

EVALUATION - HOW TO EVALUATE

- 1. Write down any first impressions i.e. Was it a strong beginning? Does the speaker appear nervous? Were you initially impressed and wanted to hear more or did you feel disengaged during parts of the speech? Was there anything that obviously stood out that you could commend or recommend? Try to identify the main reason for your first impression.**
- 2. Assess the speech structure. By this time, the opening is over, and the speaker is likely to be embarking on the body of their speech. Observe whether it is progressing logically and whether transitions are clear. If you are able, you could attempt to write down the speech outline as you hear it – is it clear?**
- 3. Assess what the speaker is saying. Listen to the sentences; are they well-constructed and fluent? Listen to the words; does the speaker use language that is easy to understand? Listen to the content; is the speaker making appropriate use of description, imagery, examples, reasoning, logic, or humour to get their message across clearly?**
- 4. Assess their body language. Observe the speaker's manner of delivery. Are they using eye contact, facial expressions, gesturing, and stagecraft effectively?**

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5. Assess their vocal variety. How is the speaker using their voice? Is it easy to listen to? Are the pitch, rate, volume, tone and rhythm of their voice appropriate for communicating their message?

6. Sit back and listen to the speech's conclusion. Did it end strongly? Did you still have the same impressions you began with, or did anything change from your initial expectations during the speech?

If an evaluator is trying to specifically observe some aspects of the speech (such as gestures and vocal variety) it can be easy to miss other parts of the speech, and then lose the train of the speech's message. If this happens to you, don't worry – consider asking other audience members afterward whether they understood the speech and what they thought it was about. It can also be useful to observe members of the audience to find out how the speech is being received.

Evaluators also need to consider the context and purpose of the speech they are evaluating.

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PREPARATION FOR EVALUATION CONTESTS

1. **PRACTISE. A LOT.** Use your club format to practise your evaluations. Ask another Toastmaster at your club to judge you according to the judging criteria. Identify your strengths, your weaknesses, and learn from them.
2. **WATCH OTHER QUALITY EVALUATORS.** Toastmasters is a community. There are many people in your community that will have different styles and different ideas. Use these people as a resource to learn more about evaluating. Visit other clubs to see different evaluators in action.
3. **STUDY SPEECH TECHNIQUES.** Build up a collection of recommendations and commendations. The more you're armed with, the more likely you will have plenty to say about the speaker. Understand why different techniques work and make sure you have analysis to match each technique.

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4. Build your vocabulary. Vocabulary is the polish that can separate 1st place from 2nd and 3rd. Avoid using generalised language and adopt terms that are specific. For example, 'I thought your opening was great', compared to 'I thought your opening was suspenseful'. The word suspenseful has more meaning and tells the speaker more than the word great. Words such as good, great or fantastic simply place the subject on a subjective spectrum of quality. Words such as suspenseful, abrasive, gritty, and energetic more effectively describe the subject.

USE YOUR WORDS WISELY!
