

CONQUERORS GUIDE TO SERVING AS AH COUNTER

Before the Meeting:

1. Confirm your attendance at meeting when you receive email/phone call from General Evaluator

Monday Before Leaving For the Meeting:

1. Assemble the following:
 - a. Writing paper.
 - b. A pen or pencil (take a spare).
2. Take all this with you to the meeting.

Monday shortly before the meeting, during the initial meeting part, and during dinner:

1. Arrive by 6:20 so the General Evaluator knows he or she does not have to substitute for you.
2. On your writing paper, prepare a list of all persons at the meeting. Possible orders are:
 - a. alphabetical
 - b. In order people will speak: Sergeant at Arms, Club President, Toastmasters, Grammarian, Ah Counter, Timer, Speakers, Table Topics Master, then Evaluators. You'll have to have a separate section for those not having a speaking role who will mainly speak during table topics.
 - c. Any other order that works for you.
3. This list should have columns like so:

Member Name	Ahs-Uhs	And/so	Double Clutches	Pregnant Pauses
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4. During the initial stage of the meeting, you will need to pay attention to get the names of people you may not know. Use the assistance of other members to make sure you have all the names, if you need it. Use dinner time to fill in names you don't have. Go up and introduce yourself and make a new friend!

Throughout Entire Meeting, Even Before Dinner and Before You Are Introduced:

1. Keep list for each member of ahs-uhs, double clutches, and/sos, and pregnant pauses. These are:
 - a. Ahs-Uhs: any noise that serves as an audible filler, or what we call an "audible pause, between words or statements.
 - b. Double clutches—a stutter or repetition of a word, or stopping a sentence in the middle and starting over.
 - c. And/so: using an "and" or a "so" at the beginning of a sentence, when the sentence could just as easily stand without it, or to connect otherwise independent sentences. Examples: "I want to the store and when I got there the line was very long so I became very irritated."
 1. When ok to use "and": between items in a list, or to connect phrases that are not in themselves full sentences. Examples: "When I arrived at the store I saw Billy and Susan and Rachel." "When I saw the car coming, I hit the brakes and swerved."
 2. When ok to use "so": when it means "to make it possible." Examples: "I went to the store so I could buy some canned pumpkin."
 3. Watch out for "ands" or "sos" that are drawn out, it often means the "and" or "so" is taking the place of what would otherwise be an ah or uh, that is, a meaningless audible filler word.
 4. Ask yourself: could the "and" or "so" have been chopped out and still leave two meaningful and independent sentences? If so it's a filler.
 - d. Pregnant Pauses: This is a long pause in which it is obvious that the speaker is pausing because he or she has lost his or her place. Do not mark people down for properly using a pause for dramatic effect.
 1. How to tell the difference? Here's how:
 - a. If the speaker is looking at the audience and making good eye contact, it's a pause for dramatic effect. (This is why a good speaker who loses his or her place still keeps eye contact with the audience—use that thinking time to good dramatic effect.)
 - b. If the speaker is also doing some dramatic gesture, it's a pause for dramatic effect.
 - c. If the speaker is looking up and not at the audience, and is not doing this as part of a gesture, it's a pregnant pause. People look up when they're trying to remember.
 - d. If the speaker is shuffling through notes or obviously trying to find his or her place in his or her notes, it's a pregnant pause.
 - e. It's not a pregnant pause when a speaker takes a brief peek at his or her notes and continues without any long pause.

When the Toastmaster Introduces You:

1. Provide an introduction to your role similar to this:

As Ah Counter, my job is to watch for and record the use of audible filler words such as ahs and uhs. Audible filler words include the use of and and so as fillers or connectors between independent sentences, and I will record such uses of "and" and "so."

I will also watch for and record double clutches. A double clutch is a stutter or repetition of the same word, such as "this this" or "chu-church," or stopping a sentence in the middle and beginning a new sentence, such as "I meant to---it was my intention to buy the car."

I will also watch for and record pregnant pauses. A pause is "pregnant" when it is obvious the speaker has lost his or her place. A pause for intentional dramatic effect, or to make a dramatic gesture, is not a pregnant pause. Nor is it a pregnant pause where you are trying to find your place, IF you can maintain dramatic eye contact, or

make a dramatic gesture, during the pause. The relevant question is: does it look to the audience as if you've lost your place?

When I hear an ah or uh or an improper use of and or so, I will clink the glass once. When I hear a double clutch, I will clink the glass twice quickly. No audible indication is given for a pregnant pause, but I will record them.

For the benefit of our guests and new members, the audible clinking is solely to help the speaker eliminate fillers and crutches. We do it not to embarrass anybody, but because long experience has shown that it works. There is no need to acknowledge the clinking, as it is for your benefit only. Do not be embarrassed if your first speaking efforts produce many clinks. Most of us had that experience when we first joined Toastmasters. It was the clinking that made us aware we were using fillers and crutch words, and enabled us to eliminate them.

No audible clinking will occur for guests or for members giving their first speech.

At the end of the meeting, I will report on violations by members. For a member, each infraction results in a fine of 10 cents. Guests are of course immune from the fines and from the reporting. Members who have not yet given their ice-breaker speech are immune from the fines, but are not immune from the reporting.

Back to you, Madame/Mister Toastmaster.

During the Meeting, When a Person is Speaking:

1. If you hear an ah or uh, clink the glass once, and record the violation.
2. If you hear an improper use of "and" or "so", clink the glass once, and record the violation.
3. If you hear a double clutch, quickly clink the glass twice, and record the violation.
4. If you hear a pregnant pause, make no audible indication, but record the violation.
5. Exceptions:
 - a. For a guest, do not clink the glass for anything, and do not record any violations.
 - b. For a member giving their first speech, do not clink the glass for anything. You do, however, still record and report on the violations.

When you are called upon by the Toastmaster to give your report:

1. Just run down your list and give the numbers of each infraction for each person. Exclude guests.

For example :

Toastmaster ___ had ___ ahs, ___ and/sos, ___ double clutches, and ___ pregnant pauses.

Toastmaster ___ had ___ ahs.

Toastmaster _____, no violations.

(And so on through the list.)

If you are a member and have already given your ice-breaker speech, you owe 10 cents per violation. Please deposit your fine in the fine jar as it comes around.

Back to you, Madame/Mister General Evaluator.

AND YOU ARE DONE!