
PUBLIC SPEAKING

5-10 days

PRESENTING A MESSAGE IN PERSON

OVERVIEW

Public speaking is crucial to civic engagement. Public speaking is not simply speaking to large groups. Public speaking, as taught in this course, is about giving an oral version of a position paper—to one person, to a small group, or to an audience of hundreds. That is, it is a way of concisely and efficiently presenting a nuanced argument. We recommend having students create a backbone speech from which they can build and which they practice, aloud, at least three times with some form of feedback.

Students should also practice answering questions about their topic. This practice gives students greater comfort with their issue and their position in the spotlight. In addition, it gives other students in the class the opportunity to learn about the other issues being discussed.

Forms to facilitate peer feedback and individual reflection are provided.

COLORADO CIVICS STANDARDS ADDRESSED: 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

SAMPLE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

- It is often said that people fear speaking in public more than they fear dying. Why do you think people fear public speaking?
- What is the logistical difference between speaking to a group in a classroom and making the same argument to one person? What would you do differently in the two situations?
- Who do you like to hear speak or lecture? Why? What do they do well? What could they improve upon?
- What are your strengths as a public speaker? What are your challenges?
- What are the best ways to respond to a question if you don't know the answer?

VOCABULARY

Debate: Formal discussion between people holding opposing views on a proposition.

Elevator speech: Speech brief enough to be presented while riding in an elevator. The term originated in the early days of Internet businesses, when entrepreneurs tried to “pitch” their businesses in short encounters with potential investors.

Persuasion: The act or process of convincing another person to support your point of view.

Public speaking: Process of speaking to others in a public forum and in a structured and

deliberate manner; the purpose of public speaking can be to inform, entertain, or persuade the listeners.

RESOURCES

American Rhetoric Online Speech Bank, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbank.htm>

Best Film Speeches and Monologues, <http://www.filmsite.org/bestspeeches.html>

The Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.,

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/contents.htm>

Tools for Public Speaking, http://www.ohio4h.org/product/files/4H_971AG.pdf

Using the Internet to Support Literacy: Speaking,

<http://www.sunlink.ucf.edu/presentations/fetc2004/speaking.html>

Wake Forest University Political Speeches,

<http://www.wfu.edu/~louden/Political%20Communication/Class%20Information/SPEECHES.html>

Means – Students participate in role-playing sessions that simulate interaction with community members about their initiatives. The class splits into two groups: one group, for half the class period, simulates a public debate and the other group role plays a one-on-one conversation with a politician. Local actors or teachers can be asked to come in and “play” the other person.

Step 5 – Polishing Speeches

Goals – Students develop a comfort level speaking and answering questions in public.

Means – Students polish their speeches and responses based on the previous day’s activities in front of new students or adults. Students prepare to meet with other groups and the politician they contacted.

Step 6 – Elevator Speech

Goals – Students learn to state their position succinctly and eloquently.

Means – Students, in their groups, create an elevator speech for their issue. An elevator speech is a very brief speech—brief enough to be presented in the time it takes for two people to reach their destination on an elevator. Because the elevator speech is only about 30 seconds long, students must hone their longer speeches to include only key points, presented in powerful language.

Assignment – Students make their presentations to the public officials they contacted.

Notes:

Names:

**PUBLIC SPEAKING 101: AKA ANOTHER WAY
OF GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD**

Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____
Topic: _____

Why: We are briefly studying (well, doing) public speaking in this class to help you reach a large number of people when you interact with them in person. Public speaking forces you to clarify your thoughts and to have a solid background of information you can use to bring people to your cause. It’s also important to practice before you speak with policy makers or to an event crowd.

What: Your group will prepare a three-minute speech that says *why you chose your issue, how you want to solve your problem, and why your solution will work*. Finalize the speech and rehearse it during class today—everyone should be up speaking and critiquing.

Tips for Public Speaking:

- Try not to fidget.
- Speak loudly. Direct your voice to the back of the room.
- Look around, and make eye contact—don’t look down at your notes.
- Take a couple of seconds before you start just to breathe and relax yourself.
- Bring a note card with key points to make, but don’t just read what you have to say.
- Speak TO your audience, not at them.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Say what you mean, and mean what you say.
- Don’t tell everything you know. Having more knowledge will make you confident and help you answer questions well.
- If you don’t know an answer to a question, say “I don’t know,” and get the person’s contact information so that you can find out the answer and send it to them.
- Have fun. (Yes, it’s possible.)

Names:

LISTENER PUBLIC SPEAKING CRITIQUE

Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____
Topic: _____

One thing you did especially well was:

One thing you should work on is:

Other notes/comments:

Presentation (Did student fidget? Did student speak clearly and loudly? Did student make eye contact? Did student refrain from simply reading remarks?):

Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

Understanding of subject matter (Did the speaker know his/her stuff?):

Lowest 1 3 6 9 12 15 Highest

Ability to handle questions:

Lowest 1 2 3 4 5 Highest

Overall:

Lowest 1 5 10 Highest

Total Score = _____

Names:

PUBLIC SPEAKING SELF-CRITIQUE

Teacher: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____
Topic: _____

One thing I did especially well was:

One thing I should work on is:

What I need to do before I will feel comfortable speaking in front of an “event” crowd about my topic:

Other notes/reflections: