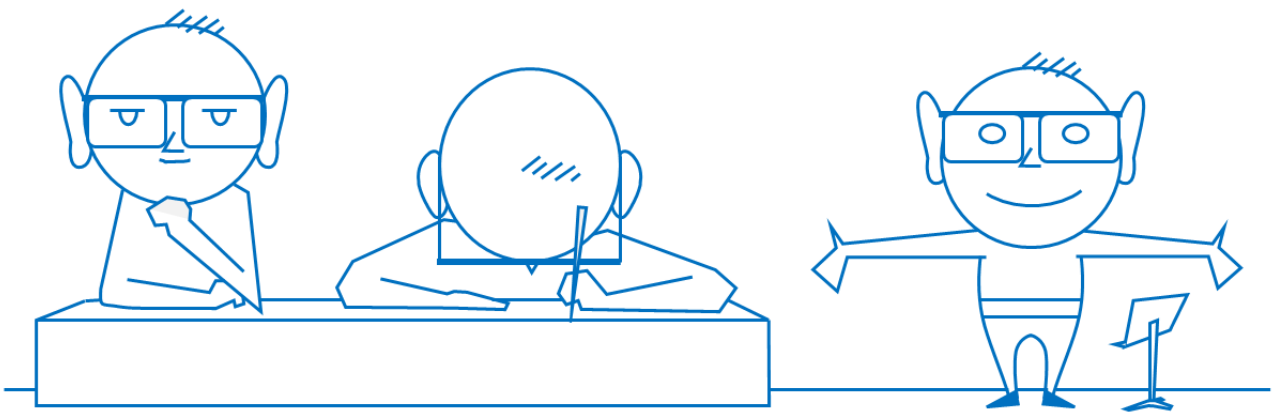

A TOASTMASTERS GUIDE TO SPEECH EVALUATION



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TOASTMASTERS SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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PREFACE

I have often heard Toastmasters in South Australia (new and experienced) express that they do not volunteer to evaluate other speakers as they lack confidence in their ability to evaluate well, and many do not enjoy the challenge.

In 2015 I visited a Toastmasters club in South Africa where I participated in an evaluation coaching/mentoring exercise. This activity impressed me in its capacity to support and upskill Toastmasters in the critical tools required for effective evaluation. It highlighted what I believe is missing in our clubs in South Australia. That is, support for Toastmasters at the point when they may most need it - when they are preparing and delivering evaluations at a meeting. While annual workshops are very useful, weeks or months later a Toastmaster may need somewhere to turn for assistance.

When I returned from South Africa, I shared my vision, now affectionately known as “KEV” – Kerry’s Evaluation Vision - to work with Toastmasters in Central Division to feel more empowered in preparing and delivering evaluations. This launched an idea for my High Performance Leadership project, to provide tools, i.e. resources, support and ideas for Toastmasters to upskill in this area. The three key steps in this project included:

1. Delivering the 2015 Central Division evaluation workshop to not only share information but also to gather information about what Toastmasters specifically need to assist them.
2. Providing evaluation coaching for Toastmasters to use as a model at their clubs when needed. This was also an information gathering exercise.
3. Provide a resource that all Toastmasters can use between workshops to guide and support them through the process. Much of this material was developed from what was learnt in steps 1 and 2.

The 2015 Central Division evaluation workshop ticked all the boxes, with record attendance and rich information to inform the next parts of the project.

The evaluation coaching activities and workshops have been well received with 50% of clubs across all Central Division Areas in South Australia participating in this activity over the last 12 months.

This resource is full of ideas, explanations, templates and examples that are suitable for Toastmasters of any level. You can choose to read the entire document or tap into specific areas of interest as you need them.

I have learnt a great deal from developing this resource and have become a better speaker, evaluator and leader as a result of the experience.

The resource that you are about to read, is a culmination of over 12 months work. I have been privileged to work with my evaluation team; a group of highly talented, intelligent, creative, fun and dedicated Toastmasters to make this happen. It has been a highlight of my Toastmaster experience and I thank them for their inspiration, encouragement and assistance in making my vision a reality. Special thanks for Nick Kastelein for his significant contribution to the content, editing and formatting of this resource and Lucas Lovell for providing his technical expertise to make this resource available online.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning how to give feedback constructively is an invaluable tool in our personal and professional lives. There are many situations where we need to give constructive feedback and we want the receiver to take the suggestions on board without being defensive. Some examples are giving a colleague formal feedback in the workplace, providing feedback to a service provider, or providing informal feedback to friends, family, or children. If we provide this feedback well, we are more likely to achieve a desired outcome and to support or facilitate positive change or improvement.

1.1 Who Benefits from Evaluations?

In Toastmasters, **everyone** benefits from evaluations.

1. The Speaker benefits – The evaluation provides a resource for improvement
2. The Audience benefits – They learn from the evaluator’s advice
3. The Evaluator benefits – An evaluator develops as a speaker by analysing the speeches of others

“Evaluations are the fertiliser of our growth and development”

–Bob Faye *The value of Evaluations*, Bedstone Olympics Toastmasters Club

1.2 The Aims of Evaluations

An evaluator has several objectives when they deliver their evaluation. Their main focus is on the speaker. While the whole audience will benefit from the evaluation, it was the speaker who put in effort, and may be uncertain about how their speech was received.

The evaluator aims:

- to make speakers aware of what they do well
- to suggest areas for improvement in a non-threatening and nurturing manner
- to provide constructive and practical ideas for the speaker’s next speech
- to motivate speakers to improve the next time they speak
- to give a speaker a reason to celebrate their achievement of speaking publicly

1.3 Who Can Evaluate?

It may be worth waiting until you have *some* experience before you begin evaluating, but don’t wait too long! In Speechcraft courses¹, the participants begin delivering evaluations after only three speeches!

Speeches are aimed at the audience, so *any audience member* has feedback that is valuable to the speaker. The speaker will want to hear if they were effective at communicating their message. So who can evaluate? Anyone. Don’t be afraid to start by delivering simple, subjective evaluations – we all start there. Evaluating is such an educational experience; don’t miss out.

Over time, you will learn more and more about providing constructive recommendations to a speaker, because you will be able to draw increasingly on your own experience and accumulating knowledge about

¹ Speechcraft courses are an intense public speaking training course that Toastmasters International runs for the general public.

speaking. However, even an inexperienced audience member adds value when they simply share their subjective opinion about the speech they heard.

In fact, it is often refreshing for an experienced speaker to receive feedback from an inexperienced evaluator, because the feedback is not biased by 'textbook' knowledge about public speaking. *It is important not to question your ability to provide quality feedback to an advanced speaker.*

1.4 Principles of Effective Evaluation

Here are some principles of effective evaluations, which provide a snapshot of things to consider when evaluating. These are elaborated on in more detail throughout this resource.

1. Observe and listen carefully to what the speaker is saying and how they are presenting.
2. Address the objectives from the speaking manual (refer to Toastmaster manual objectives).
3. Use CRC (Commend Recommend Commend) method. Always start positively and finish positively (Refer to Section 3 which includes template).
4. Consider the 'what, how and why' approach to commendations and the 'what, why and how' approach to recommendations.
5. Consider the level or capability of the speaker.
6. Identify what will assist the speaker the most and prioritise your feedback accordingly.
7. Analyse the speech by identifying the purpose(s) and assessing the various aspects of the speech (refer to purposes section 4).
8. Use a nurturing manner and constructive language when presenting your evaluation i.e. avoid using words and phrases with negative connotations or which imply that the speaker has done something wrong. Rather focus on areas for improvement with practical advice on how they can improve (Refer section 5 on evaluating with constructive language).
9. Use meaningful language when presenting your evaluation i.e. Avoid using adjectives such as 'good' and 'excellent' and rather find alternatives that describe the aspect of the speech more clearly.

2. PREPARING THE EVALUATION

2.1 Where to Start

The first step to evaluating is to know who you are evaluating, what speech they are delivering, and how much time you will have to prepare your evaluation. You can't prepare an evaluation until you have heard the speech, but you can prepare *for* an evaluation, by finding out exactly what will be happening.

Here are some things you can do before you even hear a speech to prepare for your evaluation:

- Find out the title of the speech and the manual it is from
- Look up the objectives of the speech, if there are any. In Toastmasters, objectives are outlined in speech manuals; consider reading the chapter of the manual that describes the project that you will be evaluating.
- Ask the speaker if they have any personal objectives. Are there any things they are challenging themselves with, that they are concerned about, or that they would like specific feedback on?
- For a Toastmasters manual speech, consider reading the feedback the speaker received from his/her last evaluation (**Note: some people prefer not to do this so they are not biased by the previous evaluator**)
- Think about the different elements of a speech, as described later in this resource (refer to elements of a speech at Section 6)
- If you are using an evaluation template, read through the template and plan how you will use it. Several templates are included throughout this resource. Eventually you may consider developing your own template that works well for you.

2.2 Listening and Observing Critically

Once the speech begins, you have only the duration of the speech to make observations, so you need to spend this time constructively.

Over time, you will develop a pattern for evaluating, and some ideas will just 'jump out at you'. However, it is generally good to be systematic in finding feedback during the speech.

As you gain experience and confidence, you will develop your own system and style for preparing evaluations but the following example provides one way you can listen critically to a speech:

1. At the beginning, **write down the speaker's name and the speech title**. You may only hear these details at the start of the speech.
2. **Listen carefully to the speech opening.**
3. **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.
4. **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?

5. 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 and logic, or humour to get their message across clearly?
6. **Assess their body language**. Observe the speaker’s manner of delivery. Are they using eye contact, facial expressions, gesturing, and stagecraft effectively?
7. **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?
8. **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 afterwards 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.

2.3 Prioritising Feedback

After you have listened critically to a speech, you may have identified a lot of feedback for the speaker. If this is the case, the speaker may not need to hear *all* of that feedback – it could be overwhelming, and may also be discouraging. You may choose to share your notes with the speaker or give a one on one evaluation in a break in the meeting.

The ability to prioritise feedback is one of the most important and profound skills that an evaluator can master – and if you achieve it, the speaker you evaluate will always walk away having learned something.

Before you deliver the evaluation verbally, you need to *prioritise* your observations – determine a small selection of commendations and recommendations that you will focus on (3 main commendations and 2 main recommendations is generally a good number).

Here are some things you can think about when selecting the feedback you will present:

- **Always include feedback that addresses the speaker’s objectives**. Provide feedback relating to the objectives – even if only briefly in the introduction of your evaluation. The speaker needs feedback that relates directly to what they were trying to accomplish. A good idea for Toastmasters manual speeches is to check what the objectives are for the speaker’s *next* project. You have a good opportunity to direct them on how they may benefit further from the next project.
- **Prioritise feedback that will be useful for all speeches**. Some of the feedback you come up with will be very specific to the speech you heard. For example, “When you made the third point, about your grandmother, you could have printed out a picture of her to show us”. This feedback will be more useful if it can be applied easily to the speaker’s next speech. If you use feedback to recommend more specifically why this visual aid may have enhanced the speech, then the recommendations will have greater meaning e.g. it could help the audience to connect with the character’s story.

SPEECH EVALUATION

- **Try to present a broad spectrum of feedback.** Sometimes you will have five items of feedback that all relate to the structure and content of the speech. You could present only these items, but it would be better to also provide the speaker feedback on their delivery (e.g. body language and voice) so they have a broad spectrum of feedback.

3. STRUCTURING AN EVALUATION PRESENTATION

All evaluations are different. When you present an evaluation, it is ultimately up to you how you deliver it – you have creative license! However, the use of some well-trialled structures and frameworks can help you to get started.

3.1 CRC – Commend, Recommend, Commend

A good starting point is to follow the **CRC method** – which stands for **Commend, Recommend, Commend**. This is an evaluation structure that includes all the key elements, is expressed very positively, includes a manageable amount of feedback for the speaker, and should fit within the 3 minute timeframe that evaluations are generally provided (*some Toastmasters clubs provide 4 minutes to evaluate long or advanced speeches*). The CRC method has sometimes been described as ‘the sandwich method’. The bread represents the commendations and provides a solid foundation for the speaker and acknowledges their strengths. The filling of the sandwich represents the recommendations which are the ‘meaty’ part of the evaluation where the speaker learns how they can improve and build on their strengths.

The **CRC** structure is as described below. Approximate times for each part of the evaluation are included **as a guide only**, and will vary from one evaluation to another and from one evaluator to another depending on their style and the type of speech that you are evaluating.

Evaluation Opening (30 seconds)

- a. Say who you are evaluating and what the title of their speech was
- b. For a Toastmasters manual speech, remind everyone briefly of the project objectives.
- c. Identify the purpose of their speech, as you perceived it.
- d. Provide an overview statement of how you perceived the speech, and whether it achieved its purpose.

Evaluation Body:

- e. 2 Commendations (50 seconds)
- f. 2 Recommendations (70 seconds)
- g. 1 Commendation (15 seconds)

Evaluation Conclusion: (15 seconds)

- h. Summarise the 5 points in the body of the speech
- i. Close with a positive remark to the speaker

In a 3 minute time slot for evaluation, then aim to begin recommendations before or by the white light (2 minutes), and begin your last commendation once you see the orange light (2 ½ minutes).

Example 1

Example 1: Complete evaluation using the CRC structure

Evaluation introduction

Peter's speech entitled 'Taken for Granted' informed us about the energy industry and how we take for granted where electricity comes from. He was addressing project five in the Competent Communicator manual; to use his voice to convey his message effectively.

Peter achieved his purpose with a very engaging, humorous documentary style informative speech, and a strong clear voice.

Commendation 1

Peter used a logical structure. He began with a personal anecdote and reminded us of how relevant the topic is to us, so we were inclined to listen. The speech body was clearly signposted and developed logically to the conclusion, which inspired us to have some respect for the era we live in and the technology that underpins it.

Commendation 2

Peter uses a significant pitch range and projects his voice well, so he is easily heard, but also gives the impression of a confident and authoritative speaker.

Recommendation 1

Today, Peter needed to refer to notes for specific facts and statistics. As a result, he spent all of the speech standing at the lectern which impacted on the effectiveness of his delivery. Planning for movement with purpose could have made the speech more dynamic and hence more memorable. Peter could also develop a strategy for managing his notes e.g. he could have used PowerPoint, or just walked back to the lectern when he needed them.

Recommendation 2

Another thing that I would recommend for Peter is to be very careful about using 'jargon' that is specific to the energy industry. With technical speeches, it is important to be aware of the knowledge level of the audience, and either explain the meaning of 'jargon' words used, or find alternative non-technical words.

Commendation 3

What I enjoyed most about the speech was Peter's natural rhythm for humour, which was evidence by the way everyone laughed.

Summary

Peter clearly met his objective of vocal variety with his very clear, loud and modulated voice. His structure was well-crafted to deliver an informative speech and his humour added something special.

If Peter develops his stage-craft and avoids jargon, then future technical speeches will be even more effective and enjoyable.

Well done, Peter.

3.2 CRC Evaluation Template

Speech Title: _____ Speaker's Name: _____

Date: _____ Manual Project: _____

Introduction – <i>Refer to manual objectives and identify the speaker's purpose</i>
Commendation 1:
<i>What, How, Why important/effective:</i>
Commendation 2/3:
<i>What, How, Why important/effective:</i>
Recommendation 1:
<i>What can speaker improve, Why important, How to change/improve</i>
Recommendation 2:
<i>What can speaker improve, Why important, How to change/improve</i>
Commendation 3/4:
<i>What, How, Why important/effective</i>
Summary – <i>Briefly go over main points for speaker and end positively</i>

3.3 What, How, and Why Speech Analysis Framework

Thorough feedback tells the recipient three things:

- **What** the speaker did (or what the speaker could have done).
- **Why** it influences the effectiveness of the speech in achieving the speech’s purpose.
- **How** the speaker did it (or how the speaker could have done it).

When they first begin evaluating, most evaluators usually focus on the ‘What’. We make observations and see what ‘was’ and what ‘could have been’ in the speech.

When we force ourselves to also think about the ‘Why’, we really begin to grow as evaluators and speakers. Discovering *why* an item of feedback is important to the effectiveness of a speech helps us to learn what an effective speech really looks like.

The last stage, the ‘How’ completes the circle. When we think about *how* a speaker can implement our feedback, we help them learn how to deliver an effective speech.

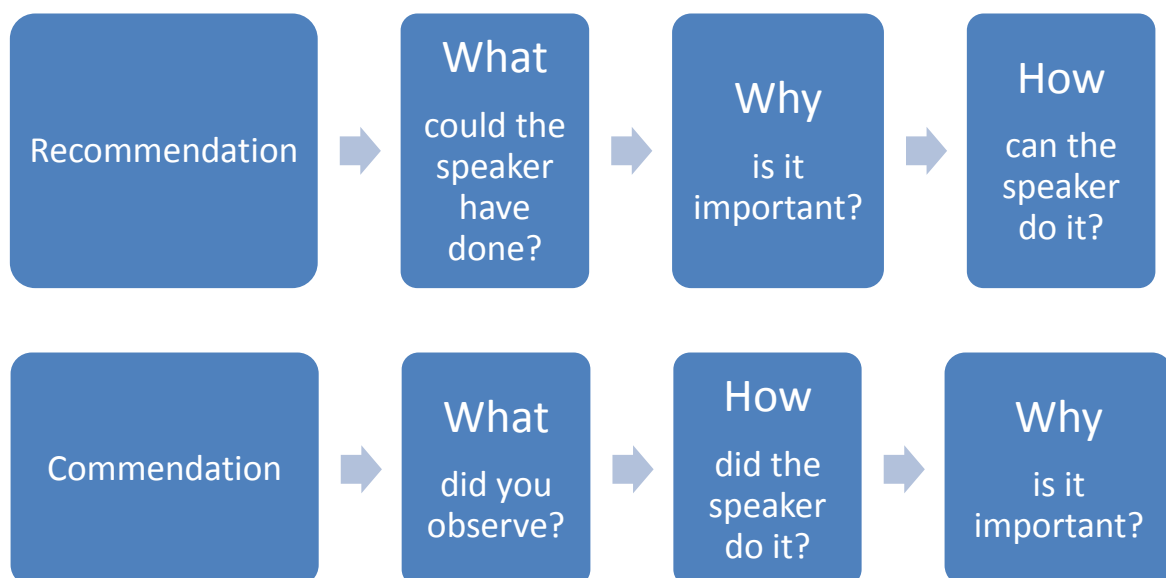
‘What, Why, How’ is also a good *structure* to use for items of feedback.

It doesn’t always have to be done in that specific order. In fact, often it works to swap the order for commendations:

- Begin by saying **What** could have been done, then **Why** it would have been effective, then finish with **How** the speaker can do it.
- *Commendations*: Begin by saying **What** you observed, then **How** the speaker did it, and finish with **Why** it was effective.

The reason that this order can be preferred is that an evaluator wants to close on the most important point (the last thing we say is what lingers in our audience’s minds). For a recommendation, the ‘How’ is the take-away message for the speaker, so it’s good to leave them with this aspect. For a commendation, the ‘Why’ is the “buy-in” – it informs everyone why the point is important, and sometimes the evaluator may choose to give this the important position at the end of the message.

There are many examples of commendations and recommendations in this resource that demonstrate how to implement the ‘What, Why and How’. Example 5 shows a commendation with the order reversed.



3.3.1 Mastering the 'How'

The last step, 'How' is the most powerful, especially in recommendations. Of the three steps in this structure, presenting the 'How' requires the most experience and can be the most challenging, so new evaluators should not be concerned if they cannot always achieve it.

The **how** step is the most practical, it requires putting yourself into the speaker's shoes and thinking what it will feel like for them to implement the idea. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What will it feel like for the speaker to do this?
- What might make this difficult for the speaker?
- Are there any ways that this idea could be practised?
- Are there any techniques that could make it easier for the speaker to put into practice the suggested recommendation?

Mastering the 'How' is a great goal to set for yourself, because knowing how to deliver an effective speech is more powerful than knowing *what* an effective speech looks like and *why* it is effective.

3.4 What/How/Why Template

Speech Title:

Name:

Project:

<p>Introduction Address speech purpose and make general statement about the speech</p>		
WHAT (Identification)	WHY (Analysis)	HOW (Example)
C		
C		
R		
R		
C		
<p>Summary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address and recap recommendations and commendations 2. Make general statement about objectives or speech impact 		

4. SPEECH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to providing feedback to the speaker on their manual and personal objectives, it is also important that the evaluator can correctly identify and understand the purpose of the speech they are evaluating. If the purpose is unclear to the evaluator then this can form an important part of the recommendations to the speaker.

4.1 General Speech Purpose

Why do we deliver speeches? There are many reasons for giving a speech. These usually fall into four general categories:

1. The first purpose is to **inform**. Informative speeches focus on providing the audience with knowledge. Informative speeches could include the evening news, university lectures, and *infomercials* (commercials that provide detailed information about the product they are advertising). Examples of specific informative speeches could be teaching the audience about weather patterns, how to knit a jumper, and symptoms to look for in stroke patients.
2. The second common speech purpose is to **persuade**. A persuasive speaker is trying to convince his or her audience to do or believe something. An effective persuasive speech includes a clear call to action for the audience to follow. Persuasive speeches could include political campaign speeches, advertisements or requests to support charities. Examples of specific persuasive speeches could be to persuade audience members to contribute to saving endangered species, or to exercise every day.
3. The third speech purpose is to **entertain**. Entertaining speeches are simply about making the audience happy. Examples include humorous speeches and story-telling.
4. The fourth speech purpose is to **inspire**. Inspiring speeches are about encouraging the audience to *be* something. These are easily confused with persuasive speeches. Inspirational speeches can be delivered to people that already agree; the aim is to re-invigorate the audience - to give them motive, energy, or hope. Inspirational speeches are not focused on an outcome of what the audience should *do* or *believe*, but what they should *be* and what *drives* them. Some examples of inspirational speech topics are speeches that encourage the audience to challenge themselves, never give up, or to trust their friend.

Often speeches have more than one of these purposes; Entertaining speeches often have an inspirational moral, and persuasive speeches are often informative. However, speeches will always have a main purpose and will focus on one of the 4 purposes above.

4.2 Specific Speech Purpose

In addition to determining the general speech purpose, the evaluator may try to understand the specific purpose of the speech which makes the speech unique. As an example, the general purpose of a speech could be to inspire the audience, and the specific purpose could be “to inspire the audience to be courageous when they feel incapable of a task, by being realistic in their thoughts and having a determined attitude”.

If you have completed Speech 4 of the *Competent Communicator Manual*, then you have learnt about general and specific speech purposes. However, you may not have realised how important it is for an evaluator to understand these and use these ideas when evaluating.

There are no absolute rules for voice, body language, structure, word choice etc. All of these are only effective *if they help the speaker to achieve the speech's purpose*. For example, audience participation, loud volume, moving around, and humour... all these things are, in general, considered effective practice; they make a speech better. However, what if you were reading a book to your child at bed-time with the purpose of putting them to sleep, then loud volume and audience participation would detract from the purpose of putting them to sleep. Evaluators need to consider the context and purpose of the speech they are evaluating.

“The purpose is always audience-focused”

People do not deliver speeches for their own sake. I may choose to talk about cats because I like cats, but my purpose is to “share my love of cats *with the audience*”.

Example 2 is an introduction to an evaluation that clearly identifies the general and specific purpose, and explains it from the perspective of the audience. In this example, the evaluator also provides an overall statement of whether the speech achieved its purpose. Example 3 demonstrates a recommendation about how to use the voice to evoke emotion in meeting the general purpose to inspire.

Example 2: Commendation about Speech Purpose

Evaluation Opening

Tonight Mary delivered a speech where she entertained us with the frivolous antics of her neighbour’s children. The speech was funny and made us all laugh at the humorous images she created.

Overall, I think she succeeded very well in entertaining us! She had dramatic gestures, a loud voice, and a continual smile. Whether she felt it or not, she appeared very comfortable on the stage – the fact that she appeared to enjoy the story meant that the audience tended to as well. The whole speech was well crafted to lift our spirits and leave us with a story we’ll never forget.

Example 3: Recommendation on Voice Appropriateness to Speech Purpose

What: Mary, your speech had sections where the sound of your voice didn’t match the emotion you were trying to create for your inspirational speech.

Why: Everyone’s voice has a natural pitch. These are the high and low notes we sound. In places, your pitch was quite high and did not assist you in evoking the anger you were attempting to demonstrate.

How: Your speech described the interaction between your two sisters during an argument. By lowering your voice during this interaction you will add the impact you desire to inspire your audience about the importance of forgiveness. It is possible to practise pitch variation by using the same word and dropping it one note at a time. It is important to stop once your voice is straining. (Note: It would be helpful in this example for the evaluator to demonstrate physically to the speaker what they mean)

4.3 Determining the Speech Purpose

How does an evaluator determine the purpose of a speech?

Working out the purpose of a speech is usually not a complicated task, because most of the time the speaker makes it very clear. Informative speeches and entertaining speeches are often easy to identify. Sometimes the motivational or persuasive part of a speech only comes at the end, and the evaluator may not realise that the speech will include a 'call to action' (reason why the speech was shared) until the speech is complete.

If the purpose of a speech is not clear by the time the speaker has finished, then this is an important item of feedback to provide the speaker. A good recommendation for new speakers is that they write down their speech purpose in two sentences or less when they begin preparing their speech – this will help the speaker to have clarity about their purpose when they prepare.

4.4 Speech Objectives

In Toastmasters, which is a *learning* organisation, a speaker also has objectives. That is, they have a skill that their speech manual requires them to address, or they perhaps have something they personally want to achieve.

To provide the most useful feedback to the speaker, it is encouraged that you read the relevant chapter of their manual, or at least read the notes for the evaluator and the objectives summary list. You could also consider contacting the speaker before the speech to ask them about their *personal* objectives for the speech.

“Is there anything you would like me to look for in your speech today?”

Sometimes Toastmasters neglect to do this prior to arriving at the meeting and this opportunity may be missed. Speakers are a gold mine for their own feedback! Speakers often have concerns about their own speaking style such as: “I worry that I talk too fast” “I want to try to appear natural with my gestures”, “I’ve been told that I look at the floor a lot and want to improve that”. The evaluator may not know this unless they contact the speaker in advance.

If you can provide feedback to a speaker directly relating to a concern they have about their style, you can maximise the value of your evaluation. Example 4 uses the ‘what, why how’ framework to provide a commendation on one aspect of speech structure: transitions.

Example 4: Commendation about Speech Structure

What: Before tonight’s speech David asked me to listen to his transitions. He was concerned that he sometimes mixes one idea with the next.

Why: It is very important in an informative speech like this one to clearly delineate between each set of ideas, so the audience can follow the logic of the presentation.

How: In this speech, Dave, your transitions were very easy to identify and follow! Each new idea was introduced with rhetorical questions - “Where are lions found?”, “How big are lions?” “Can lions be tamed?” These questions, combined with a short pause, made it clear to us that we were starting on a new distinct topic each time.

5. LANGUAGE OF EVALUATIONS

How you phrase your evaluation and how you express it has as much impact on the speaker as the content of your evaluation. Using language that is constructive and descriptive encourages the speaker and provides the speaker with meaningful, useful feedback.

5.1 Delivering Evaluations Using Constructive Language & Manner

When you mean well and have good ideas but use words that put the speaker on the defensive, your message is lost. Examples of words that can have a negative impact on the speaker include: weak, lazy, never, poor, sloppy, terrified, stop, failed, and boring.

Remember that in an evaluation you are giving your personal opinion which does not necessarily represent what others think. It is important to express your personal opinion in a friendly, direct, empathetic, diplomatic and non-threatening manner and to avoid words and phrases that have negative connotations as demonstrated in the following examples:

“You spoke in a monotone voice” could be expressed more positively by saying for example: “I recommend that you consider varying the pace and volume of your voice to add more drama and emotion to your story. This could be achieved by recording your voice and listening to where you would like your story to have more impact. For example when you were angry with your friend you could have raised your voice and slowed down the pace to create more power”.

“Your gestures were unnatural, they almost looked forced” could be expressed more positively by saying for example: “I recommended that you rehearse the use of gestures in your speech so that they complement what you are saying and flow more naturally with your speech. This could be achieved by writing down the gestures that you want to use at particular parts of your story and by relaxing your shoulders so that your gestures flow smoothly and look more natural”.

“Stop speaking so quickly and stop shouting” could be expressed more positively by saying for example: “I recommend that you concentrate on the pace and volume of your voice when rehearsing your speeches. At times it was difficult to hear every word you were saying as you spoke quite quickly. To improve this, you might consider pausing to slow your speech down and practice speaking slower than you would in a conversation. It is also useful to consider the size of the room you are speaking in and to choose a speaking volume that is appropriate for the room size and number of people present. Recording your voice would assist you in improving the pace and volume of your voice”.

“About half way through your speech, I almost fell asleep because you were waffling” could be expressed more positively by saying for example: “At times you included a large number of words in each sentence. This can be overwhelming for an audience if there is a large volume of content to digest. I recommend that when you draft your speeches, you reduce the number of words in each sentence, use more descriptive words that create a picture and expressive body language to tell the story rather than just using lots of words. Use of literary devices (such as pictures/charts) can also cut back on the volume of words and allow the audience to use their imaginations”.

5.2 Alternatives to Commonly used Descriptive Words for Evaluations

When we evaluate speakers, we need to use words that give the clearest message and meaning to the speaker i.e. descriptive words that explain what we mean. It is common for evaluators to fall back on commonly used words, such as, 'good', 'excellent', 'great', 'amazing', 'fantastic', which do not provide specific and meaningful feedback to the speaker. When you think about it, 'good' only means that it wasn't 'bad'!

It is useful to develop a list of vocabulary that you can use in your evaluations. Below is a list of words which describe particular elements of speeches that you can use as a starting point or guide. Not all these examples will suit your style, but over time you can develop your own list.

Alternative words to good and excellent	Element of speech
articulate or eloquent	delivery
conversational	speaking style
crisp	tone on voice
lyrical, rich, colourful	use of language
punchy, gripping, riveting	opening or conclusion
dramatic	pausing
expressive, vibrant, animated	gestures, facial expressions, smile
ingenious, logical	speech structure
appropriate, varied	pace, volume
clear, logical	transitions between points of story
original, thought provoking, inspiring	ideas, message
thorough	Preparation
breathtaking	use of emotion
compelling	Storytelling
masterful, purposeful	use of stage
inspiring	choice of topic
commanding, confident	stance

6. ELEMENTS OF A SPEECH THAT CAN BE EVALUATED

To effectively analyse a speech, it is recommended that evaluators assess each element of a speech against the speech purpose, determining whether each helped to achieve the overall purpose.

Elements of speeches can be categorised under the following broad categories:

- Voice
- Body language
- Structure
- Content

6.1 How to Evaluate Voice

What does the audience hear?

The content of a speech is mainly delivered through what is heard. Our voice is very dynamic, and multi-faceted. Audible speech characteristics include pitch, volume, tone or expression, pausing, pace, rhythm and accent.

When providing commendations and recommendations about **vocal variety** it is important to speak specifically about the different elements of voice i.e. **pitch, tone, volume, pace and pause**, rather than just generally commending or recommending a speaker on their effective or ineffective vocal variety.

Two useful sources about the various aspects of voice are:

1. www.write-out-loud.com
2. Your Speaking Voice: Tips for Adding Strength and Authority to Your Voice, Toastmasters International www.toastmasters.org

6.1.1 Evaluating Pitch

To understand pitch, think of music. It has high and low notes as do people's voices. Everyone's voice has a natural pitch. Women tend to have higher pitched voices than men, and everybody has a pitch range: the number of notes habitually used. When that range is very small, the effect is less variety.

An example of a recommendation around pitch is to point out to a speaker that their pitch was quite high for the entire speech and could be varied if they breathe from the diaphragm.

Example 5: Commendation on Voice Variation

What: Kelly used a variety of both volume and pitch during her delivery tonight.

How: During the section where Kelly was obviously exasperated with her son she raised the volume and pitch of her voice when telling him what she was annoyed about and then a slower and quieter tone when explaining why she was irritated by his actions.

Why: By using the varied use of both volume and pitch Kelly invoked a sense of command to get attention then implored her son to choose a different action next time. This impacted the audience as Kelly was able to invoke emotion in her audience by using her voice to create different moods.

6.1.2 *Evaluating Tone*

Tone refers to the emotional content carried by a speaker's voice. It is not the words themselves, but 'how' they are said. Speaking expressively is to fill or energize words appropriately and to place emphasis on important or emotive words. An evaluator can point out examples of how the speaker evoked emotion in the audience through the tone of their voice. (Example 6 demonstrates a commendation on voice tone).

Example 6: Commendation on Voice Tone

What: Jim you have been gifted with a speaking voice that has varied rhythm and intonation (rise and fall of the voice).

How: Jim's voice has a musical quality and a rhythmic beat which adds colour to his presentation. A particular example was during the section where Jim described the dance of the American Indians; the rhythm of his voice was just like a drum beat.

Why: I felt as though Jim's voice transported us an audience from sitting around a table to sitting on the ground around a campfire and moving as one with the speaker. Jim you have a vocal and creative talent that is unparalleled.

6.1.3 *Evaluating Volume*

How loudly or quietly a speaker speaks is called volume. Some people are habitually loud and others quiet, regardless of their speech content. Variation in volume can create interest and emotion. It is important to inform a speaker if you cannot clearly hear what they are saying or if they are speaking unnecessarily loudly for the size or acoustics of a speaking space. Excessively loud volume can be exhausting to listen to.

Example 7 is a recommendation to incorporate voice volume variation.

Example 7: Recommendation on Voice Volume

What: Verna, there were some areas in your delivery where volume variation could have been used to greater effect. By volume I specifically mean how loudly or quietly you delivered the message.

Why: By varying the volume you create interest and emotion. For example dropping the volume can increase intensity, therefore, pulling your audience in.

How: It is possible to train your voice to improve its quality. This helps bring your voice out of the throat and focus it forward even when you lower the volume. It's important that your jaw and throat muscles are relaxed and you project the sound so it feels as if it is being produced by your lips.

6.1.4 Evaluating Pace

The term 'pace' or 'rate' refers to speaking speed. How fast or slow does a speaker speak? Can they vary the rate? What is the effect of slowing or speeding up deliberately? Variation in rate can assist in conveying emotion and can impact on the energy of the speech and the impact on the audience. Example 8 demonstrates a commendation relating to voice pace.

Example 8: Commendation on Voice Pace

What: Jerry mastered the skill of using vocal variety during his presentation on poisons.

How: By slowing the pace during the section on snakes and quickening the delivery for the content on medication he had the audience transfixed and engaged.

Why: Using a combination of these vocal techniques gives the audience time to digest the complex information that was presented in this informative speech while at the same time maintaining the interest of the audience.

6.1.5 Evaluating Pause

Pauses are periods of silence between words and phrases. Their functions are:

- to separate ideas or transition between parts of a speech
- to hold attention
- to create drama or evoke emotion
- to increase suspense
- to give the audience time to digest what a speaker is saying
- to assist a speaker to control nerves

An evaluator can commend or recommend on any of the above points regarding pause. Example 9 provides a recommendation about pausing.

Example 9: Recommendation on Pausing

What: At times, it was difficult to distinguish between the different points that Jenny was making in the body of her speech.

Why: It is important in an informative speech for the audience to follow the logic and structure of the speech, which makes it easier to remember what is learnt.

How: If Jenny were to pause for longer between each segment of her speech, this would provide stronger transitions between points, and add clarity for the audience.

6.2 How to Evaluate Body Language

Speakers do not communicate with words alone. It is important for the evaluator to consider what the audience sees. A speaker presents with the whole body and the whole stage, so physical characteristics of speeches include movement around the stage, posture (stance), gestures, facial expressions and eye contact. Also, while clothing and visual aids are not technically 'body language', they contribute to the visual and physical aspects of a speech.

Body language refers to the way a speaker moves and uses gesture to communicate with the audience. Effective communication requires purposeful, direct movement and gesture to aid in the understanding and impact of the words that are spoken.

The body can be an effective tool for adding emphasis and clarity to words. It can also be a powerful instrument for convincing an audience of sincerity or enthusiasm.

On the other hand, if physical actions are distracting or suggest meanings that don't complement the verbal message, they can deflect from the spoken words. It is the evaluator's role to provide feedback about how well a speaker uses body language to achieve the above goals and/or to assist the speaker on what they can improve by explaining the 'why' and 'how' these improvements will enhance their speeches.

Feedback on body language can be grouped into three general elements, namely; **stagecraft, gesture and expression**. It is recommended that the evaluator attempt to observe each of these elements.

6.2.1 Evaluating Stagecraft

Stagecraft refers to the way we use the speaking area or stage. Effective stagecraft helps us to:

- Address and connect with the entire audience by delivering the speech from different parts of the speaking area
- 'Bring to life' our spoken words by directing bodily movements to offer more impact and to evoke emotion
- Construct a story using different parts of the stage

6.2.2 Evaluating Gesture

Gesture refers to movement of the hands or the head to express ideas and offer additional meaning to spoken words. It is also an effective method of building a relationship with the audience which is vitally important as a communicator.

Effective gestures will;

- Make the audience feel comfortable in the presence of the speaker by building rapport and trust e.g. by using open palm hand gestures
- Offer effective expression of ideas, emotions and messages (i.e. a clenched fist if trying to communicate a sense of anger)

Less effective gestures may;

- Create a barrier between the speaker and the audience, thereby reducing the capacity for the speaker to communicate and build a relationship with their audience (i.e. lack of hand and head movement may reduce energy and may convey a sense of disinterest, apathy or lack of confidence on the speaker's behalf)
- Be distracting e.g. Using similar gestures repeatedly throughout the speech such as hands in, hands out, can create a windscreen wiper effect

Gestures are very powerful. They are sometimes very generic and conversational, such as spreading the arms wide to describe a large object. However, they can also be very descriptive – creating a virtual world around the speaker as they pretend to get into a car or trip over a mat etc. Gestures can be very humorous when they paint a mental picture well.

Example 10 shows how an evaluator can provide a commendation around the use of body language.

Example 10: Commendation about body language

What Tonight John, your objectives included use of body language. I was particularly impressed by the way your body language complemented the verbal message you were delivering.

Why Your audience connected in a meaningful way when your body movement matched what you are saying.

How You grabbed my attention immediately in your opening statement when you started bouncing a ball as you said the words, “It took just 5 seconds to reach the other end of the court and dunk that ball into the net.”

6.2.3 Evaluating Expression

Expression can refer to both facial and bodily expression.

Facial expression assists a speaker to convey emotion. It is important that the speaker is aware of the emotion they are trying to convey and expresses themselves accordingly. Eye contact is a critical element of facial expression. It helps to build rapport and to connect with all members of the audience. It also helps in demonstrating emotion.

Bodily expression refers to stance and posture. Strong, upright posture gives the speaker authority, confidence and credibility, whereas a less upright posture with shoulders rolled forward may give the speaker the appearance of being unconfident or nervous. The following examples demonstrate how an evaluator can provide feedback about eye contact.

Example 11: Commendation about Eye Contact

What John tonight you used exemplary eye contact.

How I was watching intently and noticed you used equal amounts of attention to each section of the audience, and you did this without unsettling anyone with a prolonged stare.

Why This allows your audience to engage with you as the speaker.

Example 12: Recommendation about Eye Contact

Julie, tonight I noticed you were tending to avert your eyes regularly to the floor. After your voice, your eyes are the most powerful tool for communicating.

Your audience will feel left out if you avoid using eye contact. Eye contact can also help to overcome nervousness. When you look at listeners and realize that most are interested in your message, your fear will disappear and your nervous tension will be likely to decrease.

6.2.4 Evaluating the Body Language of Inexperienced Speakers

There is a basic level of body language that is useful to every speech. It doesn't matter whether the speech is informative, inspirational, motivational, or entertaining – body language can say to the audience, “I am confident, I am in control of this speech, I am focusing on you”. Conversely, nervous or unconfident body language says to the audience “I am not comfortable, I am finding this difficult” – and the audience may react to that by also not feeling fully at ease.

Gestures and facial expression are something we use every day – we all know how to use them and understand them. However, several factors can make effective use of body language in a speech difficult, and the evaluator can focus on these in their recommendations.

Nervousness is the main barrier for effective body-language; especially with new speakers. Feeling nervous or fearful can affect the body language of a speaker. It can immobilise a speaker, so that he or she cannot effectively use the gestures that they want to use. Nervousness can also be apparent from our use of distracting gestures – for example, when a speaker fidgets, clutches the lectern or puts their hands in their pockets. A new speaker is often not aware of distracting habits like these that manifest due to nerves **so it is the responsibility of the evaluator to provide feedback on these things.**

Another potential barrier to effective body language is when a **speaker's mind is occupied**. The speaker may be desperately thinking about the words they are saying, trying to put sentences together, trying to memorise, trying to not say “um”... and forget they even have a body! So the body does nothing (or it gets up to its own mischief) while the mind is occupied.

“The first skills at the root of mastering body-language are confidence, calmness and presence of mind.”

Here are some tips to use in how to support and promote effective body language for an inexperienced speaker. It is up to the evaluator to judge if any of these ideas are applicable for a given speaker:

- **Make the speaker aware of what they are doing.** Sometimes the first step to preventing a nervous or distracting gesture is for the speaker to become aware they are doing it. It is like becoming aware that you say “Um”. You begin to notice what you do, and that awareness develops into control.
- **Expressing recommendations in the negative does not help.** If you tell someone “stop being nervous”, “don't sway from side to side”, or “don't wring your hands” then they will not know how to achieve these things and it may only make their nervousness worse. Rather it is the evaluator's responsibility to provide the speaker with practical advice about what they **can** actively do – i.e. “keep your hands still at your side except when using planned gestures”, “walk slowly across the stage and stop for major points”, “move your eyes around the crowd”. **These recommendations can be expressed as a positive action to do rather than focussing on what the speaker is not doing.**
- **Some speakers need a two-step approach.** When considering the level of the speaker that you are evaluating, you may determine that a particular speaker will benefit from a two-step approach, that is, breaking down the practical ‘how to’ step into parts. For example for a speaker who uses nervous gestures an evaluator could suggest: “First, try keeping your hands still, then – when you have managed that – gradually try using your hands for specific planned gestures”.
- **Assist a speaker to ‘unlock’ their body language by suggesting that they apply specific planning and rehearsal.** Most speakers already know *how* to gesture – they do it in everyday conversation. What they need is to unlock that part of their personality while they are feeling the pressure of the stage. Whilst it will take time to fully gain confidence and release their personality, a speaker will experience the most growth when they plan specific movement and gestures, and then deliver those with determination. An evaluator may suggest that a speaker work with their mentor when rehearsing their next speech to **plan** some meaningful gestures.

6.2.5 Evaluating the Body Language of Advanced Speakers

Increasingly as a speaker has “confidence, calmness and presence of mind”, they can find a treasure trove of potential in the land of body language.

If you are evaluating a speaker who exhibits confidence and capability in their body language, then the next important thing to look out for is congruence. Did the body language match the content of the speech? Did the speaker move around the stage purposefully and logically? Were their conversational gestures merely routine and generic, or did they match the mood or the message of the speech? Did the gestures reveal the climax of the speech?

When evaluating an experienced speaker, there may be benefit in pointing out **lost opportunities** in the recommendations. Did the speaker tell a dramatic story which would have benefited from more descriptive body language? It is very common for advanced speakers to begin to take their calm conversational body language for granted, and forget that it has unlimited potential to entertain audiences.

Does the speaker have **boundaries that they can't see**? Can you find a new challenge the speaker could set themselves? For example, a speaker may be very dynamic and conversational, and move around the stage - so that as an evaluator you are struck with the 'wow' factor. But then you look closely, and realise that the speaker's arms are never straight. They always have bent elbows, and they never bend at the waist, which keeps all of their speech in a small bubble around their chest. If they just straightened their arms, suddenly their large gestures could become larger than life!

Remember that every speech and every speaker is unique so we encourage evaluators to use the ideas presented here as a stepping stone for building your own repertoire of commendations and recommendations around the use of body language.

Example 13 is another example of a commendation on body language.

Example 13: Commendation on body language

What Tonight, Sally used the stage masterfully and subtly to reinforce the structure of her speech.

How She stopped three times in her speech to make important points. She delivered her first point at the left of the stage, her next point in the middle, and her final point on the right of the stage.

Why This subtly reinforced the speech structure. It also meant she was able to point to the left of the stage when referring back to her first point, which highlighted the connections she was making, conveying the logic of her argument. It was particularly masterful because she still moved freely around the stage when presenting all of her supporting material, and so the speech remained fluid and conversational.

6.3 How to Evaluate Speech Structure

When evaluating the structure of a speech, the evaluator needs to ask themselves whether it took them on a journey that was easy to follow from the opening to the ending.

Speech structure is the order that the speaker says everything. It is very important for the effectiveness of the speech that the content is revealed in a logical order.

When a speech is well structured, the audience is usually comfortable about their expectations of where the speech is going.

In some speeches, it is also important that the speech takes the audience on an *emotional* journey that also makes sense. This might mean providing emotional highs after emotional lows, so the audience can 'recover' from the intensity of the emotions presented.

Almost all speech structures will have three main components: an opening, a body and a conclusion. These have different functions and an evaluator can provide feedback about whether these components were effectively presented.

6.3.1 *Evaluating Speech Opening*

When an evaluator comments on structure they may like to provide feedback about the opening of the speech, which is very important as it:

- **Gets the audience's attention.** At the very beginning of the speech, the speaker needs to get the audience's attention. The speaker also needs to give the audience a reason to listen – for example, by explaining why the topic is relevant to the audience, or in a humorous speech, by making the audience laugh.
- **Sets the audience's expectations for the speech.** Some examples are: In an informative speech, the opening will commonly reveal the topic and will provide an overview of the content to be expected. In a story, the opening will set the scene, answering the questions what, why, where and who. In an inspirational or persuasive speech, the opening will often provide the problem, and then the rest of the speech will be about providing the solution. In all of these examples, the opening sets the audience's expectations and the evaluator can provide feedback about whether the speaker was successful in achieving this.

Consequently, an ineffective opening may leave the audience unclear about the purpose of the speech (the opening was too brief), uninterested in the speech (the opening was not engaging), or impatient that the speaker is not getting to the point soon enough (the opening was too long). These are all valid points of feedback to a speaker.

6.3.2 *Evaluating Speech Body*

The body of the speech **unveils the bulk of the message**. This generally consists of a series of steps with segues (or 'transitions') between them.

In an informative speech, the different steps will be sub-topics, and the speaker often makes the transitions clear by saying 'subtitles' as segues between various parts of the speech. In a storytelling speech, the different sections may be different 'scenes'.

Ultimately, it is up to the speaker how they organise the bulk of the speech, but what is important to the evaluator is that the journey made sense. If the body of the speech is not well constructed, the audience may become confused as they are missing vital information because it hasn't been provided in a logical structure.

It is common for speakers not to provide clear transitions, which can result in parts of the speech being merged together in the audience's mind. An impact of this is that the audience may not remember the message clearly. When providing feedback about *effective* transitions, an evaluator can suggest that the speaker achieves this through their speech delivery – such as pausing between points, changing voice volume or pitch, changing body language and by moving to a different part of the stage.

6.3.3 *Evaluating Speech Conclusion*

The conclusion of the speech is as important as the opening. The conclusion will:

- **Ensure all aspects of the topic are concluded.** For example, if the speech started with a question, then the close of the speech needs to clearly state what the answer was if this has not been previously revealed.
- **Reinforce the main message of the speech.** For an inspirational or persuasive speech, there will be a 'call to action', which should be reinforced at the close of the speech. For an informative speech, this will often involve summarising the various main points of information that were provided.

An evaluator may provide feedback to a speaker about the impacts of an ineffective conclusion. This could include that the audience is often surprised that it ended and feel that it ended abruptly, or they may be surprised that the speech is continuing because they thought it had already ended, or they may be looking confused, because they have a lot of unanswered questions. The evaluator can then make suggestions about how the speaker could have concluded more successfully.

6.3.4 Opportunities for Speech Structure

When a speaker knows how to use speech structure well, it adds greatly to the effectiveness of the speech. Some things that a speaker can achieve with good structure are:

- Creating suspense – so the audience is continually interested to hear what will come next
- Creating a climax of the speech, which can add power to the main message of the speech
- Assist the audience to make connections, by repeating phrases or themes in the speech
- Add to the humour of the speech, by creating surprises

These ideas may form the basis of recommendations to advanced speakers on how a good structure could be improved and made even better. Examples 14 and 15 are items of feedback relating to speech structure.

Example 14: Commendation on Speech Structure

What Tonight I greatly enjoyed Bill’s speech. It was very easy to listen to. At the end I felt he achieved a very emotional triumphant conclusion.

How One of the ways that he achieved this was through a very simple and subtle structure. He told us three separate stories and at the close of each story he clearly and succinctly described firstly what the story meant to him, and secondly what the story could mean to us. At the end he drew all the lessons together and closed with a positive personal and hopeful story.

Why This subtly reinforced the speech structure. It also meant she was able to point to the left of the stage when referring back to her first point, which highlighted the connections she was making, conveying the logic of her argument. It was particularly masterful because she still moved freely

Example 15: Recommendation on Speech Structure

What At the beginning of Mary’s speech, she said that she would be giving us five reasons to support her argument. However, I found it difficult to differentiate between the several points and identify what those five arguments were in the middle and at the end of the speech

Why In a persuasive speech like this, it will have more impact for the audience if they clearly hear the different arguments that are made. When we are told that there will be five points, we begin to count them off our head, and we are more attentive and remember the speech more easily.

How Mary did very well to “signpost” the number of points she would be making. I recommend that she do two things to strengthen the transitions in the body of her speech: Firstly, introduce each new point with a clear “subheading” sentence. Secondly, use vocal variety and body language to support the transitions by pausing and moving along the stage between each argument.

6.4 How to Evaluate Speech Content

Words and ideas form the message of a speech. These aspects of a speech include content and ideas, literary techniques, grammar, word choice and humour (humour is addressed separately in section 6.5).

When evaluating content, it is **not** the evaluator's role to say whether he or she agreed with the message of the speech or not (though when particularly affected emotionally or empathetic to a speech, it can be appropriate to mention that briefly).

However, there are a few ways that an evaluator can look past agreement or disagreement and still evaluate the content of the speech:

- **Evaluate the clarity of the meaning of the speech.** Was it clear or vague? What was the reason – was non-specific language used? Was there assumed information? Was the speech too repetitive, or not repetitive enough? Did the speech address a broad audience, or did it target abstract thinkers and neglect practical thinkers? Was jargon used?
- **Evaluate the words used in a speech** with regards to correct meaning, grammar and use of rhetorical devices.
- **Evaluate the variety of types of content in a speech.** A speaker has many diverse techniques available to them: logic, examples, analogies, contrast, etc. Did the speaker use any of these effectively?

The *purpose* of a speech affects how we evaluate the content more specifically than with any other speech aspect. Refer to section 4 for details on speech purpose.

6.4.1 How to Say It

Speech 4 of the Competent Communicator manual, 'How to Say It', focusses on the actual words that you can choose to use in your speeches, including word choice, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices. This involves using the best words to describe what you are trying to evoke and painting pictures through words so that a speaker can actually take an audience into their story. These devices can be used to enhance a speech but at times rhetorical devices/props may appear contrived or may not support the purpose of the speech.

As an evaluator you can commend a speaker for their effective word choices and use of rhetorical device. Or you can recommend that a speaker could use less or more effective words or phrases to evoke emotions and paint pictures in the minds of their audience.

Some guiding questions that may help evaluators to comment on the use of rhetorical devices could include:

- Did the speaker use descriptive language?
- Could you picture what they were saying?
- Did they use techniques such as metaphors, similes, alliteration to enhance their speech?
- How did these techniques enhance the speech?

Examples 16 and 17 demonstrate how to provide feedback on the use of rhetorical devices.

Example 16: Commendation for the Use of Rhetorical Devices

What Mary used a rhetorical device effectively when describing the beauty of the scene on the lake.

Why She used a simile by comparing the lake to a mirror as she could see the crystal clear reflection of the majestic mountain range in the background.

How This was effective because audience members were taken to the scene and could picture its beauty because of the carefully chosen words and rhetorical device that she used.

Example 17: Recommendation for the use of Rhetorical Devices

What I recommend that John consider using less words to describe key aspects of his story by using rhetorical devices that help the audience to picture the scenes he is describing.

Why This will assist her in capturing his audience’s imagination and also help him to decrease the length of very long speeches by using fewer words.

How John could have chosen key scenes when he was describing the holiday environment and use devices such as similes: e.g. the lake was crystal clear like a mirror and beautifully reflected the majestic mountains in the distance.

There are a variety of rhetorical devices that are used in speeches that can enhance the content, meaning and emotion. It is useful for evaluators to commend speakers who use such devices effectively.

Whilst these are not all equally important or appropriate to all situations (for example, trying to rhyme when presenting a quarterly report to the board of directors is not generally recommended), there are a few devices that are particularly useful for speakers even in a professional context. It is important to present in a style that is appropriate for different audiences.

- **Rhetorical questions:** Rhetorical questions are questions that do not demand an answer. They are used to introduce a topic. Typically they introduce a problem that the speaker then sets out to solve. E.g. “So why do we drink so much coffee?” It’s a combination of over-supply and the addictive nature of the drink...”
- **Adjectives:** Adjectives (and also adverbs) are *modifiers*. They add detail to what comes after. E.g. “...the large, green statue.” Adjectives are often neglected, but they are the most concise way to add more meaning and realism to a message.
- **Anaphora:** Repeating the same phrase at the start of a few sentences. E.g. “Those were good years: I was young. I was free. I was alive.”
- **Triplet:** The triplet is versatile. It simply consists of stating three points, or making a list of three things. It is one of the most common tools in spoken English. E.g. “What matters is what we source, where we source it from, and how they get it here.”
- **Alliteration:** Alliteration is starting several words with the same letter. E.g. “This painting is fantastic; it’s crafty, it’s colourful, and it catches the eye” (also a triplet).
- **Metaphor and Simile:** Metaphors and simile both describe something by making a comparison. E.g. “The table was as large as an elephant” “You’re an open book – everyone can see what’s going on inside.”

- **Rhyme and assonance:** Rhyme is two words that end with the same sound e.g. “Don’t mess with him. He’ll play with your heart; he’ll tear it apart.” Assonance is repetition of the vowel sound in a word e.g. “that’s a fast shark!”

Just like good word use can add colour and meaning to a speech, there are some practices that can detract from a speech and which an evaluator can observe and recommend that a speaker avoids. Examples include:

- **Jargon.** Jargon is words or phrases that relate to a very specific field of knowledge. For example, an engineer will use terms like truss, brace, stress, fracture, tension, plasticity – and know what they all mean. However an audience without the right training will not have that knowledge.
- **Big or obscure words.** Don’t use big words just to sound clever. Small and simple words suit a larger range of audience and so they are generally the better choice.
- **Clichés.** Clichés are phrases that we frequently use to describe situations. However, over time they can become over-used E.g. “I would now like to...” Sometimes it’s better to invent your own metaphor and it will feel fresh.
- **Unnecessary filler words.** It is common for speakers to use words such as “um”, “ah”, “so”, “and” and “well” in situations where they are not needed or meaningful. A common recommendation is to replace these words with pausing, which is more impactful. Example 18 is a short recommendation on the use of filler words.

Example 18: Recommendation on Use of Filler Words

What: Veronica, tonight your speech was peppered with “filler” words. These included ‘um’, ‘what’, ‘so’, ‘ah’, and ‘you know’.

Why: Your audience can become distracted if fillers are used regularly and may not digest some of the content of your speech.

How: The best method to avoid the use of “filler” words is simply to pause. It gives you time to take a breath and your audience time to digest what you have just said. In time your self-awareness will help you to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of filler words.

6.5 How to Evaluate Humour

Humour is a bonus to any speech. If an audience is relaxed and engaged enough to laugh at the speech, then this usually means they are also receptive to the message and are more likely to recall the speech positively. As evaluators, we can tell speakers ‘why’ humour added (or *would* have added) to the effectiveness their speech.

Humour requires a lot of things to come together in order to work effectively. It is useful for evaluators to try to see past the audience response, to the speaker’s execution of the humour itself. Even when humour doesn’t get any laughs, the speaker might still be 90% of the way there, and an evaluator has an opportunity to encourage a speaker by identifying this.

6.5.1 Factors that may impact on Laughter

The following describes some of the factors that may impact on the audience’s propensity to laugh at humour in a speech. An evaluator can provide useful feedback to a speaker if they can diagnose any of these issues and propose a remedy through recommendations.

- a) **Environmental factors** e.g. technological delays; poor lighting or air-conditioning (too hot, too cold, too noisy) may not be conducive to laughter.
- b) **The confidence of the speaker** If a speaker projects nervousness, then some audience members may naturally feel nervous on the speaker's behalf, and may be less likely to laugh. A humorous speaker needs to be confident, comfortable, and thinks his/her own jokes are funny.
- c) **The delivery of the humour** We are often told not to laugh at our own jokes. However, if a speaker looks so serious that no-one can tell that they are joking, that might be going too far. There is nothing wrong with laughing at your own joke, as long as everyone else is laughing too. If a speaker wants to keep an audience laughing, then they need to say things that are funny. They also need to speak clearly enough using common vocabulary, so that everyone can hear and understand why it is funny – sometimes jokes miss out on laughs because the speaker spoke too softly for part of the joke and the audience missed out on critical information. This is the type of thing that an evaluator can recommend to a speaker to improve their delivery of humour.
- d) **The dynamics of the audience** Some audience members may not be willing to be the only person laughing (for this reason, large audiences are easier to entertain than small ones). Once the audience has *started* laughing, then they have some momentum, and are more willing to laugh again. So for a humorous speech it is usually good to start with a very good joke early in the introduction.

Example 19 is a combined commendation and recommendation on the use of humour.

Example 19: Commendation and recommendation on use of humour

What I want to commend Ben for his humour in this evening's speech. The humour was well-timed, and even when he didn't get a strong laughter response, Ben continued courageously through the speech.

Why Ben, I felt for you when you didn't get many laughs this afternoon, because your content was funny. I think that in this speech, the audience sometimes didn't laugh for one main reason: you looked very serious with your "dry humour"; consequently not everyone was sure you were actually joking!

How I recommend that you could try: Firstly, making a very funny and silly joke very early in the speech, to give the audience a clear understanding that you are being funny, and to give them momentum with laughing. Secondly, consider smiling at us! It's ok to laugh at your own jokes a little bit – even if your eyes just glimmer cheekily, we'll feel comfortable that we're laughing *with* you.

6.5.2 Different types of humour

There are many different types of humour that an evaluator can provide feedback about. Some include:

- Absurdity
- Satire
- Sarcasm
- Puns / word play
- Dark humour

To provide useful feedback about the different types of humour it may be useful for evaluator to do some research into these types so that they can comment with authority on whether the speaker was using them successfully.

What makes something funny? Different varieties of humour all have two things in common. Firstly, they **surprise** us – humour is built around surprising the audience with something unexpected. Secondly, they

are usually **not serious**. Audiences tend to laugh at things that are not serious and that are fun, even though sometimes they are *poking* fun of things that *are* serious.

Sometimes attempts at humour are ineffective simply because they aren't funny. An evaluator can try to identify *why* the humour wasn't funny: Was it too serious or dark? Was it unsurprising and predictable? Or was it just that the delivery lacked clarity so that the audience didn't understand it? The evaluator can then develop a recommendation for the speaker to remedy the issue.

6.5.3 Timing for Successful Humour

Delivering humour with appropriate timing is an art and can be one of the hardest skills for a speaker to master. The evaluator can comment on the speaker's ability to provide a clear moment of surprise (or 'punch line') for the audience. Often speakers lose out on laughs because they tell the punch line at the start of the joke, rather than the end, and people get the surprise halfway through a sentence.

The speaker also needs to pause for the audience to laugh. Some jokes will have a 'lag time' – the audience may take half a second to understand the joke. In these cases, if the speaker doesn't pause, then the audience may never get the opportunity to laugh.

This skill is often called comedic timing. The speaker needs to set the audience up so that they have everything they need to understand the punch line. Then the speaker delivers the punch line. Then the speaker pauses to allow the laughter.

If an evaluator chooses to provide feedback about humour, they can assess if any of the above elements were present in a humorous speech i.e. punch-line deliveries, use of pausing, timing, speaking loudly and clearly enough and with confidence.

6.5.4 Providing Feedback on Structure of the Humour Delivered

Humour often follows a specific structure, and understanding this may assist an evaluator to provide useful commendations and recommendations to a humorous speaker.

- **Set-up.** Not all jokes have a set-up, but most jokes do. The point of the set-up is for the speaker to create expectations in the audience's mind. The length of the set-up should be appropriate to the punch-line. Sometimes there is a lot of superfluous information provide in the set-up that doesn't add to the humour, but just delays it. However, some humour is greatly assisted by suspense, and a long set-up can create this.
- **Pause** (for suspense).
- **Punch-line.** This is the moment of surprise, where the expectations of the audience are broken (when there is no set-up, the surprise will be breaking expectations that the speaker didn't need to create, such as cultural expectations). Generally, this should be as succinct as possible. The shorter the better. In fact, if it is a *long* punch-line, then sometimes it needs to be *said quickly*.
- **Pause** (for laughter).
- **Compound the humour.** Now that the audience is already laughing, there's a chance to deliver a second punch line, or even more, creating new surprises, or adding new depth to those already provided. This is an advanced skill, which can turn a simple 'humorous speech with some laughter', into a 'humorous speech where the audience ended up rolling around the floor in hysterics'.

6.6 How to Evaluate the Use of Visual Aids

If a speaker chooses to use visual aids for their presentation, it is useful for the evaluator to provide feedback about whether the visual aids enhanced or detracted from the speech. The effective use of a visual aid can be a powerful element of a speech as it can symbolise the message of the speech and be a long term reminder or 'talking point' of the presentation for audiences. For example many Toastmasters will remember the 2014 world champion of public speaking, Dananjaya Hettiarachchi and his use of a prop; a single rose, to reinforce his message.

Visual aids can also save many words for a presenter and allow them to get to the main point by showing an item or presenting something through PowerPoint. A picture, graph and statistics can take the place of a long verbal explanation.

Examples of visual aids that an evaluator can look out for include: PowerPoint presentations, tables, graphs, props, images/photos, handouts or flip charts.

Examples of feedback around visual aids could include:

- The visibility of the visual aid for the audience. Is it large enough for the audience to see?
- The relevance of the visual aid to the message of the speech.
- The complexity of information presented. Is a page with several graphs too complicated for an audience to grasp quickly? Does it add to the presentation? Is it shown long enough for the audience to comprehend?
- The ease of use of the visual aid.
- How the visual aid enhanced the speech.
- The accessibility of the visual aid (if using props). Did the speaker need to turn their back to the audience or rummage in a noisy bag to show the audience?
- The preparedness of the speaker (if using PowerPoint). Is the IT equipment working? Is there a backup plan if it doesn't work or there is a power failure?
- Did the speaker appear to have rehearsed with the visual aid or did they seem unsure or awkward?
- If using PowerPoint, was this visual aid used as the entire purpose of the speech? Did the speaker become redundant as a result? Were the slides large enough? Was there too much or too little information on each slide? Did the speaker stand in front of the projector or block the slides? Did they read the slides word for word? Was there opportunity to black out slides when not in use? Was the presentation the appropriate size for the room being used?

Example 20 and 21 demonstrate ideas on how to provide feedback on the use of visual aids.

Example 20: Commendation on use of visual aids

What Ben I would like to commend you on your use of props as visual aids to enhance your speech.

How I liked the way you produced your props so seamlessly and without distracting the audience from what you were saying. By asking an assistant to place the prop upside down on the table in the break prior to the speech enabled you to have time to prepare at the side of the stage and not disengage with the audience or waste your valuable time once the speech began.

Why It is important when using visual aids, that you do not lose your audience. Clearly you had rehearsed the speech and how to use the props and this masterfully added another dimension to your speech.

Example 21: Recommendation about the use of visual aids

What: The handouts that you provided during your speech were distracting to the audience.

Why: Audience members began to chatting whilst engaging with the person next to them and you lost the audience focus as the notes were passed on.

How: A more useful strategy when using visual aids could be to engage the help of an assistant to provide the handouts or to place them on the tables prior to your speech.

SPEECH EVALUATION

6.7 Observe, Analyse and Commend/Recommend - General Template

Speech Title:

Speaker's Name:

Project

Category	Observe	Analyse	Commend/Recommend
Structure			
Content			
Body Language			
Voice			
Other			

This template is suitable for prepared and table-topics speeches.

7. KNOWING THE LEVEL OF THE SPEAKER

It is important to determine the feedback that will be most appropriate and useful for the level and experience of the speaker. Learning a new skill is like climbing a ladder, and to help someone effectively, you need to tell them about two things: *the rung they are on* and *the next rung*. If you tell someone about a rung that is out of reach for them, then it doesn't help them, and might be more discouraging instead. This requires discernment, as you have to determine the speaker's *level* based on their *performance*. The feedback you provide to an Icebreaker speech will be very different to that provided for the advanced speaking manuals or to a Toastmaster who is a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM).

7.1 Evaluating New Speakers

The Icebreaker speech is the first prepared speech in a Toastmaster's experience from the Competent Communicator manual.

It is critical that Icebreaker speeches receive quality evaluations because they can affect whether a speaker:

- Has the confidence to speak again
- Chooses to continue as a member of a Toastmaster club
- Is able to recognise the strengths that they already possess as a speaker
- Is able to improve their presentation skills.

The Icebreaker speech is a 4-6 minute speech where a new speaker begins speaking before an audience. It is common for a speaker giving their Icebreaker to be incredibly nervous and perhaps unsure about the experience. It is important for the evaluator to keep this in mind and to encourage the speaker and commend them on their courage in delivering their first speech.

The CRC (Commend, Recommend, Commend) method, as with all evaluations, is highly important for Icebreakers so that the speaker receives positive reinforcement at the beginning and at the end of the evaluation. Often Toastmasters are not aware of what they do well so having commendations allows them to recognise their strengths so that they can build on these strengths the next time and gain confidence from this realisation. Providing examples of when and how they demonstrated these strengths can also assist a Toastmaster to recognise what they have achieved. Simply pointing out to a speaker that they have an inviting smile or a warm tone to their voice are often strengths that are not obvious to them.

Recommendations are also very important so that the speaker has something practical to work on for their next speech. People often join Toastmasters to overcome their nerves so some gentle tips to assist a speaker on how to control their nerves in subsequent speeches can be useful. It is useful for evaluators to identify how nerves may manifest in a new speaker's presentation such as distracting gestures, pacing, shaking, avoiding eye contact, speaking quickly, which are all 'normal' and common responses.

It is important for evaluators to review the objectives for the Icebreaker in the Competent Communicator manual and to focus their feedback on these objectives. Some of the key points to look for are:

- What strong points does the speaker already have?
- How well did the audience get to know the speaker?
- Did the speech reflect adequate preparation?
- Did the speaker talk clearly and audibly?

- Did the speech have a definite opening, body, and conclusion?
- Please comment on the speaker's use of notes.

Using the 'what, why and how' approach to delivering recommendations for the Icebreaker helps the speaker to understand **what** they can improve on, **why** working on this aspect of their presentation will help them to improve as a speaker and **practical tips for how** to make these improvements. Example 22 is an example of feedback for an Icebreaker speech.

Example 22: Recommendation for voice

What: At times it was difficult to hear every word that Ben said especially with the competing noise of the air-conditioner and traffic outside. The volume of his voice was a bit quiet and the pace was a little bit fast.

Why: When sharing a story, it is important that the audience hears every word so that they can follow the logic of the story and do not miss anything important.

How: In Ben's next speech, I recommend that Ben concentrates on increasing the volume of his voice (a bit louder than usual for this venue) and speaks at a pace that is slower than he thinks he needs to. It takes a while to get used to speaking more slowly than you do in normal conversation but when speaking to an audience the pace is generally better being slower. This will improve with each speech that you deliver Ben; audio recording your voice may also assist you to recognise the clarity of your voice for next time.

7.2 Evaluating Advanced Speakers

All speakers have room to improve, regardless of whether they are a Distinguished Toastmaster or doing their Icebreaker speech. As an audience member providing feedback, please do not be intimidated by an advanced speaker - you can offer a fresh and different perspective with your feedback.

As evaluators, we all notice different things in a speech just as we do when we read a book; we interpret it differently depending on our backgrounds and life experience. To assist you in the process of evaluating an advanced speaker, you may refer to Section 4 on speech purpose and objectives, use the 'what, why and how' analysis (Section 3) and gather some inspiration from the examples of commendations and recommendations in this resource.

On the following page is a checklist of tips on the types of things that you may wish to consider if you find it difficult to think of recommendations for an advanced speaker.

Checklist of tips for evaluating advanced speakers

1. Did you understand the general and specific purpose of the speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did the speaker meet their objectives? How did they meet them? What did you observe?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Was there anything the speaker could have done that would have assisted them to better meet their objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did the speaker use the stage to tell their story? I.e. did they anchor/block different parts of the story to different parts of the stage?	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did the speaker move with purpose or did they tend to wander?	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did the speaker use humour? Could they have used humour? When? Why?	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Was there any part of the speech that you liked less? Can you identify why? How could this part have been improved?	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. How did the speech open? Was it a strong opening? Suggestions for improving opening.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. How did the speech close? Was it a strong conclusion? Suggestions for improving conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Did the speaker vary the volume and pace of their voice? What impact did this have?	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Did the speaker use pausing? Were the pauses long enough? Can you identify where longer pausing would have been effective and why?	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Did the speaker use body language? Were the gestures varied/appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Did the speaker smile/enter the stage with confidence/use salutations correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Did you hear every word the speaker said? What impact did this have?	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Was the speaker well prepared? Had they rehearsed their speech enough? Did they use notes?	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Did the speaker use any literary techniques/rhetorical devices such as alliteration, metaphor or simile? If not, was there a place for using such devices to add to their speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Did the speaker include everyone with their eye contact?	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Did the speaker look at the floor or the ceiling when trying to think?	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Did the speaker obviously lose their place in the speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Was the content appropriate for the audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Were there clear transitions between different parts of the story? How did the speaker indicate the transitions? Did they do this well to make it easy for the audience?	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Did the audience appear to be engaged with the speaker throughout the entire speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Did the speaker vary the tone of the voice to evoke different emotions?	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Did the speech title suit the content and purpose of the speech?	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.3 Advanced Skill: Diagnosis

Everyone is different. To become a good evaluator means learning how to understand, analyse and diagnose the reasons behind a speaker's actions.

For example, if someone delivers a speech that has almost no gesturing, there may be several possible reasons:

1. The speaker is unaware of the importance of gestures, values the content of the speech more than the delivery and is very focused on knowledge;
2. The speaker is nervous and therefore finds it difficult to gesture; their arms may feel locked at their sides and shake if they try to move them
3. The speaker is unprepared – usually they gesture well, but for this speech they were more focused on trying to remember what they were saying.

If the evaluator can detect what is going on in each of these situations, they may be able to more effectively determine the most appropriate feedback for the speaker. For example, in case 1, the evaluator may focus on *informing* the speaker about gestures. In case 2, the evaluator may focus on *how* to start gesturing by planning specifically, or the evaluator might choose not to mention the gesturing at all and focus on other feedback. In case 3, the evaluator could make a recommendation about effective speech preparation. Or the evaluator may talk about the skills required to deliver a good speech with little preparation – which is what we practice in impromptu speaking.

So as you can see, an evaluation may go in completely different directions for different speakers, even though the initial observation (in this case, regarding body language) is the same.

The keys to achieving this level of insight are:

- to look at the speech as a whole and see how different observations may be connected
- to put yourself in the speaker's shoes. This is where an evaluator's own experiences may help them to make more targeted recommendations to a speaker

Example 23 uses the 'What, Why, How' framework to provide feedback on body language.

Example 23: Recommendation on Distracting Body Language

What: John, during your speech I noticed you were occasionally putting your hand into your pocket and jingling coins.

Why: This could indicate a physical manifestation of nervousness or you are unaware of this habit. Having awareness is an important step in your development.

How: The first step in eliminating this is to be aware of your body movement. I suggest that you arrange for your next speech to be videoed and additionally ask someone observing to watch carefully for these specific traits and give you feedback.

8. GENERAL EVALUATIONS

8.1 Role of the General Evaluator

This section of the guide addresses how the role of General Evaluator is performed.

The General Evaluator evaluates those roles that are not evaluated by others during the meeting; e.g. Sergeant at Arms, Toastmaster, Table Topics Master, Timer, Speech Evaluators and Table Topics Evaluators. Welcome to Guests presenter and other speciality segments unique to specific clubs are also evaluated. It is not the General Evaluator's role to evaluate prepared speeches or Table Topics speeches, as these have evaluators already assigned to them.

The General Evaluator should undertake this role using similar principles as outlined for evaluators in this resource by providing constructive commendations and recommendations.

The role of General Evaluator involves:

- Critical thinking
- Organisational skills
- Time management
- Motivational skills
- Team building skills

The General Evaluator takes notes on club proceedings during the meeting, considering aspects such as:

- Preparation
- Timeliness
- Organisation
- Enthusiasm
- Performance of duties

The General Evaluator gives a verbal report towards the end of the meeting. Comments are made about specific roles. The General Evaluator also gives feedback about the overall meeting – vibe, energy, interesting comments, interruptions and anything of note.

8.2 Evaluation of Specific Roles

8.2.1 Evaluation of Sergeant at Arms

- Was the room set up appropriately? E.g. banner displayed, water and glasses on tables, chairs and tables set up.
- Did the meeting start on time?
- Did the meeting start in a positive way?

8.2.2 Evaluation of Toastmaster

- How well did the Toastmaster set the tone for the evening? E.g. address the theme, present with enthusiasm etc.
- Did they:
 - Appear well-prepared?
 - Announce changes to agenda?
 - Include the meeting theme?
 - Lead the applause?
 - Have smooth handovers with other presenters?
 - Use appropriate segues between presenters?
 - Handle disruptions and changes to the agenda well?
 - Communicate with the timer about the timing of each segment?
 - Were guests made welcome?
 - Were evaluators asked to read out speech objectives?
 - Were they flexible when necessary?

8.2.3 Evaluation of Table Topics Master

- Were members selected appropriately - priority given to those people who had no role or a minor role on the agenda?
- Were guests invited to participate?
- Was the Table Topics activity explained clearly for new members or guests?
- Were the questions clear and succinct?
- Were the questions appropriate for all members? E.g. including members who do not speak English as their first language.
- Were questions that would favour a particular age group or other group avoided?

8.2.4 Evaluation of Speech Evaluators

- Did they use CRC method and provide practical strategies for the speaker to take away?
- Did they include the whole audience?
- Did they include a summary?
- Did they present in a friendly, diplomatic and nurturing manner?
- Did they finish on time?

8.2.5 Evaluation of Timer

- Did they handle the timing equipment well?
- Was their report clear?
- Did they understand their role?

8.2.6 Evaluation of Audience members

- Were members listening intently and with respect to all speakers?
- Were members doing other things instead of listening? e.g. attending to electronic devices
- Were members applauding appropriately?
- Were members generally supportive of each other?
- Were members welcoming and helpful to guests?

The General Evaluator may also be asked to provide a written evaluation of a member's role in their 'Competent Leader' manual. When this occurs the member should give their manual to the General Evaluator before the meeting begins.

The role of General Evaluator can be marked off in the Competent Leadership manual. When undertaking this role members should bring their manuals to meetings and ask someone to evaluate their performance of the role and fill in the manual.

A template has been provided that Toastmasters can choose to use or develop one of their own.

8.3 General Evaluator Template

General Evaluator: _____ Meeting # _____

Meeting Theme: _____ Date: _____

CL Manual Credit: General Evaluator – Project 2, 3, 5, 7 or 8

Presenter	Positives- Commend	Improvements- Recommend	Summarise
Sergeant at Arms			
Toastmaster			
Table Topics Master			
Table Topics Evaluator 1			
Table Topics Evaluator 2			
Speech Evaluator 1			

GENERAL EVALUATIONS

Speech Evaluator 2			
Speech Evaluator 3			
Speech Evaluator 4			
Timer			
Other e.g. Um/Ah Counter, Welcome to Guests			
Overall Meeting			

9. TABLE TOPICS EVALUATIONS

The Table Topics evaluator provides feedback on the impromptu speeches in a Table Topics session.

In some clubs, it may also be the role of the Table Topics evaluator to evaluate the Table Topics master, though in most clubs this is part of the General Evaluator's role. Be clear on what you will be evaluating before the meeting.

9.1 Table Topics Evaluation Format

Clubs vary in their approach to the role of Table Topics Evaluator. It is a challenging role due to the number of speakers to be observed and evaluated in a short space of time and the length of time given to provide feedback to each speaker.

Some clubs allocate two table topics evaluators who take turns with evaluating speakers (odds and evens) and this allows a little time between each speaker. This is a useful approach as it reduces the pressure on each evaluator.

Regardless of the methodology used, as with other evaluations, the aim is to provide positive commendations to the speakers as well as recommendations for improvement.

There are two main approaches that an individual can use when evaluating Table Topics:

1. Provide general feedback to the entire group. This method allows the evaluator to provide more detail about the commendations and recommendations he or she has written. The evaluator can draw examples from specific speakers to provide examples for the points being made.
2. Evaluate each speaker individually, providing a mini CRC structure. When there is less time available to prepare or deliver the evaluation, the evaluator may reduce this to just one commendation and one recommendation. The evaluation may need to be very succinct, as often there will only be 30 to 60 seconds available for each mini evaluation.

A template has been provided in the following pages to assist with this activity but it is advised that you develop your own style and templates that suit you.

9.2 Common Observations for Table Topics Evaluators

A Table Topics evaluator can make observations about any aspect of the speech: the structure, content, voice, body language and any of the other things identified in this resource.

However, it is important for the evaluator to remember that the speakers are inventing the speech on the spot, so they are under a lot of pressure.

There are some recommendations that are common in Table Topics sessions:

- Characteristics that reveal that the speaker is making it up on the spot, such as wringing the hands, looking at the ceiling, or saying "Um" a lot. Some strategies could include to take more thinking time before talking, or to slow down the delivery in order to allow time to think before speaking.
- Changing track. Sometimes a speaker will have a good idea part way through their speech and so completely change direction to follow the new idea. However, this can make their presentation confusing for the audience.

TABLE TOPICS EVALUATIONS

- Addressing the questioner, instead of the audience. It is natural to direct an answer to the person that answered the question, but impromptu speeches are meant to be speeches to the audience.
- Playing with the piece of paper that the question is written on.
- Giving a very brief answer. Sometimes it is difficult to know how to expand on an answer. Toastmasters has some useful standard impromptu speech structures that can assist a speaker to do this (e.g. PREP – Point of view, Reason, Example, Point of view; PPF – Past, present, Future; AIDA – Attention, Interest, Desire, Action); more information about these is available online and is outside the scope of this resource.
- Giving an unstructured response. Giving a well-structured response is difficult in an impromptu. However, some speakers will completely omit an opening and purely repeat the question, or omit the conclusion –which is the speaker’s chance to summarise their main idea.
- Presenting a “list” type response, where the speaker says all of the ideas that come to their head, one by one. A better structure is to list only three or so ideas, and then expand on those ideas by providing examples, anecdotes and reasons for them.

9.3 Table Topics – Evaluation Templates

Speaker/ Topic	Commend	Recommend
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
<p>A. Speech Structure: Opening Body Close</p> <p>B. Physical: Stage-craft Body language Eye contact</p>		<p>C. Voice: Flexibility Volume + Pace Pausing</p> <p>D. Content Relevance Logical Length (time)</p> <p>Useful Words Eloquent Precise Skilled Professional Unique Ingenious Successful Exemplary Enriching Powerful</p> <p>Uplifting Creditable Expressive Creative Inspiring Enhance Strengthen Reinforce Progress Develop</p>

10. COMPETING IN EVALUATION CONTESTS

Evaluation contests are a great way to improve your speaking skills and challenge yourself to perform under a different set of circumstances. With contest-speaking comes greater scrutiny and a closer adherence to criteria. The outcome, more often than not, is an invaluable experience and substantial progress in your evaluation skills.

Evaluation contests are a lot of fun. They require you to work and speak under pressure, as well as make you think differently and abstractly about other speakers and speaking techniques. Winning evaluations require strong analysis and some creative flair that makes them stand out. Focus on these and you will be well on your way to winning an evaluation contest at any level.

10.1 The Criteria for Contest Evaluations

It's recommended that you have an understanding of the evaluation contest criteria before you compete. You will not be given any feedback in a contest like you are in club meetings. You will be merely judged on 4 distinct criteria out of a possible 100 marks as follows:

1. Analytical quality (40 marks)
2. Recommendations (30 marks)
3. Technique (15 marks)
4. Summation (15 marks)

10.1.1 First judging criterion: Analytical Quality

The depth and level of analysis is often what separates top performing competitive evaluators from other evaluators. Worth 40% of your mark, it's imperative that your recommendations and commendations are analysed at the required standard.

In order to do this, you must understand the difference between **identification** and **analysis**.

- Identification simply refers to issue spotting (the 'WHAT') – what has the speaker done? What could the speaker do better?
- Analysis refers to why it matters and how it can be improved (the 'WHY' and the 'HOW') – why is it important that the speaker improve in this area? How will adopting this technique improve the speech?

Too much emphasis on identification and not enough emphasis on analysis is often the difference between 1st place and last place in an evaluation contest. Take a look at the example below:

Example 24: Recommendation demonstrating identification and analysis

John, I thought your speech could be improved by using more of the speaking area. Using more of the speaking area is important because it enables you to engage more intimately with different parts of the audience. This enhances your relationship with the audience members and will therefore give your presentation more impact and meaning. To achieve this, I encourage you to move both laterally and forward-backward, thereby enabling you to deliver different parts of your speech from different areas.

Using the very simple example above, you can see the power of analysis. Not only is the evaluator identifying the issue, but he is contextualising and analysing how adopting the recommendation adds

value to the speech. Remember, this is worth 40% of your mark, so make sure you don't fall into the trap of issue spotting without analysing.

10.1.2 Second judging criterion: Recommendations

With the importance of analytical quality in mind, your recommendations as a competitor in the evaluation contest must be positive, specific and helpful (as they should be for any evaluation!). You will notice in the criteria, contestants don't receive any specific marks for commendations like they do recommendations. Your commendations will fall under the 'analytical quality' category (the previous) and the 'technique' category (worth 15%) where you are marked on your sensitivity and motivation. Of course, recommendations are assessed here too, but they are also the subject of their own category (worth 30%). For this reason, it's important that they are given high priority in your evaluation.

Things to remember when offering recommendations:

- They are worth 30% of the mark, therefore they must be **fully analysed**.
- Try to incorporate **at least 2 fully analysed** recommendations in any contest.
- 2 or 3 fully analysed recommendations are better than 4 or 5 identified recommendations.
- Aim for **specificity** over generalisation.

Tip: Be creative with your recommendations. Often there are obvious issues that many of the contestants speak about. To make you stand out to the judges, try and find more unique and specific recommendations.

10.1.3 Third judging criterion: Technique

As with any evaluation, technique is paramount. Worth 15%, it is important that you adopt a technique that is sympathetic, sensitive and motivational. This serves to encourage and inspire the evaluation test speaker to keep improving and developing.

- Make sure your contest evaluation **starts** and **ends** on a positive note.
- Use language that is constructive, not abrasive.
- Smile and adopt a positive demeanour.

Remember, how you speak and look sets the tone of your evaluation. Although you need to analyse and constructively critique effectively, you must do so with sympathy and sensitivity so as to encourage, not discourage the speaker.

10.1.4 Fourth judging criterion: Summation

An effective summation in contests *should be* an easy 15 marks for evaluation contestants. It is often lacking in standard club evaluations, so it's important that you break the habit of ending at the red light without summarising.

A quality summation should do 2 things:

- It should repeat and summarise the key commendations and recommendations that the evaluator offered; and secondly,
- It should close with a general statement about the overall feel and impact of the speech.

Whilst the former statement is quite uniform, the latter is an opportunity for the contestant to show some creative flair. You may comment on whether the speaker achieved their objective (i.e. did they succeed in persuading, entertaining or informing?) or you may discuss the positive impact their speech had on the

audience. Remember, your closing statement is the last thing the judges hear, so make sure it is constructive and leaves the speaker feeling encouraged and positive about their speech development.

Tip: Stay concise and keep it to 2 sentences.

10.2 Tips on what to do in an Evaluation Contest

In an evaluation contest, the contestants are permitted to take notes during the speech and in the 5 minute period after the speech. After this the contestant is required to hand their notes to the Sergeant @Arms until it's their turn to deliver their evaluation and the notes will then be returned to the evaluation contestant.

During the speech, it is essential that you find the correct balance between listening and note-taking. You don't want to miss something important because you were too busy frantically scribbling. How to combat this?

- focus on the "WHAT" during the speech. Listen, identify the issues, and jot down a 'memory jogger' such as a quote, a movement or a time for your reference.
- You will have time to undertake a more detailed analysis after the test speaker has finished

Now the speech has completed and you've identified your main points of evaluation, it's time to flesh out your analysis.

- Take each point and analyse; answer the 'why' and offer an example to the speaker as how they could improve.
- Decide on an opening and a conclusion. The first and last thing you say sets the tone, so it's a good idea to script your opening and closing sentences.

10.3 Preparation for Evaluation Contests

Preparing for evaluation contests can be more difficult than preparing for *prepared* speaking contests. However, that's not to say you can't prepare at all. There are a few things you can do to sharpen your presentation come contest day and ensure that you stand out above the rest.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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*,

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abrasive, gritty and *energetic* more effectively describe the subject. Use your words wisely! See Section 0 for alternative words to 'good' and 'excellent'.

11. CONCLUSION

This resource is packed with ideas, explanations, examples and templates to assist Toastmasters in developing and presenting evaluations. It has been designed so that you can use ideas from each section or tap into particular areas of interest.

On behalf of the Evaluation Action Team guided by Kerry's Evaluation Vision (KEV), I hope you find this resource useful and that you enjoy developing confidence and skills in the preparation and delivery of evaluations.

