



Panelist Basics

A Toastmasters member has asked you to participate on a panel that they will moderate. Use the following guidelines to prepare for your role.

Before the panel discussion:

- ▶ Speak with the moderator to understand the context of the panel.
- ▶ Study sources that connect your topic to the personal interest of the audience.
- ▶ Research or speak with the other panelists to prepare to defend your position when faced with opposing views.
 - If there is another panelist with a viewpoint similar to yours, coordinate with them to determine who will cover which aspects of the topic.
- ▶ Prepare for audience questions by creating a list of potential questions and answers that apply to your area of expertise.

During the panel discussion:

- ▶ Share speaking time with other panelists.
- ▶ Share personal stories only when they are relevant to the topic and discussion.
- ▶ Show respect toward the other panelists, both verbally and nonverbally.
- ▶ Show engagement toward any person speaking.
- ▶ Take a moment to gather your thoughts when you don't have an immediate answer to a question.
 - If you don't have an answer, defer to the moderator or a panelist who may be able to provide an answer.
- ▶ Maintain a conversational style to encourage audience members to engage with your point of view.
- ▶ Avoid confusing audience members by providing too much information at once.

After the panel discussion, you should:

- ▶ Thank the audience and the other panelists.
- ▶ Make yourself available to meet with audience members and answer any questions.

Notes: