

## **Ah-Counter**

### **Helping members off their crutches**

The purpose of the Ah-Counter is to note any word or sound used as a crutch by anyone who speaks during the meeting. Words may be inappropriate interjections, such as and, well, but, so and you know. Sounds may be ah, um or er. You should also note when a speaker repeats a word or phrase such as “I, I” or “This means, this means.” These words and sounds can be annoying to listeners. The Ah-Counter role is an excellent opportunity to practice your listening skills.

Several days before the meeting, use the information in A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats or in the appendix of the Competent Communication manual to prepare a brief explanation of the duties of the Ah-Counter for the benefit of guests.

When you arrive at the meeting, bring a pen and blank piece of paper for notes, or locate a blank copy of the Ah-Counter’s log, if your club has one, from the sergeant at arms.

The president will call the meeting to order and introduce the Toastmaster who will, in turn, introduce you and the other meeting participants. When you’re introduced, explain the role of the Ah-Counter.

Throughout the meeting, listen to everyone for sounds and long pauses used as fillers and not as a necessary part of sentence structure. Write down how many filler sounds or words each person used during all portions of the meeting.

When you’re called on by the Toastmaster of the Day during the evaluation segment, stand by your chair and give your report.

After the meeting is adjourned, give your completed report to the treasurer for collection of fines if this tradition applies to your club.

## **Grammarian**

### **The syntax sentinel**

#### **Before the Meeting**

One benefit of Toastmasters is that it helps people improve their grammar and word use. Being grammarian also provides an exercise in expanding listening skills. You have several responsibilities: to introduce new words to members, to comment

on language usage during the course of the meeting, and to provide examples of eloquence.

Several days before the meeting, select a Word of the Day:

- It should be one that will help members increase their vocabulary – a word that can be incorporated easily into everyday conversation but is different from the way people usually express themselves.
- Adjectives and adverbs are more adaptable than nouns or verbs, but feel free to select your own special word.
- Print your word, its part of speech (adjective, adverb, noun, verb) and a brief definition in letters large enough to be seen from the back of the room.
- Prepare a sentence showing how the word is used.
- Also, prepare a brief explanation of the duties of the grammarian for the benefit of the guests.

### **At the Meeting**

Before the meeting begins, place your visual aid at the front of the room where everyone can see it. Also get a blank piece of paper and pen ready to make notes, or get a copy of the grammarian's log, if your club has one, from the sergeant at arms.

When introduced:

- Announce the word of the day, state its part of speech, define it, use it in a sentence and ask that anyone speaking during any part of the meeting use it.
- Briefly explain the role of the grammarian.

Throughout the meeting, listen to everyone's word usage. Write down any awkward use or misuse of the language (incomplete sentences, sentences that change direction in midstream, incorrect grammar or malapropisms) with a note of who erred. For example, point out if someone used a singular verb with a plural subject. "One in five children wear glasses" should be "one in five children wears glasses." Note when a pronoun is misused. "No one in the choir sings better than her" should be "No one in the choir sings better than she."

Write down who used the word of the day (or a derivative of it) and note those who used it correctly or incorrectly.

When called on by the Toastmaster of the Day during the evaluation segment:

- Stand by your chair and give your report.
- Try to offer the correct usage in every instance of misuse (instead of merely announcing that something was wrong).

## Kapolei Toastmasters Meeting Roles

- Report on creative language usage and announce who used the word of the day (or a derivative of it) correctly or incorrectly.

After the meeting, give your completed report to the President.

### Citation:

Ah-Counter, Helping members off their crutches

Toastmasters International website

<http://www.toastmasters.org/Members/MemberExperience/MeetingRoles/AhCounter.aspx>

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