

SCRIPT READING

Objective

To give an opportunity for members to practise reading/acting while providing education in a subtle manner.

Procedure

Prepared scripts are a fun way to teach areas such as the finer points of meeting procedure or how to run effective committee meetings. This script is designed to emphasise some of the duties of the assignments of Topicmaster and Toastmaster.

Toastmasters on Trial

THE CAST

Judge
Prosecutor
Sergeant At Arms
Defendant 1
Defendant 2

SGT AT ARMS: The Toastmasters Court of Self-Improvement will come to order. The court is now in session. All rise for His Honour, Toastmaster presiding.

JUDGE: Please be seated. Sergeant At Arms, what crime has the first defendant allegedly committed?

SGT AT ARMS: Arrested for failing to obey the guidelines pertaining to being a good Topicmaster.

JUDGE: Swear in the prisoner.

SGT AT ARMS: Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and to tell the truth in a loud clear voice with good eye contact so help your Toastmasters training?

DEFENDANT 1: I do.

JUDGE: Proceed.

PROSECUTOR: Your Honour, the case against the prisoner is that as a Topicmaster he failed to present a session aimed at procuring the best of listening, thinking and speaking from his fellow Club members.

DEFENDANT 1: I object. The session was all about making the members think.

JUDGE: The prisoner will please refrain from interjecting at this time.

PROSECUTOR: Your Honour, I am not saying the prisoner did not try, but I ask you are "The mating habits of the Tibetan yak" really an appropriate subject for Table Topics?

DEFENDANT 1: See, it got a laugh, just like then.

PROSECUTOR: Ah, but as your Honour will appreciate, the idea is not for the Topicmaster to get a laugh. Rather the topics should be pitched on such a level that the members can give considered opinions or themselves attempt humour.

JUDGE: That is a valid argument, but is there any evidence that the defendant failed in these objectives?

PROSECUTOR: Yes there is. Firstly, the questions were too long-winded as the defendant tried to get laughs. And then secondly the answers that resulted were generally short and pathetic waffle. I can now call as witnesses a number of members who were embarrassed by the questions.

JUDGE: That won't be necessary, as I think this matter has wasted enough of the court's time already. Has the defendant anything to say before I pass sentence?

DEFENDANT 1: There's hardly much point. How was I to know half the Club members were such ignorant, unimaginative fools. Anyway this place is just so much yakety yak (pause) not like when yaks mate.

JUDGE: That is enough of that. The defendant has shown that as a Club member he has failed to consider the needs and feelings of his fellow Club members while carrying out his assignment. To enable him to find out better about these, I sentence him to 12 months hard labour, - to be served as his Club's next V.P. Education. Case dismissed. Next case. Swear in the next defendant please Sergeant At Arms.

SGT AT ARMS: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth with natural gestures and smiling often so help your Toastmasters training?

DEFENDANT 2: I do.

JUDGE: What crime has this prisoner committed?

PROSECUTOR: Failed in her duties as Toastmaster.

JUDGE: Proceed.

PROSECUTOR: Where were you on the night of March 20th this year?

DEFENDANT 2: I was in at my regular Toastmasters meeting.

PROSECUTOR: What was your assignment for the meeting?

DEFENDANT 2: I was the Toastmaster for the speaking program.

PROSECUTOR: Did you present your speakers in an original way, with a combination of enthusiasm, earnestness and good humour?

DEFENDANT 2: Well, perhaps not but I

PROSECUTOR: Just answer the question "Yes" or "No". Did you present your speakers with original and interesting remarks?

DEFENDANT 2: No.

PROSECUTOR: And did you resort to trite phrases like, "There's no need for me to introduce the next speaker as we all know him so well".

DEFENDANT 2: Yes, but I

PROSECUTOR: Just answer the question. Did you use trite phrases?

DEFENDANT 2: Yes.

PROSECUTOR: Did you indicate what manual speech each speaker was doing?

DEFENDANT 2: (boldly) Yes!

PROSECUTOR: How?

DEFENDANT 2: Well, I said someone was doing a Number 4 speech say.

PROSECUTOR: And do you really think that outlined the purpose of the manual assignment so that the audience could understand the speaker's objectives?

DEFENDANT 2: Yes, well maybe no. Oh, I don't really know - I give up

PROSECUTOR: You give up what?

DEFENDANT 2: I'll give up all my procrastinating ways. I'm guilty. I throw myself on the mercy of the court. I'll work hard on each assignment in the future. But please, oh please don't send me back to do another Speechcraft course.

JUDGE: The Toastmasters Court of Self-Improvement does not wish to be unnecessarily harsh or unjust. We will put you on probation for a year, during which you must attend the next two District Conferences and sit through all the educational sessions. Your fine will be to write the following 500 times: "Preparation + Practice = A Proficient Performance". Case dismissed. The Toastmasters Court of Self-Improvement is now adjourned.