



Resources For Voice Over Artists



Reading: There are a lot of books available about Voice Over work and how to best prepare. These are the ones that I have personally found to be most helpful.

- Speak with Distinction by Edith Skinner
- Word of Mouth: A Guide to Commercial and Animation Voice-Over Excellence by Susan Blu, Molly Ann Mullin & Cynthia Songe'
 - *Gwyn's note: This is really my personal "go to" reference. Great exercises, awesome warm ups and the industry explained. The latest version also comes with a CD to listen to.*
- Speak and Be Heard by Richard Di Britania
 - *Gwyn's note: Really excellent exercises, explanations and historical context. Targeted toward anyone who does public speaking, Mr. Di Britania is very focused on maintaining vocal health which is an absolute necessity.*

Listening: The top Voice Over agencies have very active websites where they post the "reels" (samples of the artist's work). It is free to go and listen to the many tracks available there. Just remember, these are all artists who have been working at this for a long time and have tons of experience. It's okay to not sound like them, YOU have your own voice, listening to them is only to hear what they do and how they do it.

- CESD Talent Agency: <https://cesdtalent.com/>
 - Click on the "Search" button in the top center and then on the "Search by Department". You will see a list of all of the different types of Voice Over work. Select one that interests you that will bring up many more options on the right hand side of the screen. I usually just select "Los Angeles"

and scroll down to the final “Search” button. This will give you an entire page of VO artists in that category to listen to.

ACM Talent: <https://www.acmtalent.com/>

- ACM is much easier to navigate. Simply choose if you would like to hear male or female voices. That selection will bring you to a long list of the names (each is a link) of the artists that ACM represents. If you keep scrolling down on that page, you will get to individual artist links and the different reels they have available.
- Studio Center: <https://studiocenter.com/talent/voice>
 - I am not a fan of this company as they only work with non-union Voice Actors - which means they are generally underpaying for the work and are not as worried about performer protections. I include it here as another source to hear what other artists are presenting only. Scroll down to select the type of voices you want to hear.

Now What???

I was drawn to Voice Over in part because of my many tattoos which makes it more difficult to be cast in some projects but also because Voice Over really frees you from how you look and opens an entirely different level of creativity. I think we all play with different voices with our friends and families, I felt like my voices were solid enough that I could use them in the industry. I actually started (without realizing it) when I was reading books for the blind for the OPB radio station for the blind. It was closed many years ago now but was a great introduction to working in a studio environment, recording and reading aloud but without the expectations that come with professional presentations.

I am most often hired to work dubbing English over foreign made productions. I was introduced to that line of work through a SAG-AFTRA training opportunity for performers with disabilities. I have taken a lot of workshops on Voice Over and professional training is pretty necessary if you are planning to pursue it professionally. We need ears outside of ourselves with industry experience to guide us and help us find better ways of presenting material. That doesn't mean a career is out of reach, it just means that training will be necessary - eventually.

This resource document was designed to give you a bit of an idea of where to start. Jeff Williams (JeffWilliamsVoice.com) did a really extensive blog post about getting into Voice Over that I highly recommend. Jeff seems to have the priorities in exactly the right order based on my experience but has been doing this a lot longer so has much more experience to draw on.

You don't want to put yourself onto the Voice Over sites until you have a really good understanding of what you are comfortable doing and how you are going to produce your product. In addition, you will need to have a demo reel for potential customers to listen to your voice. Most reels include at least 3-4 different samples of your work and the best are professionally produced and edited. Once you have a few jobs completed you are welcome to add parts of those to your demo collection after they are publicly released. No, you probably won't need a professional demo on Fiverr but do please read Jeff's advice on negotiating fees - you do not want to undercut established professionals just to get your foot in the door. Just like any other industry, people talk!

So the first step in getting started really is researching what other people are doing and finding what you are comfortable with doing yourself. Read aloud every single day, record yourself and listen to what you sound like and then compare that to what you are hearing on the professional platforms and productions. Are you getting different levels in your reading? Is your work engaging/interesting? What type of work do you look forward to doing? You may be great at reading textbooks, but if it is a huge chore and you find yourself dreading your time in the booth it's not really worth pursuing.

Once you start feeling really comfortable with what you are able to reliably produce then you can start looking at equipment and your home recording set up. Again, Jeff Williams has good suggestions though they may be a bit out of date. Many Voice Over professionals have a home studio at professional standards and using professional applications. I do not. I invested in a good mic (Shure SM7B) and digital interface but do not have a dedicated and sound proofed area in which to work. I use my limited set up for personal projects and auditions but any professional work means that I will travel to the studio. That does limit the work I do.

Whether you decide to invest in a home recording studio or not, once you have that really good understanding of what you offer (and even a "starter" demo reel) you can start putting yourself onto the Voice Over casting platforms. I am listed on Voice Match, Voices.com and the Disable Voice Actors Database. I am also on several Voice Over Facebook groups that aren't so focused on being cast but are a good resource for what is happening in the industry, what tech items and programs people are having success with and just being able to connect with people who understand what goes into this work (fair warning - it is Facebook so don't believe everything you read!).

I hope this gives you some of the answers you were looking for. If not, please do feel free to reach out and ask for clarification where needed! Since I don't have any information on your past work it's kind of difficult to guess how much of this you have already accomplished so I have opted for more information than you may actually be looking for. Most importantly,

Have Fun!