



WHEN YOU ARE A TABLE TOPICS SPEAKER

Being called upon to respond to a topic can be frightening, but remember every one in the room has gone through this process and is hoping you will do well. Even if you cannot think of anything to say at all (which is highly unlikely), you are not going to die and no one will think less of you. Do not be embarrassed, if you do not do well; just try to do better the next time.

You can prepare for Table Topics by reading about current events and, if it is a theme meeting, consider many possible topics that might relate to that theme and actively formulate your opinion concerning those topics. Also, you might ask a friend or your spouse to prepare and give topics to you, prior to the meeting.

During the Table Topics segment of the program, listen carefully to the topic. As you walk to the lectern, repeat the topic in your mind. Shake hands with the Table Topics Master (TTM), turn to the audience, smile, turn to the TTM, say: "Mr./Madam TTM (turn back to the audience), fellow TMs and guests. Thank you for this topic." At this point, 15 seconds will have elapsed, you have only 45 more seconds to meet the minimum qualifying time. All this time, keep on thinking of what you might say in response to the topic. You may wish to repeat the topic. This can serve as your Opening in the structure of your miniature speech, it will take another five seconds and will give you even more time to think of a response.

Normally, you will think of at least one point to make concerning the topic. There is a tendency to state that point or opinion immediately. Rather than doing that, save that point or opinion in reserve. This will give you more confidence because you know you have something further to say. Instead, discuss the importance of the topic and what most people appear to believe about the topic. Discuss the pros and cons of the issue. Very soon, the green light will come on and you can relax even more. You may even find yourself interested in the topic and wanting to express your opinion.

List out many possibilities regarding the issue while still keeping your opinion or point in reserve. Finally, state your main point or opinion. Then summarize by briefly restating the importance of the topic, what most people believe, some of the pros and cons, and then emphatically re-state your point or opinion.

Turn to the TTM and say: "Mr./Madam TTM." Wait at the lectern until the TTM returns, shake his/her hand and return to your seat.

Each time you participate in Table Topics, you will do better and have more confidence. Also, you will find that you are more willing to state your opinion at work or in social settings and with more effectiveness and confidence.