

Table Topics Master

The extemporaneous educator

With Table Topics, the Table Topics Master (TTM) gives members who aren't assigned a speaking role the opportunity to speak during the meeting. The TTM challenges each member with a subject, and the speaker responds with a one- to two-minute impromptu talk.

Some people underestimate the TTM role's importance. Not only does it provide you with an opportunity to practice planning, preparation, organization, time management and facilitation skills; your preparation and topic selection help train members to quickly organize and express their thoughts in an impromptu setting.

Preparation is the key to leading a successful Table Topics session:

- Several days before the meeting, check with the Toastmaster to find out if a theme meeting is scheduled. If so, prepare topics reflecting that theme.
- Confirm who the prepared speakers, evaluators and general evaluator will be so you can call on other members at the meeting to respond first.
- Select subjects and questions that allow speakers to offer opinions. Don't make the questions too long or complicated and make sure they don't require specialized knowledge.

Phrase questions so the speakers clearly understand what you want them to talk about.

Remember, too, that your job is to give others a chance to speak, so keep your own comments short.

When the Toastmaster of the Day introduces you, walk to the lectern and assume control of the meeting:

- Briefly state the purpose of Table Topics and mention any theme.
- If your club has a Word of the Day, encourage speakers to use that word in their response.
- Be certain everyone understands the maximum time they have for their response and how the timing device works (if the timer hasn't already done so).

Then begin the program:

- Give each speaker a different topic or question and call on speakers at random.

Kapolei Toastmasters Meeting Roles

- Avoid going around the room in the order in which people are sitting.
- Don't ask two people the same thing unless you specify that each must give opposing viewpoints.
- State the question briefly – then call on a respondent.
- You may wish to invite visitors and guests to participate if they inform you before the meeting of their desire to participate.

Watch your total time. You may need to adjust the number of questions so your segment ends on time. Even if your portion started late, try to end on time to avoid the total meeting running overtime.

Citation:

Topicsmaster, The Extemporaneous Educator

Toastmasters International website

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

Table Topic Speaker

“Try to address the subject given to you if you possible can. You don't have to be serious about it. You don't have to even be accurate! Make something up if you feel like it.

If you can't think of anything to say about a subject, say whatever you wish! The idea is to talk on your feet without preparation and without panicking. Saying something is better than sayng nothing, even if you have to change the subject.”

Hawaiian Electric Tostmasters Club Guide