

Second Edition

Workbook for  
**PUBLIC  
SPEAKING**

PATRICIA COMEAUX

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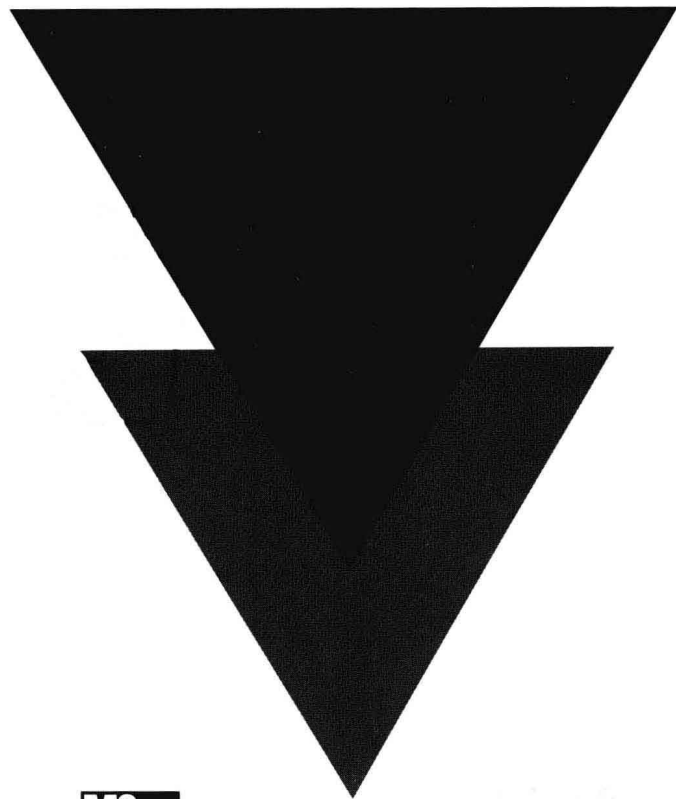


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Workbook for  
**PUBLIC  
SPEAKING**

PATRICIA COMEAUX

University of North Carolina—Wilmington



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**PUBLIC  
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# INTRODUCTION

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*Workbook for Public Speaking* is written for college students enrolled in an introductory public speaking class and is intended as a supplementary or a sole text to assist students with the concrete application of the principles of rhetoric and public speaking found in most major texts. Each unit is self-contained and can be used with various other units to help students concentrate on areas in which they need to improve. Because different classes need help in different areas, I have produced this workbook customized to fit each situation. I hope that this tailormade approach is effective in helping students grasp various public speaking principles and improve their presentational skills.

The assignments and activities reflect the culmination of many years of effort not only to improve my teaching of public speaking but also to improve student performance in preparing and delivering speeches and in developing their communication skills. My enjoyment of teaching public speaking increased as I focused on helping students rely on their own abilities to analyze and develop their public speaking competencies. Therefore the materials and activities contained in this workbook take a learner-centered approach, challenging students to evaluate their abilities and to work systematically toward improving their knowledge and skills. In addition, the materials are based on classical and contemporary perspectives of rhetoric to help students develop and shape particular messages for particular audiences and situations.

The sample outlines and evaluative essays are the work of students enrolled in my public speaking and speech communication classes over the years at Illinois Wesleyan University, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Murray State University, and the University of North Carolina—Wilmington.

The revised edition has been expanded to include units on ethics, the first speech, and presentational aids. In addition, the previous unit on Analyzing Topics, Audiences, and Purposes has been expanded and divided into two units: Analyzing Audiences and Selecting Topics and Purposes. Finally, concepts and activities have been added in response to the excellent suggestions by the reviewers. In this revised edition, I have strived to make each unit compatible with a basic public speaking text or useful as a self-contained unit.

I would like to thank the following reviewers for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions at various stages in the development of the first edition manuscript: Leslie Klipper-Groll, San Diego Miramar College; James Knear, Trevecca Nazarene College; Loren McBain, University of Arizona; Rick Morat, California State University—San Bernardino; and David Ralph, Michigan State University. In addition, I would like to thank those reviewers who contributed to the development of the second edition: Tammala Bulger, University of North Carolina—Wilmington; Lynette Mullins, University of Minnesota—Crookston; and Myra Young, Johnson County Community College.

—Patricia Comeaux

# CONTENTS

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## **Unit 1 Introduction to a Learner-Centered Approach and to Public Speaking 1**

- Note to Students (includes course objectives) 2
- Student Information Sheet 3
- Assessing Your Public Speaking Abilities 5
- Setting Goals for Self-Improvement 7
- Achieving My Public Speaking Goals:  
A Student's Testimony 8
- Public Speaking Anxieties: Pre-  
Questionnaire 9
- Public Speaking Anxieties: Post-  
Questionnaire 11
- The Process of Human Communication:  
Brief Notes 13
- Describing Communication: A Discussion 15
- Creating Communication Models 17

## **Unit 2 Developing Listening Skills 19**

- Listening Notes 20
- Recognizing Barriers to Effective  
Listening 21
- Listening: Observation and Analysis 22
- Practicing Purposeful Listening 23
- Practicing Active Listening 25
- Giving Effective Feedback 26
- Listening for Comprehension 27
- Listening for Evaluation 28
- Form for Listening for Evaluation 29

## **Unit 3 Managing Anxiety and Developing Confidence 31**

- Recognizing Fears about Public Speaking 32
- Analyzing Public Speaking Anxieties 34
- Students' Suggestions for Managing Public  
Speaking Anxiety 36
- Student Essay 1 37
- Student Essay 2 39
- Ways of Controlling Speaker  
Apprehension 41
- Describing a Confident Public Speaker 42
- Behaviors and Attitudes That Make You Look  
Confident 43

- A Public Speaking Model: The Elements  
of Success 45

## **Unit 4 Preparing and Presenting Your First Speech 47**

- Preparing to Speak in Public:  
An Overview 48
- The Process of Preparing a Speech 49
- Group Introductory Speech 50
- Introductory Values/Belief Speech 51
- Personal Experience Speech 52
- Practice Speeches 54

## **Unit 5 Understanding Ethical Public Speaking 55**

- The Value and Understanding of Ethics 56
- Analyzing Ethical Concerns: A Situation 57
- Analyzing Ethics: A Student Outline 59
- Discovering Ethical Standards: What is Plagiarism?  
61
- Outline 1 for Analysis of Plagiarism 62
- Outline 2 for Analysis of Plagiarism 64
- Determining Appropriate Ethical Speech Topics 67
- Analyzing Appropriate and Ethical Topic Choice  
and Development 68

## **Unit 6 Analyzing Audiences 71**

- Understanding Communication Is Essential  
for Audience Analysis 72
- Effective Public Speaking Is Audience Centered  
73
- Audience Analysis Exercise 75
- Adapting Topics and Messages to Audiences: A  
Process of Identification 77
- Adapting Topics to Audiences and Situations: An  
Exercise 78
- Sample Speech Outline: Speech Purpose Adapted  
for Audience 80
- Sample Audience Analysis: Aerobic Exercise  
Speech 82
- Informative Outline Developed from Audience  
Analysis: Aerobic Exercise 84

## **Unit 7 Selecting Topics and Purposes 87**

- Selecting Topics and Purposes: Notes 88
- Self-Analysis for Speech Topics 89
- Narrowing Speech Topics 92
- Understanding the Similarities and Differences between Specific Purpose and Thesis Statements 93
- Specific Purposes and Thesis Statements: An Exercise 94
- Writing Thesis Statements 95
- Topic Justification Exercise: Informative 97
- Topic Justification Exercise: Persuasive 99

## **Unit 8 Developing and Supporting Ideas 101**

- Types of Supporting Materials 102
- Developing Main Ideas from a Thesis or a Specific Purpose 103
- Prepare Speeches, Not Reports: An Exercise 104
- Problematic Development of Ideas and Supporting Materials 106
- Discovering and Improving Supporting Materials 108
- “Air Bags” Speech for Analysis of Supporting Materials 109
- “Drunk Driving” Speech for Analysis of Supporting Materials 112
- Documenting and Using Credible Sources 114
- “Endangered Birds” Speech 115

## **Unit 9 Using Logical and Emotional Appeals 117**

- Logical Appeals and Sound Reasoning 118
- Emotional Appeals and Motivational Needs 120
- Questions of Fact: An Exercise 121
- A Proposition of Fact for Analysis 123
- Questions of Value: An Exercise 127
- A Proposition of Value for Analysis 129
- Questions of Policy: An Exercise 133
- A Proposition of Policy for Analysis 135
- Analyzing Persuasion: An Exercise 139
- The Value of the Western Movie: An Outline 141
- Join the Military: An Outline 143

## **Unit 10 Organizing and Outlining Your Speech 145**

- Organizational Patterns: Notes 146
- Organizing Your Thoughts on a Topic 148
- Process of Preparing a Speech 150
- Outlining: A Method of Organization 151
- Format for Informative Speeches 153
- Comparison of Two Persuasive Outline Formats 155
- Scrambled Outline Exercise 157

- Scrambled Outline 1 158
- Scrambled Outline 2 159
- Problematic Outline Exercise 160
- Problematic Outline 1 161
- Problematic Outline 2 163
- Outline Check for Informative Speeches 167
- Outline Check for Persuasive Speeches 169

## **Unit 11 Preparing Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions 171**

- Functions of Introductions and Conclusions 172
- Analyzing Effective Introductions and Conclusions 173
- Introduction and Conclusion for Informative Speech on Asthma 174
- Introduction and Conclusion for Informative Speech on Dolphins 175
- Introduction and Conclusion for Persuasive Speech on Drugs and Physicians 176
- Introduction and Conclusion for Persuasive Speech on Exercise and Stress 177
- Writing Introductions and Conclusions: An Exercise 178
- Spinning Kick: Informative Speech 179
- Growing a Garden: Persuasive Speech 180
- Increasing Your Vocabulary: Persuasive Speech 181
- Writing Transitions 182

## **Unit 12 Using Language Effectively 185**

- Language Notes 186
- Language Shapes Perceptions: An Analysis 187
- Using Gender-Neutral Nouns and Pronouns 188
- Using Concrete and Uncluttered Language 189
- Using Language Clearly and Concretely 190
- Using Colorful and Vivid Language 191
- Using Language to Create Parallel Structure 192
- Speech 1: Parallel Structure 193
- Speech 2: Parallel Structure 195

## **Unit 13 Delivery: Using Voice and Body Effectively 197**

- Methods of Presentation 198
- Using Voice and Body for Effective Delivery 199
- Tongue Twisters Exercise 201
- Articulation and Pronunciation 203
- Practicing Vowel Sounds 204
- Practicing Vocal Emphasis 205
- Reading Aloud for Effective Delivery 206
- Content-Free Speech 207
- Impromptu Speeches 208
- Personal Experience Speech 209

The Modern Fairy Tale: Practice  
Speeches 211  
Sample Modernized Fairy Tale: Ismerelda  
of the Forest 213

## **Unit 14 Using Presentational Aids 215**

Kinds of Presentational Aids: Notes 216  
Suggestions for Using Presentational  
Aids 218  
Designing Presentational Aids:  
An Exercise 219  
The Value of Scarfs: A Speech  
for Analysis 220  
Understanding Bats: A Speech  
for Analysis 221

## **Unit 15 Preparing Informative Speeches 223**

Informing Audiences: Notes 224  
Organizing Informative Speeches 225  
Format for Informative Speeches 227  
The Wild Pitch: Informative Outline 1 229  
Rock 'n' Roll and Blues: Informative  
Outline 2 231  
Gospel Music: Informative Outline 3 233  
The Journalist: Informative Outline 4 235

## **Unit 16 Preparing Persuasive Speeches 237**

Persuading Audiences: Notes 238  
Organizing Persuasive Speeches 239  
Monroe's Motivated Sequence 240  
Comparison of Two Persuasive Formats 242  
Adapting Topics to Audience's  
Predisposition 244  
Organizing Persuasive Speeches: Selling a Product  
or Person 245  
Organizing Persuasive Speeches: Influencing Ideas,  
Attitudes, or Actions 246  
Growing Vegetable Gardens: Persuasive  
Outline 1 248  
The Drinking Age: Persuasive Outline 2 250  
Exercise Relieves Stress: Persuasive  
Outline 3 252  
Learning a Second Language: Persuasive Outline 4  
255

## **Unit 17 Preparing Special Occasion Speeches 259**

Types of Special Occasion Speeches 260  
Speeches of Introduction: An Exercise 261  
Speeches of Awards and Acceptance:  
An Exercise 262  
Analyzing Special Occasion Speeches 263  
A Eulogy 264  
A Speech of Tribute 265  
A Ceremonial Speech 271

## **Unit 18 Speech Assignments and Evaluation 277**

Values/Belief Speech Assignment 278  
Demonstration or Visual Aid Speech Assignment  
279  
Informative Speech Assignment 280  
Persuasive Speech Assignment 281  
Persuasive Presentation/Debate  
Assignment 282  
Essay Assignment: Self-Evaluation 284  
Evaluation Form: Values/Belief Speech 285  
Feedback Form: Values/Belief Speech 287  
Video Self-Evaluation: Values/Belief  
Speech 289  
Evaluation Form: Demonstration or Visual Aid  
Speech 291  
Feedback Form: Demonstration or Visual Aid  
Speech 293  
Video Self-Evaluation: Demonstration or Visual Aid  
Speech 295  
Evaluation Form: Informative Speech 297  
Feedback Form: Informative Speech 299  
Video Self-Evaluation: Informative  
Speech 301  
Evaluation Form: Statement of Reasons Method  
Persuasive Speech 303  
Evaluation Form: Monroe's Motivated Sequence  
Persuasive Speech 305  
Public Speaking Debate Ballot 307  
Feedback Form: Persuasive Speech 309  
Video Self-Evaluation: Persuasive  
Speech 311  
Evaluation Form: Self-Evaluation  
Assignment 313  
Outside Speech Critique Assignment 315

## **Unit 19 Group Discussion 317**

Student Information Form 318  
Learning to Work Cooperatively in  
Groups 319  
Conflict in Small Groups: A Student's Testimony  
320  
The Frustrations of Working in Groups 322  
Establishing Criteria for Making Decisions: The  
Scholarship Case 323  
Decision-Making Case Study: The Harris  
Scholarship 324  
Small-Group Project 327  
Evaluation for Small-Group Project 329  
Participant Rating Scale 331  
Participant Rating Scale: Student  
Examples 332  
The Reflective Thinking Sequence 334  
Problem-Solving Project 335  
Evaluation: Problem-Solving Project Report and  
Presentation 337  
Analysis Paper of Problem-Solving  
Project 339  
Evaluation: Analysis Paper 341  
Sample Analysis Paper 343



# **Introduction to a Learner-Centered Approach and to Public Speaking**

This unit outlines the objectives of this workbook and introductory public speaking courses. It is important to accept the perspective and focus of a learner-centered approach to developing your public speaking abilities. This approach encourages you to set your individual goals within the course structure, to analyze your abilities, and to work to improve those abilities. The workbook discussion questions and activities provide you with a way to analyze your public speaking abilities and set goals for self-improvement.

This unit provides a brief overview of the process of human communication. It is important to view public speaking as communication—a mutual exchange of messages between a speaker and an audience. The unit also provides you with an overview of the essential principles of public speaking. These principles will assist you in your speech preparation.

## **The components of UNIT 1 are:**

**Note to Students (includes course objectives)**

**Student Information Sheet**

**Assessing Your Public Speaking Abilities**

**Setting Goals for Self-Improvement**

**Achieving My Public Speaking Goals: A Student's Testimony**

**Public Speaking Anxieties: Pre-Questionnaire**

**Public Speaking Anxieties: Post-Questionnaire**

**The Process of Human Communication: Brief Notes**

**Describing Communication: A Discussion**

**Creating Communication Models**

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# NOTE TO STUDENTS

Your success in an introductory public speaking course (and your success with the activities in this workbook) is highly dependent upon your interest and effort toward improving your ability to communicate effectively in public speaking situations. It is common knowledge that speaking in public is one of the strongest fears of most people and that public speaking courses are considered to be among the “dreaded but necessary” university courses. Most students recognize the need—sometime in the future—to be able to speak coherently and with confidence in public. Some students recognize the immediate need to develop these skills. Few students realize the relative ease with which these skills can be developed and improved.

To say that public speaking skills can be developed with ease does not diminish the effort necessary to accomplish the task. A credible and effective public speaker, like a dancer or an athlete, works diligently to develop and refine his or her skills. A speech that has substance and organization is the result of a conscious, systematic effort on the part of the speaker. The ability to speak confidently and coherently in public may possibly be one of the most valuable skills you can acquire. Whether you are giving an oral report in a history class or to your fraternity or sorority, or presenting your ideas on an effective selling strategy to the marketing department of your future employer, the concepts presented in this workbook will be applicable.

The focus in this workbook is on you, the student, as a learner. You will be challenged to set individual goals for performance achievement, to analyze your public speaking abilities, and to work diligently toward systematically improving your public speaking skills. A learner-centered approach to public speaking recognizes that students’ abilities exist at different points on a continuum. Your goal is to analyze where you are on the continuum and to move forward. The instructor’s goal is to facilitate that forward movement.

The following learning goals are designed for students enrolled in a public speaking course:

1. To demonstrate the ability to understand and respond to public speaking as a transactional process between speaker and audience.
2. To develop listening and observational skills by providing descriptive and evaluative feedback about speeches and speakers.
3. To demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate the competence of one’s own public speaking and that of others.
4. To develop the ability to speak competently, confidently, and ethically in public settings.
5. To demonstrate the ability to collect, analyze, and use information to shape and adapt messages for various audiences, purposes, and settings.
6. To develop and adapt messages and message strategies to the needs and expectations of multiple audiences.
7. To organize ideas and supporting examples in a coherent and captivating message.
8. To speak in an extemporaneous, conversational style using language, voice, and bodily action effectively and appropriately for public settings.
9. To demonstrate the ability to apply public speaking competencies to multiple audiences and settings.

# STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

PRINT: Last name, First name \_\_\_\_\_

Campus or local address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:    Male    Female

Classification (circle one):    Freshman          Sophomore          Junior          Senior

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Focus or interest in major: \_\_\_\_\_

High school graduated from: \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternity or Sorority: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional or service organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

Sports, hobbies, or interests: \_\_\_\_\_

List the names of any persons in this class that you know *well* (i.e., roommate, best friend, high school buddy, etc.):





# ASSESSING YOUR PUBLIC SPEAKING ABILITIES

Please respond as accurately and as thoroughly as possible. (Use back if necessary.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

1. What kinds of speaking experiences have you had in your classes, jobs, church, extracurricular activities, organizations, etc.? Please list and indicate size of audience, topic, etc.
2. When did you give your last speech? What was the topic?
3. What are your career plans? How will public speaking be important to your career?
4. What do you generally find easiest about making a presentation or a speech?
5. What do you generally find most difficult about making a presentation or a speech?
6. Do you have *severe* stage fright, stuttering, or anything else that might make it difficult for you to speak in public situations? Please indicate.



# SETTING GOALS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

## Objectives

1. To understand the value of setting specific goals to improve your public speaking abilities.
2. To understand the importance of setting realistic goals for building confidence and success.

## Explanation

Even though your public speaking instructor has specific course goals for all students to work toward, it is essential that each individual sets specific and realistic goals to accomplish during the semester. Effective public speaking is a learned skill, developed by understanding and applying principles of rhetoric and speech communication.

Students enrolled in an introductory course enter with different abilities and experiences in public speaking. You can learn from observing others; however, it is best to set your goals for improvement based on your *own* previous experiences in public speaking situations.

## Instructions

After reading the following student essay entitled “Achieving My Public Speaking Goals,” take some time to consider your particular strengths and weaknesses in public speaking. Then in the space below, list three specific goals that you would like to achieve by the end of your course in public speaking. Consider what you would like to learn or what skills you would like to improve.

**Three goals I would like to achieve by the end of this course:**

1.

2.

3.

# ACHIEVING MY PUBLIC SPEAKING GOALS: A STUDENT'S TESTIMONY

Well, the semester is over, and I can honestly say that I really hate to see this class end. This class has given me more than I bargained for and has also allowed me to meet new people. I have learned a lot about the communication process by being part of the audience and through presenting informative speeches. My goals in taking this class were to learn how to prepare and give effective speeches and to overcome my nervousness and insecurity when asked to speak in public. I believe that I have achieved my goals.

My confidence as a speaker has at least doubled. Prior to taking this class I had done some public speaking but was usually so nervous that I would often forget what I wanted to say. I would trip over my words as I attempted to quote my speech verbatim from memory. My hands would shake, and my voice would quiver throughout the ordeal. I just knew everyone was watching me and waiting for me to make a mistake. I would present the speech without looking at the audience for feedback because my only concern was to state my speech and sit down. It always seemed that I would start out a little nervous and progressively become more nervous, especially if I knew that I had forgotten my lines exactly the way they were written, kind of like being in a play. I noticed during both of my speech presentations in class that this progressive nervousness did not occur. In fact, I found myself becoming calmer as time went on, actually looking members of the audience right in the eye! I now know that my inability to converse with the audience and my belief that I had to memorize a speech in order to present it effectively were two major contributors to my nervousness.

I think I have cured most of my nervousness by following the rules of preparing and presenting an extemporaneous speech. Just not trying to memorize my speech cured the majority of the jitters. By preparing a carefully planned, systematically structured outline of the thesis statement, the main ideas, and the key words and phrases, I was able to present my topic in a logical way to the audience. The extemporaneous method of presenting my speeches allowed me to relax and be more responsive to my audience and to receive feedback. By using an organized outline, I had flexibility and spontaneity, which I did not previously have with more rigid, memorized speeches. By communicating with my audience on a conversational level, I was able to focus on them, which helped me forget how nervous I was. Within one or two minutes my nerves had calmed, and I was actually enjoying being in front of an audience! I know that I can continue to overcome my nervousness by selecting a suitable topic for my audience about which I am knowledgeable, preparing a proper outline, and presenting my speech in an extemporaneous manner. I think this is definitely a winning combination for any speaker, nervous or not.

In my previous presentations, I felt comfortable with the topics, especially because I usually spoke to my fellow workers; however, I was not always comfortable with my ability to organize ideas. Therefore, one of my goals for this class was to learn to organize my presentations better. In this course I learned that the key to organization is preparing an outline with a clear thesis statement and main points. I organized my speeches so that the main points related back to my specific purpose and my thesis. This helped the speech to flow logically. I distinguished my main points from my minor points, letting the audience know exactly what I was talking about and where I was in the development of my ideas. I had never used this process before, and now know that it holds the key to the presentation of a logical speech.

I still have a number of areas in delivery that I need to work on. Even though I feel more comfortable, feedback from my classmates revealed that I do not appear to be comfortable. My facial expressions were noted as "tense" and "formal." In the future, I will try to appear less formal and relax my facial expression (perhaps a videotape would help). This is probably the main point that I will continue to work on, because it will be the hardest to overcome. I will also work on pacing my speech to allow time for pauses when necessary. My new-found confidence and knowledge of presenting an extemporaneous speech will not go to waste because I am occasionally requested to be on panels or to speak at a function as part of my job.



# PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETIES: PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

## Objectives

1. To acknowledge your anxieties about public speaking by responding to the questionnaire below.
2. To score and compare your public speaking anxieties at the beginning of your course with others' scores of public speaking anxiety.

## Instructions

This instrument is composed of thirty-four statements concerning feelings about communicating with other people in public speaking situations. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with each statement. Please just record your first impression. Again, the scale is:

1 = strongly agree      2 = agree      3 = undecided      4 = disagree      5 = strongly disagree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. While preparing for giving a speech I feel tense and nervous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel tense when I see the words "speech" and "public speech" on a course outline when studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Right after giving a speech I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have no fear of giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I look forward to giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class I can feel myself getting tense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I enjoy preparing for a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I do not know.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. My mind is clear when giving a speech.