

Communications or Public Speaking Course

Opening Unit: Speeches (and Speakers) that Changed the World

Unit Goals:

1. Acclimate students to the expectations and demands of public speaking.
2. Employ great speakers as models for strong student speeches.
3. Use these speeches as the foundation for continual goal-setting (i.e., “What skills do you see in these speakers that you want for yourself?”)
4. Situate these speeches in history, determining their audience and impact. *This step should be done in conjunction with the history curriculum, along with the selection of speeches.*
5. Glean from several of these speeches a process for writing and delivering great speeches.

This will be a 2-3 week unit before practical speech work. The above goals will result in a road map for success in the class. Each goal relates to at least one of the other units in the class.

Catalogue of Great Speeches

Speeches from the list below will be selected based on several factors:

- 1) The current curriculum in the core subjects. If a history class is dealing with one of these speakers, we will study that speech!
- 2) The experience, needs, and skill level of individual students, as assessed in beginning-of-class warmups.
- 3) Problems or challenges within the student populace that can be addressed *proactively and constructively* through the study of a particular speech.
- 4) Selected speeches must relate in a significant way to the cultural milieu of the students.

Either one student or a small group of students will conduct supervised research about a speech and its speaker, then give a short presentation about the speech and speaker to the rest of the class, so as a group they become familiar with as many speeches as possible. The teacher will select three not chosen as the foundation for teaching this unit.

The Catalogue

- “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” by Patrick Henry
- “Ain't I A Woman?” by Sojourner Truth
- George Washington's Farewell Address
- “A House Divided” or “Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln
- Announcement of Pearl Harbor by President Roosevelt
- John F. Kennedy's Inaugural – “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You”
- “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “Is It A Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote” by Susan B. Anthony
- Robert Kennedy's Announcement of the Assassination of MLK
- George W. Bush's 2nd Inaugural
- “We Shall Fight on the Beeches” by Winston Churchill
- “Quit India” by Mohandas Gandhi
- “I Am Prepared to Die” by Nelson Madela
- “Address to the Women of America” by Gloria Steinem
- “Perils of Indifference” by Elie Wiesel
- “The Wrath of Grapes Boycott” by Cesar Chavez
- George W. Bush's 9/11 Address
- Barrack Obama's Election Victory Speech
- Winona LaDuke's 1996 VP Acceptance Speech