

# LESSON 5

## Projection

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Define projection.
- ◆ Understand the function and importance of projection in performance.
- ◆ Participate in drills, exercises, and activities to develop and improve an actor's projection.

### Warm Up



**T**hink of someone who seems to always make himself/herself clearly understood regardless of where he/she is (outside, a classroom, gym, auditorium, cafeteria, and so on). What does that person do that is different from others whom you cannot understand?

### projection

the placement and delivery of voice elements used effectively in communicating to an audience.

**P**rojection is the placement and delivery of all the characteristics of an effective voice to communicate with your audience. It makes no difference where you are performing—classroom, cafeteria, small courtyard, or auditorium—your audience must be able to understand

you. Projection involves aiming your voice at a directed target. It combines all the voice elements discussed earlier. As an actor, it is your responsibility to use all the techniques available to you.

Projection involves delivering your lines to the audience, and energy is vital in the delivery of those lines. You constantly must be aware of where the audience is. Not only must you remember all the aspects of acting and speaking onstage; you must also remain aware of the audience's need to hear you.

Having the right attitude is critical. Proper and effective projection requires that you *want* to speak and perform well. Voice projection takes desire, study, and hours of work. The result, however, is that your audience will hear and understand the performance. They will enjoy and possibly even learn from the performance.

# ACTION



**1. Outdoor Theatre.** Select or write a short monologue (script for one person) using themes involving teenage students (for example, peer pressure, boy/girl relationships, friendships, or problems youth face). Either read or memorize the monologue and present it outside, with the class as the audience. Focus on the placement and delivery (where your listeners are) of your lines.

**2. Alphabet Olympics.** Everyone in class participates at the same time, reciting the letters of the alphabet. Use projection, not volume, to be heard. Choose the classmate with the best projection and write in your journal why this person has effective projection. Be specific with your explanation of the effective vocal elements.

**3. How Far Can You Project?** Locate a large room, such as the cafeteria or auditorium. Work in pairs. Memorize the following sentence: "I have told you a hundred times, and the answer is still the same." Stand 15 feet apart from each other and take turns reciting the line. Continue by moving farther and farther apart. Focus on projecting, not shouting.

**4. Stories for Projection.** Select one of the following stories to tell in front of the class or onstage.

- a. The Three Bears
- b. The Three Pigs
- c. Little Red Riding Hood
- d. Three Billy Goats Gruff
- e. Speaker's choice

When projecting onstage, remember these points:

- Warm up the voice and body before performing.
- Be prepared mentally and physically.
- Relax the throat, and don't strain your throat muscles or the vocal folds.
- Use breath control, and breathe from the diaphragm.
- Use energy to apply effective voice elements clearly, distinctly, and without dropping the last words you speak.
- Use a clear, distinct tone when you speak—not a yell.
- Speak to other characters onstage as well as to the audience.
- Focus your lines as far back as the last seat in the auditorium.

In large theatres and auditoriums actors must project their voices so that they can be heard and understood by the audience members furthest from the stage.



**5. Lines for Projection.** Read the following lines from various plays in front of the class, onstage, outside, and at home, for practice with projection.

from **Butterflies are Free**

by Leonard Gershe

**MRS. BAKER.** Of course not. And I know you're not Snow White.

**JILL.** *(Takes the apple, rises, crosses below Mrs. Baker, through kitchen to D. L. post.)* I may have to wait hours before I read. I'll probably starve to death before their eyes.

**MRS. BAKER.** *(Crosses to kitchen, takes lettuce, picks off a few pieces, washes them, puts them on plate.)* You're going to get that part, you know.

**JILL.** What makes you so sure?

**MRS. BAKER.** Well, you're a very pretty girl and that's what they want in the theatre, isn't it?

**JILL.** *(Crosses below to D. R. post, away from Mrs. Baker.)* Today you have to have more than a pretty face. Anyway, I'm not really pretty. I think I'm interesting-looking and in certain lights I can look sort of . . . lovely . . . but I'm not pretty.

**MRS. BAKER.** *(Crosses with lettuce, sits C. sofa.)* Nonsense! You're extremely pretty.

**JILL.** *(Laugh.)* No, I'm not.

**MRS. BAKER.** Yes, you are.

**JILL.** *(Turns, leans post.)* No, I'm not. I've got beady little eyes like a bird and a figure like a pogo stick. *(Waits for a reaction from Mrs. Baker. There isn't one.)* Well? Aren't you going to deny you said that?

**MRS. BAKER.** *(Unperturbed.)* How can I, dear? Obviously, you heard it.

**JILL.** (*Crosses above director's chair.*) There are plenty of true things you can put me down with. You don't have to put me down with lies.

**MRS. BAKER.** You know what I like about you?

**JILL.** Uh-huh. Nothing.

**MRS. BAKER.** Oh yes. I like your honesty . . . your candor. You're really quite a worldly young woman, aren't you, Mrs. Benson?

**JILL.** I suppose I am. (*Crosses above "picnic," away from Mrs. Baker.*) I wish you wouldn't call me Mrs. Benson.

**MRS. BAKER.** Isn't that your name . . . Mrs. Benson?

**JILL.** But you don't say it as though you mean it.

**MRS. BAKER.** I'm sorry. Why don't I call you Jill? That's more friendly . . . and I'll try to say it as though I mean it. Now, Jill, (*Jill—R. turn, back to audience.*) you were telling me about your childhood.

**JILL.** I was?

### **You're A Good Man Charlie Brown**

Based on the comic strip *Peanuts*  
by Charles M. Schulz

**CHARLIE BROWN.** I think lunchtime is about the worst time of the day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes mornings aren't so pleasant, either—waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night, too—lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between—when I do all those stupid things. Well, lunchtime is *among* the worst times of the day for me.

Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. (*He opens the bag, unwraps a sandwich, and looks inside*) Peanut butter. (*He bites and chews*) Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely. I guess they're right. And if you're really lonely, the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. (*He munches quietly, idly fingering the bench*) Boy, the PTA sure did a good job of painting these benches. (*He looks off to one side*) There's that cute little redheaded girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she'd do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her. She'd probably laugh right in my face. It's hard on a face when it gets laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over and sit there. I could do that right now. All I have to do is stand up. (*He stands*) I'm standing up. (*He sits*) I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why shouldn't she look at me? Is there any reason in the world why she shouldn't look at me? Is she so great and am I so small that she couldn't spare one little moment just to . . . (*He freezes*) She's looking at me. (*In terror he looks one way, then another*) She's looking at me. (*In terror he looks one way, then another*) She's *looking* at me.

*(His head looks all around, frantically trying to find something also to notice. His teeth clench. Tension builds. Then, with one motion, he pops the paper bag over his head. LUCY and PATTY enter)*

**LUCY.** No, Patty, you're thinking of that other dress, the one I wore to Lucinda's party. The one I'm talking about was this very light blue one and had a design embroidered around the waist.

**PATTY.** I don't remember that dress.

**LUCY.** *(Takes a pencil and draws matter-of-factly on the bottom of the paper bag)* Something like this. The skirt went out like this and it had these puffy sleeves and a sash like this.

**PATTY.** Oh yes, I remember.

**LUCY.** Yes, well *that* was the dress I was wearing last week when I met Frieda and she told me she'd seen one just like it over at . . . *(The girls have exited. CHARLIE BROWN sits immobile as their voices fade)*

**CHARLIE BROWN.** *(The paper bag still pulled over his head)* Lunchtime *is* among the worst times of the day for me . . . . .

### **Selected Lines by William Shakespeare**

Let me have men about me that are fat,  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights.  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.  
He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.  
*Julius Caesar, Act. 1, Scene 2, 192–195*

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts.  
*As You Like It, Act. 2, Scene 7, 139–142*

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.  
*Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5, 19–28*

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls;  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.  
*Othello, Act 2, Scene 3, 155–161*