

TABLE TOPICS MASTER

AIM:

- To encourage Toastmasters to think quickly, accurately and express their thoughts intelligently and articulately.
- To make this a lively and enjoyable session - the Table Topics Master can canvas opinions on social/community issues or use a variety of ideas to improve impromptu speaking skills.

PREPARATION:

- Prepare a list of 10-12 questions in advance. The questions can be on any topic, current, historical event, or even abstract. Questions that may cause offence or embarrassment should be avoided eg: religion, or sex. The questions can have a theme or thread and your Toastmaster Magazine has several alternative suggestions for this assignment.
- Keep the questions short and to the point, not longer than one sentence.
- If possible, write out the questions before the meeting and have a copy available for each evaluator (Remember to ask the questions in the same order).
- If evaluators were assigned at the previous meeting, it is your responsibility on the telephone chain to contact them as a reminder of their assignment.

ON THE NIGHT:

During the early part of the meeting, note the names of the Toastmasters next to the questions.

Ask those with without assignments first, then those with minor assignments. Avoid asking people with major assignments (eg. chairman, speakers) unless you do not have enough other members to call on at the meeting.

1. Proceed to the lectern. Address the meeting and, if guests are present, **briefly** explain the purpose and procedure of the session.
2. Advise the timer that each speaker is expected to speak for 1 minute, and to sound the bell when 1 minute has elapsed.
3. Announce the evaluators of the odd and even numbered speakers and remind them that each evaluation should be an average 30 seconds per speaker.
4. Announce the first question - **then** nominate the speaker eg. "*Should the Australian flag be changed?*" - Jennifer. Call on speakers at random anywhere in the room, and ask them to stand at their place and speak immediately.

When announcing the questions it is helpful to evaluators to say “question No. 3” as in this way there can be no confusion as to which question number it is and who is evaluating.

5. After presenting all the questions, call the evaluator of the odd numbered questions, then the evaluator of the even numbered questions to give their evaluations from the lectern.

Prior to the commencement, you may ask the visitors if they would like to participate. If yes, give them a question that will not be too difficult for them to answer.

6. Continue until you finish your questions, and hear the evaluations. Thank the evaluators, timer and participants and return control of the meeting to the Chairman.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Avoid framing the question to suit the speaker.
- Do not press a visitor to take a question (unless previously arranged). Many visitors to Toastmasters approach us because they are afraid to speak in public, being called on out of the blue to answer an impromptu question can be very daunting. Remember, we don't want to scare potential new members away on their first meeting.
- Remember your task is to give others a chance to speak so keep the introductions and questions brief.

This assignment offers scope for variety and initiative. Many Toastmasters find Table Topics a challenging assignment so relish your role as Topics Master - one thing you know for sure, you won't get a question this meeting!

AWARDS PRESENTED AT THE MEETING:

You are responsible for awarding the Best Speech Evaluation of the Evening award.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS:

The Toastmaster magazine

TIMING:

Approximately 20 - 25 minutes for the entire session, check the agenda and ask only enough questions to stay within your time allocation. Remember the Table Topics Evaluations fall within your assignment, it is important to allow enough time for those.