



SUMMIT TOASTMASTERS
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Guidelines for Grammarians
By Chuck Jernstedt, CTM

Disclaimer: If some of the following seems familiar, it is because I borrowed the good parts from Joe Masino's excellent "Toastmaster Guidelines".

The Grammarian guides us all toward clearly conveying our ideas, by educating us in careful and proper word-choice and word-usage. The Grammarian's role is to highlight good usage, as well as mispronounced words, careless enunciation, and improper or inappropriate language. The Grammarian doesn't "nitpick" for mistakes, but points them out when apparent, and pays compliments when due.

Timing

The Grammarian keeps within the assigned time limit. Two minutes is generally enough—never over three. Stays within field of criticism—does not duplicate other evaluators. The Grammarian, upon completion, returns control of the meeting to the Toastmaster.

Word/Phrase Usage

The Grammarian corrects improper word and phrase usage, such as confusion of "dangerous twins", grammatical errors, awkward syntax, slurring of word-endings and off-color or inappropriate language.

Trite or Hackneyed Phrases

An example of a trite phrase might be, "I found it interesting", which tends to be overused, and often adds little to a narrative. "Stimulating", "inspirational", or "awe-inspiring" are examples of words that are more descriptive than "interesting", which (if applicable) might be used instead.

Dangerous Twins

These are words that sound similar to the untrained ear, but may have completely different meanings. Speakers who habitually confuse dangerous twins can furnish endless merriment to an astute audience. Some less exciting examples of dangerous twins are: affect & effect, ordinance & ordnance, preclude & prelude, titled & entitled, tread & thread.