

Voice Acting for Animation & Games — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into reps. You will build a documented roster of character voices, drill cold-reading on real pages, decode director shorthand, and stand up a home booth, a demo plan, and an audition pipeline. Work through one section per module, fill the templates as you go, and keep them as living tools you reuse on every future booking.

Building a Character Voice That Holds Up

Create distinct, documented voices you can reproduce on command months later.

Exercise: Same Words, Five Different People

Pick one neutral sentence, such as I told you that would happen, and perform it as five different characters by changing only the dials. Record all five back to back, then label what you changed.

- For each of the five takes, write the placement (chest, mask, throat, lips), the pace (slow, medium, fast), and the pitch (low, mid, high).

- Which two takes sound the most like genuinely different people, and which dial difference caused that?

- Give each of the five a one-line want, an active verb describing what they are chasing in the sentence.

- Which take surprised you and would you not have found without recording? Note why.

Worksheet: Character Bible Entry

Fill one entry per voice for at least three characters. Save a short audio clip alongside each and note its filename. This is the document you will open before any callback to match the voice exactly.

Character casting type (e.g. bratty kid, smarmy villain, warm grandmother)

Placement

Pace

Pitch

Texture or extras (rasp, breathy, smile, etc.)

Spine (one sentence: what they fundamentally want)

Private recall anchor (your trigger to find the voice)

Reference audio filename (neutral / shout / whisper)

Checklist: Is This a Bookable Voice?

- I can state the placement, pace, and pitch in writing, not just imitate it
- The character survives ordering coffee, losing a game, and comforting a friend as one consistent person
- I wrote a one-sentence spine describing what the character wants
- I have a private recall anchor that snaps me back into the voice
- I saved a neutral, a shouting, and a whispering audio clip for the entry
- I can find and match the voice cold using only the bible entry

Cold-Reading Scripts Like a Pro

Make unfamiliar sides read like you wrote them, under time pressure.

Exercise: Fifteen-Second Scan Drill

Open a novel or script to a random page of dialogue you have never read. Give yourself fifteen seconds to scan, then perform it aloud in character. Repeat with five different pages and log each.

- After each scan, write the character, who they are talking to, what just happened, and what they want, before you read aloud.

- Identify the button, the single most important line, for each passage.

- Note any proper noun you committed to a pronunciation on; did you say it with confidence and stay consistent?

- Track your stumbles per passage across the five reps and watch the number fall.

Worksheet: Operative-Word Sandbox

Take the sentence I never said she stole my money. Read it aloud eight times, stressing a different word each time, and record what scene each stress implies. This builds the instinct to find the operative word on any cold line.

Stressed word

Implied meaning of the line with that stress

Which real character or situation this version would fit

Exercise: Breath-Map a Long Passage

Choose a dense paragraph of at least 150 words. Mark every planned breath with a slash at clause and sentence boundaries, then record it cleanly. Listen back specifically for audible gasps or breaths landing inside a clause.

- Where did you originally want to breathe mid-clause, and where did you move the breath instead?

- Did any sentence leave you short on air? Where should the bigger pre-breath go next time?

- Time your read and calculate your words per minute; are you near the 150 to 160 audiobook range?

- List any mouth clicks or smacks you heard and note your hydration before the take.

Checklist: Cold-Read Readiness

- I scan a page in under thirty seconds and answer who, to whom, what happened, what they want
- I mark the operative word in each phrase before reading
- I use a fixed three-to-five symbol marking system every time
- I commit to proper-noun pronunciations with confidence and consistency
- I plan breaths at boundaries, never mid-clause
- I keep water nearby and avoid dairy before reads to reduce mouth noise

Taking Direction and Protecting Your Voice

Adjust on the first redirect, self-direct from a spec, and perform demanding work safely.

Worksheet: Director Shorthand Translator

Build your personal cheat sheet by translating each common direction into the exact dial change you will make. Keep it near your booth until it is automatic.

Director phrase (e.g. pull it back, punch the button, match the room)

What it means

My concrete adjustment (placement / pace / volume / energy / realism)

Exercise: Self-Direct From a Cold Spec

Use a casting spec (real or this sample: male-presenting villain, 40s, smooth and menacing, think a charming cult leader, not a cartoon baddie, conversational, no shouting). Break it down, record two to three takes, then choose the best as your own director.

- Underline every adjective and reference in the spec and convert each into a dial setting.
 - List the do-nots in the spec and confirm your take obeys every one.
 - After a short break, listen back and pick the take a stranger would describe using the spec's own words.
 - Did you choose the take that fit the brief, or the one that was most fun to perform? Be honest.
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Checklist: Safe-Screaming Pre-Flight

- I warmed up with lip trills, humming, and sirens for at least five minutes
- I am powering from the diaphragm and air, not squeezing my throat
- My throat stays open and relaxed; size comes from resonance, not strain
- I hydrated before and have water in the booth
- I will front-load the most damaging lines while my voice is fresh
- I will stop instantly at any pain, sharpness, or sudden hoarseness and ask for a break
- I will cool down with gentle humming and rest my voice afterward

Setting Up and Booking the Work

Stand up a clean home booth, cut a targeted demo, and run a tracked audition pipeline.

Worksheet: Home Booth Build and Test

Plan your booth and run a recorded test. Record yourself, listen on headphones, and adjust until the clap test is dead and peaks sit near minus six decibels.

Recording space (closet, treated corner, etc.)

Reverb treatment used (blankets, panels, clothes)

Microphone model

Interface model

Mic distance (cm)

Peak level on test (dB)

Background noise sources found and fixed

Exercise: Plan Your Demo Reel

Design a sixty-to-ninety-second character or game reel. List your clips in performance order, sequencing for maximum contrast, and confirm your strongest character lands in the first five seconds.

- Write your clip order with each character's casting type and target length in seconds.
 - Check every adjacent pair: do any two neighbours sound alike, and how will you reorder to fix it?
 - Confirm your total runtime is ninety seconds or less and name anything you cut for being merely good.
 - Which market is this reel for (animation/character, game, commercial), and does its feel match?
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Checklist: Audition Submission Quality Gate

- My audio is clean: no audible reverb, hiss, or background noise
- I read the casting spec twice and self-directed against it
- I obeyed every do-not in the spec (no accents, no shouting, etc.)
- I recorded two to three distinct takes and chose the one that fits the brief
- My slate, file format, and file name match the submission instructions exactly
- I logged the audition in my pipeline tracker

Your Action Plan

1. Build three character bible entries with full dial settings, a spine, a recall anchor, and saved audio clips.
2. Run the fifteen-second scan drill on five unfamiliar pages and log your stumbles dropping across reps.
3. Adopt a fixed three-to-five symbol script-marking system and use it on every read until it is automatic.
4. Create your personal director-shorthand translator and self-direct one cold casting spec end to end.
5. Learn and practice safe-screaming warm-ups and stop-rules before attempting any efforts or creature work.
6. Set up and acoustically treat a home booth, then pass the clap test with peaks near minus six decibels.
7. Plan and record a sixty-to-ninety-second genre-targeted demo reel with your best character first.
8. Create accounts on Casting Call Club and one paid platform, and complete your casting profile.
9. Set a weekly audition target and submit consistently, logging every audition in the pipeline tracker.
10. Review your tracker monthly to find your real submission-to-booking ratio and double down on what converts.

