

Dear Fourth and Fifth Grade Parents,

All of our Whitaker fourth and fifth graders will be participating in the 2017 Modern Woodmen of American School Speech project. We are very excited about this opportunity for our students. Each of the students will be required to write and present an oral speech using the topic "What does it mean to be a hero?" The guidelines state:

**In popular culture, heroes are depicted as superhumans who fly through the air to rescue a damsel in distress or save the world from a villain's evil plan. Christopher Reeve, who starred as one of the most famous superheroes in American film, once said, "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles." This year's School Speech Contest asks contestants to speak about what it means to be a hero.**

**In organizing their speeches, students may choose to consider one or more of the following questions or present on their own aspect of the topic.**

- **How do you define hero or heroic behavior?**
- **What characteristics do you think define or describe a hero?**
- **What are some examples of heroic behavior?**
- **Who is your hero(es)? Why?**
- **How are heroes depicted in literature and film?**

**Students may use these questions to help formulate ideas, but they should not be limited by the list above. Speeches must be at least three minutes and no more than five minutes long. Speeches must be in the student's own words.**

This project will help our students address Anchor Standard 4 in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy – "Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience." The CCSS requires fourth graders to "Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace." Fifth graders are required to "Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace."

I have attached additional information about this year's topic. The students will be allowed to use note cards, but no props or costumes are allowed. Some students choose to memorize their speeches. The students will be working with their language arts teacher as they prepare their speeches. They will learn some techniques for effectively delivering their speech. The teachers will be giving your child the tools and showing him/her how and where to start on this process. The majority of the writing of the speech and the preparing of the note cards will be completed at home. We will be counting on you to assist your child with meeting the deadlines outlined below and with practicing the delivery of their speech. Please go over the attached information with your child. We have established some deadlines for steps to complete in order to assure all of the students are prepared for their classroom competition beginning March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two students from each language arts class will be selected to participate in our school contest on March 16<sup>th</sup>. **Please discuss the requirements with your child and return the bottom of this letter to your child's teacher by February 3<sup>rd</sup>.** You may contact your child's teacher if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
*Bobby Stern*  
Bobby Stern  
Instructional Facilitator  
4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers

**Deadlines:**

February 13 <sup>th</sup>	Final outline of speech due (students will begin to work on this in their classrooms)
February 17 <sup>th</sup>	Final Draft due
February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Note cards due (Teachers will teach the children how to prepare the note cards)
March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Classroom speech competition
March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Whitaker School Competition

We have discussed the speech competition and understand the requirements and deadlines.

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Your Speech

### Step 1: Organize your thoughts

Judges will be paying close attention to how well you've organized your speech because it's so vital to audience understanding. Follow the process below to ensure your speech will make sense and flow:

#### *Collecting ideas (mind mapping):*

1. Write the topic in the center of a large sheet of paper and circle it.
2. Write as many ideas about the topic as you can in five minutes, spacing the words and phrases around the paper.  
(See sample, p. 11)
3. Set the sheet aside. If you think of any more ideas, add them.

#### *Grouping ideas:*

1. Using different colored markers, circle two or three main ideas.
2. Look at the other words and phrases. Use the same color markers to show they're connected to the main ideas.

#### *Arranging ideas:*

1. Write the topic in the center of a new sheet of paper and circle it.
2. Draw evenly-spaced lines from the circle and write the main ideas on them.
3. Draw lines from those main ideas and write the words and phrases that go with them from the first sheet.



### Step 2: Write your speech

Now that your thoughts are organized on paper, writing your speech will be easier. As you write, keep two things in mind:

- 1) Your goal is to give your audience something meaningful to take with them: information, a new attitude, awareness of a situation, etc.
- 2) You have only a few minutes to speak. Focus on two or three main ideas and don't try to cram in too much information.

There are many ways to write a speech. In the following method, you'll notice the three parts – the introduction, the body and the conclusion – are written in mixed-up order.

#### *First: Write the body of the speech*

- Ask yourself: "If I were a member of the audience, what three things would I want to know about the main ideas?" These are the points you'll make in your speech. Get to them quickly – be brief and clear.
- Back up your points with hard facts and interesting examples. Tying in a personal experience is also good.
- Help the audience follow your speech by clearly marking each section with words and phrases like "first of all" and "secondly."
- Use short sentences and casual vocabulary. Avoid big words.
- Relate to the audience by using words like "you," "us" and "our."
- Ask a rhetorical question – one you don't expect them to answer – like, "Have you ever ... ?" Or "What would you do if ... ?"
- As you write, ask yourself:
  - Would I talk like this to someone I know?
  - Am I being clear?

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**Second: Write the conclusion**

Make it short and powerful. Wrap up the speech and summarize what you want the audience to remember. Your last sentence should be a call for action, an encouragement or inspiration.

**Third: Write the introduction**

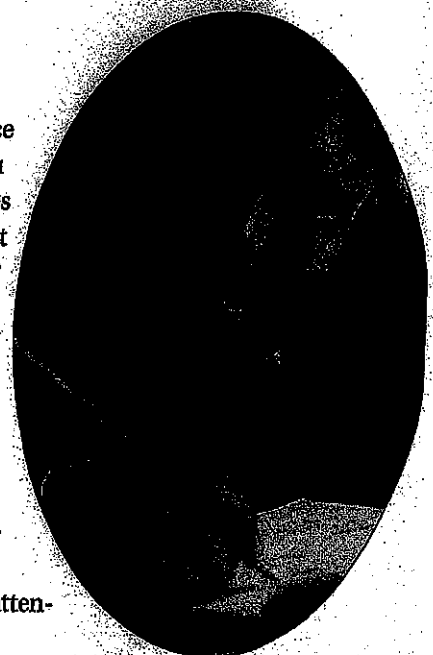
Grab the audience's attention by making it clear you have something important to say. Quote a famous person or tell a funny story. Offer a surprising fact or statistic. If the information is somehow related to you or someone you know, that's all the better.

**Other Tips:**

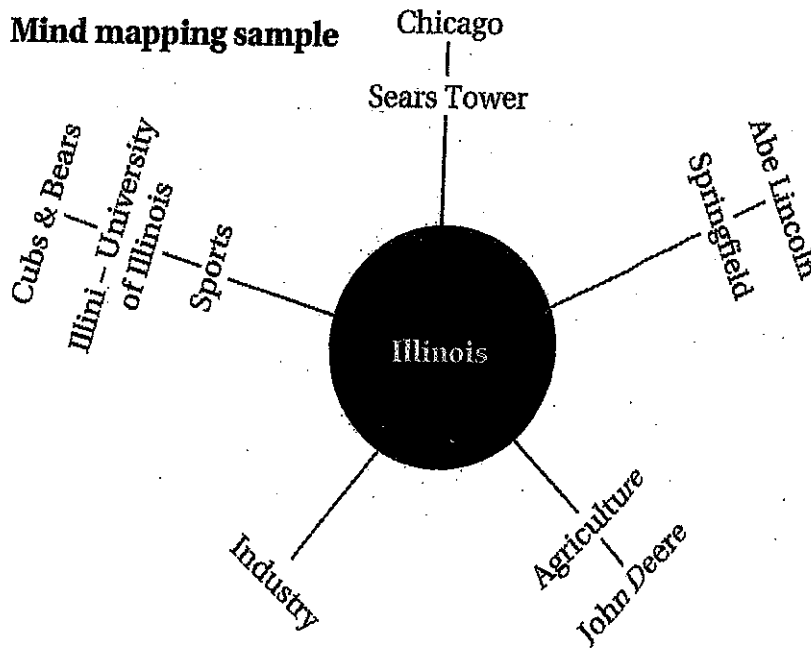
- After the speech is completely written, reread it, eliminating unnecessary words. The best, most understandable speeches are simple and to the point.

- If typed, triple-space your speech. As you practice, make notes above the text. What will you emphasize? How will your voice volume change? Where will you pause? What hand gestures and body movements will you make? All these techniques will help you hold the audience's attention.

- Write notes – key words and phrases – on 3" x 5" cards. They'll help you memorize your speech by prompting you as you practice. Make sure you number them, in case they're



**Mind mapping sample**



## Memorizing Your Speech

Memorizing takes time, so don't put it off until the last minute. Below are two methods from author Patrick Magee. His website, [www.BrainDance.com](http://www.BrainDance.com), is a great resource.

- Read your speech out loud at least twice a day, preferably first thing in the morning and last thing before bedtime, when you have no distractions. (When you say it aloud, it uses three of your five senses: hearing, speaking and seeing.)

- **"Chunk" your speech:** Divide it into 30-second to one-minute sections and memorize each section separately. Here's how:

1. Review your notes for a few moments.
2. Deliver that portion of your speech from memory.
3. Refer to your notes to see if you left out anything.
4. Deliver the chunk again from memory.
5. Review periodically by repeating steps 1-4.

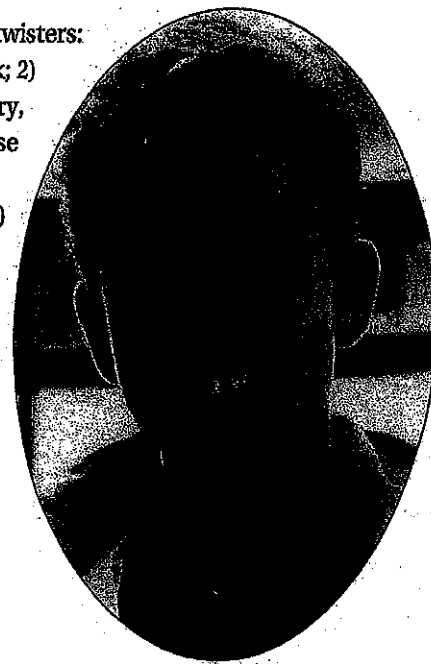
## Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters are fun and help your enunciation. Use them to warm up before the contest. After you try the ones below, make up your own and ask a friend to say them.

- A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.
- Six thick thistle sticks. Six thick thistles stick.
- Which witch wished which wicked wish?
- Shy Shelly says she shall sew sheets.
- Give Papa a cup of proper coffee in a copper coffee cup.
- Six short slow shepherds.

- Repeat these short twisters:

- 1) Unique New York; 2) Toy boat; 3) Red lorry, yellow lorry; 4) Please pay promptly; 5) Three free throws; 6) Knapsack straps; 7) Peggy Babcock





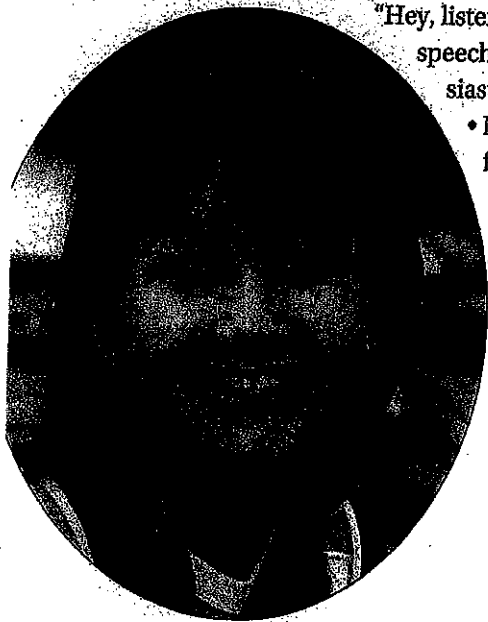
## Delivering Your Speech

### Practice ... practice ... practice!

- Practice your speech over and over, especially the introduction and conclusion. They're most remembered by the audience.
- Practice difficult words like proper names. Clear pronunciation is a must.
- Practice giving your speech to a variety of audiences – classmates, family members, friends, etc. You'll connect better with your contest audience if you've had experience speaking to different groups.

### Be enthusiastic and confident!

- Think of the audience as friends – they're on your side. Share your message and help them understand what you have to say.
- Try to relax. The most experienced speakers get nervous – they just don't show it.
  - Imagine you've just said to a friend, "Hey, listen to this!" Begin your speech in that same enthusiastic tone of voice.
  - Move a little. Take a few steps away from the podium.



- Gestures can help you describe how something works, looks, or moves; how big or small it is; and can illustrate certain words like "split." All body and hand movements should be natural, not forced.
- Unless you're gesturing, rest your hands on the podium, fold them in front of you, keep them by your sides or put them behind your back. Avoid touching your hair, your clothing, your jewelry, etc.
- Maintain eye contact throughout your speech. Pick some friendly, interested faces and shift your gaze from one to another – a few seconds on each.
- Pausing can emphasize something you want the audience to think about or remember. It's better to pause than use fillers like "uh" and "um," which could make you appear nervous. You'll seem more at ease if you speak slowly and pause at times.
- Watch your posture. Stand up straight, keep your shoulders back and your chin up – you'll breathe easier and look better.

### Judges' Scoring Rubric

<b>MATERIAL ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>(0-40 pts.)</b>
Theme and Subject Adherence – 0-10 pts. Is this year's theme followed? Does speaker stay on topic throughout the entire presentation? Is the material strong or weak? Is time used to best advantage?	
Structure – 0-10 pts. Is speech organized, well-planned and constructed?	
Content – 0-10 pts. Is material adequate, does it have substance?	
Logic – 0-5 pts. Does speech make sense? Does it follow a reasoned pattern?	
Color – 0-5 pts. Does speech appeal to heart as well as mind? Does it have good use of imagery? Does it include examples?	
<b>DELIVERY AND PRESENTATION</b>	<b>(0-40 pts.)</b>
Voice – 0-10 pts. Is there quality and variety of expression (rate, inflection, volume)?	
Pronunciation – 0-5 pts. Are all words spoken correctly?	
Enunciation – 0-5 pts. Are all words clear - not mumbled or distorted? Please overlook impediments.	
Gestures – 0-10 pts. Does the control and use of the body, while speaking, add/detract to the speech?	
Poise – 0-10 pts. Is the speaker confident, relaxed, convincing, maintaining composure and in control of situation?	
<b>OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>(0-20 pts.)</b>
Impression – 0-10 pts. Did the speech make an impression in minds of listeners (arouse a response)? Was a conversational tone used to talk to instead of at?	
Effect – 0-10 pts. Did the speaker communicate to audience what the speech was to accomplish (i.e. inform, persuade, appeal, move)? Did the speaker make a point and convince the audience?	
Penalty Points	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>(100 possible points)</b>

**Penalty Points**

Under three minutes – 5 points

Over five minutes, but less than six minutes – 5 points

Six minutes and over – 10 points