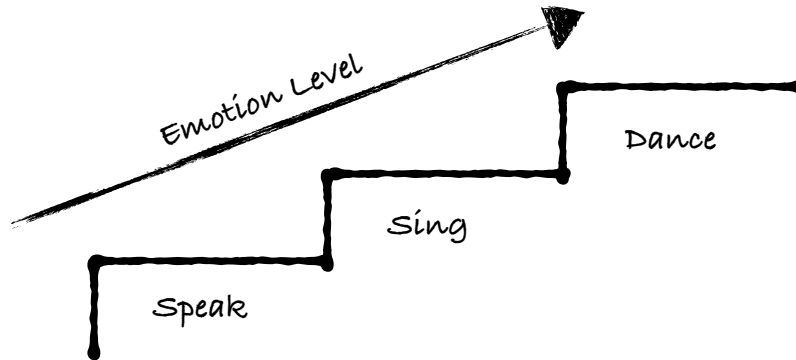


EXPLORE: Musical Theatre Emotional Staircase

- In the last lesson, we explored how music has this amazing way of conveying feelings. Today we're going to explore this a little further.
- In musicals there is an "emotional staircase" that exists. It has 3 steps, and characters move up the steps as their emotion heightens.
- Draw the following on the board and explain each step in detail:



Step 1: Speak*

Just as in a regular play (or TV show or movie), characters have wants and intentions and they use dialogue and speech as a way to convey those wants.

Step 2: Sing

In a musical, characters move up the stairs to the next step, singing, when speaking isn't enough. Characters in a musical "break into song" because something happens that heightens the dramatic moment, and they are in a place of *more*: *more* intensity, *more* action, *more* wants, *more* needs. In some cases there are *more* obstacles working against them, *more* problems to solve, *more* resistance to overcome. (You can give examples from any of their favorite Disney movies.)

Step 3: Dance

This third step is when words fail the characters completely, and they must dance. The wordless, physical explosion of dance is a final attempt to communicate using every fiber of one's body. It's not enough to talk about something; it's not enough to sing about it. Now the character must try to embody the thing itself. (i.e. The scene where Beauty and the Beast dance together.)

* The above descriptions are adapted from Tracey Moore's *Acting the Song: Performance Skills for the Musical Theatre*.