Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario

Writing Program Public Speaking Grading Rubric

A speech is a complex performance that cannot be reduced to a mathematical formula: there is no single recipe for a great speech and there is no set deduction for errors. The impact of any aspect of the performance on the speech's final mark is a matter of degree. A small error in a given area may lead to a negligible deduction whereas a major or persistent error in that same area may lower the speech's mark several grade ranges.

Grade Ranges

Below 50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100
Grades in this range identify speeches with problems sufficiently severe and/or pervasive that they significantly (or entirely) compromise the speech's ability to communicate. Grades in this range generally indicate ONE or more of the following characteristics: * Plagiarism. * Failure to follow the assigned topic. (This includes, but is not limited to, failure to remain in the allotted time slot.) * Severe persistent major problems. * A severe global deficiency (failure to adapt to the audience, inconsistency in purpose, highly inappropriate performance decision, etc.).	Grades in this range identify speeches that, while generally acceptable, have AT LEAST ONE of the following characteristics: * A significant global deficiency (failure to adapt to the audience, inconsistency in purpose, highly inappropriate performance decision, etc.). * Several major problems (see list below). * Numerous persistent minor problems.	Grades in this range tend to be fairly common in Speech 2001. These grades identify a generally good performance on the criteria listed below with AT LEAST ONE of the following characteristics: * Minor problems recurring throughout the speech or in more than one category. * Several major problems compensated for by other strong attributes.	These grades may be given to speeches that contain some minor problems, or even a very small number (one or two) of major problems, providing that other outstanding attributes compensate for them.	More common than 90+ but still relatively rare, speeches in this range demonstrate the same features as those in the upper range (clear purpose, unity of performance and material, originality of content and delivery), but to a slightly lesser degree or with a few minor problems.	Grades in this range are very rare, and identify speeches that show considerable originality and unusual skill. These grades indicate that all aspects of the performance are excellent and contribute to the accomplishment of the speech's central purpose. In short, we could imagine a different speech, but not a better one.

Please note that these descriptions are guidelines only, and do not cover all situations.

Evaluation Criteria: Category Example(s) of a major problem

Category	Example(s) of a major problem
Vocal Delivery	*Speaking too quickly *Persistent up talking, especially in a serious speech
Gestures and Body Language	*A persistent and distracting tic, such as playing with an article of clothing *Movements that are out of synch with the vocal delivery, or that are inappropriate to the content and tone of the speech
Content	*Content and language that are inappropriate to the audience, including sexist, racist or other offensive content
Structure	*Absence of an important structural element of a speech, such as a preview statement, an introduction or a conclusion *A disorganized or otherwise confusing structure
A/V	*A/V aids that distract from rather than support the performance of the speaker *A/V aids that are confusing, insufficiently explained or otherwise difficult to understand

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of categories and problems. Students may be evaluated on many other aspects of their performances.   **August 2010**