



# When You Are The TABLE TOPICS MASTER

Toastmasters has a tradition - every member speaks at a meeting. The Table Topics session is that portion of the meeting which ensures this tradition. The purpose of this period is to have members "think on their feet" and speak for a minute or so. The Topics Master prepares and issues topics; originality is desirable as much as possible. Each speaker may be given an individual subject or a choice of subjects may be presented from which the member can draw at random.

## Prior to the Meeting

- Check with the Toastmaster to find out if a theme meeting is scheduled. If so, prepare topics to carry out that theme. If no theme is scheduled, choose a wide selection of topics. Review THE TOASTMASTER and other publications for ideas. Do not repeat the previous week's Topics ideas or items.
  - Find out who the prepared Speakers, Evaluators, General Evaluators and Toastmaster are so you can call on the other members first. Only if time permits at the end of the Topics session, should you call on program-participants (speakers last), or if there is a shortage of members present.
  - When choosing your specific questions, select ones that will inspire the speakers to expound on them, give their opinions, etc.; don't make a question too long or complicated - phrase them in such a way that the speaker will know clearly what you want them to talk about.
  - Keep your comments short. Your job is to give others a chance to speak, not to give a series of mini-talks yourself.
  - Remember, Table Topics has a two-fold purpose: First, to give everyone in the room an opportunity to speak - especially those not on the program; and, secondly, to get people to learn to "think and speak on their feet."
- your remarks brief but enthusiastic. Be sure to encourage the use of the 'word of the day.'
- Keep the program rolling: be certain everyone understands the maximum time they have for their response and how the timing lights/device works.
  - 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 he or she be called on 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 specifically to give the 'pro' or 'con' side.
  - Watch your total time! Check the printed agenda for total time allotted to 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 conclusion of the Table Topics session, request the Timer's report to determine those eligible for the Best Table Topics Speaker ribbon. Also ask the grammarian who used the word of the day. Request members to vote for Best Table Topics Speaker and to pass their votes to the Vote Counter.

## During the Meeting

- When introduced, briefly state the purpose of Table Topics.
- Set the stage for your Topics program. Keep

## Did You Know?

that the pledge has only three commas - and thus only three pauses?



I pledge allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America  
and to the Republic for which  
it stands,

one Nation under God,

indivisible,

with liberty  
and justice for all.