

When Margaret Thatcher's colleagues wanted to help improve her image, Laurence Olivier - the famous actor - suggested that she work with a tutor at the National Theatre.

Her lessons there included humming exercises, directed at lowering her pitch. Studies of her before-and-after voice - as heard on this video clip - reveal she had successfully lowered her pitch 46 Hz.

According to Max Atkinson, author of *Our Masters' Voices*, that makes her results "almost half the average difference in pitch between male and female voices."

By changing her voice, to speak with a lower pitch, Mrs. Thatcher also slowed-down her speech. According to Atkinson, that is a natural result:

*...the human voice-production system is organized in such a way that reductions in pitch involve physiological processes which tend to slow down the speed at which we speak.* (This, and the above quote, from *Our Masters' Voices: Language and Body Language of Politics*, by Max Atkinson, page 113.)

When we compare the before-and-after videos, of Mrs. Thatcher, we note that she speaks more slowly post-voice instruction.

Credits:

Video clip of Margaret Thatcher's before-and-after voice pitch, online courtesy BBC.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Margaret-Thatcher-Voice-Before-and-After-Lessons>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Margaret-Thatcher-Voice-Before-and-After-Lessons>