

## **Speech**

### **Grades 9-12 Skills List**

The writer of a competent speech demonstrates most or all of the following skills:

#### **PURPOSE/AUDIENCE**

- Shows an understanding of the audience’s perspective
- Writes from the perspective of an informed speaker to a less-informed listener
- Focuses on the purpose of the speech (e.g., to entertain, to persuade, to inform, to demonstrate)
- Anticipates audience’s reactions, questions, lack of understanding
- Uses appropriate tone for the event, audience, and purpose
- Makes it clear what the listener should know, do, and/or believe as a result of hearing the speech

#### **IDEA DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT**

- Develops ideas which are connected to the content standards of the course in which the speech was written
- Uses appropriate strategies to develop ideas (e.g., statistics, stories, personal reflections, visual aids, addressing of opposing viewpoints, use of stage directions)
- Uses information from a variety of sources as necessary
- Clarifies and interprets ideas
- Uses persuasive techniques as necessary
- Provides accurate and sufficient support to achieve the intended purpose of the speech

#### **ORGANIZATION**

- Creates logical context for speech
- Writes an engaging lead to get the audience’s attention
- Places ideas in a meaningful order
- Uses transitions and transitional elements between ideas to guide listeners
- Maintains coherence and unity
- Concludes speech effectively (e.g., review of points, call to action)
- Uses visual aids (e.g., graphic organizer, Power Point presentation, text features) to support purpose as appropriate

#### **LANGUAGE**

- Demonstrates control of grammar and usage
- Demonstrates acceptable word choice for audience and purpose

#### CORRECTNESS

- Cites references and documents sources effectively
- Uses text features (e.g., stage directions, parenthetical notes) to guide method of delivery as appropriate
- Demonstrates control of spelling and punctuation
- Demonstrates control of capitalization and abbreviation

*It is important to keep in mind that speeches are meant to be heard by an intended audience. During the delivery of a speech, other skills such as facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, speed of speaking and volume of voice are necessary for a successful delivery.*

As students move from grade to grade, they demonstrate growth in the control and complexity with which they use these skills.

The Kentucky Marker Papers  
Committee did not find a sample  
to fit the category

Ninth-grade Speech

Submissions may still be sent to

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March 12, 2007

Every week my family goes shopping at Wal-Mart like most of America. There you can find the endless isles filled with discounted, jumbo packs of most everything and see the yellow smiley faces welcoming you as you float into the monstrosity of a store. Even though the experience can be exhausting while trying to navigate through the many departments, waiting in the annoying lines, and trying to find a parking space, people still flock to Wal-Mart for most of their everyday needs. However, most people are unaware of what they are supporting when they shop at the discounted mega store. Wal-Mart's smiley face logo is one aimed at concealing the hidden truths about its company's discrimination of women, unfair working conditions, harsh anti-union beliefs, and the destruction of 'mom and pop' stores which make communities unique. Many people see Wal-Mart as a store that represents America, but in actuality, it hinders the freedom and choice we have as consumers. Wal-Mart is a corporation that declines many of the rights people are born with as citizens, which should not be tolerated in any country.

Claims made by female Wal-Mart employees state that they have been sexually harassed many times while working there. Nothing was done. According to *Forbes* magazine (June 23, 2004), a class-action sex discrimination case against Wal-Mart reached 1.6 million defendants. In addition, Liza Featherstone's book *Selling Women Short* reveals that the company has held meetings at a Hooters restaurant. Can you imagine how female workers must feel in this environment?

Not only does Wal-Mart create an unfair environment for women workers, but it also fails to provide men and women acceptable working conditions. Wal-Mart workers have been locked in stores during late hours until all tasks and inventory were completed, and they have been required to work overtime without overtime pay. Recent reports from CNN indicate that Wal-Mart was found to have employed at least 250 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. They do all of this to avoid having to pay workers fair wages, which is why they can afford to charge less for their products.

Another reason why Wal-Mart can offer such low prices is because it has a "Union Avoidance Strategy." Many employees have tried to establish a union only to be fired as a result. The corporation is against unions and the necessary benefits needed, like health insurance many people can't afford not to have. They know that if a union formed, workers would be able to make demands for higher pay, proper health care, and better working conditions, which in turn, would cost them more money.

The saddest part about Wal-Mart's negative influence in America is the small 'mom and pop' stores that cannot make it because Wal-Mart is such a huge industry destroying all small entrepreneurs trying to make a living. Many of us enjoy visiting big cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and New York because these places still have specialty shops

that make their cities unique and give them character. Maybe there was once a day in our community when more of these shops existed. With Wal-Mart offering such low prices, some people have no choice but to shop at Wal-Mart because it is cheaper, most of the other competition is crushed, and their paychecks don't allow them to shop at more expensive places.

You might be asking yourself, "How does any of this affect me?" Well, do any of you eat at Brother's Pizza, shop at Excursions, get groceries from Krogers, or go to the movies at Malco? With the way things are going and the fact that Wal-Mart plans on doubling its amount of stores within the next five years, I wouldn't be surprised if our Wal-Mart decided to add a movie theatre, a pizza shop, a boutique clothing store, and endless other additions until that was the only place we had to shop in town—in essence creating a monopoly. So next time you go to Wal-Mart, think about what you are supporting while staring at those appealing discounted prices, yellow smiley faces, and huge roll packs of toilet paper. For those who do have enough money and just want to save a couple bucks by shopping at this superstore, think twice. Are you really making your own decisions, or has Wal-Mart actually taken away your freedom of choice? In a matter of years, Owensboro could easily turn into Owensmart if we don't do something today!

March 12, 2007

*writes with an engaging lead that helps narrow and focus purpose*

Every week my family goes shopping at Wal-Mart like most of America. There you can find the endless isles filled with discounted, jumbo packs of most everything and see the yellow smiley faces welcoming you as you float into the monstrosity of a store. Even though the experience can be exhausting while trying to navigate through the many departments, waiting in the annoying lines, and trying to find a parking space, people still flock to Wal-Mart for most of their everyday needs. However, most people are unaware of what they are supporting when they shop at the discounted mega store. Wal-Mart's smiley face logo is one aimed at concealing the hidden truths about its company's discrimination of women, unfair working conditions, harsh anti-union beliefs, and the destruction of 'mom and pop' stores which make communities unique. Many people see Wal-Mart as a store that represents America, but in actuality, it hinders the freedom and choice we have as consumers. Wal-Mart is a corporation that declines many of the rights people are born with as citizens, which should not be tolerated in any country.

*writes from the perspective of an informed speaker to a less-informed listener*

*introduces main points of the speech*

*uses signal phrases to document source*

*indicates what listener should believe*

Claims made by female Wal-Mart employees state that they have been sexually harassed many times while working there. Nothing was done. According to *Forbes* magazine (June 23, 2004), a class-action sex discrimination case against Wal-Mart reached 1.6 million defendants. In addition, Liza Featherstone's book *Selling Women Short* reveals that the company has held meetings at a Hooters restaurant. Can you imagine how female workers must feel in this environment?

*uses statistics to develop ideas*

*example of support*

*anticipates audience's reactions*

Not only does Wal-Mart create an unfair environment for women workers, but it also fails to provide men and women acceptable working conditions. Wal-Mart workers have been locked in stores during late hours until all tasks and inventory were completed, and they have been required to work overtime without overtime pay. Recent reports from CNN indicate that Wal-Mart was found to have employed at least 250 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. They do all of this to avoid having to pay workers fair wages, which is why they can afford to charge less for their products.

*effective transition*

*integrates source material to support ideas*

*maintains coherence and unity*

Another reason why Wal-Mart can offer such low prices is because it has a "Union Avoidance Strategy." Many employees have tried to establish a union only to be fired as a result. The corporation is against unions and the necessary benefits needed, like health insurance many people can't afford not to have. They know that if a union formed, workers would be able to make demands for higher pay, proper health care, and better working conditions, which in turn, would cost them more money.

*clarifies and interprets data*

The saddest part about Wal-Mart's negative influence in America is the small 'mom and pop' stores that cannot make it because Wal-Mart is such a huge industry destroying all small entrepreneurs trying to make a living. Many of us enjoy visiting big cities like Chicago, San Francisco, and New York because these places still have specialty shops

*shows understanding of listener's perspective*

that make their cities unique and give them character. Maybe there was once a day in our community when more of these shops existed. With Wal-Mart offering such low prices, some people have no choice but to shop at Wal-Mart because it is cheaper, most of the other competition is crushed, and their paychecks don't allow them to shop at more expensive places.

*anticipate's audience's reactions, questions, lack of understanding*

You might be asking yourself, "How does any of this affect me?" Well, do any of you eat at Brother's Pizza, shop at Excursions, get groceries from Krogers, or go to the movies at Malco? With the way things are going and the fact that Wal-Mart plans on doubling its amount of stores within the next five years, I wouldn't be surprised if our Wal-Mart decided to add a movie theatre, a pizza shop, a boutique clothing store, and endless other additions until that was the only place we had to shop in town—in essence creating a monopoly. So next time you go to Wal-Mart, think about what you are supporting while staring at those appealing discounted prices, yellow smiley faces, and huge roll packs of toilet paper. For those who do have enough money and just want to save a couple bucks by shopping at this superstore, think twice. Are you really making your own decisions, or has Wal-Mart actually taken away your freedom of choice? In a matter of years, O\_\_\_\_\_ could easily turn into O\_\_\_\_\_ mart if we don't do something today!

*concludes effectively*

*call to action*

*chooses language appropriate to audience and purpose*

#### Next Lessons

- \* using greater variety of sources
- \* considering awareness of audience's needs
- \* supporting opinions to strengthen writing

## Lunch Line

Okay, Teen America, before you sit down to your school's delectable *and* nutritious lunch of a cheeseburger and fries, look around. Sure, you may be the skinny Minnie who can fit into a size 2, but what about everyone else? Take a quick perusal of your lunch line and count the number of people who seem overweight or obese. Surprised? So is the rest of the nation. The obesity epidemic is quickly sweeping the United States, causing 300,000 deaths each year! As with all other health concerns (you remember the Anthrax scare), state and federal legislators are falling all over each other, screaming, *What can we do?* And you are probably thinking, *Yeah, what are you doing to keep us teenagers from getting fat?*

In fact, our nation has taken substantial action against obesity. We spend \$11.3 billion a year on health problems related to obesity and \$22.2 billion a year *just* on heart disease traced to obesity. To the average number-crunching American, that total of \$33.5 billion sounds like *a lot* of money. In addition, the American public spends \$33 billion of its own money on those "fabulous" weight loss products that "melt the pounds away". Yeah...right. Oddly enough, about 1 in 3 Americans ages 20 to 79 is overweight or obese, as is 1 in 5 youths ages 6 to 17. Call me crazy, but I just do not think those numbers match.

Take a new look at that fat sandwich on your plate. Frankly, America, you have no choice but to stand up, own up, and say, YES, WE ARE FAT, TELL US WHY! In scientific speak, obesity is a result of unhealthy eating and sedentary activities. Think back to yesterday when you stopped at McDonald's before going home to watch the O.C. Congratulations, you just put yourself at risk for obesity, what are you gonna do next? To answer this dilemma, let's study a little history. Obesity has become a huge health problem in the last ten years. Video games, TiVO, DVD's, and the idea of *Have a TV in Every Room!* have become popular in the last five to twenty years. Furthermore, fast food restaurant establishment, snack food production, and soft drink production have grown at an alarming exponential rate in the last 20 to 30 years. Are you seeing some parallels, America? The **truth** about obesity: No 'revolutionary surgery', no 'all-natural herbal pill', and certainly no 'miracle diet' are going to get you healthy!

Yes, it may be easier to order a Mickey D's apple pie than to slice up an apple, but peeling off the pounds is not easy work, folks. In a world of tomorrow, of forward thinking, of the cutting edge, Americans need to take a step backward to undo the social adaptations of the last twenty years. Do what your parents did for fun (hey, they couldn't have been bored *all* the time). Take a jog, pick up a basketball, opt for the carrots and toss out the carrot cake! For, if you don't, you will only continue to put on the pounds. I know all of you avid video gamers may be complaining, because you have a Halo II tournament tonight! A little advice: go to the tournament for a half hour, then shoot some hoops! It may be hard to walk away from the game, not to mention those greasy chips you wanted *so* bad, but your heart will thank you in twenty years when it is still beating strong. You too, *Desperate Housewives* fans, slumping in front of the TV two hours early with a bowl of popcorn so you won't miss the intro, the catchy song you just adore, any last-minute commercials you can strain a hint from (*so whatever happened to the gardener?*)...you get the point. Make yourself a salad and jog on the treadmill for a half hour. You will be proud of yourself, because you won't have to go to a cattle farm to weigh yourself, like my cousin shamefully does once a month.

Yes, Teen America, I see you pushing away that cheeseburger...eyeing the salad...you've got

it! You may be a little aggravated...(*you mean I actually have to try to get healthy?*), but you will greatly reduce the risk of becoming obese. Take another look at your lunch line: at the future diabetic, at the future heart attack sufferer, at the future cancer survivor. It's your choice, Teen America. Are you in or out of the lunch line?

Lead engages audience

Lunch Line

adheres to the conventions of a speech

Okay, Teen America, before you sit down to your school's delectable and nutritious lunch of a cheeseburger and fries, look around. Sure, you may be the skinny Minnie who can fit into a size 2, but what about everyone else? Take a quick perusal of your lunch line and count the number of people who seem overweight or obese. Surprised? So is the rest of the nation. The obesity epidemic is quickly sweeping the United States, causing 300,000 deaths each year! As with all other health concerns (you remember the Anthrax scare), state and federal legislators are falling all over each other, screaming, What can we do? And you are probably thinking, Yeah, what are you doing to keep us teenagers from getting fat?

focuses on purpose of persuading teens to be responsible for health

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supports ideas w/ statistics

Take a new look at that fat sandwich on your plate. Frankly, America, you have no choice but to stand up, own up, and say, YES, WE ARE FAT, TELL US WHY! In scientific speak, obesity is a result of unhealthy eating and sedentary activities. Think back to yesterday when you stopped at McDonald's before going home to watch the O.C. Congratulations, you just put yourself at risk for obesity, what are you gonna do next? To answer this dilemma, let's study a little history. Obesity has become a huge health problem in the last ten years. Video games, TiVO, DVD's, and the idea of Have a TV in Every Room! have become popular in the last five to twenty years. Furthermore, fast food restaurant establishment, snack food production, and soft drink production have grown at an alarming exponential rate in the last 20 to 30 years. Are you seeing some parallels, America? The truth about obesity: No 'revolutionary surgery', no 'all-natural herbal pill', and certainly no 'miracle diet' are going to get you healthy!

supports ideas w/ appropriate strategies

Yes, it may be easier to order a Mickey D's apple pie than to slice up an apple, but peeling off the pounds is not easy work, folks. In a world of tomorrow, of forward thinking, of the cutting edge, Americans need to take a step backward to undo the social adaptations of the last twenty years. Do what your parents did for fun (hey, they couldn't have been bored all the time). Take a jog, pick up basketball, opt for the carrots and toss out the carrot cake! For, if you don't, you will only continue to put on the pounds. I know all of you avid video gamers may be complaining, because you have a Halo II tournament tonight! A little advice: go to the tournament for a half hour, then shoot some hoops! It may be hard to walk away from the game, not to mention those greasy chips you wanted so bad, but your heart will thank you in twenty years when it is still beating strong. You too, Desperate Housewives fans, slumping in front of the TV two hours early with a bowl of popcorn so you won't miss the intro, the catchy song you just adore, any last-minute commercials you can strain a hint from (so whatever happened to the gardener?)...you get the point. Make yourself a salad and jog on the treadmill for a half hour. You will be proud of yourself, because you won't have to go to a cattle farm to weigh yourself, like my cousin shamefully does once a month.

questions help maintain coherence and unity

transitional elements lead

uses language appropriate to audience

repeats call to action for emphasis

Yes, Teen America, I see you pushing away that cheeseburger...eyeing the salad...you've got

addresses audience throughout speech

varied sentences

call to action

logical conclusion

audience is engaged  
throughout

it! You may be a little aggravated...(you mean I actually have to try to get healthy?), but you will greatly reduce the risk of becoming obese. Take another look at your lunch line: at the future diabetic, at the future heart attack sufferer, at the future cancer survivor. It's your choice, Teen America. Are you in or out of the lunch line?

provides accurate and  
sufficient support to  
accomplish intended  
purpose

appropriate tone  
throughout

-demonstrates control of grammar,  
usage and correctness

#### Next Lessons

- \* incorporating source information
- \* considering various stylistic choices

## The Way Home

What do the fateful words of the Wicked Witch of the East, "Oh, what a horrible world. I'm melting. I'm melting" have in connection with American society? No, it is not Paris Hilton's hot new sexploited film "Paris in Flames" and, no, it is not the current political meltdown of Democrats and Republicans not talking in Washington. It is something that affects us all even more intimately, and it will take even more than a trip over the rainbow to fix it. It is the melting or softening of our minds, bodies, and resolve. It is a thirty percent obesity rate for adults, it is the forty-five percent of Texas juniors who don't pass mandated test but are passed on to the next grade level, and it is the workers who slovenly do work during dress-down days. Michael Barone in his Book Hard America, Soft America says, "Americans find ways to make excuses for poor performances, give everyone five stars, and steer away from constructive criticism." He states that we do not realize this soft approach is actually contributing to our weaknesses. Today, in our attempt to click our heels and find our way back to a home that does not promote a softening of society, we will examine the reasoning of the cowardly lion to find out why America is so soft. Second, we follow the tin man's lead in looking at the effects of our softening hearts and minds; and finally, we will emulate the scarecrow and use our brain to find solutions to the growing problems of softness in America. Now, let us take our first step down the yellow brick road to see how Americans have become so soft.

When Dorothy proclaimed to Toto, "We're not in Kansas anymore," she saw that the fantasy of Munchkinland was quite different from the hard reality of Kansas.

America, too, can echo Dorothy's wisdom by saying that this is not America anymore, at least not the America that was built upon self-determination and knowledge, but one that is based upon excuse, excess and poor work habits. What has caused this weakening of society into a generation of slackers? One cause is introduced by Aram Bakshian, Jr. in his book, The Sick Society. He reveals that the 1950's schools discouraged teachers from signing the infamous red pen that bleeds on student's papers because it hurt students' self esteem. Soon spelling and grammar lessons fell by the wayside. Now, most people under the age forty cannot write a grammatically correct paper. People like Ronald Reagan's speech writer, Roarblocker, who was infamous for such Reagan miscues as the "Hollywood Bowl" and the Greek cheese, "feta compli." According to the Alliance for Excellence in Education, this softening of our education in favor of not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings is also present in the attitude of passing children in school who have failed. Our cowardly lion attitude doesn't want us to hurt anyone by leaving someone behind. The result - we are no longer the kings of the forest because our standards have softened and students can not accomplish as much. According to the July 3, 2004, "New York Times," U.S. students rank nineteenth out of twenty industrialized nations in math and science.

Business actions have also contributed to the softening of America through the relationship of the employer and employee. William Godwin in his book, Magnetical Sympathy, describes this relationship as the person in power knows they have seniority and control. In return they don't want to enforce that feeling on the inferior person. The employer often times lets the person get by with more. The sloppy work that occurs on days employees are permitted to "dress-down" also illustrates a business casual attitude

in the work place. "Business Week," August 20, 2004, describes how the latest studies show that a permissive attitude about appearance decreases work quality by fifty percent.

Finally, the attitude of "don't worry-be happy," perpetuated by a society that preaches avoidance also contributes to our softness. Pain is necessary for us to survive, but we do everything to avoid it. From providing mind numbing medications that help us "to pass the day in the merry old land of..." to the constant talk of television gurus like Oprah who emphasize pouring forth our cowardly lion emotions without making us be responsible for them.. Society's emphasis is the soft refrain, "Tomorrow is another day." Oh, that's another movie, but I think you get the picture.

Our softening minds and attitudes affect everything we do. Like the tin man searching for his proverbial heart, many Americans are searching for their heart's desire - the next spoonful of food. Obesity is a result of a weak America whose only exercise seems to be the one-two of bringing food to our mouth. The "National Geographic" of August 2004 finds that thirty-one percent of Americans are obese, compared to fourteen percent in 1971. Obesity causes four hundred thousand deaths a year and leads to illnesses such as Type Two Diabetes, colon, breast, and endometrial cancers, and unfortunately for us, Tin Man's heart disease. Our mental weakness is leading to our physical weakness. We have given up on exercise, and have "no-can-do" attitudes. We have misplaced our priorities.

Beyond our physical health, our weakness affects our daily lives. *Smithsonian*, December, 2003, reports that despite Americans working the most hours of any people on earth, the quality of work is slipping in part because workers know they can get away with it. My speech coach was standing in line at the local I.G.A. waiting to pay for her

groceries, yet the line was not moving because the cashier was having an argument with her mom about the ugly light fixture the daughter had bought. When my coach complained to the cashier and then to the manager about the unprofessional behavior, the response was, "There was no one else to hire." Due to the fact that workers can get away with this behavior, they do not perform to their highest potential. In return, others do not receive quality services. Unfortunately, no Wizard can fix the softness in our workforce.

Now, after realizing the effects our soft sides have on us daily, let us be like the scarecrow and search for an answer to see what we can do to strengthen ourselves. Like the scarecrow we need to realize that there is a problem. Then we need to follow the metaphorical yellow brick road to solve the problem of softness that has invaded the lives of Americans. The best way we can start is by making changes in ourselves. We, above all, need to be less self-indulgent and less self-centered. Understanding that doing sloppy work is not only bad for ourselves but for our community, and acknowledging that consuming ourselves into a soft oblivion has consequences far beyond the tilting of the scale, will go a long way in overcoming this softness epidemic. In Stephen Covey's best seller, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, he emphasizes the importance of self-discipline to create and reach goals. If we can discipline ourselves, then it will carry over into other aspects of our lives. We can do this by creating and following a schedule, exercising and eating healthfully, and sticking to our promises.

School systems can combat weakness by not passing students who have not met the standards. Our school systems must stop letting every child pass simply to pass when they truly have not learned the concepts needed in order to be promoted to the next grade. The No Child Left Behind Act only punishes the schools when a child fails on a

standardized test. Children and families must ultimately be responsible for their own success or failure. Schools can take a step in fighting our physical weaknesses by toughening standards for physical education.

Businesses can take major steps as well. According to an international survey of businesses, The United States is one of the only countries who does a job evaluation once a year. Countries such as Japan and Australia have quarterly evaluations of employees. Companies must stick to their guns by enforcing dress codes and rules of conduct in order to bring better service to the public. Even if it means having to let people go for inferior work.

You might expect me to conclude this speech by singing, "Somewhere over the Rainbow." Actually, it might toughen you up for listening to future oratories because my friends tell me I'm not too good at singing. But luckily, you won't need to hear it to learn the problems caused by a too soft America. If we fight against the weakness of softness that the cowardly lion faced, then we can overcome the problem of obesity that our nation faces. If we acknowledge that the heart's desire of the Tin Man often leads to excessive behavior, then we can correct the problems in education and business. And if we copy the actions of the Scarecrow and search for ways to diminish the effects of a softening America, then each of us can make a difference and strengthen ourselves physically and mentally. Whether it's receiving poor service, slacking, or simply giving in, we need to rethink our actions so that we can indeed know there is no place like home.

adheres to conventions of a speech

The Way Home

creates a context for speech

question as lead-engages listeners

What do the fateful words of the Wicked Witch of the East, "Oh, what a horrible

world. I'm melting. I'm melting" have in connection with American society? No, it is not *anticipates*

Paris Hilton's hot new sexploited film "Paris in Flames" and, no, it is not the current *audience's reaction*

political meltdown of Democrats and Republicans not talking in Washington. It is

something that affects us all even more intimately, and it will take even more than a trip "It is not..." and

over the rainbow to fix it. It is the melting or softening of our minds, bodies, and resolve. *"It is..." helps focus the purpose of the speech and anticipate listeners' perspective*

It is a thirty percent obesity rate for adults, it is the forty-five percent of Texas juniors

who don't pass mandated test but are passed on to the next grade level, and it is the

workers who slovenly do work during dress-down days. Michael Barone in his Book

Hard America, Soft America says, "Americans find ways to make excuses for poor

performances, give everyone five stars, and steer away from constructive criticism." He

states that we do not realize this soft approach is actually contributing to our weaknesses. *Style provides rhetorical effect and influences*

Today, in our attempt to click our heels and find our way back to a home that does not

promote a softening of society, we will examine the reasoning of the cowardly lion to

find out why America is so soft. Second, we follow the tin man's lead in looking at the

effects of our softening hearts and minds; and finally, we will emulate the scarecrow and

use our brain to find solutions to the growing problems of softness in America. Now, let

us take our first step down the yellow brick road to see how Americans have become so

soft. *makes it clear what listeners should know, do, believe*

When Dorothy proclaimed to Toto, "We're not in Kansas anymore," she saw that

the fantasy of Munchkinland was quite different from the hard reality of Kansas.

quotation helps narrow focus in intro.

introduces points of speech

effective transitions

Repetition of "It is not..." and "It is..." helps focus the purpose of the speech and anticipate listeners' perspective provides rhetorical effect and influences style extends metaphor as strategy to develop ideas and maintain coherence and unity

uses a variety of sentence structures

makes connections to develop ideas

America, too, can echo Dorothy's wisdom by saying that this is not America anymore, at least not the America that was built upon self-determination and knowledge, but one that is based upon excuse, excess and poor work habits. What has caused this weakening of

paragraph used

society into a generation of slackers? One cause is introduced by Aram Bakshian, Jr. in his book, The Sick Society. He reveals that the 1950's schools discouraged teachers from signing the infamous red pen that bleeds on student's papers because it hurt students' self esteem. Soon spelling and grammar lessons fell by the wayside. Now, most people under the age forty cannot write a grammatically correct paper. People like Ronald Reagan's speech writer, Roarblocker, who was infamous for such Reagan miscues as the "Hollywood Bowl" and the Greek cheese, "feta compli."

writes from perspective of informed speaker to less-informed listener

According to the Alliance for Excellence in Education, this softening of our education in favor of not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings is also present in the attitude of passing children in school who have failed. Our cowardly lion attitude doesn't want us to hurt anyone by leaving someone

maintains coherence and unity

behind. The result - we are no longer the kings of the forest because our standards have softened and students can not accomplish as much. According to the July 3, 2004, "New York Times," U.S. students rank nineteenth out of twenty industrialized nations in math and science.

uses signal phrase to cite source

Business actions have also contributed to the softening of America through the

transitional phrase helps lead listeners

relationship of the employer and employee. William Godwin in his book, Magnetical Sympathy, describes this relationship as the person in power knows they have seniority

signal phrase as documentation

and control. In return they don't want to enforce that feeling on the inferior person. The employer often times lets the person get by with more. The sloppy work that occurs on days employees are permitted to "dress-down" also illustrates a business casual attitude

integrates variety of sources to support ideas

makes connections; shows insight annotated 355-b

in the work place. "Business Week," August 20, 2004, describes how the latest studies show that a permissive attitude about appearance decreases work quality by fifty percent.

Finally, the attitude of "don't worry-be happy," perpetuated by a society that preaches avoidance also contributes to our softness. Pain is necessary for us to survive, but we do everything to avoid it. From providing mind numbing medications that help us "to pass the day in the merry old land of..." to the constant talk of television gurus like Oprah who emphasize pouring forth our cowardly lion emotions without making us be responsible for them.. Society's emphasis is the soft refrain, "Tomorrow is another day."  
Oh, that's another movie, but I think you get the picture.

shows understanding of listeners perspective

Our softening minds and attitudes affect everything we do. Like the tin man searching for his proverbial heart, many Americans are searching for their heart's desire - the next spoonful of food. Obesity is a result of a weak America whose only exercise seems to be the one-two of bringing food to our mouth. The "National Geographic" of August 2004 finds that thirty-one percent of Americans are obese, compared to fourteen percent in 1971. Obesity causes four hundred thousand deaths a year and leads to illnesses such as Type Two Diabetes, colon, breast, and endometrial cancers, and unfortunately for us, Tin Man's heart disease. Our mental weakness is leading to our physical weakness. We have given up on exercise, and have "no-can-do" attitudes. We have misplaced our priorities.

ideas are placed in a meaningful order

Beyond our physical health, our weakness affects our daily lives. Smithsonian, December, 2003, reports that despite Americans working the most hours of any people on earth, the quality of work is slipping in part because workers know they can get away with it. My speech coach was standing in line at the local I.G.A. waiting to pay for her

uses a variety of sources appropriately

groceries, yet the line was not moving because the cashier was having an argument with her mom about the ugly light fixture the daughter had bought. When my coach complained to the cashier and then to the manager about the unprofessional behavior, the response was, "There was no one else to hire." Due to the fact that workers can get away with this behavior, they do not perform to their highest potential. In return, others do not receive quality services. Unfortunately, no Wizard can fix the softness in our workforce.

*transitions  
help guide  
listeners*

Now, after realizing the effects our soft sides have on us daily, let us be like the scarecrow and search for an answer to see what we can do to strengthen ourselves. Like the scarecrow we need to realize that there is a problem. Then we need to follow the metaphorical yellow brick road to solve the problem of softness that has invaded the lives of Americans. The best way we can start is by making changes in ourselves. We, above all, need to be less self-indulgent and less self-centered. Understanding that doing sloppy work is not only bad for ourselves but for our community, and acknowledging that consuming ourselves into a soft oblivion has consequences far beyond the tilting of the scale, will go a long way in overcoming this softness epidemic. In Stephen Covey's best seller, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, he emphasizes the importance of self-discipline to create and reach goals. If we can discipline ourselves, then it will carry over into other aspects of our lives. We can do this by creating and following a schedule, exercising and eating healthfully, and sticking to our promises.

*makes it  
clear what  
the audience  
should  
know do,  
or believe/  
call to  
action*

School systems can combat weakness by not passing students who have not met the standards. Our school systems must stop letting every child pass simply to pass when they truly have not learned the concepts needed in order to be promoted to the next grade. The No Child Left Behind Act only punishes the schools when a child fails on a

standardized test. Children and families must ultimately be responsible for their own success or failure. Schools can take a step in fighting our physical weaknesses by toughening standards for physical education.

*sufficient support  
is provided to  
achieve  
purpose*

Businesses can take major steps as well. According to an international survey of businesses, The United States is one of the only countries who does a job evaluation once a year. Countries such as Japan and Australia have quarterly evaluations of employees. Companies must stick to their guns by enforcing dress codes and rules of conduct in order to bring better service to the public. Even if it means having to let people go for inferior work.

You might expect me to conclude this speech by singing, "Somewhere over the Rainbow." Actually, it might toughen you up for listening to future oratories because my friends tell me I'm not too good at singing. But luckily, you won't need to hear it to learn the problems caused by a too soft America. If we fight against the weakness of softness that the cowardly lion faced, then we can overcome the problem of obesity that our nation faces. If we acknowledge that the heart's desire of the Tin Man often leads to excessive behavior, then we can correct the problems in education and business. And if we copy the actions of the Scarecrow and search for ways to diminish the effects of a softening America, then each of us can make a difference and strengthen ourselves physically and mentally. Whether it's receiving poor service, slacking, or simply giving in, we need to rethink our actions so that we can indeed know there is no place like home.

*connects  
to lead &  
maintains  
coherence &  
unity*

*Review  
of points  
of speech  
in  
conclusion*