



American Dream Speech

(Grades 6-12)

Students will give a four-minute speech about their dream for America. Speeches should address things that are needed today to improve America and how students would convince others to work towards making that dream a reality.

American Dream Speech Rubric

Time of Speech

- ___ **4 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of the speech time without any significant pauses.
- ___ **3 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of a three-minute speech time without any significant pauses.
- ___ **2 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of a two-minute speech time without any significant pauses.
- ___ **1 point** – The speech was less than one minute and 45 seconds.

Comments:

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Eye Contact

- ___ **4 points** – Speaker engaged various parts of the room with direct eye contact.
- ___ **3 points** – Speaker maintained eye contact but in only one or two focal point areas.
- ___ **2 points** – The speaker had moments of eye contact but frequently looked down or away from the audience.
- ___ **1 point** – The speaker had no eye contact.

Comments:

Voice (Pronunciation, Volume, Vocal Variety)

- ___ **3 points** – The speaker had appropriate pronunciation throughout the speech as well as vocal variety and tone in their delivery.
- ___ **2 points** – The speaker had issues with either pronunciation or vocal variety/tone in their delivery.
- ___ **1 point** – The speaker had issues with both pronunciation and vocal variety/tone in their delivery.

Comments:

Structure of Speech

- ___ **4 points** – The speaker had a clear introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion that logically flowed throughout the speech.
- ___ **3 points** – The speaker's thesis was clear; however, there were minor issues with straying from the main focus in the body or conclusion of the speech.
- ___ **2 points** – The speaker lacked cohesion among the main points or was lacking a main point.
- ___ **1 point** – The speaker had no structure to the speech.

Comments:



Civil Disobedience Classroom Debate

(Grades 6-12)

Hold a classroom debate on the topic, *Resolved: Civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified*. End the period with a class discussion of the arguments and a vote on the topic.

Additional resources can be found online here:

www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Lincoln-Douglas-Debate-Novice-Lesson-Plans.pdf

Civil Disobedience Classroom Debate Rubric

Time of Speeches

___ **4 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of the speech time without any significant pauses.

___ **3 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of a three-minute speech time without any significant pauses.

___ **2 points** – The speaker was within 15 seconds of a two-minute speech time without any significant pauses.

___ **1 point** – The speech was less than one minute and 45 seconds.

Comments:

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Comprehension of Arguments

- ___ **4 points** – The speaker clearly demonstrated an understanding of their own arguments as well as their opponent's arguments.
- ___ **3 points** – The speaker clearly demonstrated an understanding of their own arguments; however, they struggled with comprehending one or two arguments by their opponent.
- ___ **2 points** – The speaker demonstrated an understanding of many of their own arguments and struggled with comprehending their opponent's arguments.
- ___ **1 point** – The speaker could not demonstrate a clear understanding of their own arguments or their opponent's arguments.

Comments:

Classroom Participation with Discussion

- ___ **2 points** – The student took notes during the debate and actively participated in the discussion by asking questions and sharing who they thought won the debate.
- ___ **1 points** – The student took notes but did not participate in the discussion.
- ___ **0 points** – The student did not take notes or participate in the discussion.

Comments:



“I Have a Dream” Critical Analysis Activity

(Grades 6-12)

Students will read or watch Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech and discuss it in class. Following the discussion, each student will compare Dr. King’s dream to life in America today and examine the extent to which Dr. King’s dream has come to fruition through a video, short essay, speech, or presentation.

“I Have a Dream” Critical Analysis Rubric

Participation in Discussion

___ **2 points** – The student asked questions or shared their thoughts on the speech during the discussion.

___ **1 points** – The student paid attention to the discussion but did not ask a question or share their thoughts.

___ **0 points** – The student did not pay attention to the discussion or participate.

Comments:

Student Had a Proper Presentation (Video, Short Essay, or Speech): ___ / 3 points

Comments:

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Argument within Presentation

- ___ **4 points** – The student demonstrated an understanding of their own arguments as well as Dr. King's.

- ___ **3 points** – The speaker clearly demonstrated an understanding of their own arguments; however, they struggled with comprehending one or two arguments by Dr. King.

- ___ **2 points** – The speaker demonstrated an understanding of many of their own arguments and struggled with comprehending Dr. King's arguments.

- ___ **1 point** – The speaker could not demonstrate a clear understanding of their own arguments or Dr. King's.

Comments:



“Letter from Birmingham Jail” Persuasive Speech Activity

(Grades 6-8)

Students will read “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and create a persuasive argument in the same style. Participants will imagine that they are in Dr. King’s position and write a short essay or give a short speech arguing for the desegregation of public places.

“Letter from Birmingham Jail” Persuasive Speech Rubric

Essay Length / Speech Time

- ___ **3 points** – The speech or essay was the correct length.
- ___ **2 points** – The speech or essay was near the correct length.
- ___ **1 point** – The speech or essay was less than half the correct length.

Comments:

Comprehension of Content

- ___ **3 points** – The speech or essay demonstrated clear understanding of the letter and why it was convincing.
- ___ **2 points** – The speech or essay showed some understanding of the letter and why it was convincing.
- ___ **1 point** – The speech or essay showed little understanding of the letter and why it was convincing.

Comments:

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Persuasive Argument

___ **3 points** – There was a clear, persuasive argument as to why public places should be desegregated.

___ **2 points** – There was a mostly clear, persuasive argument that was sometimes hard to follow.

___ **1 point** – There was almost no persuasive argument as to why public places should be desegregated.

Comments: