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## Speaking Activities Benchmark II

The following Speaking Activities were submitted by classroom teachers.  
Please adapt them to fit the needs of your classroom and students.



## General Ideas For Speeches

Often a speaking activity can be used across content area and grade levels. The following ideas can be adjusted to fit the needs of your topic of study or area of current focus (informative, persuasive, etc.)

Consider using these as “practice” activities in preparation for the speech you will score on the official scoring guide.

### Shoebox Speech

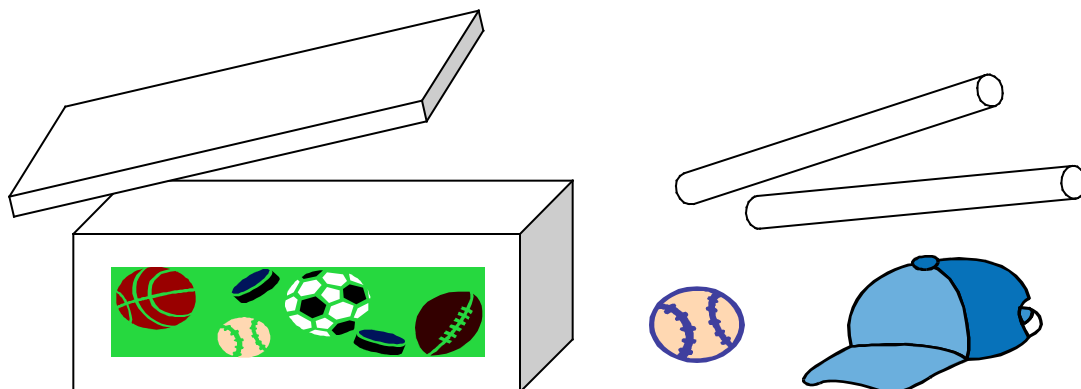
Students gather or create a predetermined number of objects that will fit into a shoebox. They take out the items in the box as they deliver their speech. This idea works well as an organizational tool for an initial speaking experience in K-12 settings as students often feel more comfortable holding something as they talk.

### **Variations**

**Personal Introduction:** Students gather items that represent some aspect of their life – or serve as symbols.

**Biography Report:** Students read a biography and gather items that represent the life of that individual. (They could also act and dress as that person, if possible.)

**Survival Speech:** Students fill the box with items they would need to survive any occasion tied to a “fun topic” or current theme of study: vacation with their family, the first day of school, babysitting, homework, a day at the mall, lost in the woods, middle school, etc.



### **Demonstration or Expert Speech**

The students select a topic on which they have prior experience – or consider themselves “an expert” (snowboarding, playing soccer, repairing bikes, etc.). They share the information with the class in an organized manner. If they are going to demonstrate a process, the students need to practice the speech many times before presenting to the class.

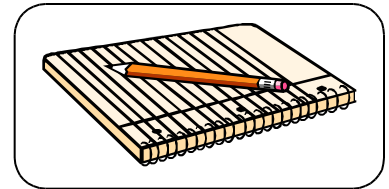


#### **Variations**

Demonstrate a science experiment, magic trick, hobby, sport, or favorite recipe.

### **Book Report**

The students read a book on their own and prepare a written and oral book report. The teacher provides the required elements of the report with an opportunity for the students to personalize through a creative activity (make a visual aid, write a diary entry from a character’s viewpoint, dress-up as a character, write “the next chapter”, etc.)

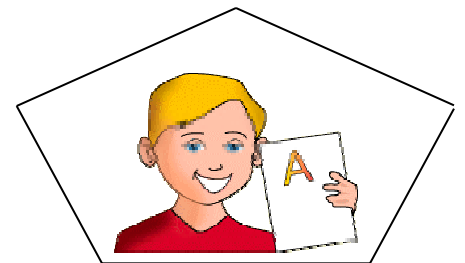


### **Memorable Moment Speech**

The student chooses a memorable experience to share with the class. They must organize the content and use descriptive words to convey the event.

#### **Variations**

Students share an embarrassing moment, a time they were frightened, a time they felt proud, etc.



## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** A Computer for Roger

**Time Limit:** 3-5 min.

**Type of Speech:** Persuasive

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Provide the following information to your students:

Roger wanted a computer very badly but he certainly did not have the \$2,000 a good system would cost. He asked his father to buy a computer for the family but his father thought it was just an expensive toy. Roger explained how a computer would be used for schoolwork, not just games, and would help him improve his grades. His father still was not convinced.

What ideas can you come up with that would help Roger persuade his father to see the value of a computer? These ideas would have to show that spending \$2,000 on a computer would benefit both Roger and the family. Use some examples to support your ideas. On a separate piece of paper, write a persuasive paper that Roger could use when he talks to his dad again about the computer.

- Using these written ideas, students create a persuasive speech to present to the class. They should speak in first person as Roger and pretend to convince his father.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Science Experiment

**Time Limit:** 5-8 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students select a simple science experiment that they will do and then demonstrate it to the class.
- They need to do some research on the science behind the experiment so that when they present the experiment they are explaining "why" and "how" and not merely demonstrating the steps involved.
- Students need to provide the teacher with a list of materials they need and an outline of the speech several days before the presentations.
- Encourage students to practice their demonstration 2-3 times before presenting to the class.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Solar System Report

**Time Limit:** 3-5 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Each student chooses and researches a component of space.
- After written tasks are scored and recorded in a grade book, students create a major model relevant to their topic.
- They become "Science Professors" and share the information they learned in a 3-5 minute speech.
- This is a great opportunity to share known and unknown facts in an enthusiastic manner.

Before the student presents his/her speech they will let the class know there will be questions at the end and that they need to "listen closely!"

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Time Travel Biography Report

**Time Limit:** 2-3 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students select a biography or autobiography of a famous person (in colonial times, an explorer, etc.).
- After reading the book, they record factual information about the individual.
- Building on that background, the students use their imagination to pretend that person has traveled in time to the present day. Students predict what the person would be like, what job and friends they might have, etc. (See attached outline.)
- Students are encouraged to be creative but must base their predictions on evidence they read in the biography or autobiography.
- The students will prepare this information for a speech to give to the class.

**Student handout follows →**

## GUIDESHEET – "IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW..."

1. Name of individual \_\_\_\_\_
2. Facts about this person:
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. \_\_\_\_\_
  - G. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What the person is best known for: \_\_\_\_\_
4. When he/she lived: from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
5. Some things he/she would want to do if he/she were here now:
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
6. What type of job he/she might have today? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who might be his/her friends now? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where do you think he/she would live now? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What do you think his/her favorite food, game, etc. would be? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Anything else you would like to project about this individual if he/she were here with you now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** My Vacation Spot

**Time Limit:** 3-5 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- When studying states and capitals in the U.S., students choose a favorite vacation site they have visited or would like to visit.
- Students must research background information about their vacation spot and give three reasons why they chose it.
- Oral presentations may include location, travel time, climate, recreation ideas, cost, etc.
- Encourage students to include visuals in their presentation.

NOTE: Activity could easily be adapted to a persuasive speech.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Biography of a Famous Person

**Time Limit:** 5-7 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students read a biography of a famous person in history.
- After reading the book, the student creates a 5-7 minute presentation in first person as the subject of the biography.
- Students may dress-up, use props, or create an enlarged paper doll in authentic dress to go along with their presentation. (They will "become" that famous person – or share an image using the doll.)

#### **Biography Paper Doll Directions**

1. Must be at least 12" long, no longer than 18".
2. Make the person's clothing as authentic as possible, i.e., use material, wallpaper samples, yarn, fur, etc.
3. Use details from your book to help describe the physical characteristics such as hair color, texture, eye color, clothing, props like books, glasses, dolls pets, etc.
4. Make it colorful, creative, and neat.

**Student handout follows →**

Submitted By: Kim DeVries & Bonnie Bradley, N. Douglas Elementary, North Douglas SD

# ***Biography Book Report***

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Interesting facts you learned about this person.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What made this person famous? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the most interesting thing you have learned about this person that has not been previously mentioned?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Flat Stanley

**Time Limit:** 5-7 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Read the book *Flat Stanley* to the class.
- Students will create/dress their own flat Stanley/Sally.
- They then choose someone they can send their character to for a "two-week vacation".
- The recipient takes Stanley/Sally to work, ball games, the beach, etc. and writes a short daily journal entry, takes pictures and/or gathers brochures/programs from their various visits.
- The information and Stanley/Sally return to the classroom. The students then present their Stanley/Sally adventures to the rest of the class.

Submitted By: Sue Egbers, Portland Public Schools

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Pioneer Project

**Time Limit:** 3-5 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- After studying pioneer times, students act as "experts" and create a product (replica) of something used on the Oregon Trail journey.
- They may build a model, re-create artifacts, sew sample clothing, make a three-dimensional map, write a diary, etc. (Ask the class to brainstorm possibilities.)
- Once they finish creating the product, students will prepare a speech to present to the class.

See student directions that follow.

**Student handouts follow →**

# Expert Project Presentation Guidelines

Congratulations for finishing an expert project. Your next step is to prepare to share your new learning experience with your classmates.

Note cards are really helpful when giving your presentation. Here are some ideas that should be written on note cards so that your presentation is easy to understand.

1. Begin with an introduction that tells the name of your project.
2. Tell about at least three ideas or facts that you learned while researching your product.
3. Tell about the steps you used to create your product.
4. Share your product with the class. How was it used? Why is it important?
5. Conclude your presentation by telling about your favorite part of this whole process.

Ask the audience if they have any questions about your research or your product.

Before you give your presentation, it is a good idea to practice at least three times. Practice in front of a pet or stuffed animal, practice in front of a mirror, and practice in front of a real person.

Good presenters stand tall, speak out so that everyone can hear, and occasionally make eye contact with audience members.



## Project Presentation Requirements

Write out a script that includes the following ideas:

1. The name of your project.
2. Why you chose to do this project.
3. How your project helps others know more about the pioneer times. This should include a written report that tells at least three important ideas about your project's place in history.
4. What your favorite part of the project is.
5. What you learned while working on this project.

### EXAMPLE:

1. My project is a pioneer dress, hat, and shawl.
2. I chose to do this project because I like to sew and I wanted to have a chance to dress up for our museum day.
3. My project helps others know about pioneer times by showing what the women wore while they were on the Oregon Trail.

### Dressing for the Oregon Trail

**Women on the Oregon Trail wore long dresses, bonnets, and shawls. They must have been hot and uncomfortable in the summer as they walked behind the dusty wagons in their long clothes.**

**The women's long dresses were made of a material called calico. It was a kind of cotton with little tiny flowers on it. The dresses had full skirts and long sleeves. They were hot, but they kept away insects and helped the women avoid insect bites.**

**The women also wore bonnets. The bonnets were sometimes called "poke bonnets." The bonnets kept the blistering, hot sun off of the women's faces. They made shade for the women and kept their hair protected from the dust.**

**Many of the women had shawls to wear when it was cold on the trail. The shawls were sometimes knitted and sometimes were made of calico to match the dresses.**

**The clothing that the women on the Oregon Trail wore included a long dress, a bonnet, and a shawl. They looked very colorful and pretty in books, but the dust of the wagons and the hot sun must have made them dirty and sweaty fast.**

4. My favorite part of this project was buying the material. I liked going to the fabric store and picking out material that looked like a teacher might wear it. It is blue and it has little tiny apples in the calico print.
5. I learned that it took lots of time to sew a long dress, hat, and shawl. I was able to sew my project on an electric machine, but it must have taken the pioneer women much longer! Sewing my dress by hand would take a really long time. I have seen a sewing machine that people used before they had electricity and it seems like it would be very hard to pedal the machine, guide that material, and not go too fast or too slow.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Personal Possession or Collection

**Time Limit:** 2-3 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- At the start of the school year, each student is asked to bring in an important personal possession or collection to help their classmates get to know them. (Limit collection of items to five of their favorite.)
- Students are asked to tell why the item or collection is important and where they got it/them.
- Although they may use brief notes, students are encouraged to have an organized presentation that they deliver using a "conversational" tone.

## My Favorite Book Collection



Student handout follows →

# Personal Possession or Collection Speech

Possible topic ideas:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

Final topic choice: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GUIDELINES:**

1. Notes are allowed.
2. You must bring the possession or collection to class. (No weapons or live animals, please.)
3. Practice your speech several times.
4. Time: 2-3 minutes.

## **Areas to Cover in the Speech:**

### *Introduction*

What is it? Use descriptive words.

### *Body*

How and where did you get this?

How did your collection start and how do you add to it?

Include a special story or memory.

Why is this special to you?

### *Conclusion*

Why and where do you keep this item or collection?

**DUE DATE FOR YOUR SPEECH:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Personality Poster/Speech

**Time Limit:** 2-3 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- At the start of the school year, give each student a piece of 8" x 11" construction paper. (Allow them to choose the color.)
- Ask students to create a Personality Poster sharing likes/dislikes about themselves.
- They may include: photos of family and pets, magazine pictures of hobbies, sports, favorite foods, games, etc.
- The student must add their name to the front of the poster in a creative way.
- When posters are completed, each student is asked to prepare a short speech sharing items off of the poster, and thus, sharing information about themselves to the class.
- Encourage students to practice good delivery techniques while preparing and presenting their speech.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Book Talk

**Time Limit:** 2-3 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students pick a mystery book from the library. The book needs to meet the following requirements:
  - be at their reading grade level
  - not made into a movie
  - no less than 175 pages long
- After each chapter, students summarize the main events and include what characters were involved.

Using the chapter summaries, they prepare an oral presentation to give the class.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** No Homework!

**Time Limit:** 2-3 min.

**Type of Speech:** Persuasive

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students write a paper persuading their teacher to not give homework for one week using good supporting ideas.
- They present their paper to the class in the form of a speech, using body language to complement their written work.
- 80% of the class must meet a '4' in both writing and speaking for the teacher to cancel homework for one week.

NOTE: This is a good activity to practice delivery techniques.

## Speaking Activity

**Title of Speech:** Oral State Report

**Time Limit:** 3-5 min.

**Type of Speech:** Informative

**Grade Level:** 4-5

### Directions or Description of Activity:

- Students research a U.S. State.
- Their report must include the state's natural resources, some history and a few activities people do in that state (such as skiing, etc.).
- Students also create a visual display about their state.
- This display can include both photocopied pictures and/or drawings of their choice.