

# WHY MAJOR IN SPEECH?

An Oration

by  
Dr. G. Allan Yeomans



## Wetmore Declamation Bureau

Box 2695  
Sioux City, IA 51106

[www.wetmoredeclamation.com](http://www.wetmoredeclamation.com)  
Email: [speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com](mailto:speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com)

CAUTION: Wetmore Declamation Bureau material is protected by United States copyright law and conventions. None of our material may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other-without prior permission. No trademark, copyright or other notice may be removed or changed. All rights reserved. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

WHY MAJOR IN SPEECH?  
An Oration

Dr. G. Allan Yeomans

ISBN 1-60045-102-0

Delivered before the Annual Professional Conference and Speech Festival, Dec. 9, 1966, at Lafayette, La.  
Permission granted by the author to the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa.

Not long ago, a young lady walked into my office and announced that she was changing her major from speech to another discipline. "Why?" I asked. "Because," she replied, "one of my other instructors had advised me that there are simply no professional or vocational opportunities for speech majors!" . . .

You know, the more I thought about that conversation with the young woman, the more it bothered me. I wondered if there were others with similar doubts and fears, and so I resolved to talk with you about it a little while this morning. Why major in speech?

The late Edward R. Murrow once aptly illustrated how we tend to overlook how much communications control our very lives. The setting was a remote island where Englishmen and Germans lived together. The year was 1914; no cables reached the island, and the packet steamer came every sixty days. When last it called, news was of an approaching murder trial on the Continent. When next it called, the peaceful island of Germans and Englishmen found that their two respective countries had been at war against one another for more than a month. Suddenly, with that bit of news, compatible people who had behaved as friends were in fact enemies. And from that moment on, that island was never the same again.

One might conclude that communications can even tell us who to hate and kill! Mr. Murrow concludes: "Thus did Robespierre tell the French Revolutionaries: 'He who can phrase it can lead it'." Ralph Waldo Emerson declared: 'There is no art more necessary to human kind than the art of putting things.' And the great German, Thomas Mann concluded: 'Speech is civilization'."

Well, we've been reading affidavits and endorsements like these in our speech texts for years. In fact, some of them may have motivated many of us to become interested in a major in speech. But, the question immediately before us is what can I do with a speech major, once I complete it?

For years the stereotype of the American business leader had been the smooth, self-assured, personality boy--glib, charming, energetic, and often ruthless. But, a significant change is taking place in American industry's thinking about what makes an executive. That change is being brought about by the worldwide importance of American business activities which puts a heavy burden of responsibility on the shoulders of our business and industrial leaders....

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---