Speech Evaluator

Guide and Tips

At Gavel, we improve through consistent constructive feedback. Bravo for taking the big step to evaluate one of your peer's speeches! You have the chance to provide them with direct value. Every speaker, no matter how new, has some useful feedback to share. Here are some guidelines on how to do so. It may seem like a lot, but you'll get the hang of it over time. For now, follow the basic structure below and just do your best!

GOAL: To motivate the speaker **to improve** by giving them a **sense of direction**

As an evaluator, you want to use a kind, constructive approach while giving the speaker a clear sense of direction for future improvement.

Kind, constructive approach:

- Not being overly harsh in your feedback. We want the speaker to keep giving speeches and feel like they could improve their speaking by implementing your feedback
- Balanced feedback: 2 things the speaker excelled at and one point of improvement (POI) (or 1 positive, 1 POI for a Table Topics Evaluation)
- Constructive feedback: A POI that's phrased to give the speaker a sense of direction for improvement: specific, serious and important.

STRUCTURE

- ❖ INTRO
  - ➢ Start with a HOOK that draws the audience in
  - ➢ Say something unique about the speech. This could be:
    - ■ Relating to a story the speaker told or the message of the speech
    - ■ A joke or anecdote about the story/message of the speech. Be careful NOT to be insensitive especially if you're evaluating a serious speech. You want to add some levity and draw the audience in, not come across as dismissive.

        - A positive general impression of the speech. *Example: "Wow.. Tonight, Josh regaled us with a nail-biting tale of survival. He didn't just tell us - he painted a picture of three harrowing days in the wilderness." "I think we can all say we learned something from Jenny's engaging speech about tsunamis - and how quickly they can strike."*

- POINT 1 - Something positive about the speech; something you enjoyed
- POINT 2 - A point of improvement; something the speaker could've done better; a challenge for their next speech
- POINT 3 - Something positive about the speech; something you enjoyed

- CONCLUSION
    - Briefly summarize the 3 points of your evaluation
    - End on a note of encouragement
    - Say something memorable - a joke, anecdote or strong statement reiterating the speaker's message. *Example: "But most of all, thank you John for the sobering reminder - robots are a real threat we need to think twice about before building."*

HOW TO STRUCTURE EACH POINT

There are **3 building blocks** to each point in our evaluation - WHAT?, WHY?, HOW?

- WHAT?
    - Describe your + or - feedback: what the speaker did well or what they can improve on
- WHY?
    - Explain why this is important for them to take note of and either keep using in their next speeches or start working on. This is CRITICAL – otherwise, the speaker won't see the point in taking your feedback seriously.
- HOW?
    - For a + point, elaborate on your WHAT statement and give the speaker examples of how they did this. *Example: "Bob's humour was amazing.*

He constantly poked fun of himself, which added levity to his presentation and helped us relax."

- For a POI, give the speaker a suggestion for how they could improve what you pointed out. *Example: "But a challenge I have for Bob is to pause for effect. After he told us a bizarre fact and said, 'But why?' I would've loved to hear him pause for a few seconds to let us digest what he told us."*

In general, these 3 building blocks mean that:

- Our feedback should be as **specific** as possible. *"You had great vocal variation"* is much less useful than, "*Your speech went from a loud, shrill voice when you were angry to a softer, friendlier voice when you expressed hope at the end."*
- **Give examples**. Quote parts of the speech.
- **Generalize** your feedback. An evaluation is for everyone to learn from, not just the speaker you're evaluating. *Example: "Your gestures were all over the place"* is much less useful to *everyone* than, "*One thing that we could've been done better - our gestures could've had more purpose. When our gestures our too erratic, it can distract the audience from the message of our speech…"*

Remember that whatever you do, your evaluation IS A SPEECH and needs to be **engaging.** Don't forget about vocal variation, humour and other tools we use.