



Public Speaking in American English

Hemmer, Nancy Grass
[Pearson Education](#). 2008
388 pages
Paper: \$69.40

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We have been teaching special sections of the public speaking course for non-native speakers for many years and we were excited to see a textbook written for this specific audience in mind. In *Public Speaking in American English*, Hemmert provides a useful overview of the public speaking process, strong chapter summaries throughout, and effective discussion questions for each chapter.

We believe this book could actually benefit two courses: traditional and non-native speakers. The basics of public speaking are present, as they are in any public speaking text, with the significant difference being the addition of chapter nine on “Using American English.” While this information is useful we believe it should come earlier than the ninth chapter. American students have grown up understanding what public speaking is for and why they need to take a class to work on their speaking skills. Many other cultures do not place such a strong emphasis on public speaking and we believe this book would have a stronger approach if this were built upon and discussed more. Chapter one begins this discussion, but could be expounded to make the reasoning more meaningful. The book would be a stronger choice for instructors teaching a specialized course to adopt if it were framed more directly for the target audience.

Two final areas that we would like to see developed a bit more are plagiarism and critical thinking or speech analysis. Having taught this class for many years, we have seen the issue of plagiarism on numerous occasions, which indicates a need for more information and coverage of

the topic as a part of the ethical process. Critical thinking and speech analysis concepts are important for students in any public speaking class and should be present in this text as well.

We would like to suggest supplements to complete the book for both the students and the instructors alike. Materials tying in other cultures would provide a better understanding of the differences as well as the similarities of public speaking. Also, providing activities to allow for application of the concepts learned would be beneficial. This book may benefit from a companion text for the instructor to help them understand students from different cultures and how they might approach the course and the speech assignments.

Overall, we are pleased there is a new textbook available for this specialized audience. The book offers great content, concepts, and coverage of the speech-making process. We feel that Hemmert has offered a textbook with a strong approach which has great potential for specialized classes as well as traditional ones, but we would like to see areas such as plagiarism, critical thinking, discussion of other cultures, and a more narrowed approach to the intended audience built upon to strengthen the book.