**GRADUATION SPEECH ASSIGNMENT 2017**

**Requirements & Recommendations:**

(*begin by acknowledging “dignitaries” who may be present and other groups of attendees.)*

1. Typed – 12 point font double-spaced
2. 1-2 pages (no more)
3. Try to engage and inspire your listeners *from the start*
4. Reflect on past years in the SOUTH LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT. Share special memories, but no inside jokes. Write for you AUDIENCE!
5. Also, LOOK AHEAD to the future
6. NO NEGATIVITY
7. Thank parents, teachers and friends
8. Be creative! Consider using HUMOR!

**Other helpful tips:**

Graduation is a formal occasion and your speech should reflect this.

Your speech should have a unifying thesis and your ideas should be listed in a clear logical order. Do not simply thank lists of people. You should express ideas that will help your classmates with the challenges they will face after graduation.

You should have control over spelling, sentence structure and mechanics. Your paper should not, for example, contain grammar errors or sentence fragments. Many people will be reading the text of your speech.

Avoid clichéd metaphors and mixed metaphors. Do not write “We were like seedlings who flourished in the fertile soil of Tiburon, and now we are ready to spread our wings and fly.” (Are the students plants or birds, and is either comparison flattering to the intellectual abilities of the graduates?) Please avoid comparing life to a journey…

Avoid passive voice constructions, vague adjectives (great, marvelous, incredible), and indirect phrases (in terms of). All of these can make your writing wordy and unclear. If in doubt, check a grammar handbook about wordiness, or see resources listed in your “How To Write a Graduation Speech packet.”

* Avoid “like,” “and,” “um,” “you know,” etc

“How to Write a Graduation Speech” by Naomi Rockler-Gladen

[*http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cfm/how\_to\_write\_a\_graduation\_speech*](http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cfm/how_to_write_a_graduation_speech)

Most graduation speeches aren't very good. You know why? Because they're too generic. They talk about the future and "spreading your wings" and all kinds of cliché things that can apply to any graduating class. A good graduation speech should be tailored only for your graduating class. The speech should be unusable by other classes because it is filled with details and stories specific to these students' experiences.

Here are **some tips** to writing an unforgettable graduation speech:

\* Tell lots of stories. The stories should be about the students in the graduating class, the teachers, and other important people in the school. The stories can be funny, or touching, or just descriptive. The audience is filled with parents and people who are not part of the graduating class, so what you want to do is make that graduating class come alive for the people who aren't a part of it.

\* Talk about major events. What are some important things that happened in the world, your community, or at your school in the last four years? Include them in your speech, especially if these events evoke emotion. If a teacher or student died, mention them and say how much everyone misses them. If your football team won the state championship, mention this (and expect enthusiastic applause from the audience).

\* Talk about meaningful activities your class did together. Here's where you talk about the prom, Spirit Week, a successful charity event, the awesome school play, etc. If your school has some traditional events, mention them. Some of the audience members will be alumni and will appreciate this.

\* Talk about values that are important to the students and the audience. If this is a liberal arts college, talk about the value of a liberal arts education. Don't dwell on these kinds of topics or you risk sounding corny, but mentioning them will make your speech feel more inclusive to everyone.

\* Be inclusive. Talk about everyone in the class: the jocks, the band geeks, the Honor Society kids, and everyone else. This speech is for everybody.

\* Use popular culture references. This is a popular culture era, so including popular culture references is another thing you can do to make your speech more personal. Work in references to popular TV shows, movies, and songs.

\* Don't talk about yourself. Well, you can talk about yourself a little bit, but only a little. This speech is for everyone, and it isn't very classy to steal the focus.

\* Don't speak badly of anyone. This is not the time to make fun of that nasty English teacher, nor is it time to get even with that kid who bullied you from grades 3 through 8. Be nice. You can gently poke fun of quirky things, like that weird green stuff they serve every Thursday for school lunch, etc. But do this sparingly, and be careful not to offend anyone.

\* Be appropriate. Use common sense. Don't swear.

\* Use inside jokes sparingly. Your classmates might appreciate inside jokes, but the audience won't know what you're talking about.

\* Avoid clichés. The phrases "spread your wings and fly," "new chapter in our lives," and "be true to yourself" should not appear in your speech, and neither should other clichés.

\* Give advice sparingly. Graduation speeches do not have to contain advice, and if you're part of the graduating class, you may not have much advice to give.

\* Thank the parents. Ask everyone in the graduating class to give them a round of applause. This will mean the world to them. Make your mom cry.

\* Thank the teachers. Lord knows teachers don't get enough praise. Thank the principal or the assistant principal too.