse, habitually strident, or nasal in quality should first  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

**1.025** Body movement that expresses inner feeling is called \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

**1.026** Hurried reading, words run together, and lack of expression are often caused by  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Answer these questions** (each answer, 5 points).

**1.027** What is the value of learning how to read to an audience?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1.028** What steps would a person go through to prepare for reading aloud to a group?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1.029** How can one discover problems of volume and rate in public reading?

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**1.030** What are the steps in choosing and cutting a reading?

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	<b>SCORE</b> _____	<b>TEACHER</b> _____	initials	date
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