

Your Toastmaster Debut

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Congratulations! You signed up to be Toastmaster for your very first time! Don't worry, it's not as scary as it looks. With just a little preparation and a whole lot of fun, your Toastmaster debut can go smoothly. *(If this isn't your first time, these tips may still help).*

Pick a Theme

First step is to pick a **theme**. You can choose whatever you want, as long as it's something you can spend a little bit of time talking about. Anything goes! If you need help choosing, try to pull inspiration from something in your life. Maybe it's summertime and you spent every weekend at the lake. Your topic can be "Fun in the Sun". Maybe you are looking forward to the holidays and family events. Your topic can be "Family Reunions". Whatever strikes your fancy. If you are still at a loss, choose a random one off [this list](#). Choosing is the hardest part, once you have the theme, everything will fall into place!

Creating an Agenda

After choosing a theme, let's make an agenda. This will help you make sure you have enough people to fill all the roles and give you time to find extra people if you need them. Some clubs have the VPE create the agenda, but here at Liberty Lakers, we believe everyone could use the practice. Here is a sample agenda you can follow.

August 21, 2019- Theme: Fun in the Sun

[5:45] Invocation/Pledge – **Phoebe**

[5:50] **Toastmaster:** Welcome and Introduce Guests – **You!**

Introduction of Assistants:

Ah Counter - **Phoebe**
Grammarians - **Phoebe**
Timer: - **Janice**
General Evaluator: - **Joey**

[5:55] Short 2 Minute Speeches:

Joke Master: - **Rachel**
Educational Speaker: - **Ross**

[6:00] **Speeches**

Speaker #1 – **Monica**

Evaluator #1 – **Rachel**

Speaker #2 – **Chandler**

Evaluator #2 – **Ross**

Timer's Report / Vote for Best Speaker
Introduce Table Topics Master

[6:18] **Table Topics:** **Gunther**

(Review Word of the Day, Ask Guests to Participate)
Conduct Topics, Timer & Grammarian Report, Vote.
Pass control to the General Evaluator

[6:30] **Gen Evaluator:** **Joey**

Calls on Individual Evaluators
Timer's Report / Vote for Best Evaluator
Ah Counter & Grammarian's Report
Secret Handshaker's Report
Provide General Evaluation of Meeting

[6:42] **Toastmaster:** **You!**

Present Awards
Closing Comments
Return control to Presiding Officer

Presiding Officer:

[6:45-7:00PM]

Conduct Business Meeting
Officer Reports
Unfinished/Old Business & New Business
Thank guests for coming & Adjourn meeting

To make a meeting successful, there are a few roles that are necessary. First you need at least one speaker. It's not Toastmasters without the speeches! You will also need an evaluator for each speaker signed up. Next you will need a Table Topics Master, to run everyone's favorite part of the meeting, impromptu speaking! While that role is all about being on the spot, it's easiest on the Table Topics Master if they have time to prepare, so make sure this role is filled sooner rather than later. The next "large" role is the General Evaluator. Luckily this role doesn't need much preparation and is easier to fill

last minute.

The next few roles are lighter on the speaking. Ah Counter and Grammarian roles can be filled by two different people or one person can take both, whichever works best for the members. The Timer role is pretty easy, if you are lacking a Timer, try encouraging one of the newer members to jump on in.

The above are all the “required” roles to help a meeting run smoothly. The other roles (Invocation/Pledge, Joke Master and Educational Speaker) are all “nice-to-haves”, but don’t stress if they are not filled. Sometimes a member who has one of the roles above will take one of these extras too.

If you have all the roles filled, great! If not, now is the time to send out a blast email telling the club what roles are missing and asking people to fill them. Hopefully people respond quickly so you don’t have to pester anyone. You can ask one of the officers to pester people if you are not comfortable doing so.

Once you have all the roles filled, create an agenda with everyone’s names. Make sure your theme is on the agenda! Other roles find it useful to play off the theme you have chosen, for instance the Table Topics Master can base their questions around your theme as well. You can email this out to the club early, and you will want to print out enough copies for everyone to have one.

Prepare your Theme

Agenda done! Now let’s go back to the theme you picked. There are a handful of times in the meeting where you will have time to share about your theme: comments, facts, short stories. If your theme is “Fun in the Sun”, some of your comments can be “how vitamin D is good for you”, “popular summer pastimes”, and “why summer is the best”. You can expand on each of these with studies, personal stories, tips and tricks, etc.

You can think of your theme as a sort of mini speech, with an introduction, bullet points and a conclusion. At the beginning of the meeting, you will introduce your theme. Give a bit of background as to why you chose the theme or the definition or history of the term. This will help set the stage for the rest of the meeting and get everyone interested in what else you will be sharing.

There are multiple places in the agenda you can use for the bullet points of your theme: before the first speech, between speeches, before table topics, after table topics. Any and/or all of the above work! You don’t need to fill a lot of time, even just a few thoughts or sentences each time is enough. This will give the next person up time for some final preparations and allow for everyone to finish writing notes or voting.

You can organize these bullet points in any way you like. If you have different types of points (stories vs facts) you can separate by type, tell all the facts first, then follow up with stories. Or you can organize by sub-topic within your theme. Don’t be afraid to engage the audience either! You can ask questions and have others give their input.

Near the end of the meeting, you will have a few moments to conclude your theme. You can sum up all the facts you’ve mentioned or add an anecdote to tie in some of the comments or ask the audience for their answers to any questions you asked or their thoughts on the theme. Conclude in any way you choose.

Run the Meeting!

Now that you've picked a theme, made an agenda and planned what to say, the last step is to run the meeting. You got this! Take that handy agenda you made. Having a copy of this agenda will help you keep the meeting on track and remember who to call up next.

First, if there is someone signed up for Invocation/Pledge, they get to start the meeting. If there isn't, you call the meeting to order yourself and begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. Next, welcome the guests and give your introduction of your theme. After that, introduce the roles and the people who are filling them. Ask each person to explain their role, and clap (or jazz hands, as we are doing virtually) for them when they are done.

Next step is speeches, beginning with the short ones. If there is a Joke Master and an Educational Speaker signed up, this is the time to call on them. Since we are currently meeting virtually, calling their name is all you need to do here. After each person is done with their jokes/speech/etc, thank them before moving on.

Once the short speeches are done, it is time for the longer ones (You can throw in a themed bullet point here if you wish). First, say who is speaking, then introduce their evaluator and ask them to say something about the speech. When the evaluator is done, introduce the speaker, either by a written introduction if they gave you one, or with a simple "Please welcome X". Clap (jazz hands) as they get prepared to begin. In fact, that goes for the whole meeting. Clap (jazz hands) for everyone!

Now the speaker is giving their speech, and you can relax for 5-7 minutes. Whew. When the speaker is done, be sure to clap (jazz hands) again. Thank them for their wonderful/lovely/insightful speech. Ask the audience to write comments for the speaker and give them a few moments to do so. This is a good time to talk about your theme again.

If there are two speakers this evening, repeat this section: (introduce evaluator, introduce speaker, clap, listen to speech, clap, ask for comments). At the end of all the speeches, ask the Timer for a Timer's Report. If there was more than one speaker and they all qualified in time, then you need to call for a Best Speaker vote. Have your Zoom Master run the poll if they can, or have all the votes sent to yourself if not.

This is another good time to talk about your theme. The next person you are calling up is the Table Topics Master and you want to make sure they have had time to write comments for the speakers and vote before you call on them.

Invite up the Table Topics Master (*clap, jazz hands*) and relax, enjoy the questions. At the end of Table Topics, the Table Topics Master is supposed to ask for Timer's Report, Grammarian's Report on Word of the Day, and ask people to vote. If they forget to do that before inviting you back up, take a quick second to do so. This is also your last opportunity to share more theme information before your conclusion.

The last person you will be inviting up to the lectern is the General Evaluator. You're in the home stretch! The General Evaluator will call for the Best Evaluator vote. After that, take a few moments to count up all the votes for best speaker, best table topics, and best evaluator if you need to.

When the General Evaluator calls you back up, it is time to end the meeting. Give the conclusion of your theme, followed by presenting the awards. Thank everyone for coming, turn the meeting over to the President, and you're done! Wasn't that bad, right? I knew you could do it!