

BPTM CLUB STANDARDS

This document presents some basic standards and minimum expectations for participation in various meeting roles in the Budapest Toastmasters Club (BPTM). The Standards have been developed for the following (as detailed on the following pages):

- Speaker
- Toastmaster
- Evaluator
- General Evaluator
- Table Topics Master

The prerequisite minimum criteria for taking a role in the meetings are the following:

1. Only active, paid-up members in good standing may speak or take roles at the meetings.
2. The Toastmaster (TM) and Table Topics Master (TTM) roles may be filled by those who have completed at least 3 speeches from the Competent Communicator (CC) manual.
3. The Evaluator and General Evaluator (GE) roles may be filled by those who have completed at least 5 speeches from the Competent Communicator (CC) manual.
4. Participation in any speech contest requires the competitor to be a member in good standing of the club. Participation in the International Speech Competition requires completion of at least 6 speeches from the CC manual.

The criteria for taking a speaking role are the following (please see also the chart below):

1. Speakers who have given their Icebreaker will have to take on the role of ah-counter, vote-counter, timer, or grammarian before signing up for Speech #2. The same applies for speakers giving their second and third speeches. Only with this 'role credit' can you schedule your next speech (in other words, you must take on at least one meeting role between speeches).
2. Speakers who have given their third speech cannot sign up for a speaking slot for their fourth speech until they have taken the role of TM or TTM. The same applies for speakers who have given their fourth speech and want to schedule their fifth. Only with this 'role credit' can you schedule your next speech.
3. Speakers who have given their fifth speech and want to schedule further speeches will have to take the role of GE, evaluator, TM, or TTM before scheduling their next speech. Only with this 'role credit' can you schedule your next speech.
4. Remember that filling meeting roles earns you credit toward the Competent Leader path!
5. These criteria do not apply to anyone signing up to be reserve speaker. However, if you do sign up for a reserve speaker slot, you must attend the meeting for which you have signed up and be prepared to speak. If you can't attend, then please let the TM know well beforehand so they can make alternative arrangements. Speaking slots are too valuable to waste.

Chart showing requirements for taking speaking roles

Roles	Competent Communicator									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Speaker	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Toastmaster				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Table Topic Master				■	■					
Evaluator										
General Evaluator										
Ah-counter	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Vote counter				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Timer				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Grammarians		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mentee	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mentor						■	■	■	■	■
International Speech Competition						■	■	■	■	■
Other speech competitions		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Legend

- Mandatory (minimum one of the indicated roles between speeches)
- Optional (one or more of these roles between speeches)

The following process will be implemented for members' advancement to the next level (CC, CL, ALB, ACB, etc):

- When a member has completed all of their projects (subject to the Evaluator signing off on each one – see Evaluator Standard), they notify the VP Education and send him/her a copy of the completion sheet from the manual.
- Within 2 weeks of the notice, the VP Education, together with the member's Mentor and another member of the Executive Committee (ExCo) calls a brief interview (10-15 min) with the applicant to review the written evaluations of the speeches, discuss the lessons learned and progress made, and agree on goals for the next award level.
- The purpose of this process is not to inhibit progress, but rather to emphasize the importance of each achievement as a milestone, and to provide additional, feedback from the peer group on the member's advancement.

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ROLE: SPEAKER

The speaker's primary function is to provide an interesting, informed, entertaining speech for the club's membership, paying particular attention to fulfilling the objectives of the specific Manual project/assignment.

The speaker is expected to:

- Prepare for the speech! With the rare exception of an advanced speaker giving a pre-announced impromptu speech, unprepared or ill-prepared speeches are unacceptable (see last bullet point, below). Preparation includes appropriate research, development of props and visual aids, and most importantly, rehearsal. In most cases consultation with the Speaker's mentor is advisable.
- Provide a title for the speech. Every speech is required to have a title.
- Fulfill the project objectives as stated in the manual. If anything in the project description is unclear, the speaker should consult with his/her mentor, evaluator, or any other member of the club in whose opinion he/she trusts.
- Contact the individual who will be introducing the speaker (Toastmaster or Evaluator) prior to the meeting to inform them of: manual and project, the title of the speech, length, and any other relevant information that should be included in the introduction. Consider typing on a piece of paper a few thoughts for the introduction and providing it to the introducer at the beginning of the meeting.
- Remember that for certain speeches, the introduction is a critical part of the project; e.g., when the speech is given under a specific presumed context such as a wedding toast or business presentation, the introducer must be the one to set the stage so that the speaker "walks onto the stage" to a prepared audience. In these cases it is especially important that the speaker and introducer coordinate well in advance of the meeting.
- Contact the Evaluator prior to the meeting to discuss the specifics of the project, including any personal objectives the speaker may have.
- Bring the manual to the meeting and provide it to the Evaluator at the beginning of the meeting, giving him/her adequate time to review the requirements and prepare for the evaluation.
- Brief the timer at the beginning of the meeting if the speech falls outside the standard 5-7 minute interval.
- Finally, the Speaker must be prepared to repeat the speech and/or project if the Evaluator, in consultation with the Speaker's Mentor, deems the speech not to have satisfied the manual requirements. E.g., if Competent Communicator Speech #5 is done standing still with no gestures, then it has not fulfilled the requirement of practicing body language, and the Evaluator should call for it to be repeated, or for another speech to be given to satisfy that specific project.

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ROLE: TOASTMASTER

The Toastmaster's (TM) primary function is to facilitate an informative, entertaining, and educational meeting, maintaining the highest standards of Toastmasters professionalism.

Prior to the meeting, the TM should:

- Prepare an agenda/script and rehearse the key points.
- Communicate with the Speakers and Evaluators reminding them that they need to consult with each other.
- Request that the Speakers inform the TM if they have any special technical needs for their speech.
- Solicit volunteers to fill the various meeting roles.
- Ensure that the props will be at the meeting (timing cards, ballots, clicker, attendance sheet, etc.).
- If the TM is introducing the Speakers, then he/she should solicit information from each Speaker and prepare a brief introduction, stating the title, manual/project, project objectives, and some background on the Speaker. In some cases the introduction is an integral part of the speech, where the Speaker relies on the introduction to set the stage and the audience's expectations, e.g., when the speech is given under a specific presumed context such as a wedding toast, business presentation, etc. In these cases it is especially important that the Speaker and introducer coordinate well in advance of the meeting.

At the meeting, but prior to starting, the TM should:

- Show up at least 15 minutes early.
- Set up the room, assisting any Speakers who have special technical needs.
- Ensure that the props are ready.
- Assign the supporting roles.
- Greet the Speakers, members, and guests.

During the meeting, the TM should (in general order of the progression of the meeting):

- Introduce guests (or have them introduced by the members who invited them).
- Provide a brief description of the purpose of Toastmasters and the format of the meeting (this may be omitted if there are no first-time guests).
- Formally assign roles (Timer, Ah Counter, Grammarian, Vote Counter, General Evaluator) and ask each responsible person to briefly introduce their role.
- Introduce the theme of the meeting, and, if appropriate, begin with an impromptu warm-up round. **As a rule of thumb**, warm-up rounds are appropriate for meetings with 10 people or fewer, above which it takes too much time from the meeting; the exception would be if only 1–2-sentence replies are allowed, in which case the warm-up round can be held for up to 15 attendees.
- Introduce the Speakers (or, if agreed ahead of time, ask the Evaluator to introduce the Speaker) and then get out of their way – allow them to take the stage and the audience's full attention.
- Following each speech, thank the Speaker, and provide a very brief commentary on the speech (1–2 sentences, but making no comments which could be

construed as an evaluation). Allow time (1 minute) for people to provide written comments to the Speaker, and encourage the members to do so.

- After the speeches, ask for the Timekeeper to state whether any of the speeches were outside the time limits and thus disqualified, and ask the members to cast their votes for the best speech of the meeting.
- Following the speeches, turn the meeting over to the Table Topics Master (TTM).
- Following Table Topics, ask for the Timekeeper to state whether any of the responses were outside the time limits and thus disqualified, and ask the members to cast their votes for the best Table Topics speech of the meeting (this may be done by the TTM).
- Introduce each Evaluator and ask for their evaluation.
- Following the evaluations, ask for the Timekeeper to state whether any of the evaluations were outside the time limits and thus disqualified, and ask the members to cast their votes for the best evaluation of the meeting.
- It is very important that the TM should never make any superfluous statements on his/her opinion on the qualifications of the speakers/respondents/evaluators, especially those which may unduly influence the results of the voting (e.g., statements such as “the best speaker”, “the funniest response” should be avoided). Let each speech/response/evaluation stand their own ground, and let the audience choose their favorite.
- Following the evaluations, turn the meeting over to the General Evaluator (GE) who will call on the Timekeeper, Ah Counter, Grammarian and Vote Counter to give their reports.
- Ask the President and/or Executive Committee members if they have any announcements.
- Remember to recognize any individual achievements/award levels that were reached during the meeting.
- Invite the guests to say a few words about how they enjoyed the meeting and whether it met their expectations.
- Close the meeting by announcing the date and time of the next meeting, and the names of the Speakers and their speeches, if known.

After the meeting, the TM should:

- Ensure that the props are returned to the appropriate person, and that the room is cleaned up and left in an orderly manner, such that the hosts will welcome us back again.

A successful TM will create a fun meeting, infusing it with enthusiasm and stories, deftly tying together the various messages and themes heard throughout the meeting. The TM must also be prepared to be flexible and spontaneous, and to handle the inevitable: things don't always go as planned.

TM can be a stressful role, and should not be taken lightly. It requires at least 1 hour to prepare an agenda, develop a theme, and rehearse the introductions (meeting and Speakers), and at least 1 hour should be dedicated to contacting the Speakers and Evaluators, GE, TTM, and soliciting volunteers to fill the meeting roles. Remember, a poorly run meeting reflects on the TM personally, and not on those whom “were supposed to have taken care of it”; therefore, the TM should take nothing for granted.

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ROLE: EVALUATOR

The Evaluator's primary function is to provide constructive and honest feedback to the Speaker to give them a solid basis for improvement. This should be done in a way which provides a learning opportunity for the other meeting participants. An evaluation has little to no value if there is no guidance or suggestion for improvement.

Prior to the speech, the Evaluator should:

- Contact the Speaker to find out about which manual and project the speech is to fulfill, the title of the speech, length, and any other relevant information the Speaker would like to share, or personal goals the Speaker has set for themselves.
- At the beginning of the meeting get the Speaker's manual and study the project criteria.
- If it is the Evaluator's role to introduce the Speaker, then the Evaluator should prepare a brief introduction, stating the title, manual/project, project objectives, and some background on the Speaker. In some cases the introduction is an integral part of the speech, where the Speaker relies on the introduction to set the stage and the audience's expectations, e.g., when the speech is given under a specific presumed context such as a wedding toast, business presentation, etc. In these cases it is especially important that the Speaker and introducer coordinate well in advance of the meeting.

During the speech, the Evaluator should pay attention to and take notes on the structure of the speech, the delivery, and pay particular attention to whether the speech has met the criteria of the project. In particular, the Evaluator should note:

- Whether the topic and content were appropriate for the project and the audience.
- Whether the structure and genre of the speech were appropriate for the theme.
- Whether the speaker prepared adequately and whether the presentation was commensurate to the expectations of a Speaker of the same experience level.
- How effective the delivery was: voice, pace, stage presence, rapport, body language, language, pronunciation, and grammar.
- How the audience reacted.

During the evaluation, the Evaluator should:

- Point out and reinforce good examples.
- Point out weaknesses and areas for improvement, supported by concrete, practical suggestions.
- Highlight those project criteria which were met and those that were missed.
- If appropriate (and the Evaluator has heard previous speeches from the Speaker) comment on what ways the Speaker is improving or not improving.

The Evaluator should state his/her opinion boldly and with confidence. Toastmasters recognize that evaluations are subjective, and that an evaluation is not a matter of expert testimony, but rather is the Evaluator's personal opinion, reflective of how he/she assessed the speech. There may (and often will be) disagreement with an evaluation, but the Evaluator shouldn't be concerned with such because he/she has been given the authority and responsibility to assess the merits and weaknesses of the speech based on his/her personal evaluation. There are plenty of forums to debate the merits of each speech and evaluation (personal conversations after the meeting, written notes made during the speech, subsequent conversations or emails, etc.), and club members are encouraged to initiate (and be open to) such dialog.

During the evaluation, the Evaluator should not:

- Critique or rebut the content of the speech (the content of the speech should be generally irrelevant to the evaluation).
- Solicit or allow for any debate from the Speaker or other members (this should be saved for after the meeting).
- Compare the Speaker to other Speakers (the reference standards for the evaluation are strictly the project objectives, as outlined in the manual, as well as the Speaker's own improvement compared to his/her past performance).
- Make any superfluous statements on his/her opinion on the qualifications of the speaker, especially those which may unduly influence the results of the voting (e.g., statements such as "the best speaker", "the most experienced speaker", "the funniest speaker" should be avoided). Let the Speaker and the speech stand their own ground. This applies also to the introduction, if the Evaluator is introducing the Speaker.

Finally, if the Evaluator feels that the speech has not met the project criteria, then he/she should state so and give the specific reasons why not. Following the meeting he/she should promptly consult with the Speaker's Mentor and the VP Education to determine whether the speech will be accepted, or whether the Speaker will be requested to repeat the speech/project.

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ROLE: GENERAL EVALUATOR

The General Evaluator's (GE) primary function is to promote continual improvement in the form and content of the club's meetings.

During the meeting, the GE should pay attention to and take notes on all aspects of how the meeting is run, in particular:

- Whether everyone filled their roles appropriately, especially the Toastmaster (TM), Table Topics Master (TTM), evaluators, and supporting roles (Timekeeper, Grammarian, Ah Counter).
- Whether the meeting was run effectively, kept on time and on track.
- Whether formalities and customs were followed appropriately.

During his/her evaluation, the GE should:

- Point out mistakes (what we did do but shouldn't have, and what we didn't do but should have).
- Point out and reinforce good examples.
- Make suggestions for how we could be doing things better, ideas for innovation and improvement (recognizing that it is up to the Club's Executive Committee to actually implement significant procedural changes; however, as an experienced club member, the GE's opinion, ideas and recommendations are valuable to the club).

The evaluator should also make up for any omissions by the TM:

- If guests were not introduced then take a minute to ask them to introduce themselves and state a few words about whether the meeting met their expectations.
- If a club member made a significant achievement (e.g., 10th speech, ACB, ALB) and it was not recognized earlier, the GE should make the appropriate recognition.
- If appropriate, the GE can make a brief comment on the effectiveness of the speech evaluations, but should not re-evaluate the speeches.

In summary, the GE report should provide the club members with insight and guidance on the standards expected of the various roles. By pointing out mistakes as well as reinforcing good examples, the club members will learn what is expected of them the next time they volunteer for a role.

BPTM CLUB STANDARDS ROLE: TABLE TOPICS MASTER

The Table Topics Master's (TTM) primary function is to prepare the Toastmasters for those real-world situations when we are called to think on our feet and to provide an intelligent, succinct answer to an important question. This may be done in a serious or a humorous manner, but the theme and questions should not be allowed to degrade into pure entertainment (there are other valid and useful public speaking forums with the purpose of entertainment).

Prior to the meeting, the TTM should:

- Develop a theme for the Table Topics session which is appropriate to the audience.
- Prepare a series of brief, easily understandable questions (15–20). Keep in mind that the majority of the members are not native speakers.
- Rehearse the questions, and come up with some 1-line comments or anecdotes related to each one which can be used to transition from one question to the next.

At the meeting, but prior to starting, the TTM should:

- Agree with the Toastmaster (TM) and the Timer on the overall time allocated for the Table Topics session, as well as the time allowed for individual answers.
- Make a list of the names of the members so that you can call them by name (it is impolite to call on someone as “you in the red shirt”).
- Make a note of who already has a speaking role at the meeting and thus should not be called upon (as a **rule of thumb**, if there is a large attendance at the meeting (>20 people) then Speakers, Evaluators, the TM and GE should only be called on if all other members have been given a chance to respond to a TT question).
- Make any necessary technical or set up arrangements in advance, so that the Table Topics can begin immediately without wasting undue time.

During Table Topics, the TTM should:

- Tell the audience about the theme and how the session will be run (e.g., if the structure is anything other than a standard question and answer). Tell the audience the expected time window (min-max) for their responses, and remind them that they are disqualified if they speak under or over the allowable time.
- Encourage first-time visitors to participate, but let them know that they can pass if they are uncomfortable. At the same time, let returning visitors and members know that their participation is expected.
- Give a very brief introduction to the session, with a personal anecdote or the inspiration for choosing the theme. This should be rehearsed, and should not be more than 2 minutes.
- Select individuals to respond (generally starting with a few more advanced speakers to allow the audience to get into the rhythm). Ask the questions slowly, in a clear manner, and repeat if necessary.

- Through experience, we have found that asking for volunteers is a very ineffective way of running a Table Topics session. People are generally hesitant to volunteer, thus this method ends up wasting precious time. It is much more effective to call speakers directly. It is perfectly acceptable to “match” questions to people and to plan in advance the order in which people will be called.
- Get out of the speaker’s way – allow them to take the stage and the audience’s full attention.
- Thank each person for their response, and, if appropriate, reflect briefly (1 sentence) on their answer. It always gives the session a good flow and makes it more enjoyable for the audience if there is some banter from the TTM tying the responses together.
- Be cognizant of the time, and end promptly when the time is up.
- Keep track of who gave what response to which question, and, if appropriate, make a note of these on the flipchart and re-state them briefly at the end of the session before asking people to vote for their favorite response.
- When everyone has replied, ask for the Timekeeper to state whether any of the responses were outside the time limits and thus disqualified, and ask the members to cast their votes for the best Table Topics speech of the meeting (this may be done by the TM).

The TTM should not:

- Select a provocative or inappropriate theme (e.g., politics, highly technical topics that are not widely understood, etc.).
- Make a lengthy speech introducing the theme.
- Ask for volunteers. Members should be selected to respond (see above).
- Solicit or allow for any critique or evaluation of individual responses.
- Make any superfluous statements on his/her opinion on the qualifications of the speaker or the response itself, especially those which may unduly influence the results of the voting (e.g., statements such as “the best speaker”, “the funniest response”, should be avoided). Let the Speaker and the response stand their own ground, and the audience choose their favorite.

The biggest challenges facing the TTM are:

- Finding a theme most people will enjoy, and which has both entertainment and educational value.
- Finding a set of questions that can have equally good serious and humorous answers.
- Developing questions which need more than 1-minute answers, but which can be answered in less than 1.5 minutes (and being prepared to deal with answers that are consistently too short or too long).
- Simultaneously keeping track of who already answered which question, preparing to ask the next question, and paying attention to the person answering to be able to transition to the next question.

TTM can be a stressful role, and should not be taken lightly. It requires at least as much preparation and rehearsal as for a Manual speech.