Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This excerpt, Guidelines for Public Speaking, was written by Elisabeth Gareis, professor of communications at Baruch College in New York City. Here, she outlines the importance of gaining and refining the skills necessary to communicate. After reading, answer the questions that follow.

Of all the skills employers desire in employees, oral communication skills rank highest. Survey after survey reports that oral communication skills are considered even more important than writing and math skills, as well as a number of other job-related qualities, such as initiative, technical competence, and organizational abilities (Adler & Towne, 1996; Hagge-Greenberg, 1979; Waner, 1995).

Oral communication encompasses a variety of genres: conversations, interviews, discussions, debates, and negotiations, to name just a few. Many of these speech events take place in fairly non-threatening settings, with interactions occurring either between two people or within small groups. While feelings of communication anxiety do occur in these settings, they are usually infrequent and of minor proportions. Public speaking is a different matter: here the speaker shares his or her views with a larger audience and often experiences apprehension and nervousness before and during the presentation.

However, there are times in almost everybody’s life when public speaking is required. Occasions can be as informal and brief as offering a toast at a party or as formal and involved as delivering a speech at a graduation ceremony. Many careers are based on a certain amount of public speaking. Take teachers, trial lawyers, politicians, broadcast journalists, or preachers, for example. For all of them, public speaking is an integral part of daily life. Likewise, people in leadership positions are routinely asked to share their views or provide guidance in larger settings. But even for those whose careers don’t call for public speaking, opportunities for speaking in front of audiences abound. There are individual or group presentations in a classroom setting, for example, contributions during a town meeting, or reports as members of a committee in school, at work, or in the community

In short, almost everybody sooner or later has to speak in public. Try not to see the task as unpleasant. Instead, try to see it as a chance to have an impact or to improve yourself. The earlier you start gaining experience and honing your skills, the better. There are many techniques and “tricks of the trade” that can help you become an effective and confident speaker.

**Directions:** Answer the following questions with Evidence Based Claims (EBCs) to support your responses.

Questions:

1. What skill is ranked most desirable by employers?
2. List three “variety of genres” in which public speaking encompasses.
3. Where are public speaking skills helpful? Use evidence from the text in your response.
4. What advice is given in the last paragraph?