

# CLASSROOM RESOURCES

A Publication of the Speech, Drama & Debate SIG of The  
Japan Association for Language Teaching

Practical ideas for  
teachers

**Philip Head (SDD SIG Publications Chair)**

Welcome to the inaugural 2015 edition of *Classroom Resources: A Publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG*. Here you will find many practical and fun ways to bring the creative benefits of drama, debate, and speech into the language-learning classroom. I would like to thank the authors for their many fine contributions to this publication, as well as for their patience during the editing process. I would also like to thank the many SDD officers who took the time to help with proofreading or who offered advice throughout this process.

**Vivian Bussinguer-Khavari (SDD SIG Coordinator)**

We are so excited to present the very first issue of *Classroom Resources: A Publication of the Speech, Drama, and Debate SIG*. Its creation and development have been in the planning for quite a while, so it is great to finally see it all come together. I would like to congratulate Philip Head, our publications chair, who has put so much time and effort into this project. To all of our contributing authors, I would like to extend my appreciation for the outstanding ideas presented here. My compliments also go to our team of editors and proofreaders, who have made invaluable contributions to this issue. Finally, to our readers and supporters: We hope you enjoy every page and come back for more next year!

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# CONTENTS

## Speech Activities

Amy Ives Takebe	<i>A Speech Practice Using an Essay from The Japan Times ST ...</i> p. 4
Amy Ives Takebe	<i>The Blah-blah-blah Speech ...</i> p. 5
Amy Ives Takebe	<i>The Confident Speech ...</i> p. 6
Amy Ives Takebe	<i>Using Fox in Sox for a Vocal Warm-up ...</i> p. 7
Anthony Sellick	<i>Audience Participation Through Peer Evaluation: Maximizing Student Involvement in Speech Contest Auditions ...</i> p. 7
Matthew Michaud	<i>Pecha Kucha in EFL: Creating Creative Presentations ...</i> p. 9

## Drama Activities

Greg Rouault	<i>“Only ¥8,800!” TV Shopping and Infomercials ...</i> p. 11
David Kluge	<i>Live Music Video ...</i> p. 12
Mark Makino	<i>Customizing Popular Music ...</i> p. 13
Philip Head	<i>Three Line Dramas ...</i> p. 14
Anthony Sellick	<i>Group Poetry – A Quick and Easy Poetry Activity for Students ...</i> p. 15

## Debate Activities

David Kluge	<i>Taking Sides on an Issue ...</i> p. 18
James Venema	<i>An Introduction to Debate ...</i> p. 19
David Kluge	<i>Stand Up for What You Believe ...</i> p. 21
Appendices	... p. 22

# A Speech Practice Using an Essay from *The Japan Times ST*

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Voice inflection, speech, presentation
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 15 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 50 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** An essay from *The Japan Times ST*, PC, speakers

At the beginning of every semester in my presentation class, I show my students a video of Sarah Jones' TED presentation (*A One-Woman Global Village*). In her presentation, Jones introduces eight different female characters by changing her voice, gestures, and look. The content of the presentation is very intriguing, of course, but it also teaches the students how they could deliver an effective presentation or speech by using their bodies, especially their voices. The following activity encourages students to discuss different ways to use their voices in a presentation or in a speech.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Make a copy of an essay from *The Japan Times ST* (a bilingual newspaper for English language learners). Make enough copies for all the students in class.

**Step 2:** Download the audio recording of the essay from *The Japan Times ST* website.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Teach different ways to say a simple sentence, such as “I love you,” with various vocal techniques (e.g., reading with different tones and volumes, pausing, etc.).

**Step 2:** Distribute copies of an essay from *The Japan Times ST*.

**Step 3:** Ask the students to make pairs and have them think with their partners how they would read the first paragraph of the essay if they were supposed to read it at a speech contest.

**Step 4:** Make a group of four students and have the students compare their speech styles with the other pairs in class.

**Step 5:** Play the audio recording of the first paragraph of the essay.

**Step 6:** Have the students read the rest of the essay. Assign each pair a paragraph to read. Give students enough time to practice reading their assigned paragraph.

**Step 7:** Have the students come in front of the classroom and read their assigned paragraph to the class. (The pair may read their assigned paragraph together or they may split the paragraph into two parts and have each student read one part of the paragraph.)

## Conclusion

The instructor may video record the students' speech with the students' cellphones so that the students could later reflect on their performance. As Rome was not built in a day, instructors should also encourage students to practice reading different essays with various vocal techniques at home to help them become greater public speakers.

## References

Jones, S. (2009). *A one-woman global village* [Online video]. Retrieved from [http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_jones\\_as\\_a\\_one\\_woman\\_global\\_village](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jones_as_a_one_woman_global_village)

The Japan Times ST English Essay. Retrieved from <http://st.japantimes.co.jp/essay/>

## The Blah-blah-blah Speech

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### Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Eye contact, speech, presentation
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 5 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 30 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** Projector, projector screen (or TV), PC

One of the reasons English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learners feel nervous when it comes to making a speech in English is because they have to speak in their second language. “The Blah-Blah-Blah Speech” eliminates the language aspect of a speech and allows students to focus on making good eye contact with the audience, which is an important element for a successful speech.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Set up projector and PC.

**Step 2:** Make sure that the classroom has Internet access.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Teach how to make eye contact with the audience. I usually teach my students to make eye contact with an individual or a group of people for three seconds before moving to the next person or a group of people.

**Step 2:** The instructor gives a short self-introduction speech twice; once with poor eye contact (e.g., looking at the ceiling, looking at the back of the classroom) and once with good eye contact (as described in Step 1).

**Step 3:** Go to YouTube and show a segment from Ai Futaki’s 2012 TEDxTokyo presentation (*The Water Connection*). Play the video without sound so that the students could focus on Futaki’s way of making eye contact with the audience. I recommend the instructors to tell their students to watch Futaki’s presentation with sound after class as it provides the students a chance to see a real L2 user, whom the students could be inspired by, giving a presentation (Cook, 2008).

**Step 4:** Now it is the students’ turn to practice making eye contact. Ask the students to make a group of three to four people and sit in a circle. All students in the group take turns and deliver a one-minute speech, just by saying “blah-blah-blah.” Students may use gestures if they would like to, but they should only say, “blah-blah-blah” and never stop making eye contacts with their group members. Allow students to deliver their speeches multiple times. Instructor walks around the class and provides feedback to students if necessary.

### Conclusion

As a follow-up activity, students may video record their speech with their cellphones and reflect on their eye contact skills in the next lesson. “The Blah-Blah-Blah Speech” could also be used when teaching movements on stage for a presentation class.

## References

Cook, V. (2008). The L2 user and the native speaker. In V. Cook, *Second language learning and language teaching* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp.170-193). London, Great Britain: Hodder Education.

Futaki, A. (2012, June 30). The water connection - [English]: Ai Futaki at TEDxTokyo. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0fQDnMgDgw>

# The Confident Speech

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Confidence, body language, presentation, speech
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 10 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 15 minutes
- ❖ **Material:** Role cards

The following simple activity was inspired by Amy Cuddy's 2012 TED presentation (*Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are*). Based on her research on how our bodies and minds influence one another, Cuddy suggests changing our posture simply for two minutes to overcome stressful situations (e.g., job interviews or public speaking, etc.). I have carried out the following activity in my university's presentation class to help my students build confidence in their presentation.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Make a role card that says: "You are a confident student." Make enough copies for all the students in class.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Put the students into groups.

**Step 2:** Distribute the role cards. Students are not allowed to share their role cards with their peers.

**Step 3:** Ask the students to stand up and deliver "The Blah-Blah-Blah Speech" (see page 5) or a self-introduction speech as the character written on their role cards to their group members. After a while, the instructors may change group members so that the students could deliver the speech several times. The instructor reveals the secret at the end; all the role cards say "You are a confident student."

**Step 4:** Teach how a speaker's emotion is often reflected by the speaker's body language.

## Conclusion

This activity gives students a chance to deliver a speech with their own interpretation of "confidence" before learning about posture and gestures. Instructors should encourage students who did well in Step 3 to try to use the same body language in their other in-class presentations.

## Reference

Cuddy, A. (2012, June 28). Your body language shapes who you are. Retrieved from [http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are)

## Using *Fox in Sox* for a Vocal Warm-up

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### Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Vocal warm-up, speech, presentation
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 5 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 10 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** Dr. Seuss's *Fox in Sox*, document camera, projector, projector screen

Ask any dancer or singer, and he or she will tell you that warming up before a performance is essential for a successful performance. In the same way, we need to teach our students the importance of vocal warm-up before they jump into their speech or presentation. I find Dr. Seuss's *Fox in Sox* an effective material for a vocal warm-up as it provides opportunities for the students to practice saying the vowels by saying various tongue twisters.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Borrow *Fox in Sox* from a library.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** The instructor reads some pages from *Fox in Sox*. I recommend using a document camera, a projector, and a projector screen for this activity so that all the students can see the pictures and the sentences from the book.

**Step 2:** Ask the students to sit in pairs and have them read some sentences from the book to their partners several times.

### Conclusion

Although *Fox in Sox* is a children's book, it may be hard for some students to read it smoothly at first since it is full of tongue twisters. However, as students practice reading it several times, it becomes a nice vocal warm-up before reading a lengthy speech out loud. This activity could easily lead to teaching oral interpretation.

### Reference

Dr. Seuss. (1986). *Fox in Sox*. New York, NY: Random House. (Original work published 1965).

## Audience Participation Through Peer Evaluation: Maximizing Student Involvement in Speech Contest Auditions

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### Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Speech contest, recitation contest, audition, peer assessment
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** Junior high school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 10-20 minutes

- ❖ **Activity time:** One lesson
- ❖ **Materials:** Scoring sheets

Speech and recitation contests are common events in Japan. Participation can help students develop their confidence in expressing themselves in English, and improving their spoken English is a primary reason why students take part.

However, the audition phase of these competitions often minimizes student participation. This is because many auditions consist of a handful of students volunteering (or being volunteered) to take part in a private audition after classes. While the above method is quick and selects the ‘best’ students, it excludes the majority. Alternatively, every student gives their speech or recitation in front of the class during lessons or during homeroom, with the ‘best’ selected by the teacher. While every student takes part, it takes a long time and most students are doing nothing for most of this time.

To address these concerns, this article presents an approach that seeks to maximize student participation in the audition process via peer evaluation. Research shows that peer evaluations do not vary significantly from teacher evaluations (Azamoosh, 2013).

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Before starting the audition process, it is essential to determine the total number of students who will participate in the speech or recitation contest. A useful rule of thumb for this is to multiply the number of participating student groups (such as or classes) by three. Thus, if there are four student groups, the total number of students taking part in the contest will be twelve.

Taking this approach also allows for two participants from each group to be selected via the audition process, with an additional third ‘wildcard’ participant selected by the teacher.

**Step 2:** Prepare student scoring sheets. These scoring sheets should be the same as the teacher’s, and be easy to understand. An example is provided below.

The score sheets should *not* have a space for the students to write their own names – their scores should be anonymous.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain to the students that the audition process will require them to evaluate their classmates.

**Step 2:** Distribute the score sheets and check that the students understand each score category.

**Step 3:** Provide good and bad examples for each category. This section should be light-hearted and useful illustrations of poor performance include the teacher demonstrating an exaggeratedly fast or slow pace, overly loud or whispered speech, using very odd intonation and pauses, hiding behind a script or staring at the ceiling, and so on.

**Step 4:** Divide the students into small groups. Each student then presents to their group, and is evaluated. While this is taking place, the teacher(s) should circulate and monitor the groups.

**Step 5:** Once all students have made their presentation and been evaluated, the evaluations are tabulated and each group’s winner (the student with the highest evaluation score) goes to the front of the class.

**Step 6:** Collect the used score sheets and distribute fresh ones.

**Step 7:** The winning students make their presentations a second time, but are now evaluated by the whole class *and* the teacher(s).

**Step 8:** Have the students tally the scores (e.g., by seating row), calculate and announce who will go on to the contest. At this stage, the teacher(s) can name a ‘wildcard’ student; a student who performed well, but did not win their group.

## Conclusion

This format increases student involvement, empowering them and increasing their ownership of the contest, while ensuring that they remain



actively engaged throughout. The peer evaluations help students develop their active listening skills. Finally, participation in such activities helps students become more autonomous learners.

## References

Azamoosh, M. (2013). Peer assessment in an EFL context: attitudes and friendship bias, *Language Testing in Asia*, 3(11).  
<http://www.languagetestingasia.com/content/3/1/11>

## Appendix: Sample Scoring Sheet

<b>Name:</b> (名前)	
<b>Content:</b> (内容)	<b>/10</b>
<b>Delivery:</b> (配信)	<b>/10</b>
<b>Pronunciation:</b> (発音)	<b>/5</b>
<b>Total:</b> (計)	<b>/25</b>

# Pecha Kucha in EFL: Creating Creative Presentations

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Pecha Kucha, presentations, creativity, self-efficacy
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Beginners and above
- ❖ **Learner Maturity:** High School and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 90-150 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** The average Pecha Kucha presentation will take 7-8 minutes per student
- ❖ **Materials:** Handouts, digital projector, computer

The use of presentations allows students more flexibility and space to explore creative expression. One form of presentation is Pecha Kucha (PK). PK is an entertaining and creative activity for students to learn to think on the fly while using English. PK's uncomplicated limitation of presenting 20 slides in total, each showing an image for 20 seconds is understandable by learners and can reflect the presenter's passions and interests.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Print out copies of the handouts to give to students. (See appendices section.)

**Step 2:** Obtain examples of PK presentations from [pechakucha.org](http://pechakucha.org).

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Introduce the history of PK and explain the fundamentals of PK creation.

**Step 2:** Tell students that they will be making a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation, using only 20 images. The images should be organized to tell a comprehensible story and each slide is shown for only 20 seconds. Emphasize the importance of key public speaking points such as eye contact, voice volume, clarity, and posture.

**Step 3:** Show example PK presentations to students via [pechakucha.org](http://pechakucha.org) or show a pre-made PK presentation to the class.

**Step 4:** Give the *What is Pecha Kucha* handout (Appendix 1, page 22) to students and explain it in detail. This handout and *PK squares* (Appendix 2, page 24) can help students organize their thoughts on paper before the actual presentation. Get the students storyboarding and writing (preferably in a computer lab, or if this is not possible assign it for homework). Students can also use their cell phones or computers to conduct research for their presentation. Check that students fully understand what is expected of them and how they should proceed with PK creation.

**Step 5:** Monitor students and give them time to think of an idea. Tell them to think on their topic deeply, while using the internet for research of ideas. It is important to get all students working creatively. Emphasize that it is best that students focus on the presentation creation first. The key is to build student self-efficacy beliefs at this point. Some might need assurances that they are working in the right direction.

**Step 6:** Check presentations and tell students that they must present next class. The teacher should insist that whenever possible, students ad-lib and not depend solely on their script during presentations. The final presentation should be a process whereby the students complete something on their own. This will help them gain insights into their own level and how they can improve. To show this, be sure to make a rubric that should include marks regarding voice, posture, eye contact, presentation structure (logical order), content (depth of presenters' knowledge of the topic, the quality of the slides, and if they set an automatic timer for the slides.

**Step 7:** At the start of the second class, students should have their presentations on a USB. They then do the presentation for the class using a computer and projector. Regarding non-presenting students, the teacher can choose to have the students evaluate the presenters or passively listen.

**Step 8:** After all students are finished, the class can discuss their opinions about the presentations. Student opinions should be limited to comments regarding content.

## Conclusion

Pecha Kucha offers English as a foreign language (EFL) students an outlet to be creative and present on topics they like. The activity can also be adjusted in terms of the number of slides and time required for talking according to the needs of the class. For example, a low level class could start with talking about 10 slides for 10 seconds each. Although some students may be leery of having to start a PowerPoint presentation, they are quick to realize that what the teacher is asking of them is quite straightforward. I started using PK in my classes to get students, who were often referred to as "low-level learners" by other teachers, to talk about something that interested them in front of fellow classmates. PK is a great presentation because the whole process from start to finish can build student motivation. I find that students rise to the occasion and are quite motivated to show other students and the teacher what their interests are. PK works well in my classes, allowing students to research using the internet, create a presentation, write, and give a final oral presentation where often students who seem to be quite quiet break out and blow the class away with an informative and energetic performance. Getting low-level students in front of a class in particular is challenging, yet PK works extraordinarily well for such students.

# “Only ¥8,800!” TV Shopping and Infomercials

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Presentations, delivery, intonation, gestures
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Low intermediate and above
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 15-30 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 3-5 minutes per presenting group
- ❖ **Material:** Worksheet

To engage students, meaningful communication tasks may include personalized activities or specific role plays. Beyond individualized “My...” speech themes, the advantages of dramatized roles may often be overlooked in typical presentation classes or courses using presentations for a demonstration of language and learning outcomes. Such oversight can result in less animated presenters speaking to an even less engaged (but yet captive) audience making the time taken to hold presentation delivery days relatively inefficient with little purpose or pizzazz.

This TV shopping and infomercial presentation activity is designed to (1) capitalize on student awareness of this ubiquitous genre, (2) provide opportunities for creative expression, and (3) guide students to address important aspects of oral presentation delivery. Through character role plays of the hawkers seen in TV shopping and infomercials, students are afforded openings where they are expected to present and deliver in a more animated, dramatic way — particularly with

intonation and gestures. For teachers looking for something a little different to energize their class, the following activity can be prepared and completed in a time frame similar to other types of speeches in courses using presentations in the curriculum.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Search for online video clips of TV shopping infomercials appropriate for the age and level of the learners. Have these ready to show in class on the instruction day.

**Step 2:** Copy the worksheet (Appendix 3, page 25) observers will use to assess and take notes during the presentations.

## Procedure: Instruction day

**Step 1:** Ask if anyone has ever bought (or wanted) anything from TV shopping and discuss what/why.

**Step 2:** Have students mime the gestures of the TV salespeople.

**Step 3:** Play the prepared video clips and have students shadow or repeat the intonation and emphasis used by the presenters on TV.

**Step 4:** Play again and highlight the use of language and emphasis to introduce and explain or demonstrate the product features.

**Step 5:** For maximum creativity and originality, ask students to (a) invent something new, (b) create an alternate use for an existing item, or (c) combine 2 things to make something new like with *chindogu* (see <http://www.tofugu.com/2012/02/20/chindogu-useless-japanese-inventions/>).

**Step 6:** Group students into pairs (or trios, as presentation time allows) to prepare their 3 to 5-minute TV shopping presentations for delivery in class with the item created in Step 5.

**Step 7:** Review the components of effective presentation delivery from the scoring scale rubric on the worksheet

## Procedure: Presentation day

**Step 1:** Assign the presentation order or select pairs/trios randomly.

**Step 2:** Hand out the evaluation worksheet. (See Appendix 3 on page 25)

**Step 3:** Have groups deliver their infomercial demonstration while classmates evaluate the presentation and take notes on their worksheet.

## Extension

Before handing them in, students use their notes to decide if they would buy the item being promoted or not and give reasons why in a small group discussion or written report.

## Alternatives

As an alternative to many “one and done” presentations in front of the whole class, three or four groups could present at the same time and do their presentation 3-4 times with small groups of observers (and the teacher) rotating to watch the different groups each time.

## Conclusion

While not academic in nature, the intention for this type of presentation is for students to stretch their presentation delivery abilities and more effectively address the elements outlined in typical evaluation forms and presentation rubrics. Personal experience has shown that these roles have provided an outlet for overly enthusiastic class members to perform while also allowing more reserved students to better execute the aspects of presentation delivery in character. Learners have provided clear evidence of taking on the demonstrative role of the TV infomercial hosts by pausing, s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g, and projecting their voice more to highlight key information with appropriate intonation – even if it reaches the absurd by shouting prices like “¥8,800 *desu!*” which is how I choose to introduce the genre and gauge the initial familiarity with the genre of my Japanese students

## Live Music Video

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Oral Interpretation, music
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Intermediate
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** Intermediate
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 5-10 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 45 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** A handout of lyrics

Oral interpretation is dramatically reading a piece of literature (poem, part of a short story or novel, speech, letter, and so on). The interpreters use voice, gesture, posture, and movement to communicate the meaning of the piece. They are allowed to hold the script in hand while performing. This activity gives students a quick and easy experience with oral interpretation.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Choose a song that students know. It is good if the song fits the unit being studied in class. For example, choose “My Favorite Things” from *The Sound of Music* to illustrate likes and dislikes.

**Step 2:** Find the lyrics to the song on the Internet and make a handout of the lyrics. Print it out double-spaced so that students have enough space to write any notes they will need for the performance. Number each verse and chorus consecutively from beginning to end.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain what oral interpretation is (see the introduction to this activity). You might want to

demonstrate by reading lines that show different emotions or concepts such as loong, or LOUD.

**Step 2:** Hand out the lyrics to the song.

**Step 3:** If possible, play the song—either from the Internet or live if you have the ability to do so.

**Step 4:** Divide the students into the same number of groups as there are verses/choruses on the handout. Number the groups.

**Step 5:** Tell the students that the group is responsible for interpreting one verse/chorus for the rest of the class.

**Step 6:** Give the students 10 minutes to sit and **plan** their part.

**Step 7:** Give the students 20 minutes to stand and **practice** their part

**Step 8:** Have the groups perform their parts in the order of the song. (Remember, the students should say the words and not sing them.)

## Option

If you can prepare a video camera, record the performances and play them back for the students at the end of the activity.

## Conclusion

This activity gives the students a quick, easy, fun introduction to oral interpretation.

# Customizing Popular Music

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Music, rhymes, prosody
- ❖ **Learner English Level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner Maturity:** Any
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 30 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 1 hour
- ❖ **Materials:** The song itself, lyrics sheets, blank sheets of paper, instrument (optional)

To the teacher, music may represent a unique context to practice several language skills, including pronunciation, prosody, and grammar. To students, music in the classroom may be a refreshing recognition of their individual tastes. The problem is that music that appeals to one student may not to another. This activity presents a means of rendering popular music into class music by collectively writing new lyrics, changing the song in question from one that only some know or enjoy to a class project that everyone has a stake in.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Get at least one student's stated interest in a particular song, artist, or musical. Learn the song yourself. Have it ready to play in class, either on an instrument or from a karaoke or MIDI version found online.

**Step 2:** Make printouts of the lyrics and have ready a spare sheet of blank paper for each student.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Play the original version of the song for the students. After playing the song, do reviews of the story or message behind the song, the vocabulary in it, and any other issues (artist, history, genre, etc.) you think students may benefit from.

**Step 2:** Hand out copies of the lyrics for each student. Introduce and review the concept of *rhymes* if this is the first time your students are encountering the idea, as is often the case in Japan. I recommend having worksheets ready to treat the concept explicitly, as well as having plenty of examples from current popular music to convey the idea. When the students get the gist, have them

find examples of rhymes from the lyric sheets of the chosen song.

**Step 3:** Have students write their own version of the lyrics, individually or in groups. In smaller classes, one verse per person is appropriate, and one verse per group works for larger classes. This step generally takes the longest, and in lower-level or less talkative classes may take the form of students choosing from teacher suggestions rather than completely student-generated content. The teacher may also simply scatter blanks in the original lyrics rather than have students write from scratch. You will need to ensure students are choosing genuine rhymes and not straying too far from the number of syllables in each line of the song. Fortunately, most students of junior high age or older in Japan will be able to grasp the sequences of eighth notes that make up the melodies of most popular music. Some will need assistance on telling how many syllables are in a given word, for example *next*, which is four morae in *katakana* (ネキスト, *nekisuto*), but only one syllable in English.

**Step 4:** Gather the sections of lyrics written and arrange them into a familiar verse-chorus pattern. Print these out as new lyrics sheets and then sing the song together as a class. Here is an example of a new verse written by one of my small groups of elementary school students for White Christmas, which they chose from a short list of holiday songs. In this case, one of the lines was kept entirely intact, the first and last had only a few blanks, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines were left to the students.

I'm dreaming of a relaxing Christmas

Just like the ones I used to know

Where I wake up at 10

And I sleep again

Everybody sits down in the snow

## Conclusion

The activity outlined here has helped me turn a number of student suggestions into class activities,

and has shown up numerous times on my teacher evaluations as students' favorite activity of the term. Remember to keep your sense of humor intact, and enjoy!

## Three Line Dramas

### Philip Head

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### Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Drama, presentations, listening
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Intermediate to advanced
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** All levels
- ❖ **Preparation time:** None
- ❖ **Activity time:** 20-50 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** Puppets (optional)

Drama can be a great way to liven up a class and allow students to express themselves while practicing speaking and listening. One of the challenges however, can be students lacking the confidence to speak, as well as the challenge of either memorizing lines in a formal drama setting or conversely, coming up with sentences quickly in an improvisational setting. Here I will describe a quick activity that can allow students to express themselves in a less intimidating manner.

### Preparation:

**Step 1:** Obtain two puppets or paper cut outs of people (or use your partner if you are team-teaching).

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Write *who*, *where*, and *what* on the board.

**Step 2:** Ask students to watch while you and another teacher (or two puppets) act out a scene and then to ask them to try to answer the three questions written on the board.

**Step 3:** Enthusiastically demonstrate a couple of short ABA scenes with a variety of topics. For example:

A: Mom, can I watch TV after dinner?

B: Only if you finish your homework first.

A: [sighing] Okay, I will.

(who = mother and child, where = a house, what = talking about homework).

A: RUN, GODZILLA IS ATTACKING TOKYO!

B: Don't worry little boy, I'll save you!

A: Thank you, Superman!

(who = Superman and a little boy, where = Tokyo, what = Godzilla attacking).

**Step 4:** Tell students that they have ten minutes to find a partner and come up with their own three-line drama, and that it must contain information to answer the three questions on the board. Emphasize that any type of scene is acceptable and that the grammar doesn't need to be perfect.

**Step 5:** Monitor the students and help them with any difficult words.

**Step 6:** Have pairs of students perform their drama for the class. Have the other students listen for the key situational information. Check the answers as a class.

**Step 7:** Repeat Step 6 until all the groups have presented (about 1 minute per group).

## Alternative activities and alterations

You can have the students write the answers to the three questions for each drama on a piece of paper to be collected at the end of class to ensure that all students pay close attention to the presentations. If you have time at the end, students can also choose their favorite presentation and discuss their reason with their partner or write it down. Higher level students can be given less preparation time or attempt an improvised version of the activity.

Also, as an alternative to presenting in front of an entire class, two pairs of students can present to and evaluate each other, placing less emphasis on teacher evaluation. These two group presentations can be performed multiple times to allow for more speaking practice. This can also save class time as presentations occur simultaneously.

## Conclusion

This activity is fast, fun, and allows students to be creative. The short duration of the scenes means that it is less intimidating to write, and extensive memorization isn't required. Also, the three Wh question information provides a framework for the writing process while not being too restrictive, as well as a listening goal for the audience.

## Group Poetry – A Quick and Easy Poetry Activity for Students

**Anthony Sellick**

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Poetry, group activity, creative writing
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** Junior high school and above
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 5-10 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** One lesson
- ❖ **Materials:** Blank paper

Poetry can help give students a feel for the intonation and rhythmic patterns of English. However, teachers can sometimes find it difficult to introduce poetry to their students. Furthermore, students often find writing to be a challenge, especially if they are required to be creative. Fortunately, poetry is a flexible medium and teachers can bring poetry into the classroom without being bound to formal styles of poetry or patterns of rhyme.

This article presents a simple poetry-writing approach that students of any level can participate in.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Choose a suitable set of contrasting concepts, such as happy/sad, can/can't, love/hate, and so on. Prepare an appropriate question (target question) for these concepts based on the students' level. For example, 'What makes you sad?' and 'What makes you happy?'

**Step 2:** Ensure that there are sufficient blank sheets of paper available for each group to write their poem on.

## Procedure: Individual Phase

**Step 1:** Write the target questions on the class board.

**Step 2:** Provide good and bad sample answers for each question to ensure the students know how to answer the questions. This section should be lighthearted and can be particularly effective (and entertaining) if the teacher provides the examples

**Step 3:** Have the students write their own answers for each question.

## Procedure: Group Phase

**Step 1:** Explain what a poem is and tell the students that they will write a poem in groups.

**Step 2:** Divide the class into groups of up to eight students.

**Step 3:** Tell the students that they need to put their answers together and arrange them in a way that sounds good to them when read aloud. Some groups may need more support than others at this stage, and it can sometimes be useful to provide examples to kick-start the students' creativity (see the Appendix).

**Step 4:** Monitor the students and provide assistance where necessary.

## Procedure: Presentation Phase

**Step 1:** Tell the students that they will perform their poems to the rest of the class, and allow them some time to prepare.

**Step 2:** Have the students perform their poems (some examples are provided in the Appendix). While the audience could simply listen to the poems, teachers may prefer to encourage feedback from the rest of the class. This could be in the form of discussing the feelings evoked by the content of the poems or their performance, or in the form of an evaluation, possibly with students voting for the poem they liked the most.

## Conclusion

This activity provides the opportunity for every student to participate, and ensures that their poems are unique, personal, and relevant to their lives. A nice way to follow up this lesson is for the teacher to collect the poems, perhaps take pictures of each group, and then make a display of the poems in the classroom. This can also make an effective display for school events, such as open days and school festivals.



## Appendix: Sample Group Poem Presentation Styles

The examples below were produced by first year senior high school students who had been given the questions ‘What makes you happy?’ and ‘What makes you sad?’

### i. Choral

[All] I am sad...  
     [All] I am a finished animation season,  
 [All] I am sad...  
     [All] I am studying English,  
 [All] I am sad...  
     [All] I am studying math,  
 [All] I am sad...  
     [All] I am studying!!!  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am shopping,  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am playing sports,  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am playing games,  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am listening to music,  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am reading comics,  
 [All] I am happy...  
     [All] I am smiling!!!

### ii. Alternating Choral

[All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 1] My kobai card has no money,  
 [All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 2] I have an exam,  
 [All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 3] I have a bad test score,  
 [All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 4] My parents were angry,  
 [All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 5] I am alone,  
 [All] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 6] I have a broken heart  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 1] I am eating sweets,  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 2] I am a long holiday,  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 3] I am listening to music,  
 [All] What makes you happy?

[Student 4] I am watching TV,  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 5] It is my birthday,  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 6] I see a friend’s smile,  
 [All] What makes you happy?  
     [All] I am laughing with friends.

### iii. Chain

[Student 1] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 2] A lack of sleep.  
     [Student 2] What makes you sad?  
 [Student 3] The exam high score I couldn’t get.  
 [Student 3] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 4] Not waking up early.  
     [Student 4] What makes you sad?  
 [Student 5] A lost baseball game.  
 [Student 5] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 6] Late for school.  
     [Student 6] What makes you sad?  
 [Student 7] Trees cut down.  
 [Student 7] What makes you sad?  
     [Student 8] Money lost.  
     [Student 8] What makes you sad?  
 [Student 1] Watching people feeling sad.  
 [Student 1] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 2] Going to the beach.  
     [Student 2] What makes you happy?  
 [Student 3] Playing the guitar.  
 [Student 3] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 4] I can wake up late.  
     [Student 4] What makes you happy?  
 [Student 5] Winning a baseball game.  
 [Student 5] What makes you happy?  
     [Student 6] A new comic,  
     [Student 6] What makes you happy?  
 [Student 7] Receiving money.  
 [Student 7] What makes you happy?  
 [Student 8] Playing sports.  
 [Student 8] What makes you happy?  
     [All] I have free time!!

### iv. Syncopation

[Student 1] Homework...  
     [Student 2] ...makes me sad.  
         [All] BUT!  
 [Student 1] Getting money...  
     [Student 2] ...makes me happy.  
 [Student 2] A test...  
     [Student 3] ...makes me sad.

[All] BUT!  
[Student 2] The sea...  
[Student 3] ...makes me happy.  
[Student 3] Smelly shoes...  
[Student 1] ...make me sad.  
[All] BUT!  
[Student 3] Getting a present...  
[Student 1] ...makes me happy.

## Taking Sides on an Issue

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### Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Debate
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** Any
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 10 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 20-30 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** A rope or string to place on the floor to divide the room in half

In debate, students must both support their position and attack the other side's position. This activity provides practice for both of these debate activities, as well as practicing how to rebut an argument.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Make a policy debate proposition—a statement that changes the present situation and that includes an agent and a policy. The statement should be one that allows two positions: an affirmative position that supports the change, and a negative one that supports the present situation. An example of such a proposition is: “The school should require all students to study abroad.” The proposition can be on any topic, but it is best if it is based on a reading or unit in the textbook.

**Step 2:** Ask students to clear the desks to the sides of the classroom making the middle an open space.

**Step 3:** Place the rope or string so that it divides the open space in half.

**Step 4:** On the whiteboard/chalkboard write Affirmative on one half of the divided classroom side and Negative on the other half.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain the expression “Taking sides on an issue.” (Clearly state what position you take on a topic.)

**Step 2:** Have students stand up in the middle of the classroom

**Step 3:** Tell students the statement.

**Step 4:** Tell students if they agree to the change, they should stand on the side of the classroom labeled Affirmative. If they do not agree with the change, they should stand on the classroom on the side labeled Negative.

**Step 5:** Tell each side to think of something to support their position.

**Step 6:** Ask for a volunteer on the Affirmative side to come up to the line separating the two sides (the border) and say something that supports their position. (If no one volunteers, the teacher can step in and say something that supports the position.)

**Step 7:** Ask if anyone on the Negative side has a response to the Affirmative's statement to come to the border and say it.

**Step 8:** Repeat Steps 6 and 7 with another Affirmative member who has another support for their position.

**Step 9:** Repeat Steps 6, 7 and 8 with the Negative side.

**Step 10:** Repeat Steps 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 but this time about something that attacks the other side's position.

## Caution

Sometimes the students make comments that attack a person on the other side. When this happens, it provides a teachable moment: When you debate, you attack the other side's arguments and not the people on the other side.

## Option

You can tell students that at any time during the activity they can switch sides if they change their mind about the resolution.

## Conclusion

I am always surprised how much students get involved with this activity and how much fun they have learning to support their position, attack the other position, and rebut an argument.

# An Introduction to Debate

## James Venema

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Debate, prize, persuade, speech
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Low intermediate to advanced
- ❖ **Learner Maturity:** High school and above
- ❖ **Activity Time frame:** Approximately one class period (45-90 minutes)
- ❖ **Materials:** Blackboard, chalk, worksheet and/or PowerPoint, some kind of prize such as a box of cookies or chocolates

Debate can be an ideal classroom task to introduce critical thinking, public speaking, and discussion. It can also provide a structured approach to writing argumentative essays. However, it is important to introduce debate in a way that makes the purpose of debate clear, while still keeping it at an accessible and motivating level. This is an entertaining first class activity that will clearly illustrate the purpose of debate and provide students with some elementary practice in organizing and giving debate speeches.

## Preparation

Buy some kind of prize(s) in advance of the class. There is little need to spend much money, as a 100-yen bag of cookies will typically suffice. Prepare a worksheet and/or PowerPoint presentation with an example of how to organize a debate speech (see Step 3 of the procedure). Teachers may also elect to use a chalkboard to present an example instead of PowerPoint.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Begin by asking students what the purpose of a debate speech is. Allow them to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the question. Elicit some answers from the class after 2 to 5 minutes of discussion time. If not already elicited, tell students that the primary purpose of a debate speech is to *persuade* an audience.

**Step 2:** Tell students that they are going to give a short debate speech in class today with a partner (a time frame of 1 to 2 minutes will usually suffice). Show students the prize. Explain that they are going to work with a partner to give a speech explaining why they should be given the prize. Upon each pair finishing their speeches the class will vote on which pair gave the most persuasive speech. The pair with the most votes (or top two or three depending on how many 'prizes' there are) will receive the prize.

**Step 3:** Either on the board, in a handout, or with PowerPoint, give students the following organization for their speech.

Greetings: *Good morning, Hello, Good Evening everyone, etc.*

Topic: *Today we are debating who should get these cookies.*

*In this class we are giving speeches to decide who will be able to eat these delicious-looking cookies.*

Opinion: *We strongly believe that we should be the team to receive the prize.*

*We think we need the prize more than anyone else in this class.*

Points: *We have two reasons, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*First,*

*Our first point is ...*

Conclusion: *Thank you, Thanks for listening, etc.*

**Step 4:** Explain to students the following:

1. Remember your audience, which includes all the students in the class, not just the teacher.
2. Give reasons that will persuade the audience that your group should get the prize over other students in the class. (Simply saying chocolate contains lots of energy would be a reason that applies to everyone.)
3. Creatively lying is OK. (This allows for greater creativity and variety in students' responses.) However, the lies must be believable to be persuasive. For example, "I haven't eaten in 2 weeks" would probably be less effective than "I skipped breakfast this morning".
4. In a light-hearted debate such as this one, humor can be an effective means of persuasion.
5. How you say something (delivery) is as important as what you say.

**Step 5:** Give the students time to prepare. Typically, 15 minutes will suffice. Walk through the class to provide input where needed and to ensure that students correctly understood the task.

**Step 6:** Have students come up and give their speeches in pairs or small groups. Ask each student to present on one point, while students can share equally the introduction and conclusion. Where necessary impose a time limit of one or two minutes. Where there are quite a number of speeches write down the names of speakers in order of presenting on the board (or have students do so themselves). This will facilitate the memory of students when asked to choose the most persuasive speakers.

**Step 7:** Have the students vote on which team they thought gave the most persuasive speech (omitting themselves), and tally the results on the board. (Where teachers want to avoid the situation where students may be discouraged by the fact they get no votes they can collect the student decisions, tally it themselves, and simply indicate the top vote-getters.) Present the winning team(s) with the prize(s).

**Step 8:** (optional) Based on the speeches given, provide some feedback to the whole class on effective speeches.

## Conclusion

This activity has proven to be entertaining and memorable, while still providing important instruction and practice in preparing and delivering simplified debate speeches. As a bonus, the winning group has often chosen to share the prize, making it a class bonding experience as well.

# Stand Up for What You Believe

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## Quick Guide

- ❖ **Keywords:** Debate
- ❖ **Learner English level:** Any
- ❖ **Learner maturity:** Any
- ❖ **Preparation time:** 10-20 minutes
- ❖ **Activity time:** 10-20 minutes
- ❖ **Materials:** None

In debate, students must speak confidently on any side of any given topic. One of the difficulties Japanese university students have is saying something that not many others agree with. Such hesitation inhibits students from participating wholeheartedly in a debate. This activity requires students to literally “take a stand” without consulting others in class.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Make a list of questions that have only two options. (e.g., If you are sitting in a crowded bus and a pregnant woman gets on, would you give her your seat? Yes? No?) The questions can be based on a reading or unit in the textbook.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain the expression “Stand up for what you believe.” (If you believe something, you

should feel that it is good to say it, or even take action.)

**Step 2:** Tell students that you will ask a question and then give two possible answers. If the student agrees with an answer, the student must stand up.

**Step 3:** Ask the question, then say briskly, “Who thinks answer 1, stand up.”

**Step 4:** Then say, “Look around to see who agrees with you.”

**Step 5:** Then say briskly, “Who thinks answer 2, stand up.”

**Step 6:** Again say, “Look around to see who agrees with you.” If no one agrees with the student, reassure the student that it is fine to be the only one to hold such an opinion.

**Step 7: (Optional):** Say, “If you did not stand up before, stand up now.” Ask each student why they did not stand up before.

**Option:** I often sit down during this activity and then stand when I agree with the position. However, the teacher can demonstrate a minority opinion first in order to make the students realize that it is okay. For example, a teacher could ask “who thinks ice cream is disgusting?” or “who doesn’t like (insert trendy comedian/music group here)?” and then take a stand that is opposite the majority stand.

## Conclusion

If this is done regularly, students learn that it is fine to be in the minority, and even be the only one to hold a certain opinion. The students gain confidence in expressing an opinion without fear of being criticized. An additional benefit is that students learn who in the class thinks similarly to them.

## Appendix 1: What is Pecha Kucha?

1. *Pecha Kucha* is a simple presentation format where you show **20 images** each **20 seconds**.
2. Think of an ***idea***, anything is ok: a vacation, a class project, your family, etc.
3. Any idea that is **fun, exciting** and/or **funny** is best!
4. You must ***create*** a Power Point presentation.
5. Please ***time*** yourself actually doing each slide.
6. Please save it on a USB!

*Please sketch slide ideas and write below... **20 images x 20 seconds!***

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. \_\_\_\_\_  
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9. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Appendices

10. \_\_\_\_\_  
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11. \_\_\_\_\_  
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20. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Appendix 2: Pecha Kucha Squares

Pecha Kucha Squares. To plan for your presentation please write notes or draw pictures.


[www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

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Pecha Kucha Squares. To plan for your presentation please write notes or draw pictures.

<p>Movie Poster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year</li> <li>• Genre</li> </ul>	<p>Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About director</li> <li>• From?</li> <li>• Awards?</li> <li>• Other movies?</li> </ul>	<p>Writer(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About writer(s)</li> <li>• From?</li> <li>• Awards?</li> <li>• Other movies?</li> </ul>	<p>Main Cast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About actors</li> <li>• From?</li> <li>• Awards?</li> <li>• Other movies?</li> </ul>	<p>Supporting Cast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About actors</li> <li>• From?</li> <li>• Awards?</li> <li>• Other movies?</li> </ul>
Movie Plot 1	Movie Plot 2	Movie Plot 3	Movie Plot 4	Movie Plot 5
Movie Plot 6	Movie Plot 7	Movie Plot 8	Movie Plot 9	Movie Plot 10
<p>Awards?</p> <p>Box Office \$?</p>	Critics comments?	<p>Extra Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soundtrack</li> <li>• Best scenes</li> <li>• Historical References</li> </ul>	<p>This movies reminds me of.... because....</p>	<p>Do you recommend this movie?</p>

[www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

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**Appendix 3**

**TV Shopping Infomercial – Demonstration Speech - Observation Worksheet**

Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Item demonstrated: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_

1) Which words did the speaker(s): | 2) What words did the speaker(s) use for warnings?

a) **STRESS!**

b) s-t-r-e-t-c-h

c) <pause>

3) What features or benefits did the speaker talk about?

4) Would you buy the item being advertised?

YES NO Why or why not?

5) Scoring: Low High

a) eye contact 1 2 3 4 5

b) gestures 1 2 3 4 5

c) voice inflection 1 2 3 4 5

----- ✕ ----- ✕ ----- ✕ -----

**TV Shopping Infomercial – Demonstration Speech - Observation Worksheet**

Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Item demonstrated: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Price: \_\_\_\_\_

1) Which words did the speaker(s): | 2) What words did the speaker(s) use for warnings?

a) **STRESS!**

b) s-t-r-e-t-c-h

c) <pause>

3) What features or benefits did the speaker talk about?

4) Would you buy the item being advertised?

YES NO Why or why not?

5) Scoring: Low High

a) eye contact 1 2 3 4 5

b) gestures 1 2 3 4 5

c) voice inflection 1 2 3 4 5