

Useful terms for critical evaluation of a speech:

ASB Public Speaking Module One:

Intention - what the speaker hopes to achieve as a result of the speech. The intention is often stated as the thesis statement. The speech is evaluated against this. Sometimes with hindsight a candidate may comment on the immediate result and then put the whole speech into its historical context. e.g. the Gettysburg address was slated by critics when it was first delivered but subsequently has become a central rallying cry of American orators.

Content - simply, it is what the speech is about - the information contained e.g. a debate to prove Helen was not to blame for the Trojan war (Gorgias - Encomium i.e. defence of Helen of Troy). This would be expanded to give the arguments for and against and the outcome.

Arrangement - how the ideas are arranged within the speech. If there are 3 arguments, which is the first, second, third? Why this order? Is it a good one?

Structure - the sequencing and arrangement of the whole to suit the speech genre e.g. the informative v the persuasive structure.

Style - the devices used by the speaker to carry the message and speaker's characteristics identified. This could include reference to figures of speech, choice of language to suit the audience, occasion and purpose; also sentence lengths, use of anecdotes