

Voicing Fiction Audiobooks Class Notes

vo2gogo.com
presents
Voicing Fiction Audiobooks
Created by David H. Lawrence XVII

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This is an Art and Commerce class.
It's all about the storytelling and the business.

Art
The skill of **storytelling** - how to voice commercials, animation and narration. It's where almost all other voice over classes stop.

Commerce
The **business** of the business. How to attract customers, how to show them your wares, how to fill their needs, and how to price your services and collect your fees.

Science
The **technology, tools and digital skills** needed to create and launch voice-over practice. The science is about **changing**.

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Here's the plan for class.

Introduction
Voicing Fiction Audiobooks: why fiction is the root of all audiobook narration.

Lesson 01
Prep: auditions, audience, settings and characters.

Lesson 02
Execution skills: pace, pitch and enunciation.

Lesson 03
Field trip: creating your own content.

3 Or More Things To Explore
Your homework and other actionable items.

Questions and Answers
Save your questions until the end, then fire away.

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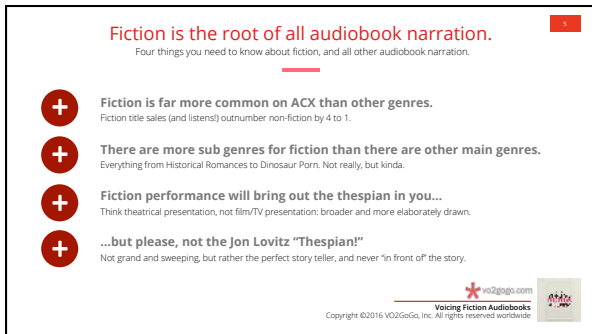
Voicing Fiction Audiobooks

Class Notes



Introduction
Why fiction is the root of all audiobook narration.

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Fiction is the root of all audiobook narration.
Four things you need to know about fiction, and all other audiobook narration.

- + Fiction is far more common on ACX than other genres.**
Fiction title sales (and listens) outnumber non-fiction by 4 to 1.
- + There are more sub genres for fiction than there are other main genres.**
Everything from Historical Romances to Dinosaur Porn. Not really, but kinda.
- + Fiction performance will bring out the thespian in you...**
Think theatrical presentation, not film/TV presentation: broader and more elaborately drawn.
- + ...but please, not the Jon Lovitz "Thespian!"**
Not grand and sweeping, but rather the perfect story teller, and never "in front of" the story.

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Lesson 01
Prep: auditions, audience, settings and characters.

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AUDITIONS:
Make sure you're the right voice for the project.




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Before you audition, try these characters on for size.
See how these two main characters sound when you tell their story. Be brutal. Do they sound believable?



Protagonists
Our hero and those who help our hero. The good ones.



Antagonists
The creepy, evil villains, and his or her henchmen. The bad guys.

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Prepping your work.
5 steps for preparing for a great read, whether auditioning for, or actually narrating, a title.



Read for potholes
Read the book not for pleasure, but to make yourself aware of potential issues.

Pronunciation
First and last names, Geographic and interstellar locations, Name brands, Chemical names, Etc.

Beware of telegraphing
You'll know how the story ends. Don't let your narrator (or any other character) give it away.

Prep the subtext
How passages are narrated depends entirely on the subtext, not the actual words.

Don't overmark
Too many lines, circles, stars and highlights can get in your way when narrating.

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Creating the story's characters.
Hearing the perfect voices in your head, and allowing them to come out and play.

- Neutral Narrator**
Your neutral narrator voice carries the weight of exposition. Make it as natural as the story calls for.
- Women and children**
Women and children tend to be voiced as inquisitive, sensitive, connected. Raise your pitch slightly for them.
- Male characters**
Men are usually voiced as definitive, declarative and a bit arrogant. Lower your pitch.
- Accents and dialects**
Don't beat the listener over the head with your amazing abilities. Serve the story.

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Get to know the audiobook consumer profile.
Here are four things that the Audio Publishers Association says make audiobook listeners extraordinary.

- 01 They're smart.**
They self identify as "smart" or "brilliant" and are twice as likely to have an advanced degree.
- 02 They're affluent.**
Their median income is \$56,000 yearly. Non-listeners? \$43,000.
- 03 They're younger.**
Median age of an audiobook listener is 48, younger than the median age of readers.
- 04 They move around.**
80% of listening occurs in moving vehicles: cars, trucks, planes, trains, etc.

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Then, define your audience of one.

Who are the fans of this genre? What gender do you think this title will appeal to most? How old? How fervent? Anything else?
Tell the story **only** to this one person.

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13



Lesson 02

Execution skills: pace, pitch and enunciation.

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14



“ Narrate audiobooks with the speed and drama of stagework and narration. ”

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15

Working your way through a fiction audiobook.

Being the storyteller means honoring the audience's truth, not your personal feelings.

Keep a consistent exposition pace.
Even if the scene is exciting, resist speeding up your read.

Vary the pace of your dialog.
The characters' speaking speeds will depend on the scene.

Keep your narrator neutral.
Watch for sing-song and roller-coaster pitch changes.

Initially, your dry tracks will seem slow.
You know the story. The listener doesn't. Help them understand.



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16

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

Notice copy written for the eye, not the ear.

Some prose goes on forever, especially with classic literature. It's your job to find the appropriate beats in what you're reading.

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17

“ Use negative audio space. Build drama with silence. Let things land. ”



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18



“ Keep track of your cast's voices, what each character really wants, and if they change over time. ”

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19



Remember how listeners consume audiobooks.

Over 80% of the time, it's while trapped in a moving vehicle.
Make sure you own the material and enunciate clearly.

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20



Lesson 03
Field trip: creating your own content.

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21


Create your own content.
Don't wait for someone else to give you permission to do great work.

- + **Fiction audiobooks are a great place to start creating your own content.**
- + **Public domain material is plentiful, and by definition has no copyright.**
- + **Create an entire library of content to sell, and to promote your talent.**

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Look for projects based on public domain works.
Here are just a few examples from prime time TV.




Sleepy Hollow
Based on The Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving (1820)

Grimm
Based on Grimm's Fairy Tales by The Brothers Grimm (1812)

Once Upon A Time
Characters based on European fairy tales and fables (various)


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“ And then there's Disney, which prefers to use public domain characters. ”



And dozens more...

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Search for your public domain title. Click on the Text link for the title. Copy it. Voice it. Sell it.

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Two ways to sell your content.

If you can build an e-commerce website, do that. If not, there's a second option.

Build your own website
If you know e-commerce, build away. Use the same keywords in the content of your site as the production you're modeling after is using.

Use Gumroad.com
This site lets you sell content and takes a small cut from every copy sold. You don't need to know how to build a site.

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Public domain works are not welcome at ACX.

Occasionally, Audible will have a celebrity voice a public domain title, but you can't put one up on Kindle, then voice it on ACX.

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20

CREATING YOUR OWN VO CONTENT

We'll dive deeper into creating content soon.

We have an entire class showing you how to create and sell your own content, including site building and e-commerce options.

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21

3 Or More Things To Explore
Your homework and other actionable items.

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22

3 or more things to explore.
Take what you've learned, explore and learn more, then put that all to work.

- +** Audition for interesting fiction audiobook projects on ACX.
- +** Identify the audience of one for your project.
- +** Voice, edit, master, sell and promote your fiction audiobook.
- +** Find a public domain title, and create and sell your own content.

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