

DSST® PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

EXAM INFORMATION

This exam was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that learned by students taking the course.

The exam consists of two parts. **Students must pass both parts of the exam in order to receive credit:**

Part 1 – Multiple-Choice: Contains approximately 85 multiple-choice questions to be answered in 90 minutes. The exam covers audience analysis; purposes of speeches; structure/ organization; content/supporting materials; research; language and style; delivery; communication apprehension; listening and feedback; and criticism and evaluation.

Part 2 – Speech Portion: Requires the student to record an impromptu persuasive speech that is no shorter than 3 minutes and no longer than 5 minutes. Speeches are to be recorded on an audiocassette tape for paper examinations. Online examinations will require the speech to be recorded in the voice capture functionality built in the online exam. The test center will provide a headset to record the speech for online exams. The student will be given a specific topic on which to speak and will have 10 minutes in which to prepare the speech.

A faculty member who teaches a Public Speaking course at an accredited college or university will grade the speech using the five dimensions listed below. Raters are trained to apply a scoring rubric (guide) uniformly to all speeches.

Structure/Organization: 25%
 Delivery: 25%
 Content/Supporting Material: 20%
 Effect/Persuasive: 20%
 Language/Style: 10%

Test takers will have 20 minutes to complete Part 2 – Speech Portion (10 minutes to prepare, 5 minutes to record, 5 minutes to playback the recording).

Reasons for automatic failure:

- Timing (speech is shorter than 3 minutes or longer than 5 minutes)
- Editing
- Topic not addressed
- Failure to take a position
- Took several positions

EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

The following is an outline of the content areas covered in the examination. The approximate percentage of the examination devoted to each content area is also noted.

- I. Ethical, Historical, and Social Considerations of Public Speaking – 5%**
Free speech in a democracy and free speech issues
- II. Audience Analysis and Adaptation/Effect/Persuasive – 8%**
Analyzing the audience and preparing the speech in terms of the needs of the speaker and the major characteristics of the audience, (e.g., age, sex, socioeconomic traits, education, political and ethnic attitudes, available time, etc.)
- III. Topics and Purposes of Speeches – 11%**
Formulating appropriate speech topics and speech purposes
- IV. Structure/Organization – 18%**
Structuring introductions, bodies, and conclusions; understanding thought patterns and organizational strategies.
- V. Content/Supporting Materials – 15%**
Recognizing and using evidence, argument, and reasoning; formulating logical, emotional, ethical, and credible appeals.
- VI. Research – 5%**
Using reference materials and finding sources in the preparation of a speech.
- VII. Language and Style – 11%**
Using language appropriate for a public speech.
- VIII. Delivery – 11%**
Articulation, voice, pronunciation, and body action.
- IX. Communication Apprehension – 3%**
Understanding and controlling apprehension in public speaking.
- X. Listening and Feedback – 5%**
Listening techniques; obstacles to avoid; giving and responding to feedback.
- XI. Criticism and Evaluation – 8%**
Criticizing and evaluating the effectiveness of a public speech.

REFERENCES

Below is a list of reference publications that were either used as a reference to create the exam, or were used as textbooks in college courses of the same or similar title at the time the test was developed. You may reference either the current edition of these titles **or** textbooks currently used at a local college or university for the same class title. It is recommended that you reference **more than one textbook** on the topics outlined in this fact sheet.

You should **begin by checking textbook content against the content outline** provided **before** selecting textbooks that cover the test content from which to study.

Sources for study material are suggested but not limited to the following:

1. DeVito, Joseph A. *The Elements of Public Speaking*. New York, NY: Longman, current edition.
2. Gronbeck, Bruce E. and others. *Principles of Speech Communication*. New York, NY: Longman, current edition.
3. Lucas, Stephen E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Inc., current edition.
4. McCroskey, James. *Introduction to Rhetorical Communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, current edition.
5. Nelson, Paul Edward, and Judy Cornelia Pearson. *Confidence in Public Speaking*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark, current edition.
6. Sprague, Jo, and Douglas Stuart. *The Speaker's Handbook*. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Pubs., current edition.
7. Verderber, Rudolph F. *The Challenge of Effective Speaking*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, current edition.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

All test questions are in a multiple-choice format, with one correct answer and three incorrect options. These are samples of the types of questions that may appear on the exam. Other sample questions can be found in the form of practice exams by visiting our website at www.getcollegedcredit.com/testprep.

1. In both classical and contemporary views of public speaking, primary attention is given to which of the following?





- a. Style of the speech
 - b. Substance or content of the speech
 - c. Delivery of the speech
 - d. Organization of the speech
2. A speech divided into the three main divisions of animal, vegetable, and mineral would be best organized according to which of the following patterns?
 - a. Temporal
 - b. Cause-effect
 - c. Topical
 - d. Problem-solution
 3. Speaker credibility refers most closely to which of the following?
 - a. Persuasiveness
 - b. Effectiveness
 - c. Emotional appeal
 - d. Believability
 4. In his famous "Liberty or Death" speech, Patrick Henry said:

"For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility, which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings."



This excerpt provides an example of Henry's attempt to do which of the following?

- a. Establish the truth of his proposition
 - b. Establish his credibility
 - c. Present his opponents' arguments in a bad light
 - d. Provide the audience with arguments to use against the alternative views they would hear from other speakers
5. The assumption that a person who is competent in one field is also competent in another field is referred to as which of the following?
 - a. Halo effect
 - b. Matching hypothesis
 - c. Social exchange hypothesis
 - d. Self-fulfilling prophecy
 6. The predisposition to act for or against a person or position is referred to as which of the following?

- a. Attitude
 - b. Belief
 - c. Value
 - d. Opinion
7. Most speeches should be prepared for which of the following audiences?
- a. Hypothetical
 - b. General
 - c. Specific
 - d. Idealized
8. Which of the following terms is used for the argument that what a person hears last is remembered best and has the greatest effect?
- a. Primacy
 - b. Regency 
 - c. Climax
 - d. Anticlimax
9. The degree to which the audience members have counterarguments ready to answer an attack on their beliefs, attitudes, and values is referred to as which of the following?
- a. Persuasive presumption
 - b. Inoculation
 - c. Selective exposure
 - d. Reinforcement
10. Which of the following patterns of organization would be most suitable for speeches such as "The events leading to World War II," "the development of language in the child," and "the major steps in learning to use a computer"?
- a. Spatial
 - b. Chronological 
 - c. Problem-solution
 - d. Cause-effect

SAMPLE SPEECH TOPIC (PART 2)

Topic: Some people believe that all states should be allowed to pass laws requiring the death penalty for certain crimes. Others feel that the death penalty is wrong and should be abolished. Try to persuade the audience of your position or point of view on the death penalty. Include supporting arguments to defend your position. Be sure to take the designated audience into consideration.



Audience: A college public speaking class composed of female and male students ranging in age from 18 to 30.

CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The American Council on Education’s College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) has evaluated the DSST test development process and content of this exam. It has made the following recommendations:

Area or Course Equivalent	Principles of Public Speaking
Level	Lower-level baccalaureate
Amount of Credit	Three (3) semester hours
Minimum Score	47 (C-grade equivalent) 52 (B-grade equivalent)
Source	American Council on Education – College Credit Recommendation Service

Answers to sample questions: 1-B; 2-C; 3-D; 4-B; 5-A; 6-A; 7-C; 8-B, 9-B, 10-B.