

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SPEECHES

The **AVERAGE** speech (**Grade C**) should meet the following criteria:

1. Conform to the kind of speech assigned (informative, persuasive, etc.).
2. Be ready for presentation on the assigned date.
3. Conform to the time limit.
4. Fulfill any special requirements of the assignment - such as preparing a full-sentence outline, requirements for outside sources, presentation aids, etc.
5. Have a clear specific purpose and central idea (thesis).
6. Have an identifiable attention-getting introduction, a coherently organized body, and an effective conclusion.
7. Show reasonable directness and competence in delivery.
8. Be free of serious errors in grammar, pronunciation and language usage.

The **ABOVE AVERAGE** speech (**Grade B**) should meet the preceding criteria **AND**:

1. Deal with a rigorous topic appropriate to the audience.
2. Fulfill all major functions of a speech introduction and conclusion.
3. Display clear organization of main points and supporting evidence.
4. Support main points with evidence that meets the tests of accuracy, relevance, objectivity and sufficiency.
5. Exhibit proficient use of connectives - transitions, internal previews, internal summaries and signposts.
6. Present sources cited within the speech.
7. Include the appropriate references in proper format.
8. Be delivered skillfully in an extemporaneous manner- with 80% or better sustained eye contact, effective hand gestures and body movement, voice variation, etc. -- so as not to distract attention from the speaker's message.

The **SUPERIOR** speech (Grade A) should meet all the preceding criteria AND:

1. Constitute a genuine contribution by the speaker to the knowledge or benefits of the audience.
2. Display a mastery of audience analysis as discussed in class and the text.
3. Demonstrate the skills and efforts appropriate to sustain positive interest, feeling and/or commitment among the audience.
4. Contain elements of vividness and special interest in the use of language. (The speech must employ the effective use of stylistic devices, such as alliteration, repetition, parallelism.)
5. Be delivered in a fluent, polished, extemporaneous manner – with warmth, enthusiasm, and style -- that strengthens the impact of the speaker's message.

The **BELOW AVERAGE** speech (**Grade D or F**) is deficient in the criteria required for the C speech.

In addition:

A "D" speech has any one of the following serious problems:

1. The speaker reads word-for-word a significant portion of the speech, as opposed to maintaining almost continuous eye contact. (It is, of course, perfectly appropriate to read briefly from your notes to be certain you are quoting statistics or testimony accurately.)
2. The delivery is mechanical, rather than expressive and engaging.
3. The topic area fails to meet the specifications of the assignment; i.e., an informative speech that seeks to reinforce attitudes or a persuasive speech that is primarily informative.
4. No term papers “on legs.”

An "F" speech has any of the following characteristics:

1. The speech is plagiarized. (See syllabus for a definition of plagiarism.)
2. The speech is apparently delivered without advance preparation.