



# Wolverhampton Speakers Club

## *Chairing The Topics Session*

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Topics - impromptu speaking - is a vital and effective skill. Impromptu speaking requires quick thinking, the ability to be articulate and staying on topic. We are talking about being asked to speak for 2,3,4 or even more minutes without preparation

You might think it just happens and that some people can do it and others can't -but it is something that can be learnt with guidance and practice.

So when we chair a Topics session we have a considerable responsibility – the responsibility to challenge, yet support, the speakers.

### ***Before the Session***

- Carefully consider the topics – these can vary from setting a scenario to using a single word, so be prepared with the subjects.
- Try to have more subjects than you think you will need – you never know how long the session might go on and you don't know how many members will turn up and do a topic.
- Decide provisionally how long you will allow for the topics – usually 2 or 3 minutes – but be prepared to change this when you see how many members attend and how long you have got left for your session.

### ***Running the Session***

- Never leave anyone out who hasn't spoken – tick off names from a list you make when members arrive and make sure you include them. Then you can ask those who have already spoken.
- Never coerce anyone to do a topic if they are unwilling – don't pester them.
- Make a list of speakers in the order you want them to speak. It's a good idea to start with an experienced speaker to set the scene.
- Take particular care with new or nervous members who are still feeling their way. Ask them during the interval if they want to take part but don't pressure them.
- For newer members you can always give them the topic before the start so that they can think about it. You can also give them the topic on folded paper and ask them to open it when the previous speaker begins to speak.
- Explain the lights clearly.
- Explain what the topics is about and what you are looking for. You might also give an example.
- Be clear and friendly so that the audience feel relaxed.
- Link between each topic but don't comment on the performance .

### ***After the Session***

- Thank the speakers and sum up the session