

# Toastmaster

The Toastmaster is a meeting's director and host. You won't usually be assigned this role until you are thoroughly familiar with the club and its procedures.

Begin preparing for your role several days in advance. You can use the [Toastmaster's Check List](#) to help you prepare. You'll need to know who will fill the meeting roles, if there are any agenda changes and if a theme is planned for the meeting. You'll also need to get an up-to-date meeting agenda from your VP-Education.



Next, contact the general evaluator and make sure you're both working from the same agenda. Ask the general evaluator to call other members of the evaluation team – speech evaluators, Table Topics Master, timer, grammarian, Ah-Counter – and remind them of their responsibilities. Remember, as the director, you're responsible for ensuring all of the meeting's players know their roles and hit their marks.

As the Toastmaster, you'll introduce each speaker. If a speaker hasn't written his or her own introduction, you may call on the speaker's evaluator to read the speaker's objectives from the evaluation resource. Introductions must be brief and carefully planned. Contact speakers several days before the meeting to ask about:

1. Speech title
2. Pathway, Level and Project
3. Assignment objectives
4. Speaker's personal objectives
5. Delivery time

Of course, you want to avoid awkward interruptions or gaps in meeting flow so your last preparation step before the meeting is to plan remarks you can use to make smooth transitions from one portion of the program to another. You may not need them, but you should be prepared for the possibility of awkward periods of silence.

## The Big Show

On meeting day, show up early. You'll need time to make sure the stage is set for a successful meeting. To start, check with each speaker as they arrive to see if they have made any last-minute changes to their speeches – such as changing the title.

You and the speakers will need quick and easy access to the lectern. Direct the speakers to sit near the front of the room and make sure they leave a seat open for you near the front.

When it's time to start the program, the Sergeant-At-Arms (SAA) will call the meeting to order and introduce you. You may prepare an introduction for the SAA to read.

Begin the meeting as per the agenda. Many clubs will start with a toast to the country, meeting theme or a person. This is usually followed by the announcement of any agenda changes and then the introduction of guests.

Be prepared for late arrivals, many guests don't realize how punctual Toastmasters meetings are and may arrive 5 or 10 minutes late. At the next transition in the agenda, ask the guests to introduce themselves.

Pay attention to the time. You are responsible for beginning and ending the meeting on time. You may have to adjust the schedule during the meeting to accomplish this. Make sure each meeting segment adheres to the schedule.

As you introduce each person performing a meeting role (e.g. Table Topics Master, speaker, General Evaluator, etc) remain standing at the lectern after your introduction until the speaker has assumed control of the lectern and then be seated. Whomever has control of the meeting must remain at the lectern until they are relieved by the next speaker or presenter. Think of the lectern as a baby, it must never be left alone.

You will lead the applause before and after each speaker/presenter and the general evaluator. When each presenter has finished, you return to the lectern and assume control of the meeting so that the speaker can be seated and you can begin your next introduction.

At the conclusion of the speaking program, request the timer's report and ask for a vote for the best speaker. Be prepared to think on your feet. The Table Topics Master or General Evaluator may have forgotten to ask for a timer's report and/or a vote. You can take care of this and maintain the flow of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, present the awards for best Table Topics speaker, speaker and speech evaluator. Invite comments from guests and then members. Ask members to review next week's agenda and verify that they are prepared for their roles.

Give your closing comments or a thought of the day and adjourn the meeting.

Serving as Toastmaster is an excellent way to practice many valuable skills as you strive to make the meeting one of the club's best. Preparation is the key to your success.