

Guidelines for Graduation Speeches

Hoover High School



- 1. There may be up to three (3) speeches for the graduation**
 - a. The ASB president will welcome the audience, and the Senior Class President will give a history of the class. This is one speech delivered by two people together.
 - b. One (1) valedictorian speech may be selected from those who audition to be delivered at the graduation.
 - c. There may be one other student speech selected from those who audition. This may also be a valedictorian or any other senior student.

- 2. The speeches may not exceed three (3) minutes in length.**
 - a. Each speech described under “b” and “c” above must be delivered by one person
 - b. The speeches should be positive in nature and reflective of high school experiences.
 - i. Avoid being too personal: your audience is large and includes parents, grandparents, school staff, and fellow graduates. Consider this is an important moment for everyone
 - ii. Avoid clichés such as “doors to the future” or “our time to fly.” Make it unique to the Hoover experience and your genuine feelings on this occasion.
 - iii. Do not give a class history or long welcome; these are presented by class presidents.
 - iv. Be sure you have a real message. What kind of words of wisdom or insight can you offer your class and audience? What are some big lessons you have learned that will guide your future?

- 3. Sign-ups to be announced.**

- 4. Write and practice saying your speech.**

Example Speech

Valedictorian Samuel Jensen: Graduation Speech

Congratulations Class of 2009. We have made it this far, but this is only the start. In essence, we still have our entire lives ahead of us. The end of high school marks the beginning of our lives. To the class of 2009, I give you advice about the future that we are, and the future that lies ahead of us.

First of all, I know what you are all thinking: what qualifies me to talk about the future. Well, I was sent from the future by John Connor to warn humanity that machines will rise against us. But really, nothing qualifies me to talk about the future because the future is an uncertain, mysterious place that is constantly changing with every single decision that we make, or don't make. No one knows what the future consists of. But, at least I can give you a flashlight to help guide yourselves in the darkness.

Unfortunately, much of our near future will be filled with strings of challenging events and setbacks. All of us here today will at some point stumble and fall. But what defines us will be our ability to get back up and continue on. Even our leaders and role models, who we consider successful, have stumbled and fallen at one time or another. But what sets them apart is their courage to get back up and try again. Thomas Edison tried over 5,000 times before perfecting the light bulb and the Wright brothers failed time after time before finally achieving man's dream of flight.

Some of us out there might consider the future to be bleak because we live in a time of great uncertainty. However, it is not our choice of what sort of times that we find ourselves in and a part of life is accepting the things we cannot change. The only thing that does matter in the end is what we do with the time that is given to us.

Finally Class of 2009, when it seems that the future has gotten you beat, remember your passions and dreams that you have always held onto. Pope John 23rd said, "Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential." My fellow students remember this for the rest of your lives: absolutely no one can take away your dreams and passions. In these past four years, we have all dreamt about the lives we wanted or things we desired. As you venture into the future, hold onto these dreams, because those dreams keep us going. They give us confidence in times of success and motivate us in our hours of doubt.

As we say our final goodbyes and step into the new world that awaits us, let us all remember the memories we had at Hoover High School. But also look forward to the future as well. Our entire lives lie outside those doors. What type of lives we choose to have depends on how hard we are willing to work and what type of attitude we have when we do meet adversity. I know there are many smart, determined people sitting out here today. We all can accomplish great things and make a name for ourselves. Don't let your past dictate your future.

Let us all hope for a better future where gas is cheap, jobs are plentiful, and hope for the day when Hoover High School finally gets a copier that doesn't break down every week. I apologize if I have made the future a scary place; I actually believe it's better in some ways. For one thing, there aren't any tardy sweeps in college.

Congratulations and good luck class of 2009, our future awaits. And I hope you will have the time of your lives.

Example Speech

Valedictorian Student Scott Thompson

Good afternoon, graduating class of 2015. The day we many of us have been anticipating has finally arrived. Thank you parents, family, and staff for making this day possible.

I brought with me today a special item I've had since I was ten. *pull out solved 3x3* I have with me a Rubik's cube. Now I must admit, solving these puzzles is a passion of mine, but that's not why I brought it. I have it because it is symbolic of our high school experience.

When we were freshmen, we entered the gates of campus in this scrambled state. *show scrambled puzzle* We were at the bottom of the class hierarchy, plagued with questions like what challenges awaited us? What would the teachers be like? Would we do well in our classes? All these questions existed, but the more important one: where do we begin?

Freshmen orientation told us where our classrooms were. We memorized our PE locker combinations and learned that it isn't so bad to dress out. We became more involved around campus, joining different clubs and sports. We cheered our hearts out at the rallies. Then suddenly, we're smiling for the camera at Ficarra Studios and that's when it sinks in that this would be our final year at Hoover. With a blink of an eye we went through college applications, senior meetings, prom, grad nite, our send off rally.

June 3rd we walked off the Hoover Campus the last time as students. Our grades were finalized, our teachers' signatures verified that we accomplished all that needed to be done and alas we come close to solving the puzzle. *show puzzle*

Think of this moment not as the last time we are together as a class but as one of those defining moments in our lives. Though today we celebrate our achievements and will become Hoover alumni when we exit these doors, it's important not to get consumed by our successes, for the labyrinth ahead will be brimming with turns and dead ends. We will no doubt be faced with fears. But each of us will prevail. Why? Because WE are Hoover Pates. When times get tough and the pieces of the puzzle begin to fall apart, *pop the cube* don't give up. Simply, take a step back, remember your roots, remember that you are a Hoover Pate. That Pate pride, the charisma and determination that we know resides in each of us, will push us to overcome our struggles. *pick up pieces* We will pick up the fallen pieces and stick them back together and continue to keep solving *finish solving puzzle* the puzzles in life until we are successful!

Congratulations '15, we solved this one!

Example Speech
Honored Student Doug Hamilton
Doug Hamilton Speech 2013

My fellow graduates, June 12th 2013 has finally arrived! While in some aspects this date feels like it has been a long time coming; I know that for many of us the last four years have gone by tremendously fast. Tonight as I look out at you and reflect upon my own experiences, I cannot believe the maturation that has taken place during our time at Hoover High. This maturation process is in no small part thanks to the many teachers, administrators, and family members that worked so diligently to help us become the young men and women we are today. People who accepted the responsibility to help us accomplish goals that we often didn't believe we could accomplish ourselves.

Looking back at our four years of high school; every one of us can recall a time when we struggled, every one of us can recall a time when we did not know how we were going to overcome the latest obstacle placed in front of us. As each of reflect back on the past four years however; we can find at least one time when another person gave us their hand and made it clear they would not let us fall short. It is that type of person that all of us should aspire to be, for it is these types of individuals that have made our campus such a wonderful place for so many of us over the years.

Far too often we allow ourselves to be bombarded with negativity. It is upon each of us to extinguish such thoughts not only personally; but for those around us. I know at times we may be overwhelmed and the path forward may seem difficult if not simply unbearable. During these times we must dig deep within, take a deep breath, and take one step forward. At the same time, it is important for those of us who see others struggling to lend them our hand and hold them up when they find it a struggle just to stand.

As we leave here tonight my message is simple. My message is that of compassion and determination. It is up to us to take a role of leadership and make the world a better place for all mankind. It is up to us to never accept defeat. It is up to us to beat our chest, look our obstacles in the eye, and say "I will never relent in my pursuit to be the best I can be". It is up to us to stand together not just as a class from the greatest high school on earth, but as a collection of strong willed individuals and say "We our great, we will succeed, and with that we will ensure the success of all those around us".

The class of 2013 can go on to be one of the most remarkable in history but it cannot be done by just a single individual. In order for us to ultimately effect change we must work together for the common good. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. once said "I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be." All of our futures are interconnected and it is essential for all of our success that we strive to be greater human beings each day. It may sound insincere but I am 100% honest when I say that the love I have for Hoover is similar to that I have for my own family, but of course Hoover High School is my family. With that I say thank you, good night, and congratulations my fellow class members of 2013!