

Ventriloquism Revealed



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VENTRILOQUISM REVEALED



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Ventriloquism - what's it all about?

Ventriloquism - What's it all about? Like myself, have you had to wonder about this "thing" called: "Ventriloquism"? This "thing" that affects supposedly intelligent people to the point that they dare to stand before an audience and talk to a wooden doll or toy animal as if it were real! Who do they think they're fooling? Certainly not you or I who sit in the audience. We know it's all make-believe. Perhaps the ventriloquist is fooling only himself? No, there must be something deeper behind it all.

Let's take a peek into the Ventriloquist's bag of tricks. What surprises lurk within? Perhaps by fitting the mysterious pieces together we can find the answer to our question.

As we dig into the subject, we find two motivations that inspire the Ventriloquist. On the one hand we have a DESIRE. It may be the desire to master the unusual or the desire to gain the satisfaction which comes from accomplishing something few others have the courage to try. Many exciting discoveries await the person with the courage to move DESIRE into action!

On the other hand, there must be a PURPOSE. A reason for trying the unusual or difficult. Is the PURPOSE of the Ventriloquist to entertain? Yes, usually. Is his PURPOSE the search of a vocation? Perhaps. Is his purpose to reach out with words, touching other lives with a smile? Yes, always.

DESIRE and PURPOSE - these two join together

into one harmonizing, symmetrical unit. A beautiful combination. Oh, yes, other factors are important. There must be creativity, planning, and self-motivation. Often it all starts with a DREAM. A dream to accomplish some special feat as well as, or better than anyone else. Not that all realize their dreams come true - many do not. But success is not measured by those who manage to achieve all the goals of their dreams...success is that warm inner feeling that comes when you know you gave it your best effort. It matters not how it may compare with someone else, for true success is an individual matter. So the Ventriloquist continues to work: Practice, Study, Planning, Practice...always with one eye upon his goal; always making each effort just a little better than the last.

Of course, his struggling efforts may appear futile to those who watch. But they cannot feel his individual emotions; the frustrations; the victories. With DESIRE and PURPOSE as his companions, his steps lead him forward toward his goal; every step forward is a personal victory. Progress is being made. And then, something unique happens.

The happiness and satisfaction that swells within the new ventriloquist cannot be contained. It must be expressed; it must be shared. And that is when you and I, the audience, come into the picture. It is with obvious delight that we watch and listen as the ventriloquist and his puppet partner share their talent with us for OUR pleasure. What fun it is!

And then, suddenly, it's over! We find ourselves snatched back to reality after our brief trip into the fun world of fantasy and make-believe. For a few moments we were caught up together into the mysterious world of make-believe...a world where we can do anything and everything we choose. Nothing is too difficult. Even a few pieces of wood or scraps of cloth can be made to talk in this world of make-believe. And for those few brief moments we all share together the pleasures of the Ventriloquist's dream.

Ventriloquism! What is it? It is a person with the courage to step forward to achieve the goals of a personal dream. It is a person with the unselfishness to share of his efforts with others. YOU, the onlooker, are a part of that effort.

But wait! There still remains one important secret. Although you have received the entertainment as it was presented to you by the ventriloquist, you have opportunity to share of yourself in return: your smile, your applause, your laughter, a word of thanks. What a thrill these are to the ventriloquist! A challenge to make the next effort even better!

Ventriloquism! What is it? It is life, warmth, and comedy displayed through an inanimate object through the dedicated skill and loving hands of the ventriloquist. Actually, the LIFE that is displayed through the puppet is simply an extension of the ventriloquist himself. It is his or her way of saying, "I like to see you smile, I enjoy making you happy."

And thus it is, that by responding to the actions of another, BOTH audience and performer have received individual pleasure and satisfaction. People reaching out to people, creating warm thoughts, expressing happiness, building friendships. All of this to make this world of ours just a little more pleasant for everyone and THAT, my friend, is what ventriloquism is all about.

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Where should I start?

If someone asked you to define "Ventriloquism", what would you say? Quite likely you would mention "voice throwing" or "talking through a dummy". You might try to describe ventriloquism as a person "talking from the stomach" or "talking without moving the lips". Perhaps you have another entirely different definition.

While each of the above definitions may contain some degree of fact, none are a totally accurate description of this fascinating art. You see, ventriloquism is a SKILL that is learned through study and practice. This skill enables a person to create the illusion of life from a lifeless puppet.

To be quite honest, we would have to admit that this skill is not nearly as difficult to master as it appears to the non-vent, and the purpose of this book is to show you briefly and simply how you, too, can be a Ventriloquist. But more than that, you should know WHY you should try ventriloquism.

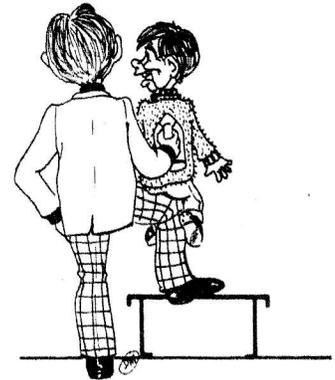
Let's begin by exploring briefly the two basic types of ventriloquism:

Near Ventriloquism

This is the most common form of ventriloquism, and for good reason: It's the easiest to perform.

A "dummy" or puppet is used by the ventriloquist performing Near Ventriloquism. Together they carry on a witty conversation to the amusement of their audience. Sometimes the skillful ventriloquist may use two puppets at the SAME TIME!

Historically, ventriloquism has been thought of as entertainment, and it is still used for this purpose today. But modern ventriloquists are discovering the many amazing ways this art can be used for communication: Humorous and/or Serious.



Distant Ventriloquism



The sound of a voice coming from a far distant point is where the idea of "throwing the voice" originated. This type of SOUND ILLUSION is more difficult to create than the Near Ventriloquism Illusion and is less commonly used by performers.

Amazing effects may be achieved through the skillful use of Distant Ventriloquism. Voices from closets, another room, the attic, the basement - these are all forms of Distant Ventriloquism.

Combining the two. . . .

Some form of Distant Ventriloquism is often used in combination with Near Ventriloquism, however. For example: a voice on the telephone or a muffled voice from within the suitcase; these are common popular adaptations of the Distant Voice.

While all forms of Ventriloquism require a degree of acting on the part of the performer, Distant Ventriloquism requires a great deal of acting. This booklet will deal primarily with the first and easiest form of ventriloquism. . . . also one of the most practical and effective.



By following the simple instructions in this booklet, you too, will soon be able to surprise your friends with your ability to make a puppet "talk".



It's an Illusion!

As mentioned previously, ventriloquism is a skillfully presented illusion. For instance, a magician performs a trick that fools our eyes into seeing the impossible; the ventriloquist performs a feat which fools our EARS into hearing the impossible. The ventriloquist has a big advantage, since it is the eye which often determines the direction of sound. When the listener sees the mouth of the puppet moving, he or she naturally believes the voice is coming from that point rather than the true source! And since hearing is one of the weaker senses, the listener is easily fooled into believing this is actually what was heard. So much for the mystery of "voice throwing"!



Ventriloquists study to learn proper breathing, how to speak in various voices, how to carry on a two-way dialogue (often called talking to one's self!), etc.

Practice is necessary to learn to move the dummy in a lifelike manner that is believable. And, of course, the ventriloquist must learn to speak for the puppet with as little movement as possible from his own lips.



Experience is the key to mastering any skill and ventriloquism is no different. Every performance and each program is a refining experience. What makes an audience laugh? How is dialogue spoken most effectively? These and many other questions are answered best (and sometimes only) through actual onstage experience.

Who can learn?

Right here we must take the time to explain that Ventriloquism does NOT take some "trick voice" or freak voice or split personality as is sometimes implied. Neither is there any special little "gimmick" that you slip into your mouth that enables you to throw your voice as is often implied in some cleverly worded advertisements.



1.

2.

3.

ANYONE can learn to be a ventriloquist IF they have:

1. A normal speaking voice
2. The desire to learn
3. Proper instruction

That's right, these are the only three requirements. Why, you ask, if ventriloquism is so simple, are there so few ventriloquists? Good question. And the answer is this - most people do not meet the second requirement named above. Most people would LIKE to learn ventriloquism, and even though they may have had a secret desire from their youth to learn, they are too busy, or lack the desire (or courage) to actually try.

We'll not pretend to fool you - ventriloquism DOES require practice...and more practice...and MORE practice. But, can you think of any true skill that can be mastered without practice? Of course not. Skill does not come in a package with a ribbon around it. Skill is that unique part of yourself that must be discovered, developed, and delivered - otherwise it is valueless. Take heart, for although learning ventriloquism takes practice, only a few minutes a day will bring almost spectacular results. And here's the big surprise: Ventriloquism practice is FUN, FUN, FUN!

Why should I learn?

This is a question that has as many answers as there are ventriloquists. And all are with sound foundation. Primarily, ventriloquism is communication; the dummy or puppet is simply a visual aid tool through which words are communicated. After all, EVERYONE (adults as well as children) want to hear EVERY WORD the "dummy" says. What a glorious opportunity for any entertainer, teacher, or speaker!

History records the use of this unique art down through the ages. Everyone enjoys a good laugh. Even the Bible teaches that "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." (Proverbs 17:22)



Although the number of persons using ventriloquism as a full time occupation are few, there are hundreds of persons using their ventriloquial talent to add extra dollars to their primary income.

Undoubtedly, the fastest growing use of ventriloquism is in the field of education. Schools, Churches, Camps, Television, etc. - these fields welcome creative persons willing to accept the challenge of discovering the many new and exciting ways to use this art constructively.



On the following pages we'll take a brief look at several places and ways Ventriloquism is being used today. Be careful - you may be in for some surprises.



Ventriloquism – Of what value is it?

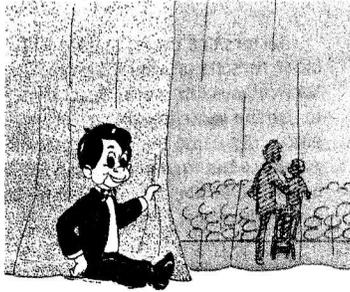


A happy evening of fun can be had right at home, in your own living room, with your own family and friends. Many a grandparent has taken up the study of ventriloquism just to be able to entertain the grandchildren.

Gifts, Games, Ice cream, Cake, Balloons, Kids, and a Ventriloquist - THESE are the ingredients for a birthday party no guest will ever forget. Thirty minutes of your time can be invested in this manner quite profitably.

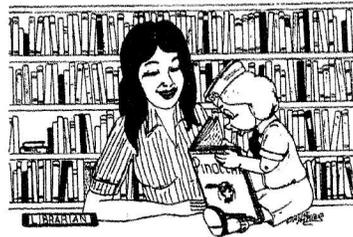


It seems as though some ambitious person is always arranging a banquet for almost any occasion. And banquets require entertainment. The ventriloquist can offer the perfect entertainment for any such banquet (just don't eat too much before the show).



Stage Shows come in all sizes: Intimate Lounges, Glittering Dinner Shows, Giant Convention Halls. Many star struck beginners dream of a glamorous lifetime career on stage but few see this dream come true.

Scout leaders find ventriloquism a helpful tool in their leadership roles. Ventriloquism is also a very practical, fun group (or individual) project, not only for scouts, but also boy's and girl's clubs.



Public and private libraries welcome experienced talent for special library presentations or storytime. Some libraries use volunteer workers while others have funds available to pay professional talent.

Various government (and private) agencies have discovered the value of Public Service and Community Relations programs utilizing the ever popular ventriloquist. The subject of such programs may be Safety, Drugs, Police/Community Relations, etc.

For lasting results the vent presentation is often supplemented with the distribution of free promotional literature: Brochures, Coloring Books, Autographed Photos, etc.





Doctors and Dentists along with other persons providing a professional service have discovered many ways to use the ventriloquist puppet in their office. By using the vent puppet to reinforce his instructions to a young patient, a Doctor can make a trip into his office almost FUN.

Therapists discovered long ago the positive response gained when puppets were used in their work with the emotionally disturbed. So effective is this application of ventriloquism that government grants are sometimes available to aid in the purchase of ventriloquist training and equipment.



Ventriloquial skills require more than average speech development and control. There have been cases when existing speech difficulties (such as stuttering) have been aided and even overcome through the ventriloquial efforts.



Song, Speech, and Ventriloquism- these three have much in common: Proper breathing, Clear voice, Distinct word pronunciation, Breath Control. Do you want to be a better singer or speaker? Then try ventriloquism!



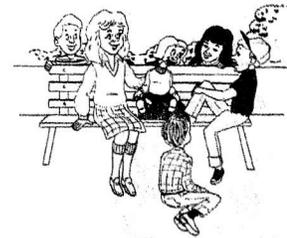
Churches, Sunday Schools, Bible Schools, Youth Rallies, Camps - all of these and more are included in the field of religious education. More ventriloquists are active in this field than ALL other fields of ventriloquism COMBINED!



A favorite teaching method in Back Yard Bible Schools, Good News Clubs and similar classes is (you guessed it) ventriloquism. Where the ventriloquist and "dummy" appear, a crowd is SURE to gather!



Do you want publicity? Or would you be happy to simply know you were able to brighten the life of someone else? Nursing Homes, Pre-Schools, Hospitals, Rehabilitation Centers - these institutions are filled with persons who would be thrilled to know someone cares enough to share of himself to brighten their day.



A proven crowd stopper is a Ventriloquist... ANYWHERE! The commercial possibilities are limitless: Fairs, Store Promotions, Public Relations, Product Demonstrations, Television Commercials, etc. The audience, be it live or watching the screen, will stop long enough to hear EVERY WORD of the ventriloquist's "pitch".

This list could go on and on but we'll stop here. Quite likely you have thought of some interesting possibilities of your own. There actually seems to be no limit to the number of ways ventriloquism can be used effectively.

"Dummies"

It's a DOLL; it's a PUPPET; it's SUPERDUMMY! Often individuals approach the ventriloquist and reluctantly ask about his. "Dummy"? (Or doll, or puppet, or partner, or whatever.) Although some ventriloquists refer to their partner as a "dummy", the commonly accepted term is a "Ventriloquial Figure" or "Figure" (or "Puppet"). Actually, most ventriloquists prefer simply to call their vent figure by name. After all, it's much less offensive. Who wants to be called a "Dummy"?! Here are several types of vent figures:



Above are the popular "Knee-Figures". These are the human type figures. Usually these are built to look youthful, but not always. Some ventriloquists use knee-figures that are adult characters. On the right (below) is an animal figure (or puppet). Numerous animal and bird characters are being used by both amateur and professional ventriloquists to great advantage.



Hand puppets (center) come in all sizes from the tiny finger puppets used in closeup work to giant larger than life creations for stage presentations. If the puppet is not a full body puppet a screen of some type is usually used to hide the operator's arm. Novelty puppets (right) cover a multitude of unique creations varying from talking boots to singing trombones! This is an area where you can simply turn your imagination loose; the results may be surprising, but nothing can be too ridiculous. Try it - it's great fun!

There are MANY variations to each of the above four classes. Just like people, all vent figures are different; all are uniquely individual; all have separate personalities. Since ventriloquists also have individual style and personalities, no two vent performances are exactly alike. This fact provides the spark that keeps ventriloquism an exciting event for everyone concerned!

How is it done?

Here we'll explain the "How-To" of ventriloquism in several very simplified steps. Then we'll show you how to build a cute ventriloquial puppet. In addition to this, you'll learn some tips for writing a dialogue (script). Are you ready? Okay - here we go!

Since it must SOUND like two separate persons talking, you must find or develop a voice for your puppet that sounds different than your own.



Then you must learn to switch quickly from your own voice to the voice of the puppet. This is done through practice. At first you'll get mixed up but don't become discouraged, soon this will be automatic.



Now the tricky part: Learning to talk without moving your lips. Your face should appear relaxed, as natural as possible. Lips and teeth are slightly parted allowing the words to pass through. The jaw motionless.



Lip control

Lip control takes practice... and more practice. It must not appear as though you are talking at the same time the puppet is supposedly talking. Some letters are easy to say without lip movement; others are very difficult... but it can be done.



To make it possible to speak the difficult letters (Labials) without moving the lips, the ventriloquist uses what is commonly known as "Sound Substitution". Most ventriloquist instructors start their students with what is called the "Beginner's Alphabet": A, C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, L, N, O, R, S, T, U, X, Y, Z. These are the letters that are fairly easy to say without using your lips. Try it - say the following sentences with as little lip movement as possible: (Use a mirror to check yourself.)

"THIS ISN'T SO HARD. I CAN DO IT... RIGHT ON - IT'S EASY!"

Easy? Sure! Now try the following sentence (still using the mirror):

"VENTRILOQUISM? I BELIEVE I CAN DO IT - IT'S A SNAP!"

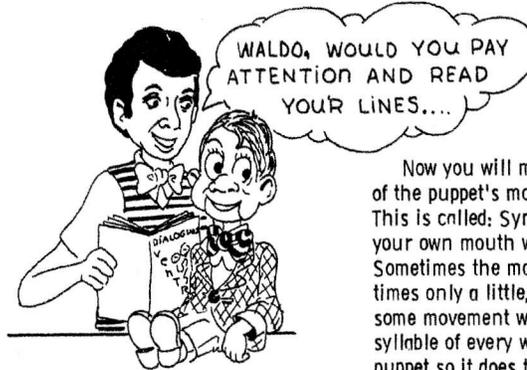
Wow - that wasn't so easy, was it? Notice the meaning of the two sentences. Both are saying the SAME THING but the choice of words makes a great deal of difference. The second sentence contains five of the six labials: B, P, M, V, F, and W. The beginner ventriloquist can make his job much easier by avoiding words for his puppet partner that contain these troublesome six letters.

But, eventually you will want to learn to say ANY word without moving your lips. So we must learn to say these six labials without the use of our lips. To make this task as simple as possible, try the following letter substitutions:

Instead of "B"	substitute a "G" or "D"
" of "P"	" a "K" or "T"
" of "M"	" a "N" or "NG" (as in "soNG")
" of "F"	" the "TH" as in "THrow"
" of "V"	" the "th" as in "there"
" of "W"	" the "oo" as in "boo"

These substitutes are not perfect substitutions of the true sound, but they will provide a very acceptable exchange. You will be able to say almost any word without lip movement and your audience will be able to understand what you are saying. In many cases they will not be aware of the substitutions at all.

Your lips will still want to move, even while using the substitutions. After all, a lifetime of speech habits are not easy to change. But it can be done and PRACTICE is the key. One rule to remember: Always THINK the letter you are substituting for and NOT the letter or sound you are using as a substitute.



Now you will match the movements of the puppet's mouth with the words. This is called: Synchronization. Watch your own mouth while you speak. Sometimes the mouth opens wide, other times only a little, but it usually makes some movement with each spoken syllable of every word. Operate your puppet so it does the same.

Now that you know how to make your puppet talk, don't forget other important movements: The turns and tilt of the head; gentle, rhythmic movements of the body. Do not move the puppet without purpose - every move should make the puppet more lifelike.

Remember: It's all an act, an illusion. Your ability to move the puppet in a lifelike manner, the believability of your own reactions to the puppet, the sound (and sight) of two people talking about some interesting subject - these are the things that make ventriloquism work!



"I gotta learn to defend myself! My ventriloquist partner is a slow learner, and our practice sessions are a bit rough - for BOTH dummies!"

REVIEW STEPS:

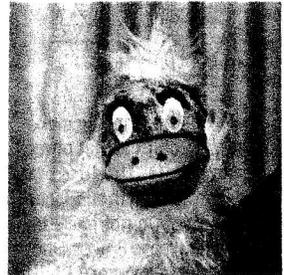
Once again, here are the steps for doing ventriloquism:

- (1) Development of a second voice for the puppet.
- (2) Learn to switch quickly from one voice to the other.
- (3) Learn to speak for the puppet without moving your own lips and while showing a relaxed, natural expression on your own face.
- (4) Synchronize the words for the puppet with its mouth movement.
- (5) Manipulate the puppet with natural, lifelike movements of head and body.

Build-A-Puppet

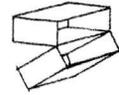
There are as many ways to build a ventriloquist puppet as there are persons to build them! Some are simple, others very elaborate. Some use common household materials, others require exotic items for construction. Most have few working parts while others are so complicated they require an engineer to work them.

Usually, the best puppets are the most simple. "Lucky Duck" pictured here is nothing more than a simple hand puppet with a long fur neck and a fur covered papier mache body (which was formed over a balloon). His only extra effect is the eyes which light up. But this comical character is an audience favorite... the very sight of that mischievous face brings a bright smile to every face. When "Lucky Duck" was built, there were no plans, just an idea. The final results were as much a surprise to the builder as anyone else... and no one was disappointed. This is a beautiful puppet that cost less than \$10 to build; purchase offers of over \$300 have been declined.

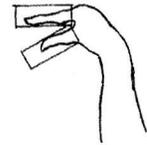


"Look partner - I know you're supposed to make me act alive, but isn't this carrying things a little too far?"

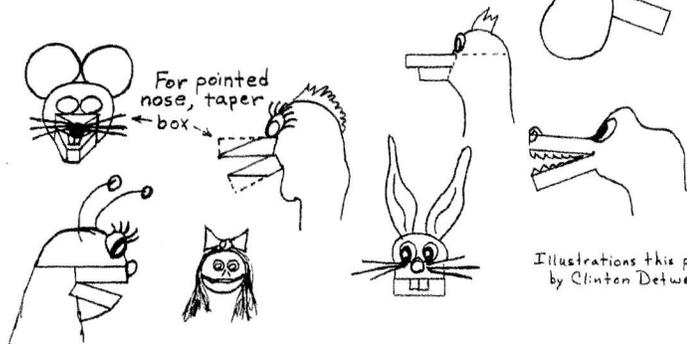
For a easy, quick, simple puppet use an empty cold cereal box; one of the small boxes that hold individual servings of approximately 1 oz. Open the box by cutting the middle on three sides. Then fold the empty box in half as illustrated. By slipping your hand into the box it can be opened and closed - this is the mouth of your puppet.



Now, look around the house for odds and ends to decorate the "mouth". Try to imagine the box as an animal, a person, a bird, a ????. Turn your imagination loose, have fun...you may just amaze yourself with the results.



Use odd buttons, scrap materials and pieces of fur, feathers, paints, construction paper, styrofoam balls, felt, pipe cleaners, spools, etc. Remember, there is no wrong way to build your puppet - if what you end up with looks good to you, BRAVO!



We call this little puppet the "After Breakfast Champion". It is just one of many puppet ideas available to you. Check your local library for books on easy puppets you can build yourself. Watch kid's TV shows and you'll get many new ideas. Many of the cute stuffed toy animals found in your local stores can be changed into puppets with a little time and effort. Most dealers specializing in ventriloquist supplies carry a wide selection of puppet "how-to-build-them-yourself" books. If all else fails you can always use an old sock... it's an age old idea but it still works and will put a sparkle into the eyes of any child!

RULE: All ventriloquist puppets MUST have a mouth that moves. This is the one feature that is common to ALL ventriloquist puppets, dolls, vent figures, marionettes, etc.



How to write a dialogue

Now that you know how to talk ventriloquially, what are you going to talk about? Finding suitable dialogue material is possibly the most troublesome part about ventriloquism once you learn the basics. There are dozens of good dialogue books that can be purchased from vent supply dealers. These books contain prepared scripts that are suitable for a wide variety of occasions. For the beginner, several of these books can save hours of frustration trying to write something suitable. Although the prepared script may not be exactly what you need, you will gain an idea and learn the "flow" of the dialogue. You can easily modify the single script or combine several scripts to obtain what you need.

As you gain experience as a ventriloquist, you'll be writing more and more of your own material. It should come as no surprise - your best dialogues will be those you write (or adapt) for your own use. So, where do you begin when writing a dialogue?

Webster defines "Dialogue" as: "A written composition in which two or more characters are represented as conversing." For ventriloquist use the dialogue is usually written for two characters: The Ventriloquist and the Vent Figure (or puppet). Neither character should dominate the conversation. The lines are more effective if they are short, concise, and to the point. Most of the punch lines should be spoken by the vent figure.

Before starting to write the actual dialogue you should consider:

- (1) The Audience - Are they adults? Children? Family groups?
- (2) The Event - Is it a Banquet? Party? School? Church?
- (3) How much time are you expected to take with your presentation?
- (4) What Vent Figure will you use? (What animations are possible?)
- (5) What is the Purpose? Entertainment? Instruction? Both?

When you have determined these five considerations it is easy to organize

your thoughts into some sort of logical pattern. The last point (The PURPOSE) is the most important; you cannot write an effective dialogue without knowing WHY it is to be written.

Don't try to "stretch" your dialogue without any reason other than to fill a certain amount of time. This will cause your presentation to drag and ventriloquism becomes quickly boring if it does not move along quickly. If you expect to hold your audience's attention, a dialogue of no more than 12-15 minutes should be used. (Less time if working before an audience of small children.) To add interest, include talk about local subjects and people. React to unexpected things that take place within the room or auditorium. If there is one thing that makes ventriloquism stand apart from other forms of puppetry it is the fact that it is a "LIVE" presentation. This is a tremendous advantage and to a great extent is responsible for the continuing popularity of ventriloquism. Walt Disney Enterprises have done great and marvelous things through computerized mechanical wonders. In our age of modern space-age technology, such impossibilities are accepted as routine. But the Ventriloquist - here is a person who uses no gimmicks, no space-age trickery, no hidden electronics. The ventriloquist simply takes his puppet partner, made of wood, nails, glue, cloth, papier mache, or whatever, and through his own carefully developed skill the ventriloquist seemingly brings this lifeless puppet to LIFE! Such a skillful presentation will always meet with the admiration and approval of the audience - regardless of the age we live in.

Back to our point of a "live" presentation. Suppose a flashbulb flashes during the act (a common happening for most ventriloquists). Most flashes will be ignored but just once the vent figure can quickly turn and say:

"Hey! That'll cost you a quarter!"

... or someone in the audience sneezes:

"Bless you." (To vent): "You suppose he's allergic to bad jokes?"

The audience enjoys this display of ready wit. These and other small personal remarks scattered throughout the dialogue make the audience feel involved with the show. They love it. If the vent figure calls one or more of the members of the audience by name, they are even more pleased:

- V. Do you have any favorite sports?
- F. I enjoy going hunting with (name of local hunter).
- V. Is he a good hunter?
- F. The last time we went we got lost in the woods.
- V. How did they find you?
- F. (Local hunter) did it the easy way. He shot a deer out of season and we were rescued.
- V. Who found you?
- F. The GAME WARDEN.

The audience knows, of course, that this is a fictitious story and will accept it in the good spirit in which it was intended. Often there are humorous true events that can be used with great results. Just remember to use good taste; never be insulting or offensive. If you must humiliate someone, pick on yourself!

Begin your dialogue with some simple, non-essential talk. This allows the listener to get accustomed to you, your puppet, your voices, and your humor. A few humorous lines early in the conversation will break the ice between the performer and the audience... BOTH will be more at ease:

- V. Hi, my name is (your name).
- F. And I'm (name of vent figure).
- V. We are here to entertain you.
- F. That will be something different!
- V. (To figure) Never mind! (To audience) For those of you not acquainted with our act, I am a Ventriloquist.
- F. He always says that so you won't think HE'S the DUMMY!

This sample introduction is simple and the jokes are old ones, but when spoken with enthusiasm they always bring a laugh.

Where will you find a plot or theme for your vent dialogue? ANYWHERE! Books, Television, Family Life, Newspapers, Radio, Conversations, Work Experiences, Friends, Other Ventriloquists, etc. By adding magic, music, or some visual aid to the dialogue you can add additional interest as well as good subject matter.

Let's look at a sample dialogue now. We'll use a simple visual aid and write the dialogue for the purpose of both entertainment and instruction.

YOU "AXED" FOR IT

- V. (Looking at vent figure) WOW! You look terrible, (name of figure)!
- F. I know.....and I FEEL terrible.
- V. Something you ate?
- F. No - something I SAID.
- V. (With surprise) Something you SAID made you feel terrible?
- F. (Groaning) Yeah.....
- V. I don't understand.
- F. Well, (hesitantly)... I... I asked my girl for a kiss...
- V. Yes? Go on.
- F. (Quickly) And SHE KICKED ME IN THE SHIN!
- V. (Surprised) Hey now! That WOULD hurt!
- F. You bet it did. But she won't do it again.
- V. No?
- F. No - she got a SPLINTER in her toe!

- V. From your leg?
- F. Of, course... serves her right for banging up my leg.
- V. Is it bad?
- F. Nothing a little SANDPAPER won't fix.
- V. Speaking of SPLINTERS... (holds up hatchet which has been hidden from view to this point)



- F. (Leaning away from vent and speaking in panic) YOU WOULDN'T!
- V. (Reassuringly) Of course not - do you know what this is?
- F. That's a lethal weapon!
- V. I thought we might discuss how much this hatchet resembles a person.
- F. (Looking closely at hatchet) It DOES remind me of someone....
- V. It does? Who?
- F. YOU!
- V. (Curiously) REALLY?
- F. Yeah - A HARD HEAD and NOT TOO SHARP. (Laughs)
- V. I'm going to ignore that remark... (Pause)... if you answer one question for me.
- F. Shoot!
- V. Would you say this hatchet is USEFUL or DANGEROUS?
- F. (Thinks for a few moments before answering) BOTH.
- V. Please explain, (name of figure).
- F. (Seriously) Well, it all depends on how it is used.
- V. Right, and the same is true of people.
- F. Yeah?
- V. Especially their TONGUE.
- F. (Surprised) THEIR WHAT?
- V. Their tongue.
- F. You're joking... I'd like to have seen George Washington try to cut down that cherry tree with his TONGUE!

- V. That's NOT what I meant!
- F. I hope not... some LICKING that would have been.
- V. I'm referring to the fact that our tongues can be both USEFUL or DANGEROUS.
- F. You mean... like when we say KIND words or when we say HATEFUL words?
- V. Now you have the idea.
- F. ... or, if we tell the TRUTH or if we tell a LIE?
- V. Correct.
- F. George Washington didn't get punished after he cut down his father's cherry tree, and I KNOW WHY.
- V. As the story goes, he was not punished because he TOLD THE TRUTH.
- F. That's the story, but the REAL reason he didn't get punished was because he STILL HAD THE HATCHET IN HIS HAND!
- V. (Shocked) NO!
- F. I'm just kidding... (thoughtfully) I'll bet his dad was mad.
- V. From the stories I've heard, I do not believe his father lost his temper.
- F. You mean, he was a GOOD HATCHET?
- V. (Questioningly) A "good hatchet"?
- F. Yeah - he didn't FLY OFF THE HANDLE!
- V. (Laughs) I see what you mean... you're right... that IS exactly what that saying means.
- F. Do you know how a VENTRILOQUIST like yourself can keep from LOSING HIS HEAD?
- V. How?
- F. By keeping a GOOD GRIP ON MY HEADSTICK!
- V. Don't be silly.
- F. (Singing) "I lost my head over you..."
- V. Say, you think you're SHARP tonight, don't you?
- F. Sharper than that MIDGET AXE of yours.
- V. There must be a moral to all of this...
- F. There is... It's dangerous if the HEAD IS SHARP....
- V. Yes...
- F. (Looking closely at vent)... and a DUMMY has ahold OF THE HANDLE!
- V. Are you picking on me again?
- F. If I am, it's your own fault.
- V. (Surprised) Oh?
- F. (Emphatically) YES - YOU "AXED" FOR IT!!

-END-

V: Indicates speaking part for the Ventriloquist.
 F: " " " " " Figure.
 Series of indicates a pause in the dialogue.
 Words in CAPS should be given additional emphasis.

This dialogue is written with a youthful audience in mind but it would work exceptionally well with family audiences. Since it is humorous and quite light from beginning to end the entire delivery will be entertaining. But there is a basic underlying moral theme which could be expanded in several directions. A dialogue of this type could be presented at parties, school, banquets, church, etc., as it is very versatile. Mr. Detweiler took his theme from a children's visual aid book he had read years ago. Only the basic plot was used: The comparison of an axe to people. From this simple plot the dialogue was developed. See how easy it is?



Ventriloquism, Puppets, Marionettes

Ventriloquism - Puppets - Marionettes --- these three are related but each is a separate art form. Each has its own unique characteristics. Their similarity is basic: A lifeless puppet is skillfully manipulated so that it appears to be alive. Since a puppet stage is not needed for the ventriloquist performance, it is the simplest of the three to stage.

Ventriloquism is the most flexible of these three puppet forms. The ventriloquist manipulates the puppet while he, the operator, is in full view of the audience. Words for the vent puppet are spoken "live" by the operator. This allows great mobility of the entire act; some vents even walk into the audience with their puppets while continuing their show. Usually one or two puppets are used at one time. Most ventriloquists work alone although there are a few team vent acts where two ventriloquists (or more) perform simultaneously.



The puppeteer uses a stage arrangement allowing the puppets to be seen while he, the operator, is hidden. The puppets are operated from below and/or behind. Words for the puppets may be spoken live but are often recorded. Recorded sound effects may be used along with special lighting and props. Puppet presentations are often a team production with two or more puppeteers. This form of puppetry is the largest of the three groups. Although most are hand puppets, the marionette (next page) is often included in this group.



Marionettes are fascinating creations manipulated by the strings upon which they are suspended. The operator stands above and behind the puppet stage and is hidden from view. Words may be spoken live or pre-recorded with sound effects. Persons working with marionettes make up the smallest of these three puppet forms. Some marionettes have mouths that open and close for speech; most simply nod their heads to simulate speaking. Unless the show is viewed close-up, few members of the audience know the difference.



In conclusion:

And there you have it - the How, What, Where, When, and Why of Ventriloquism. Isn't it fun? And isn't it surprising how versatile this art can be?

But this booklet has only scratched the surface of the subject. Many vent secrets were not even mentioned, and those we did cover should be explored in depth if you're serious about putting the art to use effectively. Several study programs are available but the Maher 30 Lesson Course (see next pages) is one of the most complete programs for learning right in your own home. Its record is proven and the entire program is approved by the Association of Career Training Schools and backed by a money back guarantee. We recommend it highly for your further consideration and study. Good luck!

Often Ventriloquist advertisements stress how ventriloquism "Builds your poise, self-confidence, and popularity." While such statements are true, the important consideration should be: "How can I use ventriloquism to help others?" This is the attitude that will bring lasting results. Besides, it is only when we give of ourselves that we truly receive.

Notes

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