GRAB BAG Impromptu Speeches

Rationale: Because the fear of public speaking is said to rank higher than the fear of death, it’s important to practice in low-pressure, safe environments. A spur of the moment speech can remove some of the anxiety. Also, seeing classmates speak one after the other in rapid succession—and survive—can be reassuring.

In pairs or small groups, review elements of an effective speech.

* Intro (attention-getter), body (uses transitions), conclusion (sense of closure/something to think about)
* Delivery: eye contact, appropriate energy & enthusiasm, appropriate body language, varied tone, speaks clearly, enunciates words, confident.
1. For the first opportunity, pick items/topics that students will be familiar with and want to talk about. Think pop culture, current events, and school related things.
2. In groups of 4, students will go around the table and draw out of the bag.
3. For the first opportunity, you can make it shorter—thirty to forty-five seconds. Ideally, you will work your way up to 1 minute.
4. After each speech, give the group time to go around and comment on the positive aspects of the speech. What did they do well?
5. For the second round (or on another day), you can give content specific words.

**Sample Impromptu Speech Topics**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **An important person in my life** | **A character I’d like to meet** | **A place I’d like to visit** | **A TV show I like to watch** |
| **My favorite food** | **A hero in history** | **My perfect day** | **A pet I’d like to own** |
| **Me in 2035** | **An age I’d like to be** | **My favorite hobby** | **My favorite season** |
| **I predict…** | **My favorite app** | **Best qualities in a friend** | **The worst…** |

**Things to consider:**

* **Model for your students**
* **You can increase rigor by giving students a 2 minutes to prepare. Encourage them to open with an attention-getter.**
* **When they get more comfortable, you can have a couple of students go in front of the entire class.**