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slow, yet natural, pace. Get your audiences attention with a quotation, anecdote, or a clever joke. Make sure your theme is clear and that all your content is cohesive and concise. Illustrate your theme with a story or example, reminding you the times you and your classmates enjoyed. A high school graduation speech should last ten minutes. Close your speech by thanking your audience, fellow students, parents, and teachers. Tie together the points you have presented during your speech and end with a clever statement your audience will remember. How to Write a Graduation Speech? Writing your graduation speech will be much easier if you have a plan. Our step-by-step guide on how to write a graduation speech will walk you through the entire process. Brainstorm Ideas Begin by brainstorming ideas. Think about the future and what kind of challenges you and your fellow students may face after graduation. Consider your past school experiences, concentrating on those which are unique and interesting. Pick a Theme Your theme may become obvious as you list your brainstorming ideas. If not, check out the list of themes we have suggested and pick one that fits your experiences and personality. Stick with Your Theme. Do not allow yourself to include anything in your speech not related to your theme. Find a quote, song lyrics, or a popular news story related to your theme if you wish to include one. Build the Basic Structure of Your Speech After identifying the theme of your speech, begin to organize your speech by creating an outline: Welcome Introduce Topic (Theme) Give Example, Testimonial, or Tell a Story or Joke Add Originality Conclusion Thank Your Audience Leave Them with a One Line Summation Delivering Your Graduation Speech Once you have completed your graduation speech, you are ready to prepare for delivering it. Find out when on the program you will be speaking so you will be ready. Knowing if you are first, last, or somewhere in the middle of the program can help you feel more comfortable about delivering your speech. Adhere to all the following suggestions to make sure your speech is the best it can be. Memorize Your Speech Reading your speech can destroy the delivery, making you sound robotic and impersonal. You will probably want to have some notes but try to speak as much as possible from memory. Time Your Speech You may be told how long you have for your speech. If not, try not to talk no more than about ten minutes; a longer speech may not keep your listeners' attention. Speak Slowly When one is nervous, they speak faster. Try to speak slowly and enunciate each word. Pause when necessary for an audience response to a joke or funny comment. Speak with Emotion Vary your tone of voice and match your emotions with your content. Make Eye Contact Look at your audience. If doing so makes you nervous, pick a spot on the wall at the back of the room and look at it as you speak. You can also pick out a few people in the audience you know and make eye contact with them. Before you deliver your speech, practice, practice, practice! Deliver your speech to your family, the mirror, your dog - anyone that will listen. Ask for advice and take it. When you give your speech, if you make a mistake, repeat the sentence or word and keep going. Smile at your audience when appropriate. Your enthusiasm for your subject will be felt and enjoyed. Finally, remember to have pictures or a video taken while you are giving your speech. You have earned the privilege of speaking for your entire class - a huge responsibility and one you will remember for years to come. Smile, have fun, and your audience will enjoy and remember your graduation speech. Susan majored in English with a double minor in Humanities and Business at Arizona State University and earned a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Liberty University. She taught grades four through twelve in both public and private schools. Subjects included English, U.S. and world history and geography, math, earth and physical science, Bible, information technologies, and creative writing. Susan has been freelance writing for over ten years, during which time she has written and edited books, newspaper articles, biographies, book reviews, guidelines, neighborhood descriptions for realtors, Power Point presentations, resumes, and numerous other projects. Read full bio Standing at a sea of caps and gowns, you feel your heart beat faster. What will you say? How can you make your words stick in the minds of these graduates? This big moment calls for big ideas that touch hearts and stay in minds long after the tassels are turned. Many speakers fall back on worn-out advice about "following dreams" or "working hard." But you want your words to shine with fresh wisdom. You want to give the gift of words that really matter. Let's find a speech idea that fits you and speaks to your audience in a way they won't soon forget. Unique Graduation Speech Ideas These speech ideas will help you craft words that hit home and stay with your listeners. Pick one that matches your style and connects with your group. 1. "The Power of One Small Step" Focus on how big goals start with tiny moves. Tell stories about famous people who began with just one small step. Talk about how each graduate can make progress in life by taking action today, no matter how small it seems. Your speech can show how small daily choices add up to big life changes. Give clear examples that grads can follow right away, like reaching out to make one new contact each week or reading ten pages of a book each day. 2. "What I Wish Someone Had Told Me" Share honest lessons from your own path that you had to learn the hard way. Pick 3-5 key bits of wisdom that would have saved you time or stress if you'd known them sooner. Make this talk personal but useful. For each lesson, explain both what went wrong for you and how grads can avoid the same bumps. This works best when the speaker has lived through struggles the grads might face soon. 3. "The Gift of Getting It Wrong" Talk about how mess-ups and flops lead to growth. Tell stories of famous fails that turned into wins, like how many top companies started with a totally different plan than what made them big. Show grads that mistakes aren't bad luck but good teachers. Give tips on how to fail well - by staying open to feedback, not taking fails too hard, and using each slip as a step to get better. 4. "Heroes Among Us" Shine light on the quiet heroes in your town or school. Talk about the lunch lady who learned every kid's name, the janitor who stayed late to help with events, or the office worker who sent cards to sick students. This speech helps grads see that true success isn't just fame or cash. It links big values like kindness and service to real people the grads know, making these values feel close and real. 5. "The Things That Don't Change" In fast times when tech and work keep shifting, talk about the steady things that matter in any age. Discuss how traits like grit, kindness, and truth-telling still count now just as much as 100 years ago. Link these lasting values to the fresh tests grads will face. Show how old wisdom can guide them through new worlds. This helps bridge the gap between their lives and the wisdom of who came before. 6. "Find Your North Star" Talk about how finding your key values helps you make choices. Share how knowing what matters most to you makes it easier to pick paths and say no to things that don't fit. Give grads steps to find their own guiding stars. You might ask them to write down their top 3 values and how they'll live by them. 7. "The Joy of Being Wrong" Push past the plain idea that mistakes help us learn. Go deeper into how being wrong can free us. Talk about how saying "I was wrong" opens doors to new ideas and deeper links with others. Share a time when changing your mind led to growth. Show how being stuck on being right keeps us small. This talk works well for grads heading to worlds where set views can block fresh paths. 8. "The Beauty of Plan B" Share tales of how life's twists often lead to better places than our first plans. Talk about how some of the best things come when our first hopes fall through. Help grads see that a blocked path isn't the end of the road. Give tips on how to stay loose when life takes sharp turns. This helps calm fears about the future by showing how good things can come from changed plans. 9. "What Success Really Looks Like" Ask grads to rethink what "making it" means. Move past the usual marks like big jobs or fat checks to talk about deeper wins like finding work that lights you up or building bonds that last. Use real tales of people who found joy off the fast track. This helps grads see that there are many paths to a good life, not just the ones that get the most hype. 10. "The Art of Showing Up" Focus on how just being there for key times shapes lives. Talk about how success often comes from steady work, not flash and dash. Share stories of how just sticking with it made all the change. Add tips on how to keep going when it's hard. This helps grads see that most big wins come from plain old grit, not magic skills or lucky breaks. 11. "Breaking the Rules That Need Breaking" Talk about times when the best move is to buck the system. Share tales of game-changers who saw bad rules and made new ways that worked better. But be clear - this isn't about breaking rules just to make noise. It's about fixing what's broke and making things work better. This helps grads tell the old friends about times when they felt most alive or to list what they'd do if money weren't a worry. Help them see that knowing their values makes life's hard calls easier. 12. "The Joy of Being Wrong" Push past the plain idea that mistakes help us learn. Go deeper into how being wrong can free us. Talk about how saying "I was wrong" opens doors to new ideas and deeper links with others. Share a time when changing your mind led to growth. Show how being stuck on being right keeps us small. This talk works well for grads heading to worlds where set views can block fresh paths. 13. "Small Wins, Big Life" Talk about how daily small wins add up to big change over time. Share how steady tiny steps beat big leaps that don't last. Use tales of folks who got far through small daily acts, not flash moves. Give grads clear ways to track small wins in their own lives. This helps them see how they can build to big goals without feeling crushed by the size of the task ahead. 14. "The Words You Say to Yourself" Focus on how self-talk shapes our paths. Share how the thoughts we think about ourselves can lift us up or hold us back. Give tales of how changing inner words changed outer lives. Teach grads how to catch bad self-talk and flip it to help, not hurt. This gives them a tool they can use right away in the next phase of life, when new tests may shake their faith in themselves. 15. "Builders and Fixers" Talk about how the world needs both kinds of folks - those who make new things and those who fix what's broke. Share how both skills matter in making things better. Help grads see which type they lean toward and how to prize that gift. This helps them see their own strengths in a fresh light and gives a frame for thinking about how they'll add to the world. 16. "The Five-Year Test" Ask what will still matter five years from now. Talk about how this test helps us see what's truly key and what's just noise of the now. Share how this view can cut stress by helping us tell big deals from small fuss. Give grads a way to use this test in their own lives. This helps them gain a long view that can guide them through the rush of choices that come after school ends. 17. "The Courage to Be Kind" Talk about how true kindness takes guts in a world that often pushes for harsh words and sharp views. Share tales of how kind acts changed lives or fixed big splits. Show how kindness isn't weak but strong. This helps grads see that soft skills like care and kind acts are as key to success as hard skills and smarts. 18. "The Non-Linear Path" Share how life is full of twists, not a straight line up. Talk about how real growth often looks messy, with steps back and side moves that still lead to good spots. This helps ease the weight of feeling like they need to have it all mapped out or that a step back means they're lost. 19. "What Makes a Good Life" Look at what truly matters to grads and how to live by it. Give tips on how to stay open to new folks while keeping ties with old friends. This helps grads see that good links with others are key to a rich life and that new doors are about to open. 20. "The Voices You Listen To" Focus on how the views we live in shape our lives. Talk about how picking whose words we heed can lift us up or drag us down. Share how to tell wise guides from those who just make noise. Give tips on how to build a group of good voices to help guide their way. This helps grads take charge of the inputs that will shape their thoughts in the years to come. 21. "The Gift of Hard Things" Talk about how tough times shape who we are. Share how tests and pain, while not fun, can be the soil where our best traits grow. Use tales of how hard spots led to growth that good times couldn't bring. Help grads see tough times in a new way - not as bad luck to dodge but as key parts of a full life. This helps them face the hard stuff that will come with more grit and less fear. 22. "Asking Better Questions" Focus on how the questions we ask shape what we find. Talk about how "Why is this hard?" leads to a stuck place, while "What can I learn here?" opens new doors. Share how good queries lead to good paths. Give grads some key questions to use as they face new tests. This gives them a tool they can use right away to shift how they face the next steps. 23. "The Joy of Good Work" Talk about the deep joy that comes from work done well, no matter what kind of work it is. Share how pride in craft adds to life, no matter if you're fixing cars or writing code. Use tales of folks who found joy in jobs that might not seem like dream gigs. This helps grads see that joy can come from how you do your work, not just what your job title says. 24. "The Unwritten Rules" Share the hidden laws that shape how things work in jobs, school, and life. Talk about the stuff that no one tells you but that makes all the diff in how you're seen and how fast you grow. Give grads the inside scoop on how to read these rules in new spots. This helps them get up to speed fast in the new worlds they'll step into. 25. "The Space Between Stimulus and Response" Focus on the gap between what happens to us and how we act back. Talk about how this small space holds all our power to choose. Share how taking a beat before we act can change the whole game. Give grads ways to make this gap wider so they have more time to pick their moves. This helps them take back control in a world that often pushes for fast, knee-jerk acts. Wrap-up Your words on graduation day can plant seeds that grow for years to come. The best talks touch both hearts and minds, giving grads both the warm glow of being seen and the light bulb flash of new ways to think. Pick an idea that fits who you are. The most moving talks come from real thoughts shared by real people. Your own true voice, mixed with ideas that speak to the time and place, will hit home in ways no list of tips can match. As the valedictorian of your class you will be expected to write a welcome speech for your graduation ceremony. Welcome speeches are very easy to draft once you decide how you want it to sound and what message you want to give out to your audience. If you are not a born orator who has a way with words then making a speech may be a cause of concern for you. It will therefore be important for you to learn how to write welcome speeches, if you have been given the responsibility of making the welcome speech at your graduation. In this article, we give you tips on how to write these speeches and give you a sample for the same. This could be a guide for you when you are writing a speech for your graduation ceremony. How to Write a Welcome Speech for Your Graduation Before writing a welcome speech for your graduation ceremony, it is important to know what the important things that need to be included in these welcome speeches are. Like introduction speeches, they need to serve the basic purpose of introducing a person and the event. Here are some tips that will help you in coming up with welcome speech ideas and also help you learn how to write them. Any welcome speech should start by thanking everyone attending the graduation ceremony. Welcome all the special guests who have been invited to the graduation ceremony. While writing these speeches for your graduation, you will need to thank all those people who have helped your batch in the smallest of manners. To make these speeches interesting, it is important to add anecdotes that are funny and nostalgic. Decide what you would want your speech to be like, would you want it to be humorous, entertaining, inspiring, or informative. While writing your welcome speech, this is something that you need to keep in mind. While deciding on the constituent elements that make up your welcome speech, try to figure out what is the special message that you want people to carry back home. This is an important inclusion in any welcome speech. You want at least something of what you say to be inspirational. Pay attention to your grammar and structure the speech well. This is very important. Do not use words or references that will leave your audience confounded in any manner. Since the audience is going to primarily comprise your classmates, you could add a few personal references but try and keep these to a minimum. While ending your welcome speech, ensure that you end with something that creates an impact. Do not have an ending that leaves your audience confused about whether or not there is something more to come. Before you give the welcome speech, it may be a good idea to check with a few people about whether the speech is appropriate so that you do not end up offending any member of the audience. If you are nervous, it may be a good idea to practice your welcome speech in front of a few people or in front of the mirror. End the speech by thanking all those people who have helped organize the event and then end by wishing all graduates good wishes for the future. There are many websites out there which offer you templates to help draft these oratory pieces for your graduation. While these templates are tempting to use, a welcome speech should be drafted from a more personal space. Resist the use of templates to draft a speech for your high school graduation. Sample Welcome Speech Given below is a sample of a welcome speech that could work as inspiration for you if you are drafting welcome speeches. Probably the most popular and oft repeated rendition of a welcome speech or graduation speech and one of the most famous speeches of recent time is the column Wear Sunscreen written by columnist Mary Schmich and published in the Chicago Tribune on 1st June, 1997. Sample of High School Graduation Welcome Speech First of all on behalf of the entire batch of 2012, I would like to welcome you to the graduation ceremony of the class of 2012 of the JFK Prep School. I would like to thank (and I am sure my classmates join me in this), our parents, teacher, friends, and family for the guidance they have given us and the patience they have shown in teaching us things that we will take with us as we step into the big bad world (as all adults like to fondly call it). As I stand here, sure and unsure in equal measure, the one image that seems to constantly flash in front of my eyes, is my first day at JFK Prep. Having transferred to this school in the middle of the school year I had prepared myself to sit alone for all lunch hours in the future. After all we are all way of the new kid in school! But little did I know that I couldn't have been further away from the truth. Sure, I spent the first few hours absolutely miserable but then I had that class where things changed. Thank you Mr. Vonnegut, for suspending us from class because that is the reason I made my first friends here. But jokes apart, I came here a shy, introverted person unsure of what I wanted from life and today as I leave, I have in my hand an admission letter to one of the most prestigious schools in the country, looking forward to a career in the arts. If I even for a second believed that I did this on my own I would be fooling myself. I think I speak for all of us when I say that without the support of the faculty at JFK Prep, many of us would have been floundering in self-doubt and meandering without reason. So thank you. Before I let my emotion sweep me away I would like to tell all my classmates who are sitting here with a square piece of cardboard on their head just one little thing. Thank you for all the memories. The fights, the team efforts, the assignments, the laughter, the tears, the prom, the photos; all of them. I don't think I would exchange it for anything else in the world. Oh and yeah! In the words of Mary Schmich whom we are all familiar with, thanks to Mr. Vonnegut once again, Wear sunscreen. This is just a sample of a welcome speech that can be given on the occasion of your graduation. Welcome speeches need to be personal and should be drafted in a manner that helps the audience relate to you. This is a day that many of you will look back at with extreme fondness and therefore, make it as memorable as possible.

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