

GPS Model for Evaluations

One model of Toastmasters evaluation speeches is the GPS+ model.

- **G**oal
- **P**erception
- **S**teps for next time
- **+** End on a positive note

The example below may be a little longer than an actual evaluation, depending on the length of time available and the individual evaluator. It's longer to provide more examples.

Goal: Each speech has a goal associated with it. Mentioning the goal helps focus the evaluation. It also serves as a reminder and navigation point for the audience.

An easy way to start an evaluation is the goal statement.

As people get further in Toastmasters they often have a personal goal. It's good practice as an evaluator to talk with the speaker beforehand and find out if s/he has any personal goals.

Say how they achieved the goal. This is the positive portion of the evaluation so even if the speaker did not fully achieve their goal, you can talk about the elements they did achieve.

Use specifics on how they achieved it. This tells the speaker what went well and what they want to reinforce.

Notice the "notice how" and the third person ("he did this..."). This is the way the evaluation becomes a speech for the entire audience and not solely the speaker. This is the way the entire room learns.

"The goal of this speech, the icebreaker, is to start public speaking and to introduce yourself to the club. He also said he wanted his speech to flow.

Andy did that very well. He wove his recent experiences in with his personal history and tied that in to how that drove him to join Toastmasters.

As far as his personal goal of having the speech flow, you accomplished that very well. In particular, notice how Andy included a number of Signpost words: like 'First' and 'Next'. That helped tie one section to the next.

Andy also projected himself into the future. He said 'here's where I want to go with my Toastmasters journey'. That closes the loop from past, to present, to future. We often think in threes and giving the third element ties everything together for us."

Perception: Speakers will have a lot of self-feedback – how they think they did, what they think went right and wrong. One thing a speaker cannot know is how they appeared to the listener. This is great information to add to the speaker’s feedback dataset.

For this section, use words that acknowledge that these are your subjective impressions. This section has a lot of ‘You’ elements.

If it makes sense to do so, you can add in what specific behavior produced that impression.

You can mention the ‘level’ of observation. It helps the speaker to know that it would only be noticeable if someone were looking for it.

It’s okay to say things like ‘Almost as if’ if that helps to get the point across.

My rule for most evaluations is that the structure is okay to discuss, the content (what they talked about) is theirs and my feedback may not be as valuable for those things.

Finally, remember it’s not solely the visual impression, but also the sounds and the words.

“You appeared relaxed up here. You took command of the space and you looked comfortable. Your stance, for instance, you had two feet solidly on the ground. There was no visible bracing or swaying back and forth.

One thing that was noticeable if I paid attention to it was that you stayed around the lectern. It was almost as if you were about to grip it.

Your voice was clear and came across well. You had a fair amount of vocal variety, especially at the end of your speech.

The way you structured the speech allowed us to follow the points easily. It was challenging to go back and forth from present to past but you handled that well. I did get a little lost when you went from college up to now so that may be one area to look at.”

Steps: Steps the speaker could take to improve their speech next time.

Introduce this as a separate section: here’s where we allow ourselves to be a little more critical.

I try to stick with 1 or 2 things the person could work on. Think of it as helping the speaker prioritize their improvement efforts.

Optional but helpful are three ‘Hows’:

- How it presents a problem.
- How it would benefit them to change.
- How they might do that, if you feel comfortable doing so. This may help the other members of the audience as well.

“In terms of things you might want to work on to make the next speech even better:

You spoke kind of fast. Even though you provided those signpost words we talked about earlier, it made it hard to follow sometimes simply because the information was coming at us pretty fast.

If you did everything the same as today but spoke more slowly it would help your speech.

One way to do that is to write your speech in outline form. That makes each section clear. And then do the speech section by section.”

+ End on a positive note.

The sandwich technique: you’ve done positives, some constructive, now end on positive.

“Overall, great speech! I love the information you shared. I look forward to your next one.”

Areas for Evaluation

These are the traditional areas that Toastmasters looks at for evaluations:

- Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively
- Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience
- Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content