

# When You are the Table Topics Master

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## Objective

To prepare and issue the topics; originality is desired, providing an opportunity for all members to speak during a meeting.

## Before the Meeting

- Check with the Toastmaster of the week to find out if a theme is scheduled. If so, prepare topics to carry out that theme.
- Find out who the prepared speakers, evaluators, general evaluator, and Toastmaster are so you can call on the other members first.
- When choosing your questions/topics:
  - Select ones that will inspire the speakers to expound on them and give their opinions.
  - Do not make questions long and complicated.
  - Phrase them in such a way that the speaker clearly will know what you want them to talk about.
- Keep your comments short. Give others the chance to speak.

## During the Meeting

- During the Table Topics portion of the meeting, be sure to
- Keep the program rolling; be certain everyone understands the maximum time they have for their response.
- State the question briefly – then call on a respondent. This serves two purposes:
  - First, it holds everyone's attention – each one is thinking of a response should they be called upon to speak; and
  - Second, it adds to the value of the impromptu element by giving everyone an opportunity to improve his or her "better listening and thinking" skills.

- Call on speakers at random. Avoid going around the room in the order in which people are sitting. Give each participant a different question. Don't ask two people the same thing unless you ask each specifically to give the "pro" or "con" side.

**HINT:** Avoid giving a Table Topic to a member who has a speaking role at today's meeting. The object is to give non-speaking members an opportunity to speak.

- Watch your total time! Check the printed agenda for the total time allotted to Table Topics and adjust the number of questions to end your segment on time. Even if your portion started late, try to end on time to avoid the total meeting running overtime.
- At the end of the Table Topics segment ask the timer to report those eligible for the award. Ask the grammarian who used the word for Table Topics. Then ask members to vote for Best Table Topics Speaker and pass their votes to the Vote Counter.

## After the Meeting

- Nothing.

### **Sample Explanation**

"Table Topics provides everyone here an opportunity to practice their extemporaneous speaking skills. The rules are simple and are as follows:

- Speak for 1 to 2-1/2 minutes to the subject/question posed by me, the Table Topics Master.
- Use the word of the day.

Guests, you're welcome to participate too. Let's begin by having the first question/topic answered by a club member. The question is (pose question first, then call upon a club member to answer)

### After the question,

"Thank you (club member's name). Would any of our guests like to participate?"

**If so, take note of who said yes and call on them. Do not call on a guest unless they willingly volunteer.**

"The next question is (pose question first, then call upon a person to answer)"

**Continue until your allotted time has been used.**

### ***Sample Request for Report***

"That's all the questions I have today and now it's time for our assistants' report. Timer, did all contestants qualify by time?"

"Grammarian, did all Table Topics Speakers use the word of the day?"

"Let's take a moment and vote for the best Table Topics Speaker, our speakers today were (say their names)."

## Keys to Success

- Be prepared for your speaking opportunities. Use sample wording provided as a guideline, but don't read it word for word. This will ensure that your introduction and report are
  - concise so that the meeting stays on schedule and
  - clear so that our guests understand what is going on.
- Be sure to ask the question first, and then call on the respondent. You want everyone to pay attention and be thinking about their answer before you call on a particular person.
- When choosing your questions, make sure they are of a general nature and do not require specific topical knowledge for a response.