Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Circle group

Many people do not like the sound of their own voice on a recording. It sounds higher and thin. But the recording is not wrong. You hear yourself in a different way than other people do.

When a friend talks, the sound comes to your ears through the air. It makes your eardrums shake. Then nerves send the message to your brain.

When you talk, your voice goes that way too. But it also shakes the bones in your head. That sound goes straight to your inner ear.

Sound that goes through bone has deep tones. So you hear air sound and bone sound together. Your voice seems deep and full to you. A microphone hears only the air sound. That is what your friends hear too.

So the recording is how others hear you. Most people get used to it. Singers listen to themselves to get better.

Questions

1. Why do many people dislike their recorded voice?

_____

_____

2. How does sound reach your ears when a friend talks?

_____

_____

3. What other path does your own voice take?

_____

_____

4. What kind of tones does bone sound have?

_____

_____

5. Why does a microphone sound different from what you hear when you talk?

_____

_____

6. Why is the recording how others hear you?

_____

_____

7. Why might singers listen to recordings of themselves?

_____

_____

Words to know

eardrums: thin skins inside the ears that shake when sound arrives
tones: sounds that are higher or lower in pitch
microphone: a tool that picks up sound so it can be recorded

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Triangle group

Most people cringe the first time they hear a recording of their own voice. It sounds higher, thinner, and somehow less pleasant than the voice they believe they have. The explanation is not that the recording is wrong. It is that you normally hear yourself in a different way from everyone else.

When another person talks to you, the sound reaches your ears through the air. The sound waves make your eardrums vibrate, and the vibrations travel to the inner ear, where nerves send signals to the brain. When you talk, that same path carries your voice too. But your voice also starts in your throat, so vibrations spread through the bones and soft tissue of your head and reach the inner ear directly.

Sound that travels through bone tends to boost the deeper, lower tones. Because you hear a blend of air sound and bone sound, your own voice seems fuller and richer to you. A microphone picks up only the sound that moves through the air, which is the version your friends and family hear.

So the recording is a fairly honest picture of how other people hear you. With practice, most people get used to it. Actors, singers, and radio hosts listen to themselves often, because it helps them improve the way they speak.

Questions

1. Why do many people dislike the sound of their recorded voice?

_____

_____

2. How does sound reach your ears when another person is talking?

_____

_____

3. What second path does your own voice take to reach your inner ear?

_____

_____

4. What kind of tones does sound traveling through bone boost?

_____

_____

5. Why does a microphone give a different sound than the one you hear when you talk?

_____

_____

6. Why is a recording a fairly honest picture of how others hear you?

_____

_____

7. Why might singers and actors listen to recordings of themselves?

_____

_____

Words to know

eardrums: thin skins inside the ears that shake when sound arrives
vibrate: to shake back and forth very quickly
tissue: the soft material that body parts are made of
tones: sounds that are higher or lower in pitch
microphone: a tool that picks up sound so it can be recorded

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Square group

Most people feel a little embarrassed the first time they listen to a recording of their own voice. It sounds higher, thinner, and strangely unfamiliar compared with the voice that they imagine themselves having. The recording is not faulty, however. The real explanation is that you ordinarily hear yourself in a way that nobody else ever can.

When someone else speaks to you, the sound waves travel through the air and strike your eardrums, setting them in motion. Those vibrations continue into the inner ear, where nerves convert them into signals for the brain. Your own voice follows that same route when you speak. In addition, because your voice begins in the throat, vibrations also spread through the bones and soft tissue of your skull and arrive at the inner ear directly.

Sound that moves through bone tends to strengthen the deeper, lower tones. Since you hear a mixture of air sound and bone sound, your voice seems richer and fuller to you than it does to the people around you. A microphone, by contrast, collects only the sound that travels through the air, which is precisely the version your friends and family hear.

Consequently, a recording is a reasonably accurate picture of how other people hear you. With repeated listening, most people become comfortable with it. Actors, singers, and radio hosts regularly study their own recordings because doing so helps them refine the way they speak.

Questions

1. Why do many people find their recorded voice unfamiliar?

_____

_____

2. How does the sound of another person's voice reach your eardrums?

_____

_____

3. What additional route does your own voice take to the inner ear?

_____

_____

4. Which tones does sound moving through bone tend to strengthen?

_____

_____

5. Why does a microphone capture a different sound from the one you hear while speaking?

_____

_____

6. Why is a recording a reasonably accurate picture of how others hear you?

_____

_____

7. Why do singers and actors study recordings of themselves?

_____

_____

Words to know

eardrums: thin skins inside the ears that shake when sound arrives
tissue: the soft material that body parts are made of
tones: sounds that are higher or lower in pitch
microphone: a tool that picks up sound so it can be recorded

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Easier · 148 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2

1. It sounds higher and thinner than the voice they hear every day.
2. Through the air.
3. Through the bones of your head to the inner ear.
4. Deep, low tones.
5. It hears only the sound that goes through the air.
6. Others hear only the air sound too.
7. It shows them how they really sound, so they can get better.

Triangle: Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

This passage · 217 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.2

1. It sounds higher and thinner than the voice they are used to hearing.
2. It travels through the air.
3. It travels through the bones and soft tissue of your head.
4. The deeper, lower tones.
5. It picks up only the sound that travels through the air.
6. Other people also hear only the sound that comes through the air.
7. It shows them how they really sound, so they can improve.

Square: Why Your Recorded Voice Sounds Like a Stranger

Harder · 237 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.9

1. It sounds higher and thinner than the voice they imagine having.
2. The sound waves travel through the air.
3. Vibrations spread through the bones and soft tissue of the skull.
4. The deeper, lower tones.
5. It collects only the sound that travels through the air.
6. Other people hear only the air version of your voice, just like the microphone.
7. It shows them how they truly sound, so they can refine their speech.