

GRAMMARIAN

GRAMMARIAN TOP TIPS:

- ▶ Pick a creative word of the day
- ▶ Make sure that the word of the day is **visible** to everyone
- ▶ Have record cards ready as you'll be taking a lot of notes
- ▶ Don't hesitate to correct poor spelling or grammar
- ▶ **Listen actively to whoever is on stage**

"Words have the power to both destroy and heal"

Buddha

Toastmasters is all about learning how to master the spoken word and as grammarian during the course of a meeting. You'll help speakers, functionaries and members expand their language. By highlighting verbal crutches such as "hums, ahs" or "you know" "I think" you'll also help speakers becoming more confident and polished when giving out speeches of all kinds. Being grammarian is also a great way to expand your listening and critical thinking skills!

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

The grammarian role provides ample opportunity for improving your listening skills, in particular active listening skills. You'll also find that by doing this role you'll analyse and look at speeches and conversations in a different way; by noticing rhetorical devices, metaphors etc. Your critical thinking and feedback giving skills will also be enhanced; which is highly helpful for other roles, such as, speech evaluator or general evaluator.

BEFORE THE MEETING

The grammarian role requires a bit of prior preparation the main one being picking a creative and interesting word of the day. You'll also be taking a lot of notes, **so arm yourself with record cards and a pen**. Research your role as well by reading about common rhetorical devices and by reviewing project 4 "How to Say It" of the *Competent Communicator* manual which includes advice on language and examples of rhetorical devices.

When choosing the word of the day, be mindful of the following:

- ▶ A word that is not commonly used is best.
- ▶ The word should be easily to use in daily conversation/in a speech on the fly
- ▶ Non-native English speakers should be able to easily understand it.
- ▶ The word of the day can be a verb or an adjective/adverb.

Print the word of the day in **LARGE LETTERS** and ensure that everyone can see printouts of it **both from the stage and from the audience perspective**. Aim to setup about three printouts.

DURING THE MEETING

In your role introduction, explain the importance of listening skills and of using the English language well. Good style and an effective use of language is what can make the difference between a good speaker and a great speaker. Similarly, weaving nicely is what has defined great writers throughout history. In many ways, the same is true for speakers!

Highlight that you'll be watching out for the verbal crutches and filler words used by speakers "hum, ahh, ehh, erm" etc. Not using these projects far more confidence when on stage and polishes the audience's perception of a speaker from good to great.

With between 3 and 5 speakers and up to 15 meeting functionaries to cover you'll be taking a lot of notes and more importantly, you'll do a lot of listening. **Listen actively to whoever is speaking on stage and concentrate your attention and focus on this person alone.** Active listening requires a lot of concentration and focus. Maintain your concentration whatever happens. You'll be surprised at what you'll be able to pick-up and notice this way.

Single-out really good uses of the English languages in your notes. Although don't forget to explain what makes them particularly effective in your opinion and reinforces the point the speaker was making.

Common rhetorical devices include:

- ▶ **Metaphor** – Comparing two different things by speaking of one in terms of the other. E.g. "*That club is spreading like wildfire. Public speaking was my Mount Everest*"
- ▶ **Anaphora** – Repetition of a word or words across two or more successive phrases, e.g. "*There is a time for thinking. There is a time for speaking. And there is a time for action.*"
- ▶ **Alliteration** – Using words starting with the same letter or sound together in a group, e.g. "*Totally tropical taste. Big beautiful berries*"
- ▶ **Simile** – Saying one thing is like something else, e.g. "*I was like a kid in a sweet shop. The soul in the body is like a bird in a cage.*"
- ▶ **Hyperbole** (hy-per-bo-lee) – Deliberate exaggeration for emphasis or humorous effect, e.g. "*There must have been a million people in front of me in the queue. There are a thousand reasons, why more research is needed on solar energy.*"

In your **three minutes** grammarian report, start off by highlighting good uses of the English language, don't hesitate to correct a poor or mistaken use of language, if this would benefit others. Filler words can be covered simply by listing off the number of usages per speaker, or only heaviest users, structure it as you see fit. Finally move on to the word of the day how often it was used during the meeting.

Note: You don't have to cover hums, erms and other filler words for table topics speakers if you would rather concentrate on their use of language.

USEFUL RESOURCES

The following websites will be useful to help you prepare your grammarian role:

- ▶ Handbook of rhetorical devices – <http://www.virtualsalt.com/rhetoric.htm>
- ▶ Grammarly Handbook – <http://www.grammarly.com/handbook/>
- ▶ Literary Devices – <http://literary-devices.com/>
- ▶ The Phrontistery, Dictionary of Unusual Words – <http://phrontistery.info/ihlstart.html>