

# Elements of Voice Exercise

## Instructions

Customize grammar, diction, and sound qualities to make the authorial voice appropriate to each audience, purpose and occasion. Each group should write approximately a half page of text. The propositional content that all of the groups share is that this is a good product and that the audience should purchase it.

Group 1. Write a memo to an investment group recommending that they purchase shares of the company that makes this product.

Group 2. Write a buy-one-get-one-free offer for Groupon.

Group 3. Write a short proposal to American Airlines recommending that they replace their standard blankets with this product.

Group 4. Write a description of this product to appear in a *Sky Mall* catalog (those catalogs full of odd gizmos that are available on airplanes).

Group 5. Write advertising copy for a full-page ad for this product to appear in a men's magazine like *Maxim*, *Details*, *Esquire*, or *GQ* (specify which one you have chosen).

## Product/Content

“The Better Marriage Blanket”

Here is the copy from the official website. You should assume that all of this information is correct. “Completely and quickly absorbs the odor of flatulence....

- A real solution to a very real problem
- Contains the same type of fabric used by the military to protect against chemical weapons
- Even works on top of bed sheets
- Makes a great wedding or anniversary gift too
- The molecules that cause the odor are absorbed and neutralized in millions of microscopic pores in the activated carbon so it has an almost unlimited capacity for eliminating odor
- Frequent washing is not needed. Only wash when the outer fabric needs cleaning but “Refresh” The Blanket in the dryer or in the sun occasionally
- The blanket will not smell bad after use
- Odor absorption will last for the life of the Blanket

Available in twin, queen, or king sized. Prices begin at \$29.99+ shipping and handling.

Here's what other publications have said about the product.

*Huffington Post:* Kiss your marital woes goodbye. Just don't kiss the blanket. Why, you ask? Because it's not only absorbed not only your troubles, but also your partner's nighttime bonanza of flatulence. The "Better Marriage Blanket" (obviously the number one cause of mediocre marriages is sleep-farting) not only exists, but it may be the first device created solely to fight farting.

*Gizmag:* As viewers of *South Park* will know, holding farts in can lead to spontaneous human combustion. Unfortunately letting one rip in the marriage bed can lead to the equally unwanted result of the withholding of snuggling. Thankfully there's now a solution in the form of the Better Marriage Blanket that soaks up offensive "flatulence molecules" to keep any marriage smelling rosy through the most destructive Indian curry. So how does the Better Marriage Blanket work its magic? Flatulence molecules pass through the blanket's cotton shell and are absorbed into a layer of activated carbon fabric, which is apparently the same type of fabric used by the military to protect against chemical weapons. If the fart-busting blanket lives up to its claims we wonder how long it is before we start seeing underwear made using the same material.

*The Consumerist:* If you are emitting such noxious gas that you require a carbon filter blanket in order to prevent divorce, you may have some kind of underlying medical condition that you should get checked out. But if you don't have health insurance, maybe you should try the Better Marriage Blanket instead.

*New York Daily News:* At a surplus store, [inventor Francis] Bibbo had purchased a suit made with the activated carbon fabric because he was looking for a way to keep deer from detecting his scent when he went hunting, according to Health Business Week.

Then he noticed that it was effective for another little problem, too, and this led to a prototype. The Better Marriage Blanket, which the Web site notes could be used with roommates, too, costs \$39.95 for the twin size and \$49.95 for the queen size. Bibbo foresees its use on planes, cruise ships, submarines and senior citizen homes as well.

"People hear about it and their first reaction is a good laugh," he told Health Business Week. "But then they think about it for a few seconds and realize that it could be much more than a gag gift; it is a very practical bedding option."

And apparently also a very popular product. Callers to the toll-free ordering number get a recording saying that because of the high volume of calls, orders must be placed online.

*Daily Finance:* Of all the boudoir hazards that can put wedded bliss on the rocks, perhaps none is less discussed, but more disgusting, than chronic flatulence. But where marriage therapists and proctologists have failed, a science teacher claims to have succeeded: Behold the Better Marriage Blanket. While I've never suffered from a single episode of flatulence in my life, I was happy to investigate this new product that claims it "Completely and Quickly Absorbs the Odor of Flatulence."

**Q: Dare we ask how his thing works?**

**A:** Glad to explain. While the inventor doesn't want to give away the secret recipe, the Better Marriage Blanket utilizes a polyester layer, activated carbon and odor-absorbing fabric in between its outer layers. But we at WalletPop have some ideas for improvements. Like: A pouch that holds a jumbo bottle of Beano. And a matching diaper that the guilty spouse would wear, made of the same fabric compound. It's all about attacking the problem at the source, ya know.

**Q: How much does it cost?**

**A:** Prices range from \$120 (39.95 times three payments) for twin to \$180 (59.95 times three payments) for king. We have no idea if "twin" or "king" refers to the size of the blanket, or the nature of the problem.

**Q: I'm curious about this product, but I'm ashamed to admit that I snore, too. Is there any hope for me?**

**A:** All that air rattling from both ends of you sounds like a heap of trouble, buster. You don't want to wind up collapsing on yourself like, say, a black hole. Let's not take that metaphor any farther.

**Q: Couldn't they come up with a more original name than the Better Marriage Blanket?**

**A:** You bet. We're liking "You've Gone Too Fart." And "Bubble Wrap." And some variation on the "Odor Eaters" theme, though we understand that's trademarked.

**Q: So the folks behind the Better Marriage Blanket say it "makes a great gift." Is this true?**

**A:** They say it's ideal for "weddings" (imagine writing out the Thank You card), "birthdays" (thus giving the expression "old fart" new meaning) and "a humorous occasion." Hmmm. "Hey honey! Here's your new Better Marriage Blanket! And guess what? It'll absorb all your gas!!! HA HA HA." The next sound, of course, would be your butt, toxic or not, landing on the couch with a thud.

**Q: Is it worth the money?**

**A:** You can't put a price on love, but sanity is another story. And while cheaper alternatives exist (a can of Lysol, nose plugs, cork), so do more expensive ones: marriage counseling, bigger beds, and the Lasko 3135 30" Oscillating Industrial Pedestal Fan. We don't know if the Better Marriage Blanket will work, honestly. But just like marriage itself, it's a bit of a crap shoot. Let's not take that metaphor any farther.

*Gizmodo:* Is flatulence ruining your love life? My friends look no further than the Better Marriage Blanket; a fart-absorbing wüunderspread that means you'll never again have to blame it on the dog. This is a real thing! Remember, it's got activated carbon fabric: "the same type of fabric used by the military to protect against chemical weapons." You know, in case you're tooting mustard gas.

*Adweek:* This sounds like, and should be, a B-grade Saturday Night Live ad parody. But it's apparently real. Leaving aside the question of whether the market demands a military-grade fart-absorbing blanket, are they sure it makes a great gift for a wedding or anniversary? Yeah, that will go over well. If you give one of these to your spouse, your days of sleeping on the couch because of his or her digestive trouble might be over, but your days of sleeping on the couch because you're an insensitive asshole will just be beginning.

