

APPLYING WRITING STRATEGIES

Reading Like a Writer

- Analyzing Voice and Word Choice

VOCABULARY

knave: a deceitful and unreliable person

paradoxical: contrary

pitch-and-toss: a game of chance

Vocabulary Tip

The poem “If” was written in 1896, and demonstrates that our language changes over time. The terms *knave* and *pitch-and-toss* are seldom used today.

What do you think?

What guiding principles help you make the right decisions about important turning points in your life?

If

Poem by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: “Hold On!”
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

The Paradoxical Commandments

Poem by Kent M. Keith

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centred.
Love them anyway.
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.
If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.
The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.
Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.
Be honest and frank anyway.
The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.
Think big anyway.
People favour underdogs but follow only top dogs.
Fight for a few underdogs anyway.
What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway.
People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.
Help people anyway.
Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have anyway.

eBookExtra

Responding

What Do You Think Now? What guiding principles help you make the right decisions about important turning points in your life? Whose guidelines do you find most helpful: Rudyard Kipling's or Kent Keith's? Why?

Analyzing Voice and Word Choice: Compare the voices in “If” and “The Paradoxical Commandments.” How is the voice in each selection similar? Different?

Literary Devices: Read one poem aloud so that you hear the rhythm of the words. Does hearing the rhythm of the poem help you understand it? Explain.

Finding the Main Idea: How do these poems fit in a unit called *Turning Points*?

Critical Literacy: “If” was written in 1896. Are Rudyard Kipling's ideas about maturity still relevant? Do you hold values that are not represented in “If”? Does “The Paradoxical Commandments,” written in 1968, better reflect your values? Explain.

Metacognition: Which lines or stanzas in either poem did you find the most challenging to understand? Why? What strategies did you use?

LISTEN CRITICALLY

There are many situations in which you need to listen to others with a critical ear. Here are just a few examples:

- You've just bought an MP3 player and the clerk tries to sell you an extended warranty.
- You're listening to your favourite actor explain why his most recent movie isn't a bomb.
- Your friends are telling you why it's OK to drop a class.
- You're listening to a news reporter rant about "teens today."

In situations like these, the following strategies can help you be a critical listener:

- ✓ **Analyze exactly what the speaker is saying.** Ask yourself: What is the main idea? How is it supported?
- ✓ **Identify any points you disagree with.** Think about how you'll question the speaker if the situation allows you to do so.
- ✓ **Reflect on the response the speaker wants.** Ask yourself: Why does she/he want that response? Would I normally respond that way? What's influencing me to respond that way?
- ✓ **Identify the speaker's purpose.** Ask yourself: What motivates the speaker? Am I motivated by the same things?
- ✓ **Identify any generalizations or stereotypes.** Ask yourself: What do these reveal about the speaker's perspectives or biases? Are my own beliefs challenged or confirmed? How do I want to respond?

Critical thinking is as important in listening as it is in reading. In listening to an oral text with a critical stance, you need to

- consider what is said and unsaid
- evaluate meaning and intent, especially related to fairness, equity, or social justice
- identify the perspectives and any biases
- question the world view the oral text favours

Just because I usually like Bland Pittman movies doesn't mean all his movies are great. Of course he's going to say the critics are wrong.

The critics just don't understand my new movie!



SPEAK WITH APPROPRIATE VOICE

What words and voice do you use when talking to a friend on the phone? How do your words and voice change when you are giving a presentation? Word choice (also called *diction*) and voice are as important in speaking as in writing. If you're unsure what diction or voice to use in a situation, follow these steps:

1. **Ask yourself: How formal or informal is the diction of the other people in the conversation?** How well do I know the other people? What impression do I hope to give?
2. **Think carefully about your topic, purpose, and audience.** Choose an appropriate voice to achieve your purpose. Use language suited to your topic, purpose, and audience.
3. **Avoid generalizations and stereotypes.** Be sensitive to the different groups in your audience.

Diction includes the words one chooses to use and the way those words are pronounced and enunciated.

formal diction: words and sentences that sound more sophisticated and are suited to formal situations

informal diction: words and sentences that sound like everyday speech and are suited to informal situations

SAMPLE SITUATION	FORMAL DICTION	INFORMAL DICTION
agreeing	Your assumption would seem to be correct.	Good plan, man.
disagreeing	I think you'll find that the correct answer is ...	You couldn't be more wrong!
interrupting	Excuse me, if I could just interrupt to correct one of your facts.	Hold on a second!
praising	Congratulations on a job well done.	Great job!

JARGON

Part of knowing what words to use is knowing whether or not your audience will understand any *jargon* (specialized language) connected to your topic. For example, if you're describing skateboard moves to another skateboarder, you'll use different words than if you're describing those same moves to someone who doesn't know anything about skateboarding.

Transfer Your Learning

Connect to ...

Writing: How did learning about voice in writing (pages 50–51) help you understand this lesson on speaking with appropriate voice? What did you learn about speaking in context that could help you with your writing?

Media Literacy: When you're listening to a TV show, you can use these critical listening strategies to help you evaluate the show's message. What strategy from page 62 would be particularly useful?