



World Voice Day 2024

**RESONATE,
EDUCATE,
CELEBRATE**



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Teacher!
**Your
voice
matters**

 **World Voice Day 2023**

This public information leaflet, which deals with teachers' voices, has been jointly produced by The British Voice Association (BVA) and the Australian Voice Association (AVA) to celebrate World Voice Day (always 16th April).

The theme for 2024
"RESONATE, EDUCATE, CELEBRATE"

The BVA and AVA understand the importance of care for the speaking and singing voice. As two major international organisations representing multidisciplinary voice professionals, the BVA and AVA bring together the latest knowledge and expertise to help take better care of all voices, including yours.

With thanks to: Elissa Finn, David M. Howard, Jane Oakshott, Rebecca Schwarz, Nikos Spantideas, and Louise Gibbs.

For more information: www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk/voicecare.htm



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Teacher!

Are you struggling with your voice?

- Difficulty using your voice at work or in daily activities
- Experiencing pain or discomfort when speaking
- Losing your voice often
- Your voice sounds rough or hoarse
- Difficulty speaking at soft or loud volumes

Any voice problem lasting longer than three weeks should be investigated by a qualified healthcare professional.

Care for your voice

While we recommend you speak to a healthcare professional for individual advice, below are some suggestions on how you can start to care for your voice.

- Look after your mind and body



- Drink water - little and often through the day
- Inhale plain steam to improve hydration at least 45 minutes before voice use
- Warm up and cool down your voice
- Stretch your body and do some gentle humming before you start your teaching and at the end of the day
- Use a microphone where practicable (eg, for assembly, playground duty or in the gym)
- Find a voice coach

Speak less – make it count more

- Structure your workday to include short, silent voice rests
- Speak in short sentences
- Employ non-verbal strategies to reduce unnecessary voice use (eg, signs, sign language, clapping or playing music)

Make your teaching environment work for you

The size and acoustics of a room affects the clarity and volume of your voice, how you hear yourself, and how you are heard

- Hard surfaces reflect sound. Soft surfaces absorb sound
- Modify hard, reverberant surfaces with soft materials like textile artwork, books or acoustic panels
- Brighten a dull acoustic by removing absorptive surfaces like curtains or soft furnishings
- Experiment to find the best place to speak from

Be aware of your Health & Safety rights and the responsibilities of employers

The Health and Safety at Work Act (United Kingdom 1974) sets down that if a worker complains of voice problems, the employer has a legal obligation to assess the risk of voice loss; AND to make the required health and safety adjustments to working conditions. This protection for the worker is strengthened by the Equality Act (UK 2010) under which voice loss that affects everyday life and work can be classified as a disability. This classification is dependent on the duration and severity of symptoms. If you have suffered from a failure of your employer's Duty of Care you could be entitled to take legal action.

Health and Safety at Work law will differ according to the country and location of your work. If you want to find out more about your employer's obligations to create a safe working environment, contact the workplace health and safety regulator in your specific work location, or seek legal advice.

Where to go for voice help

There are clinics in the British National Health Service and in Australian public and private healthcare settings that specialise in treating people with voice disorders. You can ask your General Practitioner GP to refer you to these people. Consult the BVA website for the Voice Clinics Directory.