

Speech Evaluator

One of the goals of Toastmasters is to help people learn how to provide constructive criticism. This is a particularly important skill used in almost every profession. The Evaluator plays a very important role, because he or she can help Speakers learn how to improve weak points in the meeting execution, while praising strengths and providing positive feedback. The Evaluator has three minutes to make his or her meeting evaluation.

A speech evaluation should cover four broad areas:

- (1) the organization, content and flow of the speech: did it have a fluid opening, body and close? Was it appropriate for the audience? Was it well-researched?
- (2) how well the speaker met the objectives of the speech, as presented in the Speech Manual
- (3) the vocal presentation of the speech: tone, expression, vocabulary, language, projection, and so on
- (4) the physical presentation of the speech: body language, use of space, audio visual materials, if applicable

Checklist

2-3 days Prior to the Meeting

- Check with Toastmaster to determine whom you are evaluating, and whether or not you are introducing the speaker
- Call the speaker to learn about the speech being presenting, its objectives and title; find out what specific characteristics the speaker would like to be evaluated on
- If applicable, get sufficient information from the speaker to provide an effective introduction at the meeting

Before the Start of the Meeting

- Discuss & confirm role with Toastmaster
- Check with Speaker and get Speech Manual from him or her, so that you review the objectives and can fill in the evaluation component for that particular speech

During the Speech

- Observe and listen carefully, and take notes on items that should be covered during the evaluation
- You may want to organize your notes in terms of the four areas: organization; objectives; vocal presentation; physical presentation.
- When planning your feedback, try to use the “sandwich” approach: speak about some positive aspect of the speech, then move into areas for improvement, and finish with positive feedback

During your Speech Evaluation

- When called upon by the Toastmaster, take over the podium, shake the Toastmaster’s hand, and address the group
- Present your evaluation, keeping in mind good public speaking principles. Remember that YOU too may be evaluated in the context of the Best/Most Improved Speech Evaluator

- Keep an eye on the timer: you only have 3 minutes.
- After you have finished your evaluation, thank the Speaker, and close by indicating that the General Evaluator can take over the podium again. Shake hands with the GE before you return to your seat.

After the Meeting

- Return the Speech Manual to the speaker. He or she may ask you for a few more comments, or to elaborate on your evaluation.

NOTES:

With respect to the evaluations, be aware of the two most common errors:

- (1) spending too much time merely summarizing the speech
- (2) whitewashing (that is, the Evaluator finds nothing wrong with the speech)

These two errors typically go together. There is ***no such thing*** as a perfect speech. There are always at least one or two things that would improve the speech.

Consider this approach: as the speaker presents his or her speech, write down the single most positive and single most negative thing he or she has done. This provides a frame of reference for the evaluation.