



Speech or Fine Arts? Clarifications on the History and Usage of Speech in Oklahoma

History

Twenty years ago, speech, drama, and debate were English Language Arts (ELA) electives in Oklahoma. When schools reported their enrollment data, they reported those subjects under ELA. In 2015, speech and drama were moved to the new section titled “Fine Arts/Drama/Speech.” When this new section was created, drama and speech joined the Fine Arts list of course codes. Debate remained an ELA elective on the course codes document.

Recent Updates

In 2019-20, the “Fine Arts/Drama/Speech” section of the course codes document was further clarified by renaming the section “Fine Arts” and then creating the following categories within: Dance, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Visual Arts. Drama/Theatre includes Drama I-IV, Performing Arts/Theatre I-IV, Speech and Competitive Acting I-IV, Stagecraft I-IV, and Vocal Production/Theatre. Thus, competitive speech/acting (solo acting, duets, monologues, speeches, etc.) and drama are fine arts classes.

In Oklahoma, students on the college preparatory/work ready graduation track may choose to take speech in lieu of a fine arts class. The regional trend is to include speech and debate as ELA classes; however, Oklahoma has a rich and storied debate history that requires a different response. Therefore, speech and debate are under the new category of “Communications” instead of ELA. Public speaking or debate classes count for a speech credit. Students on the college preparatory/work ready graduation track may use any course from the Communications section of the course codes document to fulfill the 1 speech credit, in lieu of a fine arts credit, required to graduate high school.



Two Options for Speech

Speech classes may be reported under fine arts or communications, depending on the certification of the teacher and the competencies addressed in the course. Either category will meet the 1 fine arts or speech credit requirement for the college preparatory/work ready graduation track.

Fine Arts Speech & Competitive Acting	Communications Speech - Public Speaking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher is certified in Speech/Drama/Debate.• The class includes speech concepts and acting. The class may also include debate.• The class incorporates Oklahoma drama/theatre standards within the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher is certified in a subject area (agriculture included).• The class includes traditional speech concepts (informative, persuasive, etc.) and other speaking/professional work behaviors.

Communications in Agriculture

Students who are enrolled in the course Communications in Agriculture (code 8022) are able to use the earned credit to satisfy the speech competency required by law. If a student elects to use the credit to satisfy the speech requirement, the course code would be 4011 Public Speaking I or the CTE code 8022.

Certification

The Oklahoma teacher certification test for drama/theatre is a combined test for speech, drama, and debate. As all three subject areas were formerly part of ELA, this combined test made sense. As we move forward, all Oklahoma newly certified drama/theatre teachers will also be certified in speech/drama/debate. The exam is evenly split between the three subject areas. The institutions offering a speech/drama/debate education degree program (University of Central Oklahoma, Oral Roberts University, and Oklahoma City University) ensure future educators take classes from all three discipline areas.

Course Codes

The [current course codes](#) may further clarify the information in this document. The Fine Arts codes are on page 2. Communications course codes are at the bottom of page 4.

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- **Elizabeth Maughan, Ph.D.**, Director of Fine Arts & Advanced Placement, elizabeth.maughan@sde.ok.gov

