



Voice - How do you speak?

Fact

- Air coming out of your lungs pushes past your vocal chords in your throat and makes them vibrate.
- Your vocal chords are flexible muscle flaps at the top of your wind pipe.
- The vibration of your vocal chords makes the air vibrate and vibrating air makes a sound.
- Making your mouth into different shapes and moving your tongue changes the sound and helps you to form words.
- Higher pitched sounds are made when there are more vibrations per second.

Do you know

- Your voice can change when you've got a throat infection because your vocal chords can swell which changes their vibration which changes the vibration of the air – and that makes a different sound.
- Men have deeper voices than women because their vocal chords are longer and less tight.

Experiments you can do

Try making different sounds with your voice.

When you speak feel the vibrations in your throat, on your lips and nose. What sound can you feel the most?

Can you make your voice lower or higher? What do the vibrations feel like?

Do you move your body at all to help you? Maybe you lower your chin to talk in a deep voice and raise your chin to talk in a high voice? Try making those sounds without lowering or raising your chin. Can you still do it?

Other Investigations

Listen to the voices of people around you. Are some voices high and squeaky? What about low and deep? Can you imitate or copy them and sound the same? Some people are better at this than others.

Try out drum covers by making circles of material to cover a clean empty can and tapping it with something – maybe a chopstick. Compare the sounds when the material is dry and wet. Change how tight the material is around the can and see if that makes a difference.

How about being a ventriloquist? Can you speak easily without moving your lips? Try saying hello without using your lips. It's quite easy. But how about saying good-bye? Practice helps – but it can be tricky.