

Qualities of an Effective Speaking Voice: Evaluation Form

Communication consists of four broad areas: reading, writing, speaking and listening. In college, most emphasis is placed on writing and, by extension, reading. Too many people graduate without ever learning how to use their voices to maximum advantage, without knowing how to listen closely. This exercise will help rectify that.

Each member of the class will select a piece (at least a good-sized paragraph) to read. The reading should take 3-5 minutes. The pieces should be ones that the rest of the class is not likely to know by heart. When picking your piece, remember WIIFT: What's In It For Them.

All members of the class will get up in front of the class/room and read their pieces—back to. Why back to? Because people gain a surprising amount of information about your speaking by seeing your face—your expressions, your lips. So we're going to remove that prop, to make people judge you solely on your voice. And you have to project enough that your voice carries over your shoulder.

You will evaluate all of your classmates. They will do the same. These evaluations are for you and me. I will not share them¹, so you can and must be honest. Realistically, everyone will not be awesome. That's OK. The purpose of the exercise is to help people realize things that they need to work on.

Also, take heart: some of the most compelling speakers in history did not have classically wondrous voices. They knew what they had and found ways to play up the strengths and minimize the weaknesses.

We will debrief after this exercise and listen to some famous speakers.

Evaluation Form on Back

¹ I will not share the actual forms. But I am happy to talk with you about how you did and your classmates' reactions and perceptions.

Effective Speaking Voice EVALUATION FORM

Presenter's Name: _____ Date: _____

Presentation Name: _____ Your Name: _____

Rate each speaker for the following six categories. Use a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. **Please include justification for your scores.** Be kind but realistic. No one is perfect. But through hard work and knowing themselves, people can use their strengths and convert the mistakes to successes. Please explain your score for each.

Audibility: not simply loudness—adjust volume and force.

Pleasantness: variable rate, articulation, pronunciation. Shouldn't be shrill, raspy, whiny, nasal.

Variety: fluctuates in rate, pitch, quality.

Animation: Rate, force, liveliness

Fluency: Smooth flow of words.

Clarity: Easy to understand.

How would you **rate** the presenter and presentation? How could it improve? Be specific.