



Texas A&M University Core Curriculum Oral Communication Rubric

Definition

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board states that the Texas Core Curriculum objective of Communication is “to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.”¹ Further, the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) defines oral communication as “a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.”²

Framing Language

This rubric is designed to evaluate oral communication of a single speaker in an audio or video recording from a range of disciplines and a variety of genres. This rubric best applies to sustained, structured oral deliveries of sufficient length (minimum of thirty seconds) such that a central message is conveyed with purposeful organization. In a multimedia artifact, the central message should be conveyed orally, though written text or visual components (e.g., bullet points on a slide deck, title of a painting, and images) can frame the audience’s understanding.

Glossary

The following definitions clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Audience: The student’s instructor(s) or classmates unless otherwise noted.

Central message: The main point/thesis/bottom line/take-away/topic/concept. The specificity of the central message conveyed may depend on the genre. For example, the central message of a persuasive speech may be an evidence-backed argument, whereas the central message of a dramatic monologue may be a concept (e.g., an emotion or abstract idea) enhanced by the delivery.

Delivery: Vocal elements within the student’s control, such as tone, volume, articulation, and enunciation. Effective delivery excludes filler words (e.g., “um,” “like,” and “uh”) and uses pauses, pacing, and tone to enhance audience understanding.

Evidence: Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, reflections, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis.

Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of oral communication is clear and appropriate to the topic and for the audience. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.

Organizational pattern: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the oral communication reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives. For example, an effective pattern for a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. Other types of oral deliveries may be enhanced by alternative patterns, such as problem-solution or chronological.

¹ 19 Tex. Admin. Code §4.28 (2021).

² American Association of Colleges & Universities. (2009). *Oral communication VALUE rubric*. <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics-oral-communication>





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Oral Communication Rubric**

	Advanced 8	7	Competent 6	5	Developing 4	3	Beginner 2	1	Not Present 0
Central Message	<i>Central message</i> is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported). Persuasive supporting <i>evidence</i> enhances the <i>central message</i> .	<i>Central message</i> is clear and consistent. Supporting <i>evidence</i> strengthens the <i>central message</i> .	<i>Central message</i> is basically understandable but is not memorable, repeated, and/or emphasized. Supporting <i>evidence</i> is sufficient for the <i>audience</i> .	<i>Central message</i> can be deduced but is not explicitly stated. Supporting <i>evidence</i> may be insufficient and/or inappropriate for the <i>audience</i> .	<i>Central message</i> is unidentifiable (e.g., <i>audience</i> relies on written text to identify topic) and/or unsupported in the oral communication.				
Organization	<i>Organizational pattern</i> is skillful and enhances the content.	<i>Organizational pattern</i> is clearly and consistently observable and makes the content cohesive.	<i>Organizational pattern</i> is generally observable and coherent.	<i>Organizational pattern</i> is observable but may be ineffective, inconsistent, distracting, and/or confusing.	<i>Organizational pattern</i> is absent or unidentifiable (e.g., stream of consciousness).				
Presentation	<i>Language</i> is imaginative, memorable, compelling; it is tailored to the <i>audience</i> . <i>Delivery</i> makes the content memorable and compelling.	<i>Language</i> is thoughtful and appropriate for the <i>audience</i> . <i>Delivery</i> makes the content interesting.	<i>Language</i> is mundane and commonplace but appropriate for the <i>audience</i> . <i>Delivery</i> is coherent and makes the content understandable but could be improved in terms of clarity, pacing, tone, etc.	<i>Language</i> is unclear, confusing and/or inappropriate for the <i>audience</i> . <i>Delivery</i> may be occasionally incoherent (e.g., mumbled word) and/or difficult to understand (e.g., excessively fast pace or monotone).	<i>Language</i> and <i>delivery</i> are incoherent, unintelligible, and/or inappropriate for the <i>audience</i> .				

Italicized words appear in the glossary and provide guidance on applying this rubric to student work.

