

The Dirty Dozen

These are twelve **negative** practices that speakers in general (and interpreters specifically) fall into a habit of doing. If this “dirty dozen” can be prevented or eliminated from your delivery style – you will become a more effective reader.

1. Dropping Word Endings

Remember word endings are important to GOOD diction. The “t”, “d”, “ing” – let the audience hear the last sound of the word. Work for CLEAR diction! “Did you eat yet?” – “No, did you?”

2. Emphasizing The Wrong Words

Nouns and verbs are usually the key words in sentences. They are the words that most often need to be stressed. Emphasis can be gained by coloring words rather than punching them. Color by tone, volume, verve.

3. Overplaying Or “Milking” A Selection

Think of the meaning of the selection. Don’t exaggerate for the sake of exaggeration.

4. Rushing

Take time with lines. Don’t rush! Remember your audience does not have the script. They are depending on your reading to get the meaning of the words/selection. Rush...and you lose the audience.

5. Misusing Pauses

Although there are many times when you can do your best interpreting during pauses, if pauses are overplayed – they lose their effect.

6. Bringing Down The Curtain Before The Performance Is Over

Keep your concentration on the scene and what the author is saying. Don’t rush the end. In many instances the ending is a vital part of the literature.

7. Failing To Finish Beats

Be certain that important lines are delivered with meaning before you move on – don’t rush!

8. Playing Cartoons And Stereotypes

The BEST interpretation is based on believable characters. Don’t fake it! Read the lines as the author intended.

9. Forcing Interpretations On A Selection When Not Needed

Interpretations must come directly from the script. Leave the script to the author.

10. Over Exaggeration Of An Emotion

Remember, this is interpretation – not ACTING – keep within the limits.

11. Neglecting To Study The Script

Study the script. You don't want or need surprises with pronunciation, phrasing, etc.

12. Forgetting The Importance Of Approach And Decent From The Podium

Remember, your reading begins from the moment you begin your approach to the lectern or ambo. Attention continues to be on you during your decent or return to your seat.