

Diction Exercises

- to make sure they get your message

Why *should* you do diction exercises?

Because your speech content may be great, you may *look* fantastic but unless your audience can UNDERSTAND what you're saying, your message is lost.

Diction exercises will help you learn how to speak clearly. An athlete does warm-ups and stretches before an event: a singer does likewise.

These exercises are the speaker's warm-up equivalent. They prepare and train you to speak with ease.

The specific benefits of diction/articulation exercises are:

- strengthening and stretching the muscles involved in speech
- bringing to your attention habitual speech patterns which may be *less* than perfect.

Good diction is *NOT* about changing your accent or making you *'talk posh'*. It is about *clarity* - making sure what you say is heard.

The most commonly known and used diction exercises are **Tongue Twisters**.

There are literally *squillions* of them, each focusing on either a single letter, or a letter combination. Often they're complete nonsense - phrases and word combinations chosen purely for the way they make you work to say them clearly.

Tongue twisters have long been an integral part of a public speaker's tool kit. As well as being fun, they are *extremely effective*.

Diction Exercises: Tips & Tongue Twisters

Diction Exercises for 'B' words:

Betty bought a bit of butter, but she found the butter bitter, so Betty bought a bit of better butter to make the bitter butter better.

*Bill had a billboard.
Bill also had a board bill.
The board bill bored Bill,
So Bill sold his billboard
And paid his board bill.
Then the board bill
No longer bored Bill,
But though he had no board bill,
Neither did he have his billboard!*

For 'D' words try:

Did Doug dig David's garden or did David dig Doug's garden?

Do drop in at the Dewdrop Inn

Diction Exercises for 'F' words:

Four furious friends fought for the phone

Five flippant Frenchmen fly from France for fashions

For 'H' words try:

How was Harry hastened so hurriedly from the hunt?

In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire hurricanes hardly ever happen

Diction Exercises for 'J' words:

James just jostled Jean gently.

Jack the jailbird jacked a jeep.

Diction Exercises for 'K' words:

Kiss her quick, kiss her quicker, kiss her quickest.

My cutlery cuts keenly and cleanly.

Diction Exercises for 'L' words:

Literally literary.

Larry sent the latter a letter later.

Lucy lingered, looking longingly for her lost lap-dog.

Diction Exercises for 'P' words:

Peter pier picked a peck of pickled peppers.

If Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

Where's the peck of pickled peppers that Peter Piper picked?

*Pearls, please, pretty Penelope,
Pretty Penelope, pretty Penelope,
Pearls, please, pretty Penelope,
Pretty Penelope Pring.*

For 'Q' words:

Quick kiss. Quicker kiss. Quickest kiss.

Quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly...

For 'R' words:

Round the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran.

Reading and writing are richly rewarding.

Exercises for 'S' words:

Six thick thistle sticks

Theophilus Thistler, the thistle sifter, in sifting a sieve of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.

The shrewd shrew sold Sarah seven sliver fish slices.

Sister Susie sat on the sea shore sewing shirts for sailors

*Moses supposes his toeses are roses,
But Moses supposes erroneously,
For nobody's toeses are posies of roses
As Moses supposes his toeses to be.*

(Pronounce the word 'toeses' to rhyme with 'Moses'.)

For 'T' words:

Ten tame tadpoles tucked tightly in a thin tall tin.

Two toads, totally tired, trying to trot to Tewkesbury.

For 'V' words:

Vincent vowed vengeance very vehemently.

Vera valued the valley violets.

And lastly, two especially for your tongue

Red leather, yellow leather...

Red lorry, yellow lorry...

And then, one more for good measure!



This comes from Gilbert and Sullivan's light opera **'The Pirates of Penzance'**.

It's *guaranteed* to make you work as it's the tongue's equivalent of a triathlon!

It includes many difficult combinations impossible to get right unless you articulate clearly. Have fun with it.

*'I am the very pattern of a modern Major-General;
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral;
I know the Kings of England, and I quote the fights historical,
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;
I'm very well acquainted too with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both simple and quadratical,
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,
With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.
I'm very good at integral and differential calculus,
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous,
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.'*

<http://www.write-out-loud.com/dictionexercises.html>