



10 TIPS FOR EVALUATING A SPEECH

Everyone needs feedback to improve.

- 1 **Listen analytically**
Practise listening analytically - assess a speech in terms of how the speaker delivers the message, rather than concentrating on the content of the message itself.
- 2 **Make allowances**
Bear in mind the experience of the speaker in your evaluation and make allowances when evaluating new or nervous speakers. Your aim is to stretch the abilities of speakers - but not too far. Any suggestions for improvements you make must be within their practical reach.
- 3 **Praise first**
Before you tell the speaker what they could do better tell them the parts that worked well. Remember speakers have put a lot of effort into their speech so acknowledge that by praising the good bits.
- 4 **Be specific**
Nobody needs to be told that they weren't very good if they're not sure what they weren't good at. Tell the speaker how to improve rather than just saying it wasn't good. Give examples to illustrate a point by giving an example from the speech. This reinforces the message by putting it into context. Always follow this with a suggestion of how the delivery might be improved. If you cannot think of a constructive way of helping, then there is little point in drawing attention to the fault.
- 5 **Give advice appropriately**
Don't try to give too much advice. Don't catalogue every fault. Apart from being depressing, people can only take in so much information at once.
- 6 **Most important aspects**
Pick out the most important aspects that need attention. Highlight two or three fundamental points on which the speaker can concentrate.
- 7 **Constructive advice not criticism**
Remember that the role of the evaluator is to help the speaker not to tear them apart. Deliver the evaluation kindly and in a helpful manner. Evaluation is not criticism.
- 8 **Benefit for all**
If you're delivering an evaluation in front of other people remember that they will be gaining knowledge from hearing the evaluation. It's beneficial for everyone.
- 9 **Delivery**
In your evaluation add the factors common to any speech – pace, delivery and structure.

If you're doing this as part of a training event make sure that your own delivery is of a high standard.

10 **Meaningful and of lasting value**

Your speaker should feel that their evaluation has included something meaningful and of lasting value.