

**Speech and Communications**  
**2025-026**  
**Ryan Thomas**  
[ryan.thomas@trentonssd.org](mailto:ryan.thomas@trentonssd.org)  
[thomaseducationalservices@gmail.com](mailto:thomaseducationalservices@gmail.com)  
**Peabody High School**

**Course Description:**

Welcome to the **Speech and Communication** class at Peabody High School. **S&C** is a semester-long course that completes one of your Humanities credit requirements. However, **S&C** is also closely associated with English and Language Arts so both the information and the performance will be evaluated during the course. This course acts as an introductory course that covers a variety of styles of public speaking and formal debate and seeks to make students more comfortable and confident giving public addresses and debating topics. Through instruction, students will become familiar with the types of speeches; through research and practice students will become comfortable with their delivery and with interacting with the audience. Each section of the course will culminate in performance assignments that require students to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom setting. Opportunities to take their knowledge to competitions at the local and state level may be made available through extracurricular programs.

**Course Objectives:**

The primary aim of this course is to develop students' ability to engage in public speaking and formal communication in preparation for real-world scenarios. Secondary aims of this course is to develop students into critical thinkers in order to prepare them for future English classes and the world beyond school; likewise, this course will develop research skills and evidentiary explication of key ideas. This will involve a mainly discussion-based class atmosphere and expressing original ideas through evidence-based written and performative assessments. Students will be expected to participate in discussions and live performances.

This course is designed to help students:

1. Gain confidence in front of an audience.
2. Prepare for and perform a variety of speeches and debates in class.
3. Locate sources through research and differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources.
4. Incorporate sources into speeches and debates as evidence/support
5. Increase their working knowledge of current events.
6. Develop critical thinking skills and the ability to look at both sides of an issue
7. Develop an awareness of posture, vocal quality, personal appearance, and both verbal and nonverbal communication in all speaking situations (including personal interviews).
8. Exhibit the ability to draw logical conclusions from critical evaluation of facts and ideas; exhibit a logical arrangement of ideas in writing and speech.

### **Evaluation / Grade assessment**

Each student is evaluated at the end of a nine-week grading period (quarters). Most of the assessments for understanding will come in the form of written and performative projects to show comprehension. The students' grade will come from the following areas:

- Drafts of speeches
- Performed speeches
- Discussion / Participation / "Impromptu" Speeches

### **Grades are not dropped.**

TSSD uses the grading scale below. This scale is standard across all public schools in Tennessee.

100-90:	A
89-80:	B
79-70:	C
69-60:	D
59 or below:	F

**Assignments are expected to be turned in on the assigned due date.** Part of the class is to make and adhere to deadlines as in the real-world; if an assignment is late due to an excused absence, students have 3 days from the due date to turn in the assignment for full credit. After that, Mr. Thomas has discretion as to whether the assignment will be accepted and how many points to take off for being late. **Assignments that are not done/turned in will be marked as missing (which counts like a zero) and will remain until the assignment is turned in.**

### **Attendance & Late Policy**

All make-up work is the responsibility of the student. **S&C** is a class that demands a lot of research and, discussion, and performance; therefore, it is important to be in attendance each day. Student attendance is essential for success in this class. However, if a student is absent (excused or unexcused) then they will either be exempt from the assignment (if done in class) or be expected to turn the assignment in later. **A zero will be placed for the grade** in the gradebook and it will be the responsibility of the student to get the assignment turned in to change the grade. Students are responsible to rescheduling missed speech performances and for turning in missing documents.

If a student returns from an absence and a scheduled performance or assignment is due upon the return, then the student is expected to be prepared to perform at their scheduled time.

### **Classroom Supplies and Materials**

Each student is responsible for the following materials:

- Three-ring binder (1" - 1 ½")
- A package of **college-ruled** paper.

## **Technology**

With technology being an ever-present part of our lives, both personally and academically, technology will be a part of the curriculum for our class. We will be using Google Classroom, Google Drive, video recording technology, and the internet for research. All major writing assignments should be typed and turned in electronically in order to prepare students for the next levels of high school and beyond. You have access to your school Chromebook every day so if at any time, you are using technology in improper ways, or are not using your device for an assignment, then your electronic privileges for the class will be revoked for an undetermined time period.

## **Expectations:**

In this class, all students are expected to please:

- Take this class seriously as it will help you no matter what career you plan on entering after your educational experience is over This is a fun and beneficial class; however, it is **NOT** an “easy A” class and thinking it is one will result in you being disappointed.
  - Turn in assignments electronically on time
  - turn in applicable paper assignments in black or blue ink or pencil only.
  - turn in all assignments with your name; otherwise, points will be deducted.
  - print all typed papers and essays in black ink.
  - have all relevant materials with you in class.
  - keep all cell phones turned off and out away; cell phones are allowed for educational purposes and only with teacher permission.
  - Use earbuds / headphones correctly
  - food in class will be handled on a case-by-case (class-by-class) basis. Mr. Thomas is okay with food in class as long as students clean up after themselves and do not leave a mess. If this occurs, eating privileges will be revoked for a student and/or class
  - have drinks in a container with a twist-off cap or closed container with a straw. No open containers with drinks, please.
  - be in your seat when the tardy bell rings. Please ask permission to get out of your seat.
  - stay in the classroom during the class period. Students may use the restroom in cases of urgent need. Students will be asked to leave their phone with Mr. Thomas during their trip out of the classroom (since they will not need it to do their intended business) in exchange for the restroom pass. When they return with the pass they will exchange it back for their phone. Students will not be allowed to leave Mr. Thomas’s classroom during class to “see” another teacher unless that teacher has contacted Mr. Thomas by phone, email, or explanatory note and requested the student’s presence.
  - act like the young adult that you are.
  - be responsible.
  - be respectful of Peabody faculty, staff, facilities.
  - be respectful of your peers.
  - be respectful of YOURSELF!
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## **\*Plagiarism Policy\*:**

Much of my classroom management and instruction is based on **a foundation of mutual trust** between student, parents, and teacher. Most difficulties can be resolved quickly in the classroom. However, **there are some student behaviors which quickly erode mutual trust** in the classroom, and which should therefore be avoided. Some of these behaviors include truancy, subversive classroom disruptions, dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is an extremely important problem and is found at alarmingly high numbers among high school students. Plagiarism is actually **stealing** someone else's words and/or ideas. Plagiarism is "an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author" (Dictionary.com Unabridged). In higher education, if a student is caught plagiarizing then it often results in a failing grade for the class and in some instances (depending on the severity) expulsion from the university/school. Getting ideas from other sources is fine (and even recommended) but proper credit must be given to these sources through the use of citations.

**Plagiarism** involves a student's submission of ideas, thoughts, phraseology, or organizational patterns that are not his or her own. It is the misrepresentation of one's own work and/or that of another, and/or the falsification of information, data, or records. Plagiarism also includes the stealing of tests, answers, or other academic materials, or the having of these on one's person.

Remember: **Plagiarism** is a form of theft and will not be tolerated (even in its most seemingly innocent form). **Students found cheating, copying without teacher permission, or plagiarizing in any other way will be subject to immediate disciplinary action by administration.**

Also remember: using A.I. software to write your paper for you is a form of plagiarism since A.I. generators are "schooled" on other people's work and cannot be considered "original" work by you.

The common punishment: If a student is found to be plagiarizing material, the student will receive a grade of a 0 for that assignment. They have the opportunity to complete the assignment within one week of receiving the 0 plagiarism grade; however, the highest grade that can be earned at that point will be a 60 (much better than a 0).

Parental support in upholding this standard is greatly appreciated.

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I hope you find this class enjoyable, challenging, and ultimately rewarding. I hope you gain new understanding and appreciation for public speaking as well as an expanded confidence in your personal abilities in front of an audience as you continue your journey toward becoming a successful person in both school and life. I look forward to a productive and meaningful semester.

Details of this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the teacher.

### **Contact:**

The best way to contact Mr. Thomas is through email, which he looks at every morning and afternoon.

[ryan.thomas@trentonssd.org](mailto:ryan.thomas@trentonssd.org)

You can text Mr. Thomas through the Remind.com app. Instructions for this are included.



# **SPEECH AND COMMUNICATIONS**



Week	Focus	Work Due
Week 1 8/4 – 8/8	PHS Start Policies and Procedures Syllabus/Outline Types of Speeches Delivery Styles	Topic Choices Notes
Week 2 8/11 – 8/15	Rhetorical Pillars Rhetorical Devices Vocal Devices Watch Examples	Notes
Week 3 8/18 – 8/22	Informative Presentation	Topic Choice Outline
Week 4 8/25 – 8/29	Informative Presentation	Notes Draft of Speech
Week 5 9/1 – 9/5	Informative Presentation	First Read Peer Notes
Week 6 9/8 – 9/12	Informative Presentation	Final Performance
Week 7 9/15 – 9/19	Demonstrative How-To Presentation	Topic Choice
Week 8 9/22 – 9/26	Demonstrative How-To Presentation	Outline
Week 9 9/29 – 10/3	Demonstrative How-To Presentation	Presentation
Week 10 10/6 – 10/10	Fall Break	



# **SPEECH AND COMMUNICATIONS**



Week 11 <b>10/13 – 10/17</b>	Special Occasion Personal Narrative w/ Motive	Topic/Format Choice Motive Clarification “Outline”
Week 12 <b>10/20 – 10/24</b>	Personal Narrative w/Motive	Draft
Week 13 <b>10/27 – 10/31</b>	Personal Narrative w/Motive	Performance
Week 14 <b>11/3 – 11/7</b>	Persuasive Speech Logical Fallacies Preliminary Research	Topic Choice
Week 15 <b>11/10 – 11/14</b>	Persuasive Speech	Outline
Week 16 <b>11/17 – 11/21</b>	Persuasive Speech	Draft
Week 17 <b>11/24 – 11/28</b>	Turkey Break	
Week 18 <b>12/1 – 12/5</b>	Persuasive Speech	First Read Peer Review
Week 19 <b>12/8 – 12/12</b>	Persuasive Speech	Final Performance
Week 20 <b>12/15 – 1/19</b>	Exams	



# Sign up for important updates from R. Thomas.

Get information for **Peabody High School** right on your phone—not on handouts.

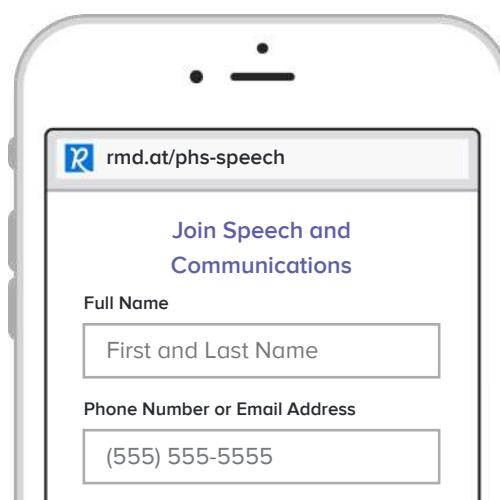
Pick a way to receive messages for **Speech and Communications**:

**A** If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

[rmd.at/phs-speech](https://rmd.at/phs-speech)

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.



**B** If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message [@phs-speech](#) to the number **81010**.

If you're having trouble with **81010**, try texting [@phs-speech](#) to **(415) 749-9889**.

*\* Standard text message rates apply.*



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to [rmd.at/phs-speech](https://rmd.at/phs-speech) on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

## **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN**

WE HAVE RECEIVED AND READ A COPY OF THE  
COURSE SYLLABUS AND CLASSROOM RULES FOR MR.  
THOMAS's CLASS IN **SPEECH & COMMUNICATIONS.**

I UNDERSTAND ALL EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:

PARENT NAME (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PARENT CONTACT INFO**

Daytime/Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_