



**AUSTRALIAN
GUILD OF MUSIC
& SPEECH**

Communication and Public Speaking

Speech Syllabus no 4

Examination Syllabus

**Beginner's
Level to
Associate
Diploma**



2026
agms.edu.au



AUSTRALIAN GUILD OF MUSIC & SPEECH

No. 4 – Communication and Public Speaking 2026

Australian Guild of Music & Speech Ltd
P.O. Box 864,
Upper Coomera QLD 4209
Australia

ABN: 22 664 671 701
W: agms.edu.au

FOREWORD

We welcome you to join the **Australian Guild of Music and Speech Ltd (AGMS)** family. Founded in 1969, the **AGMS** is a proud Australian, **education and examination body**.

**“ Empowering your success
is our passion ”**

The **AGMS** is driven to provide engaging, relevant, high-quality frameworks, to mould solid foundations for the next generations of musicians and speech & drama performers and educators.

The **AGMS** provides examinations for music and speech & drama students from introductory to advanced levels, including in speech & drama, certificate (C.S.D.AGMS), Associate (A.S.D.AGMS), Licentiate (L.S.D.AGMS) and Fellowship (F.S.D.AGMS) diplomas.

Below gives an insight into the values we share with our members:

Music/Speech.	We champion the inherent value of all types of music/speech and its enormous contribution to the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical development and self-esteem of individuals and communities. We leverage our position to spread the love of music/speech and drama.
Kindness.	Our approach is student-centric and, at all times, we are positive, encouraging, friendly and supportive. We assist the learner to recognise and celebrate their achievements.
Service.	We understand the needs of teachers and respond efficiently and flexibly. Our systems and processes are simple and make exam organisation and reporting easy.
Integrity.	Our examination process is academically sound, impartial, transparent and delivers assessments which are consistent with international standards.
Excellence.	We strive for best practice in examinations and only partner with the best examiners and educators.

Via an **Academic Advisory Committee**, the **AGMS** has formulated this syllabus.

We look forward to growing with you on your pathway of excellence.

Yours in the arts,

The AGMS Board of Directors.

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COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC SPEAKING



INTRODUCTION

Background to this syllabus

- The Speech and Drama syllabus is the most longstanding within the Speech syllabus package.
- It is designed for individual students who wish to undertake practical speech and drama training, accompanied by equivalent theoretical studies.
- Of all the Speech syllabi, this one takes the most academic approach.
- It offers students the opportunity to achieve high level qualifications such as the Licentiate and Fellowship Diplomas.
- This syllabus is recommended for those who wish to qualify as a Speech teacher.

Notes for Teachers

- This syllabus must be used in conjunction with the supporting document 'Speech Syllabi Background Information for Teachers' which contains essential information such as
 - Structure of the Speech Syllabi package
 - Grade set
 - Age of candidates
 - Guidelines for selecting appropriate selections at each examination level
 - Prepared versus Impromptu items
 - Memorisation requirements
 - Reading of books prior to practical examinations
 - Hard copy requirements
 - Guidelines for practical examinations
 - Guidelines for online examinations
 - Guidelines for theory examinations
 - Guidelines for Diploma examinations
 - Suggested reference books.

STRUCTURE OF THE SPEECH SYLLABUS PACKAGE

- Speech Syllabi Background Information for Teachers
- Syllabus no 1: Practical Speech and Drama
- Syllabus no 2: Speech and Drama Performance
- Syllabus no 3: Theory of Speech and Drama
- Syllabus no 4: Communication and Public Speaking

STEP THREE (PRELIMINARY)

	Time: 15 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Poem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the poem is from an Australian anthology. Time limit: 1 minute. 	30
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A passage of consecutive words from a simple story book. Time limit: 1 minute. 	25
3	Sounds and rhymes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. a) Sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The examiner will say one consonant sound and the candidate is to say a word beginning with the same consonant sound. Five consonant sounds will be given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the examiner might say the sound of the consonant 'b' to which candidate might answer 'bread'. b) Rhymes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The examiner will say a one-syllable word and the candidate is to say a word that rhymes with the word spoken by the examiner. Five words will be given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the examiner might say 'fish' to which the candidate might answer 'dish'. 	10
4	Matching pairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. The examiner will say a word, and the candidate is to complete the matching pair. Five words will be given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the examiner might say 'brush' to which the candidate might answer 'comb'. 	10
5	Story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a story, which may be original, a story the candidate has read or a story about an event in the candidate's life. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	25

GRADE ONE

	Time: 15 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poem or prose selection from a novel. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	30
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A passage of consecutive words from a simple novel. If prose were selected for Item 1, this reading may be from the same novel. Time limit: 1 minute. 	25
3	Spot the stranger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. The examiner will present the candidate with four words, one of which will be out of place, and the candidate is to identify the 'stranger'. Five sets will be given. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the examiner might say 'dog, cat, flag, mouse' to which the candidate should answer 'flag'. 	10
4	Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-introduction, including for example, the candidate's skills, likes and dislikes, experiences etc My favourite television programme. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	20
5	Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The examiner will open the conversation with a question related to one of the above presentations. Examiner's choice. 	15

GRADE TWO

	Time: 15 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poem or prose selection from a novel. It is recommended that the recitation is by an Australian author or contains content relating to an Australian theme. Time limit: 2½ minutes. 	30
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A passage of consecutive words from a novel. If prose were selected for Item 1, this reading may be from the same novel. Time limit: 1½ minutes. 	20
3	Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate's hobby A recent holiday experience. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	25
4	Impromptu speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. Speak for 1 – 1½ minutes on a word suggested by the examiner. Preparation time: ½ minute. The examiner will give a warning at 1 minute. 	15
5	Telephone procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present instructions on suitable ways of answering the telephone, how to ring a friend and how to leave a message on an answering machine/voicemail. The examiner may enter into a discussion with the candidate at the close of the talk. Time limit: 2 – 3 minutes. 	10

GRADE THREE

	Time: 20 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poem or prose selection from a novel. Time limit: 3 minutes. 	30
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A passage of consecutive words from a novel. If prose were selected for Item 1, this reading may be from the same novel. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	20
3	Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An instructive talk based on the candidate's own expertise. Explain the correct procedure/s for one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the skills to play a sport Creating an object Acquiring a certain skill. Time limit: 3 minutes. 	20
4	Storytelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. The examiner will show the candidate 2 objects and the candidate is to tell a story using these objects as significant features in the story. Preparation time: 1 minute. Time limit: 2 minutes. The examiner will give a warning at 1½ minutes. 	20
5	Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The examiner and the candidate will discuss the examination programme, with particular reference to the recitation, novel and instructive talk. 	10

GRADE FOUR

	Time: 25 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose selection from a book. • Time limit: 3 minutes. 	30
2	Reading The candidate is to select whether this reading will be impromptu or prepared. When marking this item, the examiner will take this choice into consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impromptu. • The examiner will select a passage from the book chosen for Item 1, for the candidate to read aloud. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared. • A passage of approximately 200 consecutive words from the book chosen for Item 1. 	20
2	Reading—Online Candidates The candidate must bring to the examination a hard copy of <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> , by C S Lewis. The candidate is to select whether this reading will be impromptu or prepared. When marking this item, the examiner will take this choice into consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impromptu. • The examiner will select a passage from <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> for the candidate to read aloud. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared. • Approximately 200 consecutive words from <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i>. 	

Level 4 examination continues on the next page.

3	<p>Association of ideas / Talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impromptu. ● The examiner will say a word and the candidate is to say 4 words in succession, each word having been inspired for its association with the previous word only. ● The candidate is to give a 1 – 1½ minute talk using the fourth word as the topic. ● For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The examiner might say ‘mouse,’ and the candidate’s sequence might then be ‘clock ... punctuality ... transport ... travel’. The talk would then be on the topic of travel. ○ Note: avoid too close an association such as ‘mouse ... trap ... cheese ... caught,’ where all the words are related to the same act. ● The examiner will give a warning at 1 minute. 	15
4	<p>Imaginative speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impromptu. ● The examiner will show the candidate a picture. The candidate is to study the picture and then present one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell a story using the picture as an appropriate illustration for the story. ○ Use descriptive language to explain what is illustrated in the picture. ● Preparation time: 1 minute. ● Time limit: 2 minutes. ● The examiner will give a warning at 1½ minutes. 	20
5	<p>Discussion of technical work</p> <p>The examiner will ask the candidate questions on the following areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The correct method of breathing for speech, including demonstrating one suitable breathing exercise. b) The correct ways to stand when reading aloud, including demonstrations of the correct way to hold the book and to walk onto the speaking area. 	15

GRADE FIVE

	Time: 30 minutes. Pass mark: 65	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prose selection from a novel. ● It is recommended that the novel is by an Australian author or contains content relating to an Australian theme. ● Time limit: 3 minutes. 	30
2	Reading The candidate is to select whether this reading will be impromptu or prepared. When marking this item, the examiner will take this choice into consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impromptu. ● The examiner will select a passage from the novel chosen for Item 1, for the candidate to read aloud. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared. ● A passage of approximately 250 consecutive words from the novel chosen for Item 1. 	20
2	Reading—Online Candidates The candidate must bring to the examination a hard copy of <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> , by Kenneth Grahame. The candidate is to select whether this reading will be impromptu or prepared. When marking this item, the examiner will take this choice into consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impromptu. ● The examiner will select a passage from <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> for the candidate to read aloud. OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared. ● Approximately 250 consecutive words from <i>The Wind in the Willows</i>. 	
3	Book review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oral review of the book chosen for Item 1. ● Headline notes may be used. ● The candidate is to bring the book to the examination. ● Time limit: 2 minutes. 	20

Level 5 examination continues on the next page.

4	Creative speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Impromptu.● The candidate will be shown a picture of a person, animal or object.● The candidate will have 30 seconds to study the picture.● Invent an imaginary background life for the person, animal or object.● Time limit: 2 minutes.● The examiner will give a warning at 1½ minutes.	20
5	Discussion of technical work <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The examiner will discuss with the candidate the importance of facial expression and eye contact in public speaking. The candidate is to have some prepared comments on this topic as well as entering into a discussion and demonstrating facial expressions.	10

GRADE SIX

	Time: 35 minutes. Pass mark: 70	Marks
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prose selection from a work of non-fiction. Time limit: 3 – 4 minutes. 	25
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. From a biography or autobiography. <p>(For Online exams, the reading will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	15
3	Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today's media My school years So-called junk food The love of sport Freedom Art or science Laughter. Time limit: 3 – 4 minutes. 	20
4	Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. Speak for 1½ – 2 minutes on a topic, idea or theme suggested by the examiner. The examiner will provide the opening phrase or sentence. Preparation time: 1 minute. The examiner will give a warning at 1½ minutes. 	15
5	Storytelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell an Australian tall story or yarn. May be based on an existing story or be an original composition. The 'Aussie' accent and broad Australian language may be used. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a story describing the candidate's most embarrassing moment. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a story describing a humorous situation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time limit: 2 minutes. 	15
6	Discussion of technical work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The examiner will discuss with the candidate body language and gesture in oral communication. 	10

GRADE SEVEN

	Time: 45 minutes. Pass mark: 70	Marks
1	Memorised presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consecutive words from a published speech. Time limit: 3 – 4 minutes. 	25
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. From an Oral Communication or Public Speaking text book. <p>(For Online exams, the reading will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	15
3	Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A persuasive or didactic speech on a topic related to current affairs. Time limit: 3 minutes. 	20
4	Reading / Impromptu speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. Read aloud a newspaper or magazine article. Deliver a short talk based on the subject matter of the article. Preparation time: 1 minute. Time limit: 1½ – 2 minutes. The examiner will give a warning at 1½ minutes. <p>(For Online exams, the reading will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	15
5	Talks (2) <p>a) Welcome speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the procedure for giving a successful welcome speech. Time limit: 2 minutes. <p>b) Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a talk with brief demonstrations on the procedure for introducing people to one another. Time limit: 2 minutes. 	15
6	Discussion of technical work <p>a) The examiner will discuss with the candidate the importance of speech exercises in relation to clarity and pleasing vocal tone. The candidate is to have some prepared comments to offer as well as being willing to answer some questions.</p> <p>b) The examiner will give the candidate 4 speech exercises, such as tongue twisters, and exercises for resonance, projection and pitch variation. The candidate is to read each exercise aloud and state its purpose.</p>	10

GRADE EIGHT (PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATE)

	Time: 1 hour. Pass mark: 70	Marks
	Notes for Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency Certificate consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Proficiency Certificate. 	
1	Recitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prose selection from a biography or autobiography. Time limit: 4 minutes. 	15
2	Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yesterday—today—tomorrow The advertisement A chosen proverb Savoir-faire Expectations Convention Entertainment Vocation Addiction and obsession Who are my neighbours? Time limit: 4 – 5 minutes. 	20
3	Readings (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. Two prose passages of contrasting styles. <p>(For Online exams, the readings will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	10
4	Appreciation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An informative and persuasive appreciation of one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My country of residence The person I most admire The lifestyle of my country. Time limit: 3 minutes. 	10

Proficiency Certificate continues on the next page.

5	Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Impromptu.● The examiner will give the candidate a topic relating to public speaking skills.● Preparation time: 1½ minutes.● Time limit: 3 minutes.● The examiner will give a warning at 2½ minutes.	15
6	Creative speech <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bring to the examination a mystery object enclosed in a dark bag or box.● Describe the object, give its history, extol its assets and attempt to sell the mystery object.● The object is to be displayed towards or at the conclusion of the speech.● Time limit: 3 – 4 minutes.	15
7	Social speech <p>a) Prior to the examination, select a speech made by a well-known person, either from the past or living. Bring a hard copy of the speech to the examination. (For Online exams, a copy of the speech is to be provided electronically; the AGME will advise candidates/teachers of the process.)</p> <p>b) Based on the selected speech, present a vote of thanks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Time limit: 3 minutes.	15

ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

	Time: 1 hour 15 minutes. Pass mark: 70 Prerequisite: Proficiency Certificate (Communication and Public Speaking)	Marks
	Notes for Teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Diploma Communication and Public Speaking consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Associate Diploma. The candidate must illustrate a high degree of competence in all areas. The examiners will discuss the programme with the candidate throughout the examination. 	
1	Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a topic of the candidate's choice. Time limit: 5 minutes. 	15
2	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impromptu. Read a published speech in a manner suitable for platform delivery. Preparation time: 1 minute to peruse the article prior to reading aloud, to decide on the style required. <p>(For Online exams, the reading will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	10
3	Critical assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the same speech as for Item 2, the candidate will be given two minutes to examine the speech further. Explain the style, merit, argument and conclusion of the speech. Make recommendations for the style of spoken delivery. Time limit: 2 – 3 minutes. The examiner will give a warning at 2 minutes. 	10
4	Humorous presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell 3 humorous anecdotes based on a theme. The theme is to be briefly explained. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a short memorised comic selection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time limit: 2 – 3 minutes. 	10

Associate Diploma Communication and Public Speaking examination continues on the next page.

5	Self-appraisal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present a self-appraisal, citing, for example, some simple personality traits, significant events in one's life, likes, dislikes, goals, successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses. ● Note: this is not intended to be an intrusion into any aspects of a candidate's private life. Particulars presented are the option of the candidate. ● Time limit: 3 minutes. 	10
6	Speeches (2) <p>a) Meetings procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the procedure for conducting a meeting—business, social or committee. ● Time limit: 3 minutes. <p>b) Courtesy speeches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A chairman's welcome ○ A presentation speech ○ A toast to a bride, guest of honour or other ○ A vote of thanks to a member of staff. ● Time limit: 2 minutes. 	15
7	Reading / Impromptu speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impromptu. ● Read aloud an editorial, leading article or commentary by a prominent columnist. It will be selected from a newspaper, significant magazine or appropriate website and will relate to current affairs. ● Deliver an impromptu speech on the content of the article. ● Preparation time: 2 minutes. ● Time limit: 3 minutes. ● The examiner will give a warning at 2½ minutes. <p>(For Online exams, the reading will be emailed to the candidate once the exam has commenced.)</p>	15
8	Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the duties of a master of ceremonies at one celebration such as a wedding, wedding anniversary, coming of age, graduation party, school speech night or other. ● Time limit: 5 minutes. 	15