

GLOSSARY of SPEECH KEY TERMS

The following definitions are provided for the information of teachers and candidates to assist with the interpretation of the syllabus documents.

A candidate should be able to show his/her knowledge and understanding of these (and other) aspects of communication and performance by explanation and application (in practical and written examination contexts).
A candidate should be able to relate this learning to real or imagined practice through reference to examples (in both the written and practical examinations) and through demonstration (in the practical examination).

For references, see the Resources section of this syllabus document.

**Issued by authority of the College
For use in 2023-2025**



ANATOMY The physical composition of the human body. In relation to the mechanical production of breath, voice and speech, students should have a knowledge and understanding of the anatomical location, function and workings of the following

- abdomen (abdominal cavity)
- abdominal press
- bronchi
- clavicles
- diaphragm
- glottis
- hard palate
- intercostal muscles
- jaw
- larynx
- lips
- lungs
- mouth (oral cavity)
- nasal sinuses
- nose
- pharynx
- ribs
- soft palate
- sternum
- teeth
- teeth ridge
- thorax (thoracic cavity)
- tongue (tip, blade, front, back, etc)
- trachea
- uvula
- vocal folds (cords)

ARTICULATION (enunciation, pronunciation) The process by which voice is transformed into speech sounds (by the organs of articulation, chief of which is the tongue) so that a listener can recognize such sounds as being human communication.

BREATHING (inhalation/inspiration, exhalation/expiration, respiration) The intake of air (gases) and the exchange processes that occur in the lungs before air (gases) leave the body. Breathing is the basis of life and the fundamental anatomical process that governs the production of voice and speech. Sufficiency and management are two aspects of breathing of critical concern to practitioners of performance and presentation. [Syllabuses offered by the Australian College of Music would expect a knowledge and understanding of the physiology of breathing (the interaction of muscles, see "Anatomy"), appropriate breathing techniques and faulty breathing methods.]

CHANNEL The term for "the vehicle or medium through which signals are sent" (DeVito, 2009, p.322; see also Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322).

COMMUNICATION The process of exchange between animals that allows meaning to be made and shared. Communication processes are sign-mediated interactions between at least two agents which share a repertoire of signs and semiotic rules. Communication is commonly defined as "the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs". Communication can be perceived as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction. Communication is a process whereby information is encoded and imparted by sender to a receiver via a channel/medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback. Communication requires that all parties have an area of communicative commonality. There are auditory means (such as speaking, singing and sometimes tone of voice) and nonverbal, physical means (such as body language, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, by using writing). The communication process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. Therefore, communicating is the process of making and sharing meaning by sending/receiving.

CONTEXT DeVito (2009) defines "context" as "the physical, psychological, social, and temporal environment in which communication takes place." (p. 323) Therefore, context is the backdrop against which, and the "spaces" within which, the exchange of meaning occurs.

CONVERSATION Communication between multiple persons. For successful conversation, partners must achieve a workable balance of contributions. A successful conversation includes mutually interesting connections between the speakers or things that the speakers know. For this exchange to occur, those engaged in conversation must find a topic to/on/about which they can relate. Those engaging in conversation (naturally) tend to relate the other speaker's statements to themselves. They may insert aspects of their lives into their replies to relate to the other person's opinions or points of conversation as part of the feedback process.

DECODING The translation of a message from one form into another. Receivers (e.g. listeners) interpret messages according to their own life experience, learnings, attitudes, values, beliefs, cultural assumptions, etc. (See DeVito, 2009, p.323; Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322)

DISCUSSION Communication between at least two people in which the oral interrogation of a topic or subject occurs in a formal manner.

ENCODING The taking of a message in one form and translating it into another form for the purpose of making meaning. (See DeVito, 2009, p.324; Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322)

EMPHASIS Any technique the purpose of which is to make a particular sound or word (or group of words) more prominent in a flow of speech (e.g. a syllable in a word, a word in a phrase, a phrase in a sentence). Emphasis is achieved via a range of technical devices including deployment of

- facial expression
- gesture
- length
- pace
- pause
- pitch (including intonation)
- volume (power)

FACIAL EXPRESSION An emphatic device, refers to any movement in the anatomical structure of the face to effect more nuanced and clearer communication or to impart meaning. Subtle use of the muscles of the face, the eyes, eyebrows, nose and mouth (e.g. smile) can complement the physical and vocal (interpretation and) delivery of a text or message.

FEEDBACK The response of the receiver/perceiver to the message/meaning being sent. Feedback can be positive or negative (see DeVito, 2009, pp.327, 328). It is a continuous process and the term “feedback loop” is often used to encapsulate the process as being sustained, interactive and, at times, subtle.

GESTURE An emphatic device, refers to “a significant movement of limb or body used with or instead of speech” (Krummel, 1998, p.21). Accordingly, a single gesture may be solely referential, emphatic, emotional/impassioned or imitative, or might (at one and the same time) be all of these (that is, serve all of these functions).

INFLECTION (or inflexion) A change in the pitch of the voice.

INTERFERENCE Anything that prevents, distracts or disrupts a receiver’s reception or interpretation of the sender’s message as it was intended to be decoded. Interference can be internal (due to poor transmission) or external (due to problems with the channel of communication; see Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322 and also “Noise” in DeVito, 2009, p.327).

INTONATION The distinctive use of patterns of vocal pitch. Particular kinds of question and statement are conveyed through the use of speech melodies (pitch-variation). In studying intonation (that is, pitch patterns such as tunes), it might be useful to identify and distinguish pitch variables such as range, height and direction.

LATERAL PLOSION (lateral release) The articulatory release of a plosive (stop) consonant at the sides of the tongue in words associated with syllabic /l/. The /t/ sound in “cattle” is released in a manner that is influenced by the tongue position for the articulation of dark, syllabic /l/ (see also Colson, 1982, p.69).

LENGTH An emphatic device, refers to the duration of a speech sound. For example, vowels vary in length (short and long) just as there are differences (between speakers) in the duration (or “hold”) of other sounds such as stop (plosive) consonants and continuant sounds.

LYRIC POETRY expresses a writer’s personal feelings and thoughts through verse form. Among the more common of the lyric verse forms are the sonnet, ode, elegy and dramatic monologue. Of these, the only “closed” form is the sonnet (that is, the line structure and rhyme scheme tends to be more formulaic.) A considerable amount of free verse is lyric but the “boundary” between lyric verse and narrative verse has become increasingly blurred in recent years.

MEDIUM See “Channel”.

MESSAGE The intention that is encoded by a sender in verbal and/or non-verbal form with the aim of making and sharing meaning.

MODULATION The variation (adjustment, manipulation) of speech’s musical features for artistic or aesthetic effect, that is

- pace
- pause
- pitch (including intonation)
- rhythm
- tone
- volume (power)

NARRATIVE POETRY expresses a writer's view of people, places and events within the context of a story or tale. Among the most common narrative forms are the ballad, epic, romance and the idyll. Much of the humorous verse published for children is narrative as is Australian bush verse. Satiric poetry can be narrative but the depth of "thought, feeling and emotion" usually confers lyrical status.

NASALITY A predominance of nasal tone in the production of voice and speech. See Colson (1982, p.47) for descriptions of "hyper-rhino condition" and "hypo-rhino condition".

NASAL PLOSION ("nasal release") The articulatory release of a plosive (stop) consonant by the lowering of the soft palate so that air escapes through the nose, as at the end of the word "hidden". The final sound is the syllabic /n/ but the plosive /d/ is released through the nose rather than through the mouth because of the conjunction of the alveolar plosive and the alveolar nasal. A similar situation would apply to a word like "hearten" (see also Colson, 1982, p.69).

NEGLIGENT PRONUNCIATION The production of speech sounds in a manner or with an effect that is considered unacceptable in general usage. The most common types of speech negligence (see Colson, 1982, pp.70-71) include

- assimilation (coalescent/juxtapositional assimilation, consonant substitution)
- elision (consonant, vowel)
- intrusion (consonant, vowel)
- overuse of strong forms (instead of use of the neutral vowel for weak forms)
- substitution (consonant, vowel)
- transference (of final consonants to effect slurring)

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION (NVC) The process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. NVC can be effected through

- gesture and touch (haptic communication)
- by body language or posture
- by facial expression
- eye contact
- object communication (e.g. clothing, hairstyles, jewellery, tattoos – i.e. artifactual communication)
- architecture
- symbols
- infographics.

Speech contains non-verbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, emotion and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Dance is also regarded as a non-verbal communication. Written texts include non-verbals such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, the use of emoticons, etc.

PACE (also known as "rate") An emphatic/modulative device, refers to the rate at which words are spoken, that is, the speed of delivery (Krummel, 1998, p.78).

PAUSE An emphatic/modulative device, refers to the cessation of sound (a relative silence) for the purposes of taking a breath or giving prominence to the word or phrase that precedes or follows the silence. ACM candidates need to be aware of the different types of pauses (and their purposes) that are used for interpretative effect in the presentation of verse, prose and drama.

PERCEPTION The process by which the receiver becomes aware of people, objects, events, etc through the senses in order to construct a meaningful reality. Perception is influenced by one's situation (context), life experience, cultural background, attitudes, values and beliefs, etc. It is possible that two individuals receiving the same initial message similarly (i.e. through visual and/or aural channels) may well reconstruct that message very differently.

PITCH An emphatic/modulative device, refers to the relative height/depth of the voice and is one of three primary characteristics of the human voice along with loudness (volume) and timbre (tone). Patterns of pitch are known as "intonation".

PRESENTATION A form of public speaking which includes the deployment of illustrative material as a complement to spoken communication. The presented material is usually of a visual kind, but other forms of illustration are sometimes used, including recorded or live music, self-spoken material, dramatic work, audience participation, and processes involving other audience senses (taste, touch and/or smell).

PROJECTION The capacity of a speaker "to get their message out and connect with an audience". Projection relies on volume and resonance but is more than mere audibility which refers to the capacity to be heard. Projection relates to the capacity of a speaker to be heard, to be understood and to be pleasing to the ear of the listener.

RECEIVER A recipient or the recipients of a message whose task is to decode the verbal and non-verbal elements of communication in order to share meaning (see Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322; DeVito, 2009, p.329).

REGISTER A variety, style or type of a language used for a specific purpose or in a particular social/cultural setting (based on the definition provided via Wikipedia). For example, an English speaker may adhere more closely to prescribed grammar, pronounce words ending in -ing with a velar nasal instead of an alveolar nasal (e.g. "walking", not "walkin'"), choose more formal words (e.g. train vs. choo-choo, sodium chloride vs. salt, child vs. kid, etc.), and refrain from using the

word "ain't" when speaking in a formal setting, but the same person could violate all of these prescriptions in an informal setting. Essentially, register relates to the degree of language formality used by a speaker.

RESONANCE The "*amplification* [and reinforcement] of the initial sound made in the larynx" (Houseman, 2002, p.162), the achievement of which requires "space and time" (Barbara Houseman, SDTAQ Inc. in-service, March 2009)

RHYME The use of sounds that are the same to achieve a rhythmical effect either within a line of text or between lines of text, usually in verse.

RHYTHM A modulative device, refers to "the variation of the length and accentuation of a series of sounds." When rhythm is regular, that is when the stresses follow a particular pattern, then the rhythm is metrical. (Metre is, therefore, "regular rhythm".) The study of rhythm, stress, and pitch in spoken language is called prosody.

SENDER The source of a message, the encoder of meaning - for example an actor, a presenter or the initiator of an element of a conversation (see Galvin & Book, 1984, p.322; see "Source" in DeVito, 2009, p.331).

SPEECH The production and vocalization of sounds that human beings recognize as the basis of communication.

STRESS The degree of [breath] force used to produce a syllable: the usual distinction is between stressed and unstressed syllables, the former being more prominent than the latter. Usually, prominence is due to an increase in volume of/on the stressed syllable, but increases in length and pitch may also contribute to the overall impression of prominence.

SUBTEXT The meaning underlying dialogue and stage directions; the "meaning behind the words which make us say them" (Moore, S. 1984, *The Stanislavski System*, Penguin, New York, 2nd revised edition, p.57, ISBN 0140466606). Sub-text is the meaning that an actor or presenter brings to a text that has been created by a playwright or scriptwriter. The term was coined by Konstantin Stanislavski during the Moscow Art Theatre's productions of Anton Chekhov's plays in the 1890s. Stanislavski said "Spectators come to the theatre to hear the subtext. They can read the text at home." (Moore, 1984, p.28) Therefore, subtext is the meaning that lies between, under or within the lines of a script (play, speech, etc). In higher examination grades, ACM candidates would be expected to be able to distinguish between connotative and denotative meaning of words, the figurative and literal, etc.

SYLLABIC CONSONANT (either /l/ or /n/, but no longer /m/ except for the purposes of period drama) occurs when the individual sound forms a single (often and usually the final) syllable in a word. According to *The Macquarie Dictionary*, in Cultivated Australian English, these occur following the alveolar plosive consonants (/t/ and /d/) as in the following examples: "metal/meddle" (syllabic /l/), "medal/meddle" (syllabic /l/), "modern" (syllabic /n/), "gentle" (syllabic /l/), "gentleman" (syllabic /l/), "cottonwool" (syllabic /n/), and "beaten" (syllabic /n/). The terms "lateral plosion" and "nasal plosion" are associated with syllabic consonants.

TEXT The words or script provided by a playwright or writer for the purposes of public presentation/performance. However, a text can be "wordless" as in a presentation of movement, mime and dance where the body becomes word and is "text".

TONE A modulative device, refers to "the quality of a voice" and is linked to "resonance".

VARIANT PRONUNCIATION relates to the evolutionary nature of speech in that there may be more than one acceptable pronunciation of a word or phrase, negligent pronunciation/s having become acceptable in society over time. For example, "often" is pronounced both with and without the /t/ sound. Similarly, it is considered acceptable in general conversation to pronounce "windscreen" with or without the /d/ sound. The words "family" and "history" can be pronounced (acceptably) with two or three syllables, the pronunciation having evolved (devolved) from three to two syllables over time. While a (current) variant pronunciation may have been negligent once, it is rare for a variant pronunciation to become "negligent". There are, however, many examples of "historical assimilation" (e.g. the current, accepted pronunciations of "century" and "issue") and "historical elision" (e.g. the current, accepted pronunciations of "Christmas", "handkerchief" and "cupboard") respectively. N.B. *The Macquarie Dictionary* (2009 edition) is the guide to acceptable pronunciations of words in Australian English. (Other references should be consulted for valid pronunciation of Received Pronunciation, etc as might be used in period drama.)

VOICE The sound that is given to breath in the larynx and is then amplified through resonance. Human speech is a combination of breath and voice as some consonants are voiced (the vocal cords "approximate") whereas others are voiceless or breathed (the vocal cords "remain apart" allowing the air to pass freely through the glottis). At other times, voiced consonants (e.g. /l/ and /r/) can be devoiced because they follow a voiceless consonant (e.g. /r/ in "tray" is devoiced as it follows the voiceless plosive /t/ whereas the /r/ sound in "dray" is voiced because it follows the voiced plosive, /d/. Similarly, for the words, "plot" and "blot": /l/ is devoiced and voiced respectively).

VOLUME (power) An emphatic/modulative device, refers to the relative loudness (or softness) of a voice.