

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL



A TOASTMASTER  
**WEARS MANY HATS**



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**

# MEMBER MEETING ROLES

Toastmasters club meetings provide an opportunity for members to learn and practice communication and leadership skills by assuming a variety of roles. Each meeting role has a unique set of responsibilities and skills for you to explore.

## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE A **SPEAKER**

A major part of every Toastmasters meeting revolves around two or more scheduled speakers. Members prepare their speeches based on projects in the education program.

Giving a prepared speech provides an excellent opportunity to practice your communication and leadership skills, including planning, organization, and time management.

The suggestions below are designed to help you enhance your experience before, during, and after you deliver your speech.

### Prior to the Meeting

- ▶ Check the meeting schedule for your time to speak.
- ▶ Begin working on your speech enough in advance to allow time for research, organization, and rehearsal. If you plan to give a speech based on a Pathways project, be sure to make use of the project checklist provided. It will give you a comprehensive overview of each step you need to accomplish to complete your project.
- ▶ Write a speech introduction or ensure that the Toastmaster of the meeting prepares one for you. For more information, see The Introducer section below.
- ▶ Request the name of your evaluator. Depending on your club, you may need to contact the General Evaluator, Toastmaster, or Vice President Education for the information. Communicate with your evaluator about your project and the speech you will be presenting. If possible, email the evaluation resource for your Pathways project to your evaluator.
- ▶ Be sure to discuss your goals and any personal concerns about your speaking skills with your evaluator. Emphasize areas you are working on that you would like your evaluator to note.
- ▶ You may also choose to bring a printed version of your Pathways evaluation resource to your meeting.



### Upon Arrival at the Meeting

- ▶ Arrive early so you can check the microphone, lighting, and any props or equipment needed for your speech before everyone arrives.
- ▶ Sit near the front of the room for quick and easy access to the lectern.
- ▶ If you have a printed version of your evaluation resource, provide your evaluator with the resource.

## During the Meeting

- ▶ Give your full attention to the speakers at the lectern. Avoid studying your speech notes while someone else is talking.
- ▶ When introduced, walk with confidence to the lectern.
- ▶ After you finish your speech, wait for the Toastmaster to return to the lectern before taking your seat.
- ▶ During your speech evaluation, listen for helpful advice that will assist you in delivering better speeches in the future.

## After the Meeting

- ▶ When your evaluator returns your written evaluation to you, ask him or her any questions you have about your scores or any written comments.
- ▶ Take a moment to review any evaluations or comments you receive from other club members in the form of written notes.
- ▶ Request feedback from club members on Base Camp and read through any feedback that has been posted.
- ▶ If you have completed all the requirements for a level and you are ready to move on, send the level completion request to your Vice President Education.

## Resources

- ▶ There are many resources available on Toastmasters Base Camp.

# ▶ WHEN YOU ARE AN EVALUATOR

Serving as an evaluator is an opportunity to practice leadership skills, including listening, critical thinking, providing feedback, and motivation. At first, it can be intimidating to provide feedback. Always remember that the most important benefit of Toastmasters for members is the honest, fair, and supportive evaluation of their presentations and leadership accomplishments.

Make use of the Pathways evaluations to help you clearly identify where speakers succeeded and where there is room for continued growth and improvement. For each presenter you evaluate, find a few things they did well and mention them in your evaluation. Your purpose is to help members be more self-confident and improve their speaking skills.

When you have the opportunity to provide feedback for a member fulfilling a leadership role, your goal is to help the member become more effective so they are better able to achieve their goals. Offering support for what they did well and fair, supportive feedback for places where their leadership skills can be enhanced and improved will move them toward that result.

The most effective evaluators make themselves aware of the member's skill level, habits, and mannerisms, as well as their progress to date whenever possible.

## Prior to the Meeting

- ▶ Communicate with the member you will be evaluating for information about the project they are completing. Review the Pathways evaluation resource on Base Camp or provided to you by the member.
- ▶ It may also be helpful to take a moment to revisit the content in the Pathways "Evaluation and Feedback" project to review strategies for providing feedback and completing an evaluation.



### Upon Arrival at the Meeting

- ▶ When you enter the meeting room, greet the member you will be evaluating. If you have any questions about the project they are completing or need to review specific concerns the member wants you to address in your evaluation, be sure to clarify them as soon as possible. If time permits, review the Evaluation Criteria section of the evaluation resource with the member and clarify any questions that arise.
- ▶ Meet briefly with the General Evaluator to confirm the evaluation section format.

### During the Meeting

- ▶ Record your impressions on the first page of the Evaluation Form. As you record scores, refer to the Evaluation Criteria section to be sure you are accurately reflecting the member's speech and delivery. Remember, a score of 3 on a competency means the member met that expectation.
- ▶ A score of 4 or 5 reflects achievement above and beyond meeting the competency. Only the very best public speakers will ever achieve a 5. The scale reflects an understanding that there is always room to grow and improve as a public speaker and a leader.
- ▶ Remember that the best evaluations encourage and motivate members to improve. In addition to mentioning areas to be strengthened, suggest specific solutions or actions to build any needed skills and behaviors.
- ▶ When giving a verbal evaluation, you may stand when you're introduced, walk to the lectern, and provide your evaluation. Begin and end with a note of encouragement or praise. Though you may have written lengthy responses to sections of the evaluation, refrain from reading them. Your verbal evaluation time is limited; cover what is essential to encourage and support the member while giving honest feedback.
- ▶ Praise a successful speech or leadership assignment and give reasons to explain why it succeeded. Share specific ideas the member could apply in the future such as strengthening content or working with a mentor on speech delivery techniques. Be respectful and focus on skills and accomplishments rather than personal attributes.

### After the Meeting

- ▶ When delivering the written evaluation to the member, give them a few words of encouragement and congratulations.

### Resources

- ▶ Pathways learning experience project "Evaluation and Feedback"
- ▶ *The Navigator* (Item 8722)

## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE **TIMER**

A hallmark of effective speakers is the ability to express themselves within a specific amount of time. Members rely on the timer to pace speeches and practice adhering to a time frame. The timer is also responsible for tracking every part of the meeting agenda.

To fulfill the role of the timer, you must know each presenter's speech length. In Pathways, speeches range in length from a short report of two to three minutes to a much longer speech of up to 20 minutes. It is the timer's responsibility to confirm the length of the speeches being presented before the start of each meeting.

The Toastmaster of the meeting will call on you to explain the timing rules at the start of the meeting. Be clear and concise as you describe your duties and report times to the club. The timer's role is fundamental to the success of every meeting.

### **Prior to the Meeting**

- ▶ Confirm members who are scheduled to participate with the Toastmaster and the General Evaluator.
- ▶ Confirm the time allotted to each prepared speech with all speakers.
- ▶ Write your explanation of timing in the clearest possible language and rehearse it. For the benefit of guests, be sure to emphasize timing rules and how timing signals are given.

### **Upon Arrival at the Meeting**

- ▶ Collect timing equipment (stopwatch and signal device) from the Sergeant at Arms. Check that the timing equipment is working properly and that you are comfortable with its use.
- ▶ Choose a seat where the signal device can be seen easily by everyone.

### **During the Meeting**

- ▶ When introduced, explain the timing rules and demonstrate the signal device.
- ▶ Throughout the meeting, listen carefully to each participating member and signal speakers based on the policy of your club. You will also need to signal the Toastmaster and Topicsmaster with red when they have spoken for their allotted or agreed-upon time.
- ▶ Record each participant's name and the exact time they required to complete their speech.
- ▶ When called to report by the Topicsmaster, Toastmaster, and/or General Evaluator, you may stand near your seat to announce each speaker's name and the duration of their speech. Review club policy for reward eligibility and your reporting responsibilities.



## After the Meeting

- ▶ Return the timing equipment to the Sergeant at Arms.
- ▶ If your Club Secretary maintains records of speech times in meeting minutes, give the completed timer's report to the Secretary.

# ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE TOPICSMASTER

The Table Topics® session is the portion of the meeting designed to give every member and guest of the club an opportunity to speak extemporaneously for a minute or two. The Topicsmaster is responsible for preparing and issuing an original, creative topic or topics. Each speaker may be given an individual subject or presented with a choice of subjects from which they choose or draw at random.

Serving as Topicsmaster supports leadership skills including planning, preparation, organization, time management, and facilitation.

## Prior to the Meeting

- ▶ Confirm any scheduled meeting theme with the Toastmaster. If one has been selected, choose topics that coordinate well with that theme. If there isn't a theme, choose a wide selection of topics. Avoid repeating Table Topics from recent meetings.
- ▶ Create a list of speakers, evaluators, General Evaluator, and Toastmaster for the meeting so you can call on other members first. If time permits, call on participants already scheduled to speak.

## During the Meeting

- ▶ When introduced, briefly state the purpose of the Table Topics session.
- ▶ Announce your topics and keep your remarks brief but enthusiastic. If the club has a word of the day, encourage speakers to use it in their responses.
- ▶ Review the maximum time allowed for each speaker's response and remind members of the timing signal if the timer hasn't already done so.
- ▶ State the question or topic and randomly select a member to respond. Working through members randomly supports the impromptu nature of Table Topics.
- ▶ Keep your comments short. Your job is to give others a chance to speak.
- ▶ Check the printed agenda for the time allotted to Table Topics and adjust the number of questions or topics to end your segment on time. Even if you start late, adjust your time so the meeting ends at the established time.



- ▶ If your club presents a Best Table Topics Speaker award, ask the timer at the end of the Table Topics session to report those eligible for the award. Invite members to vote for Best Table Topics Speaker and pass their votes to the Sergeant at Arms or vote counter. If the club has a Table Topics evaluator, ask for his or her report and then return control of the meeting to the Toastmaster.

## Resources

- ▶ TableTalk (Item 1318)
- ▶ *Master Your Meetings* (Item 1312)

# ▶ WHEN YOU ARE A **TABLE TOPICS SPEAKER**

Table Topics helps develop your ability to organize your thoughts quickly and respond to impromptu questions or topics. The Table Topics section of the meeting usually follows the prepared speech presentations. The Toastmaster of the meeting introduces the Topicsmaster, who gives a brief description of the purpose of Table Topics.

The Topicsmaster states the question or topic briefly and then calls on a member or guest at random to respond. Each Table Topics speaker receives a different topic or question.

As a Table Topics speaker, you may stand next to your chair or move to the lectern to give your response depending on the policy of your club. The Topicsmaster will specify the allotted time for responses.



## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE **GENERAL EVALUATOR**

The General Evaluator is the member who evaluates everything that takes place throughout the meeting. The General Evaluator role provides excellent practice in leadership skills such as critical thinking, planning, preparation, organization, time management, motivation, and team building.

The General Evaluator is responsible to the Toastmaster of the meeting. General Evaluators are responsible for the evaluation team, which consists of the timer, grammarian, Ah-Counter, speech evaluators, and Table Topics evaluator, if your club has one.

Traditionally, there is one evaluator for each prepared speech, but this isn't essential. As members, you are free to set a procedure that is effective for your club. Each evaluation should be brief, yet complete.

At the conclusion of the evaluation section of the meeting, you return control to the Toastmaster.

### **Prior to the Meeting**

- ▶ Check with the Toastmaster to confirm the program for the meeting and any planned changes to the usual meeting format.
- ▶ Communicate with all evaluators to confirm whom they will be evaluating and the evaluation format needed for that member. Encourage them to prepare for their roles by contacting the speakers to discuss any special evaluation requirements. When you communicate with evaluators, emphasize the importance of positive, supportive, and honest evaluations. Their goal as evaluators is to help fellow members develop their skills.
- ▶ Communicate with remaining members of the evaluation team to remind them of their assignments.
- ▶ For the benefit of any guest at the meeting, prepare a brief talk on the purpose, techniques, and benefits of evaluation.

### **Upon Arrival at the Meeting**

- ▶ Ensure that the individual evaluators have the materials they need to complete an evaluation for the members who are speaking or fulfilling club leadership roles at the meeting. Ensure that evaluators understand the criteria for the speech and are comfortable fulfilling the role.
- ▶ Greet all evaluators. If one is absent, consult with the Vice President Education to arrange a substitute.
- ▶ Check with the grammarian for any word of the day.
- ▶ Verify each speaker's time and notify the timer.
- ▶ Sit near the back of the room for a better view of the meeting and participants.

### **During the Meeting**

- ▶ Take notes about everything that happens, including anything that doesn't, but should. For example, check that the club's property (trophies and banner) are properly displayed. Watch for unnecessary distractions that could have been avoided. Be aware of the time to evaluate if the meeting and each section of it began and ended on time.
- ▶ Evaluate each participant on the meeting program. Look for good examples of preparation, organization, delivery, enthusiasm, observation, and performance of duties. Although members who present a speech or fulfill a leadership project have evaluators assigned to them, you are free to add comments if you wish.
- ▶ Before Table Topics, you may be asked to stand and present your team's means and methods of evaluation. Briefly describe the evaluation process.
- ▶ Identify the grammarian, Ah-Counter, and timer. Ask these members to briefly state the purpose of their roles.
- ▶ When prompted to conduct the evaluation section of the meeting, stand at the lectern and introduce each speech evaluator. Afterward, thank each for his or her efforts.

- ▶ Give your general evaluation based on the notes you took throughout the meeting. Phrase your evaluation to encourage and support club members while identifying areas for growth. As the general evaluator of the meeting, provide feedback on individual speech and leadership role evaluations. Be sure to note where evaluations followed the defined criteria and provided specific, meaningful feedback.

## WHEN YOU ARE THE TOASTMASTER

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The main duties of the Toastmaster are to coordinate and conduct the entire meeting, introduce participants, and act as a genial host. The Toastmaster sets the tone for the meeting. This task is generally reserved for members who are quite familiar with the club and its procedures.

Serving as Toastmaster is an excellent way to practice planning, preparation, organization, time management, facilitation, motivation, and team-building skills as you strive to make the meeting one of the club's best.

### **Prior to the Meeting**

- ▶ Communicate with the Vice President Education for a list of members scheduled to speak or fulfill meeting roles. Confirm any special theme for the meeting and any program changes.
- ▶ Reach out to the Topicsmaster to review their responsibilities and provide them with a list of members scheduled to participate as speakers or in meeting roles.
- ▶ Communicate with all speakers in advance to remind them that they are scheduled to speak.
- ▶ Based on your club policy, you may be responsible for creating an introduction for each speaker. Take time to confirm each speaker's speech title, project, time requested, and anything interesting to include in your introduction. Prepare an introduction for each speaker.
- ▶ Confirm the General Evaluator for the meeting. Encourage them to contact the other members of the evaluation team (speech evaluators, Topicsmaster, timer, grammarian, and Ah-Counter) and review their responsibilities for the meeting.
- ▶ Prepare remarks to bridge the gaps between program sections.
- ▶ Remember that serving as Toastmaster is one of the most valuable experiences in your club work. The assignment requires careful preparation to facilitate a well-run meeting.

### **Upon Arrival at the Meeting**

- ▶ Arrive early to complete any last-minute details.
- ▶ Check with the speakers to address any last-minute changes.
- ▶ Sit near the front of the room and ask that speakers do the same for quick and easy access to the lectern.

### **During the Meeting**

- ▶ Preside with sincerity, energy, enthusiasm, and decisiveness.
- ▶ Strive to begin and end the meeting on time. You may have to make adjustments to the schedule during the meeting to accomplish this task. Ensure each part of the meeting adheres to the established schedule.
- ▶ Lead the applause before and after the Table Topics session, each prepared speech, and the General Evaluator's remarks.
- ▶ Introduce each speaker. After your introduction, remain near the lectern. Once the speaker takes their place, return to your seat.
- ▶ Introduce the General Evaluator as you would any speaker. They are responsible for introducing other members of the evaluation team.
- ▶ Introduce the Topicsmaster.

- ▶ At the conclusion of the speaking portion of the program, request the timer's report. If your club awards a best speaker for the meeting, collect the vote.
- ▶ While votes are tallied, invite comments from guests and make announcements.
- ▶ Present awards.
- ▶ Request the thought for the day if your club has one.
- ▶ Adjourn the meeting.

### Resources

- ▶ *Chairman* (Item 200)
- ▶ *Master Your Meetings* (Item 1312)
- ▶ *TableTalk* (Item 1318)

## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE GRAMMARIAN

The responsibilities of the grammarian are to introduce new words to members, comment on the language used during the course of the meeting, and to provide examples of good grammar and word usage.

### Prior to the Meeting

- ▶ Select a word of the day. Choose a word to help members build their vocabularies and that they can incorporate into everyday conversation.
- ▶ Prepare a brief description of the grammarian's duties for the benefit of guests.
- ▶ Communicate the word of the day for inclusion in the agenda or develop a visual aid. Include the word, part of speech (verb, noun, adjective, or adverb), definition, and use it in a short sentence.

### Upon Arrival at the Meeting

- ▶ Place any visual aid at the front of the room where it can be seen by everyone.
- ▶ Be prepared to take notes as people speak during the meeting. You may need to use the grammarian's log provided by your club. Collect it from the Sergeant at Arms.

### During the Meeting

- ▶ When introduced, announce the word of the day. State the part of speech, the definition, use it in a sentence, and invite everyone speaking during the meeting to use it.
- ▶ Briefly explain the role of the grammarian.
- ▶ Throughout the meeting, listen to each speaker's word usage. Write any awkward use or misuse of language (such as incomplete sentences or incorrect grammar) with a note of who erred.
- ▶ Create a list of members who used the word of the day (or a form of it) and note those who used it correctly.
- ▶ When called on by the General Evaluator during the evaluation section, you may stand near your chair and give your report. Offer examples of correct usage in every instance in which there was misuse of grammar. Report the use of creative language and announce who used the word of the day (or a form of it) correctly.

### After the Meeting

- ▶ The grammarian's responsibilities conclude with the meeting.



## Resources

- ▶ Word of the Day (Item 1415)

## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE AH-COUNTER

The purpose of the Ah-Counter is to note unnecessary words and sounds used by members who speak during the meeting. Words or phrases that may be used inappropriately or unnecessarily include *and*, *well*, *but*, *so*, and *you know*. Sounds may include *ah*, *um*, and *er*. Serving in the Ah-Counter role provides an excellent opportunity to practice listening skills.

### Prior to the Meeting

- ▶ Prepare a brief explanation of the duties of the Ah-Counter for the benefit of guests.

### Upon Arrival at the Meeting

- ▶ Be prepared to take notes as people speak during the meeting. You may need to use the Ah-Counter's log provided by your club. Collect it from the Sergeant at Arms.

### During the Meeting

- ▶ When introduced, explain the role of the Ah-Counter.
- ▶ Throughout the meeting, listen to speakers and note unnecessary words, sounds, and pauses. Tally the sounds or words each person uses throughout the meeting.
- ▶ When called on by the General Evaluator during the evaluation section, you may stand near your chair and give your report.
- ▶ The responsibilities of the Ah-Counter conclude with the meeting.

## ▶ WHEN YOU ARE THE INTRODUCER

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The role of introducer is not required, but it is found in many clubs. A good introduction paves the way for a positive experience for the speaker and the audience. It is the responsibility of the introducer to develop an introduction for each speech and present it well to the club. An introduction requires almost as much preparation as a full speech.

### **Prior to the Meeting**

- ▶ Contact each speaker you will introduce to collect relevant information about the speech and the speaker.
- ▶ Prepare your introductions.

### **Upon Arrival at the Meeting**

- ▶ Greet the speakers you will be introducing and confirm the title of their speeches and any pertinent information that may have changed.
- ▶ Select a seat near the front of the room for quick and easy access to the lectern.

### **During the Meeting**

- ▶ Introduce each speaker. After your introduction, remain near the lectern. Once the speaker takes their place, return to your seat.
- ▶ The responsibilities of the introducer conclude with the meeting.

## ▶ OPTIONAL MEETING PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVITIES

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Your club may have other meeting participants, such as Joke Master, parliamentarian, and Word Master. Check with your club officers for guidelines affecting these positions.

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