***Senior Speech (English)***  Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4.0 – 6.0 minutes Your Time\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Since you have so many high school experiences on which to draw, I’m giving you an opportunity to share some of your wisdom with the class. Use the questions below to organize your speech. You do not have to discuss all the points below and you do not have to answer them in the order that they are listed. You should also feel free to add anything else that you like that is appropriate for this speech and for the classroom setting. The tone of this speech can be serious at points and light-hearted at points. Commencement speeches should acknowledge the significance of your senior year and graduation as the beginning of your new life. Commencement speeches are not the proper occasions to burn bridges. The speech should be positive and thoughtful.

\*This discussion does not have to only include things that happened at school, just things that occurred during your high school years.

\*\*The content of this speech should be appropriate for the classroom setting.

\*\*\*Commencement speeches are not the proper occasions to burn bridges. Be respectful.

***Content Components:***

 \_\_\_\_\_ - Attention getter

 \_\_\_\_\_- The content is interesting and information that the keeps the audience’s attention.

 \_\_\_\_\_ - The content is positive, thoughtful, & it reflects sincerity, depth, and preparation

 \_\_\_\_\_- I have provided unique / memorable / appropriate closure.

***Delivery Components:***

 \_\_\_\_\_ - Eye Contact is consistent and is given throughout the room so the whole

audience feels like I’m talking to them.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Sincerity: The audience can tell that I sincerely care about the topic

through my delivery, energy, and enthusiasm.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Speaking loudly and clearly.

\_\_\_\_\_ - My body language / nonverbal communication is positive & reinforces my

 content.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Visual aids are incorporated correctly and show time and thought.

Fillers Present? (Um, Uh, You Know, Like) YES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Monotone? YES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Possible Points*** (You can discuss some of these or none of these…just be interesting):

Favorite Quote/Quotes (and why)

What has high school meant to you?

What are your best memories?

Great stories.

Biggest accomplishments / successes.

What will you cherish about your high school experience and laugh about even at your thirty-year reunion?

What would you recommend that other students do?

What would you recommend that future students not do? Any regrets?

Who/What have been your biggest influences over your high school years?

Things that you thought were important that weren’t actually that important.

Things that you didn’t think were that important, but they actually are important.

Any common sense tips?

How have you changed and / or grown academically, personally, socially, since you first entered high school?

What interesting stories or other content can you add?

*An Open Letter to Seniors: Don’t Blink*

You're so close. You have somewhere around a month left of high school. One more month of after-school practice, of AP classes, of seeing yourself on posters in the hallway, and of being known as the sum of your choices over the last four years. And then, I'll be honest, life gets really different. Whether you hate high school or love it, it's rapidly drawing to a close, and you probably can't wait for what's ahead. In fact, you've spent the last year preparing for the future: applications, college visits, standardized tests, RoomSurf, choosing a major… everything you need to figure out in order to start the rest of your life. And by this point, you have it pretty much all figured out and ready to go…

But you're still in high school. It's a frustratingly weird limbo to have one foot in high school and the other in college, but I want to challenge you to plant both feet firmly in high school and make the most of the time you have left. I understand the anticipation of putting these four years behind you and experiencing what lies ahead, but *do not wish away the end of your senior year*. The fact of the matter is you are still in high school, and you're there for a reason.

You are still in class with people who have never known a true friend. You still play sports with teammates who have become like family. You still spend week nights on your best friend's bed laughing about things no one else would find funny. And you have about a month left of it. One month. A lot can happen in a month, my friends. Lives can be changed forever, or they can remain untouched. It isn't a time to wish away.

**So don't be restricted by trying to impress people.**

**Don't hesitate to leave your mark on the lives of friends and enemies alike.**

**Invest in people more than grades.** I hate to say it, but this is the time in your life when grades matter the least. So as long as your grades are staying afloat, it won't hurt to focus a little more heavily on people than homework.

**Dance a lot.**

**Be bold in reaching out to people.** If I could say this 100 times, I would. People can change drastically at the end of high school simply because someone cared more about them than their own comfort.

**Give your activities your best effort all the way to the end.** People are still looking up to you.

**Thank the adults who have helped shape you over the last couple years.** Sacrifice doesn't even begin to describe the way your parents, teachers, coaches, and mentors have invested in you. High schoolers can be a pain, man.

**Celebrate your best friends and cherish every moment with them.** It could be a while before you're together again.

**Ask your parents to go on an ice cream date with you.** You have the opportunity every day now, but soon you won't have that luxury.

**Make sure your siblings know how much you love them.** It gets hard to communicate as often as you should down the road, and you want to leave no doubt in their mind.

**Don't waste time putting makeup on every day.** I honestly don't know why I tried… I am an afterthought at most to those people now.

**Ask questions and gain absolute certainty in your beliefs.** A day is coming when not everyone will share them, and your commitment to the truth will be tested.

**Hug your mom often.**

***Have fun* with your best friends.** You still have a month's worth of inside jokes and memories to make before you have to focus on saying goodbye.

Kelsey Kaigler (Baylor University)

<http://theodysseyonline.com/baylor/letter-high-school-seniors/100605>