

# "The Issues Speech – Self-Assessment Paper"

Goals: \*\* To find an issue or two you wish to work on in your public speaking.

\*\* To become more aware of your strengths as a speaker.

\*\* To take control of your own learning by becoming your own best critic.

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For this assignment, you will need to write a short paper that describes two strengths of your speaking performance in "The Issues Speech" and two features of your speaking that you want to work on and improve in your next speech performance.

## Method:

- Have a friend in class record a video of your speech (including sound) on your cell phone (or some other device you use to make videos).
  - Arrange this with a classmate in advance of the day you speak so you can be sure your friend can operate your recording device
  - Your friend should sit a good spot where he/she can get a decent video and close enough to the speaker to get decent audio and so the speaker fills the screen from the waist up.
- After class when you are at home, watch your speech video at least once before doing any evaluation or making any judgments.
  - Remember that, when watching yourself speak for the first time, you are likely to "over-react." That is, you will have a tendency to respond to features of your speaking (like the sound of your voice) that you aren't normally able to experience and you may respond in ways that the rest of us don't. You may notice things that seem like a big deal to you but that the average class member hardly noticed at all (e.g. "I'm stumbling over my words a lot."). Watching your speech several times before starting your paper will help you be a more objective (and probably kinder) critic.

## Analysis

- Once you are ready to begin your self-assessment paper, identify 2 features or sections of the speech that you believe reflect the speech at its best. This could be due to delivery or content. Describe and explain each feature indicating at what point in the speech it can be seen ("In the attention material I told a story...", or "In point I.B. I said..."). For example, "In my second main point I integrate information from my local newspaper. I believe this is a strong aspect of the speech because it is important to ...." or, "In my first main point I made really nice use of my visual aid to make the statistics clear. This helped the audience ...."
- Next identify 2 features or moments that you believe reflect weak points of the speech. (One reason you might notice a weakness is because something was NOT present.) Describe and explain those features and explain what you should have done. For example, "Here is the moment when I should have had an oral citation for credibility but did not. This is a weakness because.... I should have said something like "... " or "While I explained the idea that the problem of unemployment is serious, It was likely not clear enough to the audience. What I should have done is use a statistic or a quotation to make that point. It is important to use multiple types of concrete support because..."

### **Features to consider discussing as strengths or weaknesses in your self-assessment**

- Effectiveness of your attention material
- Presence of a link to your audience in the Motivation step
- Quality/strength of your Thesis
- Presence of a clear Overview.
- Clear main points stated as assertions
- Good, clear organizational pattern
- Quality and variety of support material
- Substantive Underview
- Effective use of transitions and internal summaries.
- Quality of eye contact with the audience
- Distracting movements (foot shuffling, hand movements, etc.)
- Conversational speaking vs a “reading sound” in the delivery.
- Volume and dynamism/energy

**Writing the Paper** Now you are ready to write your paper: (about 3+ double-spaced pages)

- Write a short paragraph introducing the topic of the paper and explaining what your speech was attempting to accomplish.
- Write a solid, well-developed and supported paragraph (or two) for each of the 4 features of the speech (two strengths and two weaknesses). Be sure that you explain in each paragraph, 2 things (with supporting material in the form of quotes or explanations): 1) what the feature is that you are discussing and 2) either why it is a good thing to do in speeches OR what you should have done (or want to do in the future) to improve the quality of your speaking.
- Conclude with a paragraph indicating how you will keep up the strengths and how you will attempt of reduce the weaknesses in future speeches.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on the quality of your writing (good, grammatical sentences, strong paragraph unity and topic sentences), how accurately you use the concepts we have studied in discussing your strengths and weaknesses and the degree to which your analysis seems to speak to actual strengths and weaknesses. [I will not second guess your decisions about what strengths or weakness to discuss.] This grade will factor into the "Library and Bibliography" portion of your course grade.

**Due: The class period after you speak.**