Speech Assignment Resources

Assignment: Write and record a three-to-four-minute speech addressing your generation on a cultural moment. This may be a historical or current event, movement, mentality, or philosophy that is affecting your generation. See below for different examples of these types of speeches throughout history.

Write an outline or full transcript of your speech and record yourself giving the speech. Then, watch your recording and review it with the criteria below. Then, make changes to your script, re-record it, and then send it to Headquarters for feedback. Once you receive feedback from Headquarters, make any additional changes and submit your final recording and outline.

Examples: Each link goes to an official library or archive transcript.

Speech	Official transcript
Reagan, Challenger Address (1986)	Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (1863)	Library of Congress
Churchill, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" (1940)	International Churchill Society
Bush, Address to the Nation on 9/11 (2001)	White House Archives

Brainstorming Questions:

- **Historical/Cultural**: What past event still shapes how my generation lives, learns, or thinks?
- **Current Event**: What is happening now that my generation will remember in 20 years?
- **Movement**: What are people my age organizing around, joining, or pushing back against?
- **Mentality/Philosophy**: What attitude or belief is common among my peers, and is it helping or hurting us?

Tips:

- **Keep your speech topic narrowed**: A 3–4 minute speech can fully develop one focused claim, not a whole subject.
- **Check your thesis***:* Can it be said in one breath? Does it speak directly to your generation?
- **When giving a source in your speech,** name the source, its credibility, and its date in one breath before the fact: *"A 2024 Pew Research Center survey found that…"* Then list the full citation in the written outline.

Checklist:

- ▲ **Content:** Appropriately focused to one claim; has a distinct thesis; clearly addresses the prompt.
- ▲ **Organization:** Speech is engaging and logically sequenced.
- ▲ **Research & Analysis**: Facts and information are explained, well-developed, well-researched, and clearly support the thesis.
- ▲ **Citations:** Sources are shared clearly and ideas are credited to original sources.
- ▲ **Language:** Word choice is concise and original; language is suited to topic and audience.
- ▲ **Presentation:** Confident and engaging; limited number of verbal pauses; little to no use of “um” or “uh;” controlled use of hand gestures.

Outline 1: Past → Present → Future

Sample outline if you are focusing on a historical or recent event with a clear before and after (like Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* or Reagan's *Challenger Address*).

1. **Introduction**
    1. Hook: *Open with something concrete the audience can picture, such as a short story or a fact that the audience would recognize. Do not start with "Today I'm going to talk about…"*
    2. Context: *Briefly explain the moment you will discuss and when it happened.*
    3. Thesis: *Say it plainly, then pause so it lands.*
    4. Preview: *"I will talk about [past], [present], and [future]."*

2. **Past: What happened**
    1. Fact: *Start with a key fact about the event from history.*
    2. Oral citation: *"According to [source, with date]…"*
    3. Analysis: *Explain the fact; don't just state it. Ask yourself "so what?"*

3. **Present: How it shapes us now**
    1. Fact or data: *What effect does this moment in history have on your generation?*
    2. Oral citation: *"[Source] found that…"*
    3. Analysis or example: *Make the data real; add a personal, local, or other example.*

4. **Future: What we do next**
    1. Claim: *What should your generation do, change, or build on?*
    2. Support: *Give a reason or example showing that this is possible.*

5. **Conclusion**
    1. Call to your generation: *What is one specific thing that you are asking your generation to do or believe?*
    2. Callback: *Return to the image or story from your hook, now changed.*
    3. Final line: *A short, memorable sentence calling back to your thesis.*

Outline 2: Problem → Impact → Response

Sample outline if you are focusing on an ongoing issue, pressure, or threat facing your generation (like Churchill's *We Shall Fight on the Beaches* or Bush's *9/11 Address*).

1. **Introduction**
    1. Hook: *Open with a question, surprising statistic, or scene that reveals the problem.*
    2. Thesis: *Say it plainly, then pause so it lands.*
    3. Preview: *"Let's look at what the problem is, what it is costing us, and how we answer it."*

2. **The problem**
    1. Definition: *Describe the issue in plain words.*
    2. Fact: *Give evidence of how widespread the problem is.*
    3. Oral citation: *"A [year] report from [source] shows…"*

3. **The impact on our generation**
    1. Fact: *How does this problem affect people your age?*
    2. Oral citation: *"[Source] found that…"*
    3. Analysis: *Why does this matter for your generation's future? Ask yourself "so what?"*
    4. Fairness check: *Acknowledge another side or a complication in one sentence; it makes you more credible.*

4. **Our response**
    1. Action 1: *What can individuals do?*
    2. Action 2: *What can friends, schools, or communities do?*
    3. Analysis: *Explain why these actions would make a difference.*

5. **Conclusion**
    1. Rallying repetition: *Use three parallel sentences, such as "We will… We will… We will…"*
    2. Callback: *Return to the question or scene from your hook.*
    3. Final line: *A short, memorable sentence calling back to your thesis.*

Option 3: Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Sample outline if your main goal is to move your generation to act. This five-step pattern was developed by Purdue professor Alan Monroe and is a standard structure in public speaking (Monroe's Motivated Sequence: An Overview).

1. **Attention**
    1. Hook: *Open with a story, image, question, or quotation that grabs your peers' attention.*
    2. Thesis: *Your audience should know your topic and your stance within the first 30 seconds.*

2. **Need**
    1. Problem: *What is wrong, missing, or at stake for your generation?*
    2. Fact: *Give evidence that the need is real.*
    3. Oral citation: *"According to [source, with date]…"*
    4. Make it personal: *How does this affect the people listening? This section is the longest because it must make the audience care.*

3. **Satisfaction (Solution)**
    1. Solution: *What can your generation do or believe instead?*
    2. Support: *Give a fact, example, or expert view showing the solution works.*
    3. Oral citation: *"[Source with date] found that…"*

4. **Visualization**
    1. Picture the future: *Describe what happens if your generation acts, or what happens if it doesn't. Use vivid language so the audience can see it.*

5. **Action**
    1. Specific ask: *What is one clear, doable step listeners can take this week?*
    2. Final line: *A short, memorable sentence that echoes your hook.*