



# **District 6 Toastmasters**

## **Club Programming Idea Cookbook**

**May 29, 2000**

**Cost: \$3.00**

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Thanks to all of you who contributed ideas to this District 6 Cookbook. We appreciate your creativity and new ideas. Special thanks to Noel Field, DTM, who edited the most recent version of this Cookbook. More special thanks to Terry Daily, DTM, for his contributions to this revised Cookbook via his Diamonds From Daily newsletters.

Finally, thank you to Judy Daily, ATM and Carol Squires, CTM for their editing assistance. I hope you all enjoy this Cookbook, and find it helpful to your clubs.

## Forward

Welcome to the District 6 Cookbook! This book will be invaluable to your club to help you plan enjoyable, educational meetings. As our founder Dr. Ralph Smedley said, "We learn best in moments of enjoyment."

Experiment with your club meetings using the ideas in this cookbook. Add your own twist to them. Watch as your club members walk away saying, "I can't wait to see what happens at our next meeting!" Also, watch the reactions of your guests; they'll more than likely say, "This is a club I've got to join; they enjoy their meetings!"

As your club members develop new ideas for creative table topics, educational theme meetings or special recognition meetings, please share them with your current Lt. Governor Education & Training. Periodically that person will create a supplement to this cookbook that you can add to the back. That's why this cookbook is three-hole punched for your convenience.

Experiment. Try something new. And above all, have many enjoyable and educational meetings in the future.

## The Mission of Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is the leading organization devoted to making effective oral communication a worldwide reality.

Through its member clubs, Toastmasters International helps men and women learn the arts of speaking, listening and thinking--vital skills that promote self confidence, enhance leadership potential, improve human relations and contribute to the betterment of all people. It is basic to this mission that Toastmasters International continually expands its worldwide network of clubs, thereby offering ever-greater numbers of people the opportunity to benefit from its programs.

## Getting the Most Out of Your Club Meetings

Whatever your goals in life may be, your success depends on your ability to communicate. Individuals who can verbalize their ideas so that they are heard, understood and acted upon possess one of the primary qualities of leadership. By joining a Toastmasters club, you have embarked on a program that will multiply your communication and leadership skills like the more than three million people who have participated in Toastmasters. You are about to gain these same benefits, benefits that can change your life.

As a Toastmaster you will learn to overcome the initial nervousness many feel when called upon to speak before an audience. You will learn how to organize and present your ideas logically and convincingly. You will improve your ability to listen to other people's ideas and evaluate them. And you will develop self-confidence that will radiate in every situation involving other people.

## Learn by Doing

The key to getting the most out of the Toastmasters' communication and leadership program is active participation. People learn best by doing. No method of skill development can match the power of actually experiencing what you are learning. That's how the Toastmasters program works, and that's what makes it so effective in helping people like you become more successful.

The Toastmasters program is not a formal course in public speaking; it is an ongoing series of experiences that will directly involve you in a variety of communication situations. The principles you will learn are basic to any form of interpersonal communication, whether your audience consists of one person or 1,000.

In addition to presenting prepared speeches, you will participate in Table Topics, an impromptu speaking exercise that will develop your ability to "think on your feet" in situations such as interviews, seminars, business meetings and conversations. You will also serve in various roles at club meetings, including Toastmaster, Table Topics leader, Evaluator, and General Evaluator. Each of these roles has a specific educational purpose and will aid you in your self-development. Another benefit of attending club meetings is the opportunity to watch other speakers and learn from them.

## You're Among Friends

Your Toastmasters club is not a classroom. It is a workshop in which you will develop your communication and leadership skills among a group of friends, people who are there for the same reason you are. It's also a laboratory where you can experiment with new ideas and techniques, and receive friendly feedback.

This shared commitment to a worthwhile goal gives a Toastmasters club a special energy. Members draw strength from one another and take pride in helping one another grow and develop. This spirit of camaraderie and mutual support is one of the most satisfying benefits of a Toastmasters membership. It also makes learning fun!

As you get started, your club will provide you with a coach/mentor to help with your first few projects. Rely on this experienced Toastmaster for advice and guidance; he or she has faced the same challenges you're facing and understands how you feel. Like your coach/mentor, the other members of your club are there to help you become the communicator and leader you want to be.

You will get out of Toastmasters what you put into it. If you participate actively and apply what you learn to your business, home and social life, your opportunities for self-development will be endless and richly rewarding.

## Elements of an Effective Club

These elements of an effective club are essential to the development of individual members and effective club programming.

### **1. Club officers are responsible, dedicated and effective.**

Training session attendance, regular executive committee meetings, financial responsibility, Area Council participation, job awareness, and the responsibility to perform duties are all important.

### **2. Club programs are well-planned and well-executed.**

Plan good programs, have enjoyable meetings, use variety in meeting programs, and have meetings start and finish on time.

### **3. The club places high emphasis on educational development.**

Regular manual speeches; CTM, ATM, and DTM accomplishments; keeping accurate member progress charts; and recognizing achievements along the way as well as at the completion.

### **4. Meetings are varied, dynamic, and enjoyable.**

Conduct theme meetings, contests, debates, special programs, Success/Leadership modules, and have guest speakers. Plan meetings fun!

### **5. Members receive positive support and recognition.**

Positive evaluations, members support one another, and recognize member accomplishments in club bulletins.

### **6. The club attracts and retains new members.**

Best sales tool is program excellence, good guest relations, new member orientation, new member induction, coaches or mentors, and rapid involvement of new members.

### **7. Members are encouraged to get involved outside the club.**

Speechcraft, Youth Leadership, joint meetings with other clubs, speaker/evaluator exchanges, Area Councils and events, District Conference attendance, service as District Officer, new club sponsorship and assisting low-member clubs.

### **8. Members are energetic and enthusiastic.**

Members have a shared commitment to a worthwhile goal, a positive attitude, and a high energy level.

### **9. Members assess the club with the Moments of Truth**

A strong club regularly “touches base” to ensure it is a quality club serving its members in the best way possible. Use the Moments of Truth at least once a year to check how well your club is operating..

*“We learn best in moments of enjoyment.”*

*- Dr. Ralph C. Smedley, founder, Toastmasters International*

## Putting Fun into Your Meeting

### Audience Swap

After each speaker comes to the lectern, the Toastmaster announces who the “audience” will be for that speech. For example,:

- A speaker on environmental responsibility can address an audience of oil refinery owners.
- An anti-gun speaker can address the NRA.
- A pro-choice speaker can address an audience of conservative leaders.

The audience is supposed to act the role assigned to it, and heckling is encouraged. The speeches are evaluated on how well the speakers adjust to the hostile audiences, and if they convinced their particular group.

### Brighter Tomorrow

**Theme Setting:** Think happy! Tomorrow will be better. The whole meeting is an optimistic note.

**Table Topics:** For a brighter tomorrow, how should we handle these problems?

- Disagreements with each other
- Strife between nations
- Family problems, divorce, etc.
- National problems; pollution, unemployment, crime
- Individual problems, tensions, outlook on life

**Speeches:** Have talks on improving quality of life. Today, compared with yesterday. Ideas and slogans on having an optimistic outlook. Inspirational people and philosophies.



## Box Social Meeting

The spouses or guests bring decorated boxes containing fancy lunches for two. Prizes are given for the best decorated boxes. Members bid on boxes during an auction conducted by one or two creative auctioneers. Successful bidders share lunches with the spouses/guests that prepared them.

For a little extra spice, secretly pre-arrange with the members that a \$1.00 bid is really only a \$.25 bid. Watch the reactions when the bids get up into the \$20.00 range or higher. This makes a great videotape program. Have each couple introduce themselves on camera. Then take shots during the bidding, paying particular attention to reactions to the high bids. Play back the tape during the meal.

## Celebrity Wing It Day

Draw for meeting roles and the celebrities to impersonate in those roles at the beginning of the meeting. (for example, Toastmaster = Johnny Carson, Invocator = Mother Teresa, Ah counter = Edwin Newman). Vote for the best impersonator.

## Defense Plea

**Theme Setting:** Plan a courtroom, with judge, lawyers and the appropriate setting.

**Table Topics:** Pose “legal” situations (caught running stop sign, mistake on tax return, threw rock at a bird but it went through window, etc.). The “culprits” give a two minute defense plea for their actions.

**Speeches:** Have a mock trial, with the defense and prosecution briefly stating positions. The “culprit” takes the stand on behalf of themselves and pleads extenuating circumstances.

*"A kind word is never lost."  
-Unknown*

## **"Demosthenes" Theme**

**Theme Setting:** Meeting based on famous Greek orator Demosthenes. Speaker could wrap sheet around for toga and wear a laurel wreath on head. Each speaker is given jelly beans, real beans, or other such objects to hold in their mouth while speaking. Speeches may be flowery and oratorical in manner of the Greek style.

**Table Topics:** Is the lectern stronger than the sword? Or, do actions speak louder than words? Has the old style of oratory vanished? Who still uses it? Has TV influenced our speaking style? Evaluate the styles of well-known speakers (Billy Graham, Susan B. Anthony, Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King etc.).

**Speeches:** Have lofty, elaborate speeches, with beans, marbles, etc. in the mouth (please be safe!) Possibly also have a serious speech or two on the use of dramatics in speaking.

## **Exaggeration (Liars) Theme**

To prevent Topics participants from having too much preparation time, give each of them a special subject for their lies (Hole-In-One, Ten Strikes, My Aunt Elsie, Smart Investments, The Great Windstorm. etc.).

Speeches should be humorous longer versions on the same kind of subjects. Select the Liar of the meeting and give an appropriate special award. For extra fun, have the minutes and the Treasurer's report fit the theme for the evening.

## **Red Tape Meeting**

For this one, type the Table Topics and seal them in pre-numbered envelopes. Pass out the envelopes in advance with instructions not to open them until called on to do so. Call the numbers out of sequence and give a complicated envelope exchange instructions before the speaker can open one to respond to the question. This gets funny when the Topics leader is hard pressed to remember who still has unopened envelopes.

At least one speech should be a humorous lampoon of the bureaucratic red tape we have all experienced at some time or another. Try something closer to home; have some member explain to a prospective member what the dues will be if he/she joins at this meeting.



## Reincarnation Theme

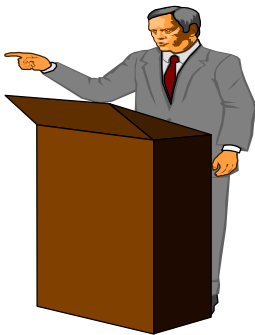
**Theme Setting:** Speakers and others could impersonate well-known people of the past as their incarnate ancestors.

**Table Topics:** Why I do (do not) believe in reincarnation. Why I did it that way when I was (Custer, Napoleon, Hitler, Cleopatra, Margaret Thatcher, Rosa Parks, etc.).

**Speeches:** Each speaker relates his/her life as the impersonated ancestor. Pick especially interesting episodes, such as the French Revolution, Gettysburg, Titanic sinking, Montgomery bus boycott, etc. as the setting.

## Saturday Night Live!

Reenact the long-standing television show by having each member portray a character and perform exaggerated or satirical skits as the SNL actors do. They can be the Blues Brothers, news anchors, the Whiners, or any character on the current show.



### Soap Box Meeting

Have members get on a “Soap Box” to sell ideas or items assigned by the Topics leader. The “soap box” can be an imaginary one, but the speakers will respond more in “soap box” oratory style if made to stand on a real box.

Speeches should be assigned to members who in the past have indicated strong feelings on particular subjects. Encourage them to let loose.

## Sound Off Meeting

Every member prepares a short speech on a controversial subject and after delivering it calls on some other member to give a short rebuttal. Then the speaker is allowed one minute to rebut the rebuttal. Sound confusing? The idea is that each member gives only one speech and one rebuttal of some other member’s speech. Skip Table Topics since the rebuttals fulfill the impromptu aspects of Topics. If you have a large club, you may want to do this in two nights with 50% of the members speaking each time. Note: Timing is important and should be adhered to.

*“The world needs more warm hearts and fewer hot heads.”  
- unknown*

## **Summer Theme**

Decorate the room with lots of summertime props: members can bring beach towels, sunglasses, sun hats, etc. The Toastmaster can serve lemonade. Table Topics can center around summer vacation getaway ideas, etc.

## **Surprise Meeting**

This one works well for reduced summer meetings when attendance is intermittent. Don't make any assignments. Have each member as they arrive draw for the role they will fill for the meeting including president if you wish. This meeting can provide a good lesson in the value of preparedness for both the speakers and the audience. Some interesting news articles could be provided for the speakers.

## **Tonight Show**

The Toastmaster can be Jay Leno and begin the meeting with a monologue after being enthusiastically introduced by the Sergeant at Arms in an upbeat manner. Members on the agenda can introduce themselves as an entertainment personality they want to portray. “Jay” can interview them about current or upcoming movies, TV appearances, etc. when they give their reports/perform their duty.

## **Vacations Theme**

Really use your imagination for this one. Speeches may be fantasy, dream vacations or reviews of unexpected and satisfying vacations.

Table Topics can be vacations of the future: trip to the moon, asteroid cruise, climbing Everest with a Rocket Belt, etc.

## **Winter Theme**

Decorate the meeting room with lots of winter props such as snow shovels, fake snow, mittens, coats, etc. The members can bundle up in their winter finest. The Toastmaster can serve hot chocolate. Table Topics can center around what I would rather be doing now or fun things to do in the coldest of winters.

## General Warm-Up (Set the Mood)

Start your meeting with self introductions, and have every member respond to a theme or answer a question. This will serve as a warm-up period for every member and will get the essentials of a good meeting into action.

## Table Topics A-Z

The following Topics can help you have lively, entertaining and fun Table Topics.

### Abstinence Topics

This has nothing to do with alcoholic beverages. The Topics participants are to abstain from answering the Topic, no matter how attractive it might be to them. They should talk instead about why they will not discuss the Topic and why they believe no one else should discuss it either. This can be a big success and hilarious if the Topics leader knows the members well enough to entice them with subjects that they would otherwise discuss at the drop of a hat.



### Altered Headlines Topics

Cut out newspaper article headlines and with a black felt tip pen personalize them to pertain to members. Seal them in individual envelopes. Pass them out with instructions not to open them until called upon to speak. When called, speakers open their envelope and relate the story that they feel pertains to the member it was personalized for. Some of the funniest news stories result when a member gets a headline that names him or her as the subject.

### Baby Picture Topics

Have each member bring a baby picture in the 1-4 year range. Place them all in a large envelope so they can't be seen. Speakers will remove only one picture from the envelope and discuss for two minutes the life of the member to whom they believe it belongs.

### Backyard Invention Topics

Each Topic starts with the phrase "You have invented a(n) \_\_\_\_." The Topics participant's task is to explain the invention to the patent office. The clever Topics leader will select items that are not only needed badly, but will also stimulate the imagination of the participant. Perhaps a much-needed invention will be initiated by this session.

*Maturity is the capacity of knowing you are right, without the compulsion to try to prove it.  
- unknown*

## **Beauty Pageant Topics**

Place questions in a bag and have the Topics leader be a beauty pageant host. The Topics participant selects a question and reads it silently, then the leader reads it aloud. The participant answers the question just like a pageant contestant would. Members vote for best response that addressed the question instead of avoiding or dancing around it.

## **Biggest Blunders Topics**

Some of the best humor comes from stories in which the teller is the goat. In this Topics session, the participants are asked to “tell” on themselves. To maintain the spontaneity of Table Topics, give each participant a particular field that his/her biggest blunder must relate to. For example, someone may be asked to tell about the biggest blunder as a driver, another as a car buyer, a lover, or an interviewee for employment. An appropriate award for the best Topics would be a big lemon.

## **Book Report**

Each Topics participant is given the title of some obscure book and asked to give a two-minute book review. The Topics leader then gives a brief description of the real book.

## **Buttons**

Bring a container of lapel buttons--serious, comical, etc. Have Topics participants select a button and explain the word or phrase on the button, or tell a story using the word or phrase.

## **Calendar Theme**

At the end of the year, take an old calendar and use the captions/pictures for the theme (for example, cats, plants, birds, humor). Each participant can talk about the picture they have. For example, if each month had a different bird, include the name of the bird, where they live, etc. Make it educational as well as fun.

## **Continuous Story**

Begin a story and ask Topics participants to continue it. The last line used by each participant is the first one used by the next participant.

*“The human voice is our hardest faculty. It begins at birth and functions beautifully, right up till we stand up to speak in public.”*

*- Unknown*

## **Counter Topics**

The Topics leader has a sack of unusual items from around the house that were grabbed from the kitchen, bathroom or other counter. Each participant is given a different item to talk about. If the object is not known, the participant makes up something.

## **Definitions of Unusual Words**

The Topics leader presents unusual or difficult words to each participant, with the assignment to define the meaning. If the participant does not know the correct meaning to the word, he or she should make one up. Following each participant's definition, the Topics leader gives the correct definition.

## **Describe the Photograph Topics**

The Topics leader gives each participant a different photograph of a place or thing, and has them tell about the picture.

## **Different Sayings**

Provide each participant with a saying and ask them to explain where it originated and what the phrase means. Examples are “a stitch in time saves nine” or “the straw that broke the camel's back.”

## **The Diplomat (Mock United Nations)**

Each Topics participant is assigned a country to represent as a delegate to the U. N. Security Council. An international incident is outlined with sketchy details by the Topics leader; for example, a nuclear bomb missing, a plane load of hostages flying over the U.S. etc. Each participant then represents their country in a predictable response.

## **Dual Personality Topics**

The Topics leader chooses two Topics participants and assigns them opposite personalities; for example, Adam & Eve, JFK & Jackie, Bill & Hillary Clinton, etc. Each participant then gives their respective points of view on their relationship.

## Emotion & Situation

The Topics leader holds two bags. One contains slips of paper with different emotions (joy, fear, love, excitement, etc.) and the other bag contains situations (going to the dentist, winning the lottery, reunions, etc.). Topics participants pick one slip from each bag, then reenact the Topics.

## Emotional Topics

Choose a particular mood such as happy, sad, disgusted, angry. Have the responder reply to a regular type of question demonstrating the mood.

## End of the World

Topics participants answer one of the following questions:

1. You have just received word that the world will end in 24 hours. How would you spend this last day?
2. How do you think the world will finally end? Is it worthwhile to spend so much on space exploration so our descendants can leave Earth in case of such a disaster?

## Famous Person Interview

The Topics leader writes the names of famous people on slips of paper (JFK, Hillary Clinton, Martin Luther King, Madonna, etc.). The Topics leader then has Topics participants draw a slip of paper and impersonate the personality. The Topics leader then interviews the personality with questions pertaining to their life.



## Hats

The Topics leader collects many different hats and brings them to the meeting. Each participant gets a hat to wear while role playing the character that would have worn that individual hat; for example, a derby, baseball hat, football helmet, clown hat, etc.).

*“There are no atheists on turbulent airplanes.”*  
- Erica Jong

## **Ice Breaker Topics**

Ask questions to get Topics participants to introduce themselves to the group. This Topics is good for joint meetings with other clubs, or on special occasions when there are many guests in attendance. It helps, of course, in getting others to know you; and sometimes in getting to know yourself.

### **“In School I . . . .”**

The Topics leader asks the Topics participants questions relating to their school days. Examples: first teacher crush, the first kiss, your first sweetheart, your first or worst punishment, your favorite or worst subject, etc.

### **It Was a Dark and Stormy Night...**

Set the mood by reading an opening paragraph to a story. Prepare slips of paper with descriptive words (locations, objects, people, animals, etc.). Topics participants pick a word and continue the story using the word.

### **Job Interview**

The Topics leader calls on two members. One is the job applicant and the other is the interviewer. The Topics leader indicates what the job opening will be. Examples: street dancer, mime actor, psychologist, nanny, etc. The more unusual the job opening, the funnier the interview becomes.

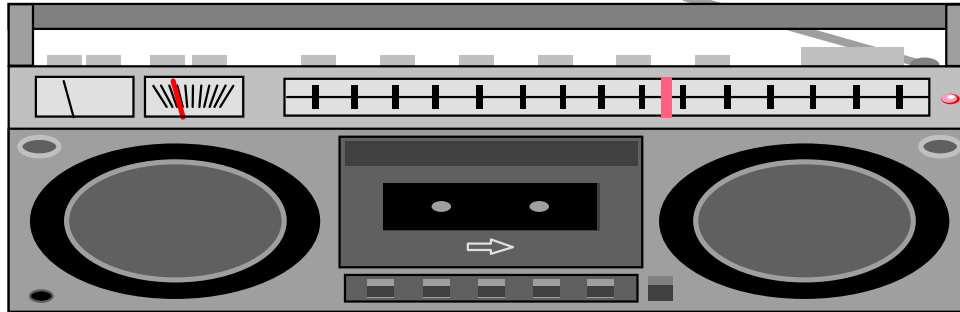
### **Lemonade Topics**

A popular thought in recent years has been “If the world hands you a lemon, make lemonade.” The Topics leader should invent lemons for each speaker, personalized if possible, and then ask them to explain their reactions to receiving the lemon and what positive action they would take to turn the lemon into lemonade. For example, “You have just lost your job after 10 years with the company; what do you do?” A participant might then idealize that it was just the opportunity to start up a new business.

### **Lottery Winners**

All Topics participants win lotteries, but for different amounts of money. The first participant wins \$1 million, the next \$10 and the next \$500. What will they do with the money?

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## Music Time Machine

Take old records or tapes to the meeting and play a portion of a song. Ask each participant what memories the song brings back. Another twist is showing an album or CD cover and ask Topics participants for their memories or why they would never buy that album/CD.

## Nostalgia Topics

The Topics leader presents each Topics participant with a reminder of something out of the past. Speakers respond by relating their fond or nostalgic memories triggered by the reminder word or phrase. Some examples are soft mud, popcorn, black jelly beans, first grade teacher, shiny pennies, etc.

## Objectives Topics

This is a good Topics for New Year's or Toastmasters month. Have each speaker discuss his/her Toastmasters objectives for the year in terms of manual speeches, new members and guests, Area Council attendance, etc. If "Objectives" is the meeting theme, then one or two speeches can be assigned to relate the details of the Management by Objectives approach.

## People's Court

The Topics leader calls two members forward. One is the plaintiff and the other is the defendant. The Topics leader is the judge and reads the charges against the defendant. The plaintiff speaks first, the defendant last. Each has one to two minutes. The other members serve as the jury, and vote guilty or not guilty. The more ridiculous the charge, the more fun the session.

## A Picture is Worth 1000 Words

Ask each participant to tell a story after looking at a picture from a newspaper, magazine or post card.



*“When I was born, I was so surprised that I didn’t talk for a year and a half.”*  
- Gracie Allen

## **Point-Counterpoint**

Ask a Topics participant to express a viewpoint about a Topics. Then ask another Topics participant to express an opposing viewpoint about the same Topics, whether or not he or she actually shares that viewpoint. This makes for interesting mini-debates!

## **Pretend Topics**

Choose a flower, animal, fruit or object, and have responders tell why they chose to become that flower, animal, etc. You can use the specific names of the general Topics (flowers = tulip, dandelion, violet, orchid).

## **Progressive Story**

The Topics leader begins telling a story, and then asks the next Topics participant to continue the story. After 1-2 minutes, the Topics leader stops that person and calls on another to continue. The story continues until all Topics participants have contributed to the story. A central theme could be determined from the start.

## **Quotations**

Read quotations from people, famous or not, and ask Topics participants to explain how they feel about the quotations. They can act in character or be themselves.

## **Reading Practice**

Use your *Toastmaster* magazine by assigning numbers to sections of articles, then numbering off Topics participants. Call on a number and that person will read the assigned section in the magazine and discuss its significance. Great way to share the magazine!

## **Secret Desires Topics**

Prepare envelopes containing slips, each with a different participant’s name in it. Number the envelopes on the outside. Instruct the participants to take an envelope but not open it until their number is called. When the number is called, the speaker opens the envelope, reads the name, but does not disclose it. Topics participants then describe what the secret desires are of the individual without disclosing the name. All members are furnished ballots on which they guess whose desires were described by each Topics participant.

## Soap Opera Topics

This is one of the versions of the progressive story Topics. The Topics leader sets the stage for today's episode of "Life in the Suburbs" and then selects Topics participants to continue the story. Add variety by having every third speaker give a spot commercial for products named by the Topics leader.

## Table Topics Quotes

For Table Topics select a famous quote or slogan. Request the responder to tell who said it and why they think the quote was made. For example: To be or not to be; Give me liberty or give me death; Mother, please let me do it myself; Filled to the rim with Brim.

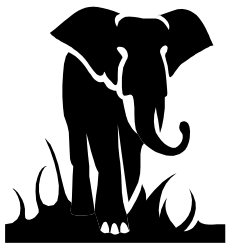
## Toastmaster Topics

Ask each participant a question about Toastmasters. Examples: "How did you become a Toastmaster?" "How did you feel presenting your icebreaker?" "Why did you join?" "Why did you renew?"

Also, you can have them select a duty and explain how it has contributed to their Toastmasters experience.

## Turn Around Topics

It may never happen, but if your club has an unprepared, though previously assigned Topics leader, don't give him or her the opportunity to throw together some hasty Topics. Let them be the recipient of what they would foist on you. Turn the tables on the "culprit." Have him/her stand at the lectern and respond to all the hastily prepared Topics that the members can give, each taking a turn. A few questions should relate to unpreparedness. Best Topics award is given for the best question submitted.



## White Elephant Topics

Members bring articles that are no longer useful to them but that do have some value. One member acts as auctioneer, but as each item is offered, the contributing member makes a 1-2 minute sales pitch in its behalf. Therein lies the educational value. If the sale is well-planned, the Club will benefit monetarily. Present the most useless item to the winning "sales pitcher". Variations include having each person be their own auctioneer, having \$1.00 equal \$0.10, and holding an auction annually so some items become classics.

*“To teach another is to learn yourself.”  
- Unknown*

## **Why Doesn't Someone . . .**

This is a chance to get things off your chest, ask probing questions, raise buried objections. Some possible “Why doesn't someone” Topics. Why doesn't someone:

- Start a Toastmaster library with loaner books?
- Sell an inexpensive electric car?
- Build an easel that collapses to suitcase size?
- Solve the deficit crisis?

## **Yellow Pages**

Have Topics participants randomly turn to a page in the Yellow Pages, point to a spot without looking and then sell whatever item they're pointing at.

## **Theme Meetings**

The following themes can enhance your club meetings by adding variety, fun and learning opportunities for members. Theme meetings help the Toastmaster and Topics leader of the day prepare comments and questions that center around a common idea.

## **Educational Themes**

### **All the World's a Stage**

Schedule a meeting at a local school, library or meeting hall with a raised stage. Members will gain confidence by speaking in a new environment.

## Audiovisual Theme

In preparation for the audiovisual theme, the club may wish to order the Toastmaster Audiovisual Handbook from the Toastmasters International catalog. If possible, get experienced audiovisual people to handle the presentations. This may mean inviting someone from outside the club for the featured presentation. Some local schools or community agencies have audiovisual departments and might supply a main speaker. The following Topics are appropriate:

- How to prepare and use flip charts
- How to prepare and use slides
- How to prepare and use overhead projectors
- Movies, chalk-talk, and other visual presentations

Special emphasis might be placed on flip charts, since most Toastmaster programs are readily adaptable to these. If possible, the club should acquire an easel, and encourage its members to use flip charts as often as they can.



## Building Vocabulary

In addition to the ongoing vocabulary building program (word of the week/day, grammarian's report) which every club should be conducting, why not have a special vocabulary theme? For example:

**Table Topics:** Ask each Topics participant for the meaning of an unusual word (permit others to challenge the definitions given).

### Speeches:

- How to read a dictionary (pronunciation marks, root words, etc.)
- The history of our language
- The use of slang and colloquialisms
- Politically correct/incorrect terms