

# Deliver a Speech





## Course Overview

This course focuses on developing a point of view and communicating it clearly to an audience. It shows how to build the skills needed to engage, persuade, or move an audience.

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Item R2 Rev. 04/2020

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# Introduction

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When presenting a speech, there are many aspects of how you deliver your speech that you must consider. From the tone of your voice to the movement of your body, a vast amount of information can be conveyed by your appearance, manner, and your voice. In public speaking, your body and voice can be effective tools for adding emphasis and clarity to your words.

Your voice and the way you use gestures are two of your most powerful instruments for convincing an audience of your sincerity, earnestness, and enthusiasm.

In this course, you will learn the effective use of your voice and body to express emotion and convey your point of view. You will begin to recognize different forms of body language and identify gestures that show confidence when speaking in public. You will also learn how to demonstrate awareness of unintentional movement and use gestures to strengthen and enhance your message. As you develop awareness of your body language, you will also begin to understand the power of silence and how your voice can draw an audience into your narrative.

# Your Assignment

Your assignment is to deliver a 5-to 7-minute speech of your own to apply what you have learned.

**Overview:** Prepare a 5-7 minute speech on a topic that lends itself to expression through voice and movement. Practice in front of the mirror or a friend and get feedback, in person or via video. Make adjustments based on the feedback.

**Speech Options:** You can present to a group of your choice.

You may choose to give your speech to a Rotary, Rotaract, or Toastmasters club, either as a guest or because you are a member. You may present to a group of colleagues at work, or to a group of peers.

**Online Speech Delivery Options:** Speeches delivered before a live audience are best, but there are times when finding a live audience isn't possible or practical. If you choose to deliver your speech online, there are a few steps you can take to make it a positive and successful experience.

Follow all guidelines for speech delivery and be sure your recording is easy to hear and at a distance far enough to show your body language.

- ▶ Deliver your speech live instead of posting a recording if possible.
- ▶ Invite an evaluator to view your speech.
- ▶ Encourage a select group of trusted friends or Rotary club members to view your speech.
- ▶ Visitors to the website you use can leave feedback in the comments section if that is available or by contacting you privately via chat or other methods.
- ▶ Consider all feedback and then act on input that is helpful to you and disregard the rest.

**Evaluation:** Be sure to choose someone in your audience to provide feedback and evaluate you.

Throughout this course you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



**For all assignment details and requirements, review the Course Checklist on page 20.**



**Video:** Sign in to the Learning Center to watch a video that supports this project.



**Interactive Activity:** Sign in to the Learning Center to complete an interactive activity.



**Resource:** Sign in to the Learning Center to view this resource online.

# Skills Check

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.

Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

**5**  
EXEMPLARY
**4**  
EXCEL
**3**  
ACCOMPLISHED
**2**  
EMERGING
**1**  
DEVELOPING



Pre-course	Statement	Post-course
5 4 3 2 1	I recognize the importance of understanding body language.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I understand how my body language communicates my level of confidence when I speak.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am able to enhance my message with gestures.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I recognize the impact of vocal variety.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am able to effectively adjust pitch, tone, volume, and pace to emphasize different sections of a speech.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am aware of my personal vocal variety patterns.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I know how to adjust my vocal patterns to meet the needs of an audience and improve the quality of a speech.	5 4 3 2 1

# Competencies



**The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this course.**

- ▶ Understand how body language expresses emotion and attitude.
- ▶ Recognize the body language used when speaking publicly.
- ▶ Identify gestures that show confidence when speaking in public.
- ▶ Use gestures to enhance speech content.
- ▶ Demonstrate awareness of unintentional movement.
- ▶ Recognize the impact of vocal variety on audience members' reception of a presentation.
- ▶ Effectively adjust pitch, tone, volume, and pace to emphasize different sections of a speech.
- ▶ Demonstrate knowledge of personal vocal patterns and adjust them to meet the needs of audience members and improve the quality of a speech.

# Body Language



Body language is the nonverbal expression of emotions, feelings, and ideas. Your posture, movement, position, gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions all contribute to the message you send when you speak. Your body language can enhance your communication or undermine your message.

## Posture, Stance, Position, and Movement

When you present a speech, effective body language is an essential tool in building credibility and connecting with your listeners. Appropriate gestures focus your audience on you and your message.

### Posture

How you carry yourself when you speak communicates a strong visual message to an audience. Your posture reflects your attitude and your level of confidence. Without making any changes to your speech content, you can communicate that you are alert and in command of yourself and the speaking situation. Proper posture helps you breathe well and effectively project your voice. Proper posture includes head held high with chin up slightly, back straight, shoulders squared, chest out, and stomach in.

### Stance

When standing, your stance is the way you position your body. The ideal stance to demonstrate confidence includes:

- ▶ Weight evenly distributed over your feet
- ▶ Knees straight but not locked, shoulders relaxed
- ▶ Feet pointing straight ahead, not quite shoulder-width apart
- ▶ Arms hanging naturally at your sides





## Position

Practice in front of a mirror, with a friend, or with a mentor. Your goal is to feel comfortable and relaxed. Adjust your position until you see the message you want to communicate reflected back to you in the mirror. The best position will always be what feels natural and comfortable.

## Movement

If you are physically able, movement adds energy and variety to your presentation and helps you appear confident. Changing your position or location by stepping out from behind the lectern during a speech is one visible action you can perform.

While constant motion, such as swaying or pacing, is a distraction that can detract from your message and annoy your audience, there are types of intentional movement that can be meaningful and support your presentation:

- ▶ Taking a step forward helps emphasize a point.
- ▶ Moving a few steps back creates a distance that may help your audience process information.
- ▶ Making a lateral movement can help emphasize a transition in your speech.
- ▶ Standing in front or to the side of the lectern makes you appear more open to the audience.
- ▶ Combining stillness with a verbal pause can add drama or intrigue.

# Gestures



A speaker's gestures can suggest very precise meaning to an audience. To be effective, a speaker's gestures must be purposeful—even when they are performed unconsciously. Unconscious movement is unintentional, often a habit or a natural expression of the speaker's personality. Whether the movement is intentional or unintentional, gestures must support a speaker's words, as well as the meaning behind the message.

There are four types of effective gestures.

## Descriptive Gestures

Descriptive gestures indicate position, location, or anything tactical. For instance, use your hands to specify a number of objects.

## Emphatic Gestures

Emphatic gestures underscore strong emotion such as earnestness and conviction. Placing your hand on your heart in many cultures communicates a powerful belief in your message.

## Suggestive Gestures

Suggestive gestures are symbols of thoughts and emotions. An open palm can suggest giving or receiving ideas or a tangible item.

## Prompting Gestures

Prompting gestures evoke responses from an audience. When asking for a show of hands to answer a question, raise your hand to encourage audience members to contribute feedback.

## Ineffective Gestures

Some unintentional gestures send the wrong message to an audience. You may inadvertently communicate anxiety, frustration, or other discomfort when you present by exhibiting any of the following gestures:

- ▶ Gripping the lectern
- ▶ Clutching an object such as a pen or notes
- ▶ Fidgeting with clothing or accessories
- ▶ Tapping your fingers
- ▶ Biting or licking your lips

## Eye Contact

Making effective eye contact means focusing on individual listeners and creating a connection. Recognize that some audience members may be less comfortable with eye contact than others. Be sensitive by briefly making eye contact before moving on to another person. Brief eye contact acknowledges the individual without making them uncomfortable.

As you deliver your speech:

- ▶ Make eye contact with audience members before you begin.
- ▶ Begin your speech by selecting one person and addressing him or her personally.
- ▶ Hold eye contact for three to five seconds, roughly the time required to complete a sentence or share one thought.
- ▶ Keep your eyes up and shift your gaze to another person.
- ▶ Move your eyes from one person to the next without following any set pattern.

## A Note for the Visually Impaired

Speakers with visual impairments may not be able to make eye contact with audience members. That does not mean they cannot engage an audience. When you present with a significant visual impairment, move your head instead of keeping it fixed in one direction. Your voice will carry to different parts of the room as you shift your position and engage audience members regardless of their location.

Arrive for your presentation early and orient yourself to the room. Locate the area where you will present, either the front of the room or the lectern. When it is your turn to make your speech, take the time you need to make sure you are properly positioned and lined up to face your audience.

## Facial Expressions



When used effectively, facial expressions can enhance your message. One of the biggest challenges for many speakers is relaxing their expression enough to communicate well when they are nervous. When anxiety is an issue, concentrate on what you can control. Practice facial expressions in front of a mirror or on video just like you would other forms of body language.

Smile as you approach the lectern. Use your expression to communicate surprise, demonstrate appreciation, or show disagreement during your speech. As with most components of a public speaking, practice will help you use your facial expressions to your greatest benefit.

## Too Much Body Language

A speaker who moves frantically around the stage is likely to catch audience member's attention but not necessarily in a positive way. Audience members may be trying to figure out what the speaker is doing, rather than listening to their message.

Intentional and purposeful movement and gestures support and enhance your presentation. Being conscious and aware of each movement will help you avoid agitated and unfocused gestures that can detract from your speech.

## Cultural Differences



Acceptable gestures can vary widely between cultures. An innocuous gesture in one culture can be inflammatory in another. Because of this, you must be aware of cultural differences when planning body language in your presentations. If you are presenting to a group with members from a culture or cultures that are unfamiliar to you, research common body language and its corresponding meaning in those cultures.

## Understanding Vocal Variety

Once you feel comfortable adjusting your movements to effectively use body language, it is time to consider another important component of delivering a successful speech. The best public speakers recognize when to raise or lower their voices, how to use silence to add impact, and the value of varying their pace as they present to an audience.

Vocal variety is more than sound or quality. It is made up of pitch, tone, volume, and pace. When you present a speech, effective use of vocal variety is essential to connect you with audience members and make every word impactful.

# Pitch, Tone, Volume, and Pace

## Pitch

The pitch of your voice is how high or low it sounds. Though every speaker has a range of pitches when they speak, some tend to default to a low, deep voice with a grating pitch while others tend toward a high voice with a gentle or piercing quality.

While there is no absolute correct pitch for public speaking, it can be helpful to extend your pitch. This is particularly important for individuals with a narrow range who may sound monotone. Monotone means the pitch of a voice is always the same. Other speakers have a wide range in pitch.

### Speak Aloud

Select any group of words to say aloud. You may choose to practice an upcoming speech, select a poem, or read the words on this screen.

### Start Comfortably

Read or say the words at your most comfortable pitch, but keep the pitch the same. This should sound like you are playing one note on a musical instrument.

### Change Pitch

After thirty seconds to a minute, change your pitch. You may choose a higher or lower pitch, whichever appeals to you. Read or say the same selection at this pitch for thirty seconds to a minute.

### Repeat

Do the exercise several times to move up and down your vocal range (all of the different pitches at which you are comfortable speaking).

### Broaden Range

Extend your range by completing this exercise and reaching higher and lower than you normally would. The broader your range, the easier it will be for you to vary your voice as you speak.

## **Tone**

Your tone is the emotion behind the sound of your voice. It is the quality that tells an audience how you feel about the words you are saying. Your tone will tell the audience when you are cheerful, discouraged, excited, or any number of emotions you can have about the material you are conveying.

Communicate with tone. Use the following exercise to practice speaking using different tones.

- ▶ Select any short sentence, such as, “My grandmother arrives on Friday.”
- ▶ Say the sentence in a neutral tone.
- ▶ Say the same sentence as if you are very excited.
- ▶ Say it again as if you are afraid.
- ▶ Repeat the sentence several times using different tones. Try joyful, sad, secretive, and terrified.
- ▶ Practice in front of a mirror or video record yourself to hear and see the impact of your tone.

## **Volume**

When you speak, your volume affects many things. First and foremost, your volume impacts your ability to be heard. When your voice is too quiet for the room or setting, your audience will struggle to hear you. If you tend to speak in a loud, booming voice, audience members may be too distracted to listen to the content of your speech.

## **Emphasis**

Your volume can be a tool used to emphasize words or sections of your speech. Shouting in the middle of a speech with an otherwise consistent volume can have an impact—a whisper may be even more powerful.

Achieving the best volume level for each speech takes practice and feedback. Outstanding public speakers practice volume levels to make sure they can be heard and to make effective use of the loudness or softness of their voice.

## **Practice**

Use the following exercise to practice speaking using different volume levels.

- ▶ Work with a partner.
- ▶ Stand at one end of a room and have your partner stand at the other.
- ▶ Begin speaking (say anything you choose).
- ▶ Keep your voice quiet at the beginning and slowly increase your volume.
- ▶ When your partner can hear you, they should raise their hand.
- ▶ Speak at that volume for a few seconds and begin lowering your voice.
- ▶ Your partner will drop their hand when they can no longer hear you.

## **Pace**

A speaker's pace is the speed at which they speak. Many speakers, when they begin developing their public speaking skills, speak too fast or too slow. A speaker whose pace is too fast is difficult to understand. Speakers who tend to speak at a slow or plodding pace often lose audience members' interest in their speech.

For many people the pace at which they speak is affected by nervousness. When speaking in front of an audience causes you to feel anxious or uncomfortable, it may help to focus on your pace.

Once speakers are able to keep their pace from being affected by anxiety, it can become another powerful tool of expression. Like the other forms of vocal variety, a speaker's pace can create or enhance emotion in audience members and add to the overall quality of a presentation.

## **Adjust Your Pace**

Use the following exercise to practice adjusting the pace of your speech.

### **Select A Piece of Writing**

You may choose a children's book, a newspaper, or a magazine article. It may be effective for you to use a speech that you have presented in the past or one that is upcoming.

### **Review**

Take a few minutes to read and familiarize yourself with the material.

### **Say it Aloud**

Read the text aloud at a comfortable volume.

### **Add Power and Interest**

After you have read it aloud once, identify sections that could be more powerful or effective at a different pace. For example, identify sections to read with a slower pace. Mark sections to read faster.

### **Practice**

Read the same selection several times, speeding up your speech and slowing it down. Pay close attention to the effect of your pace. If possible, complete this exercise with a partner or create a video recording. You will benefit from feedback on the impact of changes in your pace.



## Take a Breath

When people are nervous or worried their breathing can become shallow. This can present a serious problem for people who are about to present a speech to an audience. When speakers are winded or breathless from nerves they lose volume, have a higher pitch, and are often difficult to understand.

Making time to take a few deep breaths before you begin a speech will help in two ways. The first, and probably most important, is that deep breaths can lower anxiety and help a speaker relax. The second is that a speaker who has plenty of air will have better control of their voice.

A deep breath that fills your lungs will move your stomach and not raise your shoulders.

To practice taking deep breaths:

- ▶ Stand or lie down.
- ▶ Place your hands on your stomach.
- ▶ Relax your shoulders.
- ▶ Take a deep breath. Make sure your shoulders stay level and feel your stomach move out as you inhale.
- ▶ Exhale slowly. Repeat the exercise any time.

You can use this exercise at any time to help you relax before a speech. Practicing will help you understand how your body is affected when it is well-oxygenated.



Speak aloud after taking several deep breaths. Notice how your voice sounds and feels when you have plenty of air. Remember the feeling to help you the next time you have a presentation.



## Reflect on Your Learning

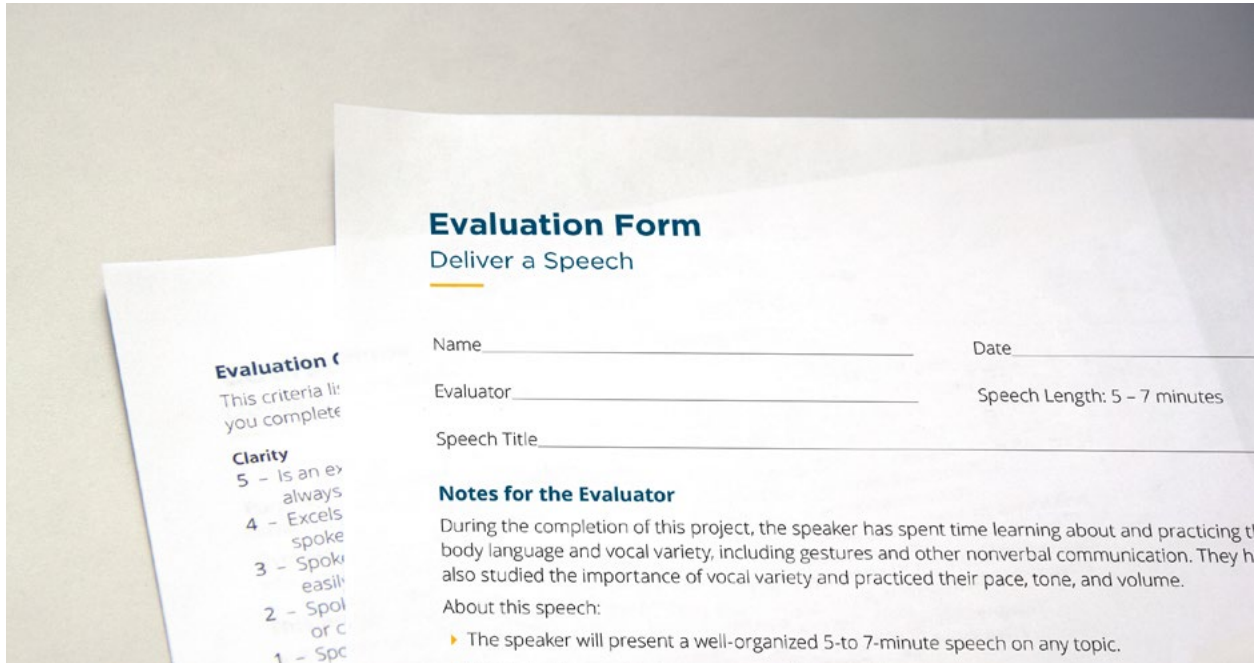
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Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the course.

- ▶ In what ways can body language express emotion?
- ▶ Why is eye contact with your audience an important part of your speech?
- ▶ How can facial expressions enhance the content of your message?
- ▶ Why is too much body movement distracting for an audience?
- ▶ Why is it important to be aware of cultural differences in the use of body language?
- ▶ In what ways can you use vocal variety to express emotion?
- ▶ Describe how tone can be used to change the meaning of a sentence.
- ▶ Why is it important to consider your volume when you speak?

# Complete Your Assignment



Now that you have read through the course, plan and prepare your speech or report.

**Review:** Review the resources on pages 18–21.



**Write your speech:** Use the Assignment Checklist on page 18 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

**Schedule:** Decide where you intend to deliver your speech and schedule your presentation.

**Practice your speech:** Practice delivering your speech and apply the feedback you receive.



**Prepare your evaluator:** Decide who will evaluate you and print or send them the evaluation form.

# Assignment Checklist

## Deliver a Speech

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this assignment is to practice speech delivery with an emphasis on awareness of your intentional and unintentional body language and how you use your voice.

**Overview:** Prepare a 5- to 7-minute speech on a topic that lends itself to expression through voice, movement and gestures. Video record your presentation and get feedback from a mentor, friend, or other reviewer before delivering your speech to your intended audience. If you do not have access to a recording device, perform your speech in front of a mirror and make adjustments before your scheduled speech.

### This assignment includes:

- ▶ A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this assignment. Please remember, your speech is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your assignment.

- Decide where you intend to deliver your speech and schedule your presentation.

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- Write your speech. Be sure to choose a topic that supports the use of body language.

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- Rehearse your speech.

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- If possible, have your mentor, a friend, or family member video record your speech. If you do not have access to a recording device, perform your speech in front of a mirror.

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- After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 5 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

# Evaluation Form

## Deliver a Speech

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Name\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator\_\_\_\_\_

Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title\_\_\_\_\_

### Notes for the Evaluator

During the completion of this project, the speaker has spent time learning about and practicing their body language and vocal variety, including gestures and other nonverbal communication. They have also studied the importance of vocal variety and practiced their pace, tone, and volume.

About this speech:

- ▶ The speaker will present a well-organized 5-to 7-minute speech on any topic.
- ▶ Watch for the speaker’s awareness of his or her intentional and unintentional movement and body language. Note distracting movements as well as movements that enhance the speech.
- ▶ Listen for how the speaker uses his or her voice to communicate and enhance the speech.
- ▶ The speech may be humorous, inspirational, or any style the speaker chooses.

### General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

<b>5</b> EXEMPLARY	<b>4</b> EXCELS	<b>3</b> ACCOMPLISHED	<b>2</b> EMERGING	<b>1</b> DEVELOPING
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<b>Clarity:</b> Spoken language is clear and is easily understood		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Vocal Variety:</b> Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Eye Contact:</b> Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Gestures:</b> Uses physical gestures effectively		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Audience Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Comfort Level:</b> Appears comfortable with the audience		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Interest:</b> Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Unintentional Movement:</b> Unintentional movement is limited and rarely noticeable		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		
<b>Purposeful Movement:</b> Speech is strengthened by purposeful choices of movement		Comment:
<b>5</b> <b>4</b> <b>3</b> <b>2</b> <b>1</b>		

## Evaluation Criteria

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

### Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

### Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

### Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

### Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

### Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs

- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

### Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

### Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

### Unintentional Movement

- 5 – Every movement is purposeful and enhances the speech
- 4 – Most or all movements appear intentional
- 3 – Unintentional movement is limited and rarely noticeable
- 2 – Unintentional movement detracts from speech
- 1 – Unintentional movement is highly distracting

### Purposeful Movement

- 5 – Speech is an exemplary example of the effective use of body language
- 4 – Speech is enhanced and improved by purposeful choices of movement
- 3 – Speech is strengthened by purposeful choices of movement
- 2 – Some movements appear purposeful
- 1 – Few movements appear purposeful



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