



Dawn Talkers Club #84

When you are the Table Topics Master

Toastmasters has a tradition – every member speaks at a meeting. The Topics session ensures this tradition and provides members with an opportunity to “think on their feet” and speak for a minute or so. The topics Master prepares and issues the topics; originality is desirable as much as possible. Topics speakers may be given an individual subject or a choice of subjects from which members draw at random.

Prepare in Advance

- Check with the Toastmaster to find out if a theme meeting is scheduled. If so, prepare topics to carry out that theme. If not, 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 are the prepared Speakers, Evaluators, General Evaluator, and Toastmaster 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).
- When choosing your specific questions:
 - Select questions that will inspire the speakers to want to expound on them, give their opinions, etc.
 - Don’t make the question too long or complicated – phrase them in such a way that the speaker will clearly know what the question is.
 - 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:
 - To give everyone a chance to speak especially those who are not on the program.
 - To help people learn to “think and speak on their feet”.

Entering the Meeting Room

- Prior to the start of the meeting, check with guests to see if they would like to participate, avoid putting them on the spot during your program in the event they do not wish to speak. If the guest is a visiting Toastmaster, you are encouraged to call on them without warning.
- Reconfirm with the Toastmaster those who are on the program; avoid calling on them prior to giving all other members an opportunity to speak.



Dawn Talkers Club #84

When you are the Table Topics Master

During the Meeting

- When introduced:
 - If guests are present, briefly state the purpose of the Topics session.
 - Set the stage for your Topics program. Keep your remarks brief but enthusiastic.
 - Encourage speakers to use the Word of the Day in their responses.
- Conduct the Table Topics Session:
 - Keep the program rolling. Be certain everyone understands the maximum time
 - Call first on those who are not major program participants.
 - State the question briefly – then call on a respondent. This serves two purposes:
 - (1) it holds everyone’s attention and
 - (2) it adds to the value of the impromptu element by giving everyone an opportunity to improve their “better listening and thinking” skills.
 - Call on speakers at random rather than the order in which people are seated.
 - Give each speaker a different question. Don’t ask the same thing unless you specifically ask each to give the “pro” or “con” side.
 - Watch your time! Check the standard agenda for the total time allotted to Topics and adjust the number of question so as 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 Topic session, briefly recap the questions asked and who answered as a means to wrap up the session in a nice package.