



SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMMENCEMENT ADDRESSES

- **Focus on specific aspects of your own Harvard experience and then explore the broader significance for all graduates**
- **Try to limit yourself to developing one main theme or argument**
- **Refer to some aspect of your past and contrast it with this special occasion**
- **Inject some element of your particular culture, ethnicity, background**
- **If you choose to be mainly serious, be sure to include some element of joy or humor on this happy occasion.**
- **Find ways to acknowledge the various groups represented in the audience**
- **Avoid the usual clichés, Harvard hubris, too much focus on yourself**
- **Consider including some mention of Harvard history, geography, culture, etc. (The judges seem to love this!)**
- **Be altruistic, insightful, international, grateful, etc.**
- **Consider picking up the rug to find something unexpected**
- **Alternate “macro” (abstract ideas) with “micro” (concrete illustrations)**
- **Consider dramatic repetition of key statements**
- **Try to end by referring to something you said at the beginning**

Marie Danziger
Lecturer in Public Policy
marie_danziger@harvard.edu
617-495-2686

HKS Communications Program
www.hkscommunicationsprogram.org
Twitter: @hkscommprog