

Table Topics First Aid Kit

Ever been at a meeting where the Table Topics master doesn't turn up? Or one where a speaker cancels at the last minute and an extra Table Topics session is included in the meeting? Keep the following in your Toastmasters' bag for an impromptu session of Table Topics.

Totally impromptu themes

1. 1. **Colors**
Have your speaker speak about a given color. What does it mean to them?
2. 2. **Favorites**
Ask the speaker to talk about their favorite.... Try to be as creative as possible in choosing your topics! For example:
 - Disney character
 - Pastime
 - Fashion Fad
 - Music
 - Season
3. 3. **Excuses**
How does your speaker explain... Try to have unlikely subjects! For example:
 - Their way out of being late for their wedding
 - Why are they wearing odd colored socks
 - Why they are serving burnt toast
 - Why they took off the legs off all the chairs
4. 4. **In Character**
Ask your speaker to take on the character. To be that 'thing'. The more absurd the 'thing' is, the more humorous the story will be. For example:
 - A day in the life of a Rosebud
 - A day in the life of a coin
 - A day in the life of a feather
 - A day in the life of a lamppost
 - A day in the life of a white line
 - A day in the life of a piece of string

Variation: Have the speaker choose the next absurd topic and the next speaker!
5. 5. **Never-ending Story**
Give the first 30 seconds of a story. Then pick at random your next speaker to carry on the story for another 1 minute. It is fun and more creative if you choose the first letter of their first word, One minute speeches are best to enable some substance to be established in the story.
6. 6. **How to**
Ask your speaker to explain how to do something that is perhaps old fashioned or even a children's game. For example:
 - Play Hop Scotch
 - Play marbles
 - Play hangman
 - Play dominos

Some needing a little more preparation

7. 7. **Mix and Match**

Write out a series of statements - works best with proverbs. Divide the statements in half and label the first half "A" and the second half "B". Cut up the two halves and put the A's in one box and the B's in another. Ask your speaker to take one from each box and put them together to form 'the new proverb' and then explain the meaning. Chances are they won't pick the correct match. It is better if they don't, as very humorous stories can evolve. For example:

- ➤ A bird in the hand (a) is worth two in the bush (b)
- ➤ A closed mouth (a) catches no flies (b)
- • Imagine (a) in the first example matched to (b) in the second example. It now becomes:
 - ➤ A bird in the hand catches no flies
 - ➤ A closed mouth is worth two in the bush.

8. 8. **Keep a bag of small trinkets/gadgets**

In your bag to pull out and ask speakers what the particular trinket/gadget means to them. For example:

- A plug
- An envelope
- A McDonald's wrapper
- A matchbox

Variation: Have the speaker think up an unusual use for the item and sell it to the audience.

9. 9. **Mix Up**

Use, and mix up fairy tale and Disney characters. Ask the speaker to explain. For example:

- Why the Gingerbread Man visited Cinderella?
- Why the wicked fairy befriended Mickey Mouse?
- Why did the Tin Man climb the Beanstalk?

10. 10. **Proverbs**

Ask your speaker to explain the meaning of the chosen proverb. For example:

- • Watch your Ps and Qs
- • Plenty of fish in the sea
- • Every cloud has a silver lining

11. 11. **Debate**

Choose some 'discussion' topics - The Moot. The crazier the topic is the more fun the session will be. Ask the first speaker to talk for the moot and the next speaker to answer against the moot. For example: *Johnny Appleseed did not plant the apple trees.*

12. 12. **Headlines**

Pick headlines from the latest newspaper, or magazine of any kind and ask the speaker to tell the audience what the article is about.

With this Table Topics First Aid Kit, you'll be able to conduct that impromptu Table Topics session!

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