113 學年度新竹縣英語朗讀比賽講稿

國中組

Junior High Level

新竹縣英語教育資源中心

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編號 1:

The Sound of the Silence

Yoshio couldn't wait any longer. He counted, "Three... two... one!" and opened the door. The sounds of the city filled the air around him. Tokyo was full of noises, like music! As he walked, his boots made a *squish-squash* sound in the puddles, and the rain made tiny *tap-tap-tap* noises on his umbrella. Yoshio laughed, and hearing his own giggles made him laugh even more. Suddenly, he heard a strange sound. It was high, then low, squeaky, and vibrating. It was amazing! He followed the sound and found a woman tuning her koto, a traditional Japanese instrument. Then, she began to play. The music was twinkling and magical, and it made Yoshio's ears tingle. When the song ended, Yoshio said, "Sensei, I love sounds, but I've never heard a sound like that before!" The koto player smiled and laughed softly, like the wind chime in his mother's garden.

"Do you have a favorite sound?" Yoshio asked her.

"The most beautiful sound," she said, "is ma—the sound of silence."

"Silence?" Yoshio asked. But the koto player only smiled again and went back to playing. Yoshio bowed and left for school, wondering,

Where can I find silence?

On his way to school, he listened carefully. He could hear his boots hitting the pavement, *thwack-thwack*. At school, there was always noise—children talking, chairs moving, and pencils scratching paper. At recess, he

went to the bamboo grove at the edge of the playground. It was the quietest place he knew. But even there, the wind made the bamboo stalks knock together with a *takeh-takeh-takeh* sound. The leaves whispered *swish-swish* as the wind blew through them. It was beautiful, but it wasn't silence.

After school, Yoshio walked home, listening hard. He heard buses honking, the *whoosh* of bullet trains, and the *beep-beep-beep* of traffic lights. But there was no silence. At dinner, chopsticks clicked, and everyone made noises as they ate. In the bath, even his toes splashed in the water, and drops of water dripped off his nose with a soft *drip-drip-drip*. Yoshio thought, *Silence isn't here either.*

That night, Yoshio stayed up late, trying to find silence while his family slept. But his eyes became heavy, and soon he fell asleep.
The next morning, Yoshio woke to the sound of the neighbor's dog barking. "Oh no!" he said. "I missed silence again!"

He left for school early. The streets were quiet. As he opened the school gate, it creaked softly. Inside, the building was empty. Yoshio changed into his indoor shoes and listened to the *shuffle-shuffle* sound they made on the shiny floor. He sat at his desk, opened a book, and started to read. Slowly, he forgot about everything around him. Then, suddenly, he heard it. No footsteps. No talking. No buses or bamboo. Not even his own breath. Everything felt still and calm. It was silence.

In that moment, Yoshio felt peaceful, like sitting in a quiet garden after snow or lying under the warm sun. He realized something amazing: silence was always there. It was in the spaces between the sounds—between the *thump-thump* of his boots, in the pause after the wind stopped

blowing, after the family meal, when the bathwater settled, and before the koto music started or after it ended.

Silence wasn't loud or obvious, but it was everywhere. Yoshio smiled as he finally understood what the koto player had meant.
Ma—silence—was always with him. He just had to listen carefully to find it.

編號 2:

Why the Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves in Winter

One day, a long, long time ago, it was very cold; winter was coming. And all the birds flew away to the warm south, to wait for the spring. But one little bird had a broken wing and could not fly. He did not know what to do. He looked all round, to see if there was any place where he could keep warm. And he saw the trees of the great forest.

"Perhaps the trees will keep me warm through the winter," he said. So, he went to the edge of the forest, hopping and fluttering with his broken wing. The first tree he came to was a slim silver birch.
"Beautiful birch-tree," he said, "will you let me live in your warm branches until the springtime comes?"

"Dear me!" said the birch-tree, "what a thing to ask! I have to take care of my own leaves through the winter; that is enough for me. Go away."

The little bird hopped and fluttered with his broken wing until he came to the next tree. It was a great, big oak-tree.

"O big oak-tree," said the little bird, "will you let me live in your warm branches until the springtime comes?"
"Dear me," said the oak-tree, "what a thing to ask! If you stay in my branches all winter you will be eating my acorns. Go away."

So, the little bird hopped and fluttered with his broken wing till he came to the willow-tree by the edge of the brook.

“O beautiful willow-tree,” said the little bird, “will you let me live in your warm branches until the springtime comes?”

“No, indeed,” said the willow-tree; “I never speak to strangers. Go away.” The poor little bird did not know where to go; but he hopped and fluttered along with his broken wing. Presently the spruce-tree saw him, and said, “Where are you going, little bird?”

“I do not know,” said the bird; “the trees will not let me live with them, and my wing is broken so that I cannot fly.”

“You may live on one of my branches,” said the spruce; “here is the warmest one of all.”

“But may I stay all winter?”

“Yes,” said the spruce; “I shall like to have you.”

The pine-tree stood beside the spruce, and when he saw the little bird hopping and fluttering with his broken wing, he said, “My branches are not very warm, but I can keep the wind off because I am big and strong.”

So, the little bird fluttered up into the warm branch of the spruce, and the pine-tree kept the wind off his house; then the juniper-tree saw what was going on, and said that she would give the little bird his dinner all the winter, from her branches. Juniper berries are very good for little birds.

The little bird was very comfortable in his warm nest sheltered from the wind, with juniper berries to eat.

The trees at the edge of the forest remarked upon it to each other:
“I wouldn’t take care of a strange bird,” said the birch.
“I wouldn’t risk my acorns,” said the oak.
“I would not speak to strangers,” said the willow. And the three trees stood up very tall and proud.

That night the North Wind came to the woods to play. He puffed at the leaves with his icy breath, and every leaf he touched fell to the ground. He wanted to touch every leaf in the forest, for he loved to see the trees bare.

“May I touch every leaf?” he said to his father, the Frost King.
“No,” said the Frost King, “the trees which were kind to the bird with the broken wing may keep their leaves.”

So North Wind had to leave them alone, and the spruce, the pine, and the juniper-tree kept their leaves through all the winter. And they have done so ever since.

From: https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/

編號 3:

Tom Thumb

Once upon a time, there was a poor man and woman who longed for a child. One evening, as they sat on their porch and saw a falling star, they wished for a baby, no matter how small. To their amazement, seven months later, they had a child no bigger than a thumb. They named him Tom Thumb and loved him deeply.

Though Tom stayed tiny, he was clever, quick, and determined to help his parents. One day, he begged his father to let him guide their horse to the field. "I can sit in the horse's ear and give directions," he said. His father, trusting his son's wit, agreed. While Tom rode in the horse's ear, two strangers spotted him and were astonished by his size. They offered to buy Tom, promising the father a great sum of money. At first, the father refused, but Tom whispered, "Father, take the money. You and Mother will have a better life, and I promise to find my way back to you." Reluctantly, the father agreed, and the strangers took Tom.

On their journey, Tom escaped when the men stopped for lunch. He climbed down from their hat and hid in a mouse-hole, calling out to them mockingly, "Go on without me!" Frustrated, the men left. Free again, Tom wandered through the woods and came across robbers plotting to break into a pastor's house. Using his size as an advantage, Tom offered to help, saying, "I'm so small I can sneak in and hand things out to you." The robbers agreed and let him enter.

Inside the house, instead of stealing, Tom created a ruckus, shouting loudly and waking the maids. The frightened robbers fled, leaving Tom safe. Exhausted, he found a pile of hay to sleep in, but the next morning, he was swallowed by a cow grazing nearby. Trapped in the cow's stomach, Tom cried for help. The pastor, hearing the strange voice, believed the cow was cursed and killed it. The cow's stomach, with Tom inside, was thrown into a pile of trash.

Before Tom could crawl out, a hungry wolf came by and swallowed the stomach whole. Though frightened, Tom quickly devised a plan. From inside the wolf, he promised to guide it to a house filled with delicious food—his parents' home. The wolf followed Tom's directions and entered the house's kitchen. The noise woke Tom's father, who grabbed an axe. Just before he killed the wolf, Tom shouted from inside, "Father, I'm in here! Be careful!"

Tom's father killed the wolf and carefully cut it open, freeing his son. Overjoyed to be reunited, his parents promised never to sell him again, no matter the offer. From that day forward, they lived happily ever after, cherishing their clever, thumb-sized son.

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編號 4:

The Girl Who Dreamed of Baseball

Marcenia Lyle loved baseball more than anything. She adored the feel of the dusty field, the sting of a ball slamming into her glove, and the thrill of tagging out runners. She dreamed of playing professionally, even though girls weren't supposed to have such ambitions.

At home, her love of baseball puzzled her parents. "I wish I knew why you liked baseball so much," Mama said one evening as she washed dirt from Marcenia's hair. "Playing with dolls is fun too."
"Not as much fun as baseball," Marcenia replied.

Her father, Papa, also didn't understand. "What did you learn in school today?" he asked.

"Some history," Marcenia said, then quickly shared details of her team's victory after school. Her face lit up as she recounted how they'd won the game.

Papa shook his head. "And you ripped another dress," he said. He kissed her cheek and left her to dream of baseball beneath the moonlight.

In the kitchen, she overheard her parents' conversation. "She thinks she'll be a ballplayer," Papa said. "Girls don't grow up to do that. She'll end up a teacher, nurse, or maid."

“I just want her to be happy,” Mama said softly.

Clutching her pillow, Marcenia made a promise to herself. “I’ll show them,” she whispered. “Tomorrow, I’m going to score three runs and hit a home run.”

The next day, the field buzzed with excitement. A man sat in the bleachers, watching the game. Harold whispered to Marcenia, “That’s Gabby Street! He’s running a baseball camp this summer.”

Marcenia’s heart leapt. Gabby Street, the manager of the St. Louis Cardinals, was a legend. “What’s the camp for?” she asked.
“He’s looking for kids to train,” Harold said. “And it’s free!”
“All you need is a glove and cleats,” Clarence added.

Marcenia couldn’t wait to prove herself. She played her heart out, scoring three runs and hitting a home run. After the game, Mr. Street spoke to the players.

“I’ve seen some good ball today,” he said. “Who wants to join my camp?”

Every hand shot up, including Marcenia’s. Mr. Street shook each hand, but when he got to Marcenia, he hesitated. “You’ve got a good arm, little miss, and you run fast. But I don’t take girls in my camp.”

The words stung, but Marcenia didn’t give up. Day after day, she played with determination, asking Mr. Street to reconsider. Day after day, he refused.

Then, during a tied game, Marcenia decided to take a bold chance. Standing on third base, she waited for the pitcher to throw the ball. At the perfect moment, she launched into motion, sprinting for home. The catcher caught the ball and ran toward her, but Marcenia doubled back toward third, then turned and bolted for home again. Sliding low, she reached the plate just as the ball sailed past her. Safe!

Her teammates cheered as Marcenia faced Mr. Street. “I’m a baseball player,” she said. “I want to learn to play this game as well as I can. May I come to your camp?”

Mr. Street smiled. “If you can steal home, you can do anything,” he said. “You can come—as long as you have your own equipment.”
Overjoyed, Marcenia ran home to tell her parents. But Papa was unmoved. “You’ll need cleats, and we can’t afford them,” he said.

Marcenia’s heart sank. That night, she gazed at the bright moon, round like a baseball, and wondered if her dream was out of reach.
The next day, she told Mr. Street she couldn’t come to camp. “I don’t have cleats,” she said quietly.

Mr. Street nodded but later handed her a pair of cleats. “You’re a good ballplayer,” he said.

When Papa saw her wearing the scuffed shoes, he sighed. “We can’t give them back now,” he said with a smile. “I’ll take you to that camp.”

Marcenia threw her arms around him, her heart bursting with joy. She was finally on her way to becoming a real baseball player.

This isn’t just a story—it’s history. Marcenia Lyle grew up to be Toni Stone, the first woman to play professional baseball. Her determination reminds us that no dream is too big to chase.

編號 5:

The Frog Prince

One summer evening, a young princess was playing in the park with her favorite golden ball, tossing it high into the air. But one throw sent the ball into a nearby lake with a loud splash. Devastated, the princess wept, fearing how upset her father would be since the ball was a precious gift from him. “I’d give anything to get it back!” she cried.

Hearing her distress, a frog emerged from the water and offered to retrieve the ball. “I’ll help you,” he said, “but in return, you must let me live with you, eat from your plate, and sleep in your bed.” Though repulsed by the idea, the princess thought the frog couldn’t possibly follow through. “Of course, I promise,” she said, and the frog dove into the lake. He soon returned with her golden ball, rolling it toward her. Overjoyed, the princess grabbed the ball and ran back to the castle, ignoring the frog’s calls to take him with her.

The next day, during dinner with her family, there was a gentle knock at the door. To her shock, it was the frog. She slammed the door and returned to the table, visibly upset. When her father asked what was wrong, she reluctantly confessed what had happened at the lake and the promise she had made. “A princess must never break her promises,” the king said sternly. “Let him in.”

The princess obeyed, and the frog joined them at the table, making unpleasant tapping and splashing sounds as he moved. He asked to sit on a chair, then demanded to eat from her golden plate. Disgusted but bound by her promise, the princess complied. After dinner, the frog declared he was tired and asked to sleep in her bed. Horrified, she protested, but her father insisted she honor her word. The princess carried the frog to her chamber and placed him on a pillow next to hers. The next morning, she woke to find him gone and sighed with relief, thinking it was all over.

That evening, the frog returned, knocking gently on her door again. Begrudgingly, she let him in, repeating the routine of dining together and sharing her bed. The same thing happened the third night, but this time, the princess fell asleep plotting ways to get rid of him. When she woke the next morning, the frog was gone—but in his place stood a handsome prince with kind, brown eyes.

The prince explained that he had been cursed by a spiteful fairy and transformed into a frog. The spell could only be broken by a princess who allowed him to live with her, eat from her plate, and sleep in her bed. “Thanks to your kindness, the curse is lifted,” he said gratefully. “Now, I ask for your hand in marriage. Will you join me in my father’s kingdom?”

Moved by his story and newfound charm, the princess agreed. Her father gave her a fine horse, and she and the prince rode together to his castle, where they married and lived happily ever after.

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編號 6:

Jack and The Beanstalk

Once upon a time there lived a poor widow and her son Jack. One day, Jack's mother told him to sell their only cow. Jack went to the market and on the way, he met a man who wanted to buy his cow. Jack asked, "What will you give me in return for my cow?" The man answered, "I will give you five magic beans!" Jack took the magic beans and gave the man the cow. But when he reached home, Jack's mother was very angry. She said, "You fool! He took away your cow and gave you some beans!" She threw the beans out of the window. Jack was very sad and went to sleep without dinner.

The next day, when Jack woke up in the morning and looked out of the window, he saw that a huge beanstalk had grown from his magic beans! He climbed up the beanstalk and reached a kingdom in the sky. There lived a giant and his wife. Jack went inside the house and found the giant's wife in the kitchen. Jack said, "Could you please give me something to eat? I am so hungry!" The kind wife gave him bread and some milk.

While he was eating, the giant came home. The giant was very big and looked very fearsome. Jack was terrified and went and hid inside. The giant cried, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be

he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" So, the giant ate his food and then went to his room. He took out his sacks of gold coins, counted them and kept them aside. Then he went to sleep. In the night, Jack crept out of his hiding place, took one sack of gold coins and climbed down the beanstalk. At home, he gave the coins to his mother. His mother was very happy and they lived well for some time.

Jack climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's house again. Once again, Jack asked the giant's wife for food, but while he was eating the giant returned. Jack leapt up in fright and went and hid under the bed. The giant cried, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" The giant ate his food and went to his room. There, he took out a hen. He shouted, "Lay!" and the hen laid a golden egg. When the giant fell asleep, Jack took the hen and climbed down the beanstalk. Jack's mother was very happy with him.

After some days, Jack once again climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's castle. For the third time, Jack met the giant's wife and asked for some food. Once again, the giant's wife gave him bread and milk. But while Jack was eating, the giant came home.

“Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I’ll grind his bones to make my bread!” cried the giant.

“Don’t be silly! There is no boy in here!” said his wife. The giant had a magical harp that could play beautiful songs. While the giant slept, Jack took the harp and was about to leave. Suddenly, the magic harp cried, “Help master! A boy is stealing me!” The giant woke up and saw Jack with the harp. Furious, he ran after Jack. But Jack was too fast for him. He ran down the beanstalk and reached home. The giant followed him down. Jack quickly ran inside his house and fetched an axe. He began to chop the beanstalk. The giant fell and died. Jack and his mother were now very rich and they lived happily ever after.

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