



## Evaluating Public Speakers for Performance

*Try grouping your thoughts into three categories: What did I see, hear and feel?  
Then, evaluate by giving specific observations and actionable recommendations.*

### 1: What did I see?

- Notice their stage presence. Did they breathe from the belly? What was their comfort level? Did they smile and make eye contact?
- Did the speaker overly rely on their notes or did they use them as helpful guides?
- Did they memorize the introduction and conclusion?
- Did their gestures/body language enhance the presentation? How?

### 2: What did I hear?

#### Introduction/ Organization/Conclusion

- Did the introduction get your attention? Was it creative? Interesting? Shocking?
- Did the speaker preview the thesis of the speech?
- Was the body of the speech clearly organized; did it build up to a point?
- Did the conclusion signal that the end of the speech was coming?

#### Delivery

- Clarity: Did the speaker enunciate so that you could understand what they were saying?
- Volume: Was the volume appropriate to the speaking conditions (size of space, size of audience, microphone or not)?
- Pitch: Did the speaker speak from the "powerhouse" (diaphragmatic belly breathing) vs. from the chest/throat?
- Vocal variety: Did the speaker vary their rate and pitch in order to avoid a monotone presentation?
- Rate: Was the speech appropriately paced and use pauses effectively?
- Fillers: Did the speaker "fill" in pauses with filler sounds like "um" "so" "uhhhh."

### 3: What did I feel?

- Did the speaker connect with the audience? Did you feel as if you mattered, as if the speaker needed you to witness that speech?
- Did the speech accomplish its purpose, given the assignment?
  - For a speech of introduction: do I know the speaker better now?
  - For an informative speech, did I learn new information?
  - For a persuasive speech, will I think about the speech topic differently now, as a result of the speech?

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#### The Evaluator's Role:

When evaluating a public speaker, it is important to see yourself as a partner in the process, rather than a critic or a judge. Your thoughtful and candid feedback can help the speaker refine their presentation and public speaking skills.

Remember that speakers feel vulnerable at the end of the speech, so beginning and ending your evaluation on a positive note, using “the sandwich” pattern of giving feedback (commend, recommend, commend) helps the speaker hear what they did well and opens them up to recommendations for improvement.

Make sure that your commendations are authentic and specific. You may think “your speech was awesome” will encourage the speaker, but general statements like that are not specific enough for the speaker to trust you, and the speaker hasn't been given any actionable skill to practice next time.

Strive to have the speaker leaving the stage feeling visible, recognized and motivated to improve.

