



Table Topics Master

The purpose of the Table Topics portion of the meeting is to encourage improved impromptu speaking by requiring members to “think on their feet” and speak spontaneously for a minute or two. The Table Topics Master prepares and presents the topics in a way that encourages the participants, and gives them a supportive situation in which to express themselves. The Table Topics Master should pose creative and thought provoking, yet approachable, questions or topics. Extremely complicated or obscure set-ups are counterproductive, because they make speakers more nervous and do not stimulate them to speak freely.

Before the meeting

At Sunrise Toastmasters, each meeting has an assigned theme. Consult the agenda. Whenever possible, the Table Topics Master should use the theme as the inspiration for formulating the topics. **Prepare eight (8) questions, although you may not need all due to meeting time restraints. But be prepared!**

When choosing your questions or topics, select ones that give speakers the opportunity to expound on them, give their opinions, or relate personal experiences. Don't make the questions too long or complicated. Phrase them in such a way that the speakers will know clearly what you want them to talk about. Keep your own comments brief. Your job is to responsibly create a scene or situation so that others have a chance to speak successfully--not to give a series of mini-talks yourself.

Example:

Which team would you choose and why, if you were selected to play ball for a major baseball league?

Where would you travel to if you had no limits on money or time?

If you could fix any problem in the world, which one would you choose?

What to say when called upon to explain role:

My job today is to present topics to challenge the members to “think on their feet.” If I select you to answer one of my questions you have to speak for 1 – 2 minutes. This provides us with good practice in leadership skills, planning and time management. Sometimes you may not be able to relate to the question so you can what we call “tap dance” and talk about something that you may be passionate about or even answer the prior question.

Remember, Table Topics has a twofold purpose: first, to give several participants a chance to speak at every meeting, and second, to get people to learn to “think and speak on their feet.” You may wish to encourage speakers to use the Word of the Day in their response.

During the meeting

It's recommended to call upon members without roles. Try to avoid calling upon a first-time guest for Table Topics. **Use Member's FULL NAME**, to help the newest members learn the names of the members in the Club. If you don't know the member's last name, please ask them to present their full name.

State a question or topic succinctly, then call on a respondent. This holds everyone's attention (as each person is thinking of the response he or she could give if called on), and it adds to the value of the impromptu aspect. Remember to thank each respondent when he concludes, and lead the applause.

In conclusion,

- **make brief, supportive remarks about each participant's presentation**
- **ask the Timer if everyone was on time, advise members of such for voting purposes (if someone did not meet the time requirement they are disqualified)**
- **return control of the podium to the Toastmaster**

Time: *Table Topics respondents are asked to speak for **one to two minutes** -- include this in the introduction of your role. **The Table Topics Master may take two to three minutes to set the stage for the session, and then no more than about half a minute for each question.***

NOTE: Keep an eye on the Toastmaster; he/she will let you know how many questions you can ask.