

# **THORNLEIGH VITAL GUIDE TO MEETING ASSIGNMENTS**

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## CHAIRMAN

It is the Chairman's job to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the meeting.

Arrive at least 15 minutes before the meeting is due to start. Check with the VPE to determine if there are any last minute programme changes and amend your copy of the agenda.

It's important as Chairman that you control the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chairman should stand to receive the gavel from the Sergeant at Arms. The Chairman should make their opening comments, and then take their seat. The rest of the meeting is usually conducted / lead by the Chairman seated. However it is still important they confidently guide the rest of the meeting.

The Chairman should clearly introduce each assignment and lead the applause to welcome or thank each speaker.

### **Sample script for meeting**

This is a suggested script for the Chairman to follow during the meeting. This is a sample only. Essentially you introduce each assignment throughout the meeting, and thank each speaker. You are the overall MC for the meeting. You set the scene, and control the meeting.

Call to Order	The Sergeant at Arms calls the meeting to order, and hands the gavel to the Chairman.
Chairman	The Chairman makes a few opening remarks, including explaining the theme for the evening if they have chosen one.
Program Alterations	This is done by the Vice President Education (or the President in their absence). Introduce the VPE, for example "Please welcome xxxx to explain the program alterations for tonight's meeting".
Welcome	All other assignments on the agenda are presented from the lectern. "I'd like to introduce xxx who will be giving us the official welcome this evening". Once the speaker has finished, the Chairman should say a few words of thanks or a general positive comment about the Welcome.
Toast	In preparation for the Toast, can you please ensure you all have "Please welcome xxx to give us the Toast for this evening"

## LISTENER'S REPORT

### **AIM:**

To help all club members with their listening skills.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

During the meeting, write down interesting key points of information mentioned at any time during the night, and note who said it.

At the end of the meeting, you have 2 minutes to ask questions to test how well everyone has been listening.

Mix the format of the questions up to test everyone's skills. Also try not to ask the questions in chronological order as they happened during the meeting, make it a little harder by mixing them up.

For example if John says there are 215 clubs in District 70, which covers NSW & ACT. You can ask:

- How many clubs are there in District 70? Answer: 215
- Where is District 70? Answer: NSW / ACT
- Who told us there are 215 clubs in District 70? Answer: John

## GENERAL EVALUATOR

### **AIM:**

To provide general comment about the overall meeting. You evaluate every assignment that hasn't already been evaluated (you don't comment on the Table Topics answers or the Speeches).

Comment on what you liked about the meeting or how the assignment was done. Comment on how you think the meeting could be improved, or how an assignment could be done differently. Provide suggestions on how to improve, or why something could have been changed.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

The General Evaluation role can be challenging, you have to listen carefully through the whole meeting. Remember to pick key points; you don't have time to comment on every single piece of the meeting in detail.

Here are some ideas for the assignment.

- Was the overall tone of the meeting lively; orderly; entertaining; dull; too serious; frivolous?
- Did the Sergeant at Arms start the meeting on time? Both at the beginning of the meeting, and after the break?
- Did the Table Topics Master explain the reason for the assignment? Did they explain the timing? How will they be evaluated – progressive or by one evaluator?
- Did the person doing the Welcome acknowledge all the visitors by name? Did they welcome the members? Did they tell a story, a poem or use quotes in the assignment?
- During the Toast, did the member tell everyone to fill their glasses? Did they ask everyone to stand? And sit again at the end of the Toast? Did they use clichés? Eg. Raise your glasses.
- Table Topics Evaluators – should keep it short 1 minute maximum. Use the PIPE format. Praise (what the speaker did well), Improve (a suggestion for next time), Praise (another strength of the response) and Encourage. The evaluator should never speak longer than the speaker.
- Did the Toastmaster seem confident when they introduced the speakers? Did they remember to introduce the evaluators and ask them to read the speech objectives? Did they give the timer instructions for the timing lights? Did they show preparation by having the speech title, manual, evaluator and introduction all ready to go? Did the Toastmaster welcome the speaker? And the evaluators?

- The structure of a speech evaluation is the same as a table topics evaluation, just longer. This means the evaluator will give another 1-2 recommendations for improvement or enhancement. And another 2-3 points of praise or strengths from the speech. The evaluator shouldn't repeat the speech, but comment on the presentation. Its important that evaluators give constructive suggestions for improvement – that's who we all learn. Likewise praise and encouragement is needed for the speaker to overcome their nerves and come back to speak again.
- Provide feedback on how the Chairman has performed. Did they run the meeting with confidence? Did they introduce the assignments clearly and with flair?

### **WHEN YOU'RE THE SPEAKER**

As a speaker you should help to prepare an introduction for yourself. It helps the Toastmaster if you can give them a written evaluation including: speech title, speech number (from the manual) and a brief introduction about yourself or your speech.

Make sure you bring along your manual so that your evaluator can give you a written evaluation for your speech. The benefit of a written evaluation is so you can refer back to it after the meeting.

You also need to fill in the "Record of Achievement" in the back of your manual, and get the Vice President Education to sign it at each meeting.

Talk to your evaluator on the night, and tell them if there is anything special you would like them to watch or comment on.

## **SPEECH EVALUATOR**

### **AIM:**

To help the speaker improve their public speaking skills by providing useful, honest, helpful feedback for the speaker and the meeting.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

Early in the night, obtain the speaker's manual and read previous evaluations. In this way you will be able to pay special attention to areas, which were previously suggested, for improvement. Always keep in mind the aim of the manual speech.

Ask the speaker if there is any particular thing you would like them to watch or comment on.

### **THE FORMAT OF AN EVALUATION**

While each has their own ideas on how this should be done, and different speeches and speakers may call for different techniques, an evaluation should proceed on these lines:

#### **Praise:**

Show the speaker that you listened to and appreciated their presentation. This will create a sound bond between speaker and evaluator. Be generous with your praise.

#### **Improve:**

Identify you feel could be improved or areas where you feel a change could make the speech even better.

Suggest ways the speaker can improve on these areas; give them ideas on how to make the change.

#### **Praise:**

Include another positive, encouraging note by restating the strengths of the speaker.

#### **Encourage:**

Motivate and inspire the speaker, encourage them to speak again.

## **WHAT TO EVALUATE:**

Select three or four areas for praise and one or two areas for improvement that you feel are the main strengths and weakness of the speaker. Here are some suggestions on evaluations.

### **Voice:**

Was the volume too little or too loud? Was the tone too shrill? Or pleasantly pitched? Uninteresting monotone or change of tone used to highlight material and arouse interest? Diction - words slurred, run together, could words be heard clearly.

### **Appearance/Manner:**

Was it confident, organised, appearance, enthusiasm, apologetic, sincere, nervous.

### **Speech Content:**

Was it appropriate, logical, interesting, enough material or too much, analytical, quality and impact of introduction and conclusion.

### **Structure:**

Look for an opening, body & conclusion; are the ideas of reasoning well presented?

### **Gestures:**

Inappropriate, forced, absent, natural, relaxed, eye contact, added impact

### **Effectiveness:**

Did the speaker achieve what he set out to do? Did he achieve the objectives of the assignment? Did he maintain interest? Was the speech well received?

Did the speaker use visual aids, were they clear?

## **HOW TO EVALUATE:**

Whatever points you choose to praise or comment on, the following should be borne in mind if your evaluation is to be useful.

**What:** Identify strengths and weakness as above

**Why:** Analyse why this aspect of the presentation affected you as it did; for example: "Jane's concern for preserving endangered birds certainly came through in her speech".

**How:** Give positive suggestions on how to improve eg. "The presentation would have more impact if Bob could arrange his visual aids so that he did not need to turn his back on the audience".

Or, "I feel I would have appreciated Jane's point more if she had given specific data on the number and type of endangered birds that are taken out of the country".

When you are called upon to give your Evaluation by the Toastmaster:

- Proceed to the lectern
- Deliver your evaluation, keep it brief and to the point.
- At the end of the assignment, acknowledge the Toastmaster and return to your seat.

**POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

Each manual speech has objectives – you can reference this during your evaluation and whether or not the speaker has achieved the speech objectives.

Complete the written evaluation for the speaker in the manual and discuss the evaluation with the speaker at the end of the meeting.

Evaluate in the third person, so that all the audience is included, not just the speaker.

Be just, kind and generous in your praise - but don't give a worthless whitewash. Remember your aim is to assist the speaker, not to dazzle the audience with your word power.

Don't waste time repeating the title of the speech or explaining what the speech was about - evaluation requires analysis of the speech, not description of the content.

## **TABLE TOPICS EVALUATOR**

### **AIM:**

To provide useful feedback to the speaker and the meeting on the Table Topics answer.

At this club, we use a format called 'progressive evaluations'. That means the Table Topics Master nominates one club member who will answer the Table Topic question, and another who will evaluate. The evaluation is presented immediately after the answer.

Another way of evaluating is to have one or two evaluators who evaluate all of the questions. The evaluations are presented at the end of the Table Topics answers. If you have two evaluators, they are generally Odd numbered and Even numbered.

### **HINTS ON EVALUATING:**

Evaluations should be brief and to the point. During a progressive evaluation, the maximum time is 1 minute. Restrict yourself to 2 or 3 points of praise and 1 or 2 aspects you consider could be improved. Remember the method of effective evaluation - Praise, Improve, Praise and then Encourage.

**Do not repeat the question, this wastes time. The evaluation should never be longer than the speech you are evaluating.**

Do not evaluate whether the content of the answer was right or wrong.

Concentrate on the physical appearance, posture, eye contact, voice modulation, voice clarity, gestures. Was the answer a mini speech with an opening, body and close? Were they very evident? Was the question addressed? Did the speaker use humour?

Here are some questions you can ask yourself as an evaluator.

**TABLE TOPICS**  
**Guidelines for Evaluation**

	✓ Praise	✓ Improve
<b>Physical: What I saw</b>		
Appearance	.....	.....
Use of hand gestures	.....	.....
Eye Contact with audience	.....	.....
Facial Expressions	.....	.....
 <b>Voice: What I Heard</b>		
Tone	.....	.....
Vitality	.....	.....
Volume	.....	.....
Vocal Variety	.....	.....
 <b>Structure of Answer: What I Understood</b>		
Did opening get our attention	.....	.....
Did response develop as mini speech	.....	.....
Was there a clear ending	.....	.....
 <b>Language:</b>		
Appropriate use of words	.....	.....
Word pictures	.....	.....
Emotive words	.....	.....
Use of humour	.....	.....
 <b>Manner:</b>		
Enthusiastic	.....	.....
Confident	.....	.....
Poised	.....	.....

## **TABLE TOPICS MASTER**

### **AIM:**

To encourage Toastmasters to think quickly, accurately and express their thoughts intelligently and articulately without prior knowledge of the question they are asked.

### **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 simply be on random topics.
- Keep the questions short and to the point, not longer than one sentence.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

The usual practice at Thornleigh Vital Toastmasters is progressive evaluations.

That means you nominate the Table Topics Speaker and the Evaluator for each question. Because many of our club members are reasonably inexperienced you will usually nominate both at the beginning of the question. This gives the evaluator warning and allows them to take notes.

First welcome the speaker to answer their question, and then welcome the evaluator. Both speakers come to the front of the room to present their mini speech. Repeat this process until all members have answered a question, and evaluated an answer.

Ask the visitors if they would like to participate, but don't push them if they don't. Often people come along to Toastmasters to overcome nerves, and if we come on too strong they may be scared away.

Once the club members become more experienced, you can make it a little harder by only nominating the evaluator once the question has been answered. Make sure this is not detrimental to the evaluation though, its more important to ensure constructive feedback than simply provide a twist or challenge to the evaluator.

Another form of evaluation is to have one or two evaluators who provide feedback on all the Table Topics responses at the end of the session. If you have two, they usually evaluate alternate questions eg. Question 1, 3, 5 etc and Question 2, 4, 6. Ask the Vice President Education if you plan to use this method so they can update the agenda.

The timing for the Table Topics response is 1-2 minutes. Ask the timer to show the green light at 1 minute, orange light at 1:30 and the red light at 2 minutes.

For progressive evaluations, the evaluator has 1 minute. The timer should show the green light at 30 seconds, and the red light on 1 minute.

The buzzer should be pressed if either the speaker or the evaluator speak for more than 30 seconds over their allocated time.

## **TIMER**

### **AIM:**

To assist the meetings to run on time, by helping all speakers know when the time is up on their assignment.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

Arrive early and familiarise yourself with the agenda, timing device and stop watch.

Use the timing lights for all assignments.

For a small assignment that is only 1-2 minutes long (table topics answer) – show the green light on 1 minute, the orange on 1:30 and the red light on 2 minutes.

For longer assignments like speeches that are 5-7 minutes – show the green light on 5 minutes, orange on 6, and red on 7 minutes.

Use the buzzer to sound an alarm when the speaker is over time by 1 minute or more.

Your final assignment is to present a simple 2 minutes report on how well the meeting and individual speakers were able to keep on time. It is not necessary to give individual times for Table Topics - mention only those who were significantly short of the assigned time. Give times for all speakers and evaluations. Add some highlights or lowlights of the meeting. Keep your assignment upbeat. Don't be too boring or analytical.

## THE TOAST

### **AIM:**

To pay formal tribute to a person, group, or special event with which the meeting will readily identify, in the format of a mini-speech with an opening, body and close.

To set a positive, light tone for the rest of the evening. Avoid too serious topics.

### **PREPARATION:**

Research your Assignment - What is the theme for the night? What significant or relevant time of the year is it? What special day or event is being celebrated?

You can construct your toast around any of these ideas or you can make up one yourself.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

Remember to take your drink to the lectern and place it nearby.

Ensure that everyone has a drink with which to Toast. This can be done before the meeting starts or when you are at the lectern by stating "*Please make sure you have your glasses ready for the Toast*"

Commence your assignment with "*Mr / Madam Chairman, Toastmasters & Guests .....*" Give the subject of the toast and then continue with a mini speech on why Toastmasters should propose a toast to your subject.

When you are ready:

- ask everyone to stand and take up their drink
- wait until everyone is ready, ask them to raise their glasses to join the "*Toast to .....*"
- if necessary, prompt the audience response, then take a sip from your glass
- after everyone has toasted, ask the audience to be seated
- wait until everyone is seated and settled
- hand back to the Chairman with '*that completes my assignment.*'

**POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- Do not leave the audience guessing as to who or what you are toasting - ensure this is clear in your opening remarks.
- Avoid clichés like “be upstanding”, “down the hatch”; A well-presented toast can simply start “please join me in toasting.....”
- Ensure your Toast is short, sharp and concise; no more than 3 or four words.
- The toast can contain humour; it should be warm, sensitive, special, and sentimental.

## THE TOASTMASTER

This assignment gives you experience introducing speakers to an audience - in some situations this would be described as Master of Ceremonies. The introductory remarks by which speakers are presented to their audiences are an important part of public speaking and should create an atmosphere of expectation and interest.

### **AIM:**

To coordinate the prepared speech session - introducing the speakers to the audience; putting each speaker at ease in front of the audience and introducing the evaluators.

Ideally you will contact the speakers one week prior each meeting to get the introduction from them. However if this is not possible, or there are extra speakers on the night, you need this information.

- Speech Title
- Purpose of the assignment (i.e. Ice Breaker Speech, C & L Manual Speech No 1, or Advanced Manual etc)
- Obtain any helpful information to introduce the speaker (eg. if an Advanced Manual speech you may like to know why the speaker chose that particular manual)
- Timing
- Any special requirements of the speaker, eg. lectern, whiteboard

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

You should check the agenda as soon as you arrive so you know who the speakers and evaluators are for the meeting.

#### **1. Introduction**

Approach the lectern and introduce the prepared speech session with a few brief remarks – What will happen? Why do we make prepared speeches?

#### **2. Timer**

Give the timer advice on the lighting signals required as per speech requirements - if all speeches are the same length; just give one instruction to the timer at start of session. For example:

*“Madam/Mr Timer - our three speeches this evening are 5 - 7 minutes. Please turn on the green light at 5 minutes, amber light at 6 and a red light at 7.*

*Evaluations should last no more than three minutes*

If the timing is different for each speech, make sure you give instructions to the timer during your introduction of each speaker.

### **3. Evaluator**

Mention the evaluator when you introduce each speaker so there is no confusion as to who is evaluating which speaker. Ask the Evaluator to stand and read the objectives of the speech during your introduction.

### **4. Introducing Speakers**

You are now ready to introduce the first speaker. Give his/her name, evaluator and some background material to 'set the scene' for the audience and speaker. eg.

*"Our first speaker is Tom. Tom is giving a presentation from the Advance C & L Manual - Speaking to Inform. His evaluator is Jane. Jane please stand and read the objectives of Tom's speech. The title of Tom's speech is "Does Sydney need the Olympics". (Refer example template at the end of this guide that may be useful for Toastmasters to gather and present the introductions).*

Lead with enthusiastic applause and remain at the lectern until the speaker arrives. Greet the speaker with an encouraging smile and handshake and exit from the area as quickly and quietly as possible to the closest chair. Don't walk in front of the speaker or cross behind the speaker as you exit.

When the speaker has finished his speech, lead the applause as they return to his/her seat. Pass a brief complimentary or relevant remark before you introduce the next speaker.

Introduce each successive speaker in the same manner until all speakers have completed their assignment.

### **5. Evaluations**

At the conclusion of all speeches you will be calling on the evaluators. If guests are present you may like to give a brief explanation of why we evaluate speeches. Introduce the first evaluator:

*"Our first evaluator tonight is Jane; she is evaluating Tom's speech. Please welcome Jane to the lectern".*

Lead the applause, and when the evaluator reaches the lectern, exit to a convenient seat. When the evaluator has finished, thank them and introduce the next evaluator until all evaluations have been completed.

At the conclusion of the session, make brief closing remarks thanking the speakers, evaluators and timer, eg.

*"This completes the speech section of the meeting. Thank you to our speakers, thank you to our evaluators for your assistance and to our timer."*

## POINTS TO REMEMBER:

Introductions need not be flat, dull and stereotyped. They can be fun and interesting to hear provided you remember the following:

- Give star billing to the speaker - don't be a scene stealer. Direct the group's attention to the speaker, not to yourself.
- Know what the speaker will be talking about - do your preparations so you can tailor your introductory remarks and make the speaker/ audience feel at ease.
- Set the mood for the speaker and the speech - if Jim has just given an hilarious speech about his fishing vacation and the next speaker you are about to introduce will be talking about the need to support cancer research, your audience must be mentally prepared for the subject transition. Your introduction needs to shift the mood from humorous to serious.
- Be brief - 30 seconds to 1 minute for an introduction is adequate.

Here is a Speaker Introduction guideline that you may find useful to:

- help you gather the required information each speaker
- help you display this information in an easy to read format

Speaker Number	
Name	
Current Award	
Speech No	
Manual	
Time	
Timing instructions	
Name of Evaluator	(Evaluator to read objectives)
Introduction	
Speech title	
Welcome	

## UMS & AHS COUNTER

### **AIM:**

To identify the use of space fillers during speaking and help your fellow club members overcome the nerves that cause the use of space fillers. For example: um, ah, repetition of words, lengthening of words.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

1. Use a cheat sheet like the example below or a blank sheet of paper. Write all the members & visitors names on the paper, along with columns headed up um, ah etc.
2. Include visitors in praise, not in errors.
3. You may wish to list the numbers of ums & ahs associated with each member.
4. Or you may wish to highlight key areas.
5. If you are complimenting, mention the name of the Toastmaster. If you are pointing out an error, it may not be appropriate to mention the name, especially if a new Toastmaster or one who has difficulty with grammar, is just as effective to preface your report with "Tonight, I heard...." or "one speaker said ....."

## WELCOME

### **AIM:**

To welcome members and visitors and make them feel at ease, relaxed and looking forward to a great night. To set the atmosphere for the rest of the evening - the warmth and sincerity of your welcome is important.

### **ON THE NIGHT:**

Find out visitors names. "Toastmasters and Guests" then tailor your welcome according to the guests. It is not necessary to include the areas below, if there are a significant number of guests or visitors, you can simply welcome them by name.

Incorporate **some** of the following in your welcome -

1. who are we
2. what they can expect to hear and learn
3. how they contribute to our meeting's success
4. invitation to come again
5. invitation at end of the night to give us their comment and impressions