

# ANSWERING TABLE TOPICS

When you are called upon to speak during the Table Topics portion, here are some pointers to help you on your way.

- Listen carefully to the question.
- Keep your remarks brief and to the point.
- Don't apologize. This sounds weak, "Well, that's all I can say... sorry I don't know much about the subject ... hope I didn't bore you."
- Don't ramble. When you find yourself repeating a point, wrap up and conclude your talk.
- Try to present sensible, worthwhile ideas that add to the knowledge of others.
- You can refute or elaborate on ideas and information already presented by others.

You'll be able to talk comfortably on virtually any subject - even those about which you know little - if you have several mental outlines to follow. Here are some outlines you may want to remember:

- When the question asks for your opinion, use the **PREP** outline. State your Point or opinion, and give a Reason why you think this way. Illustrate your point with an Example. Conclude by re-stating your Point.
- When you want your listeners to take action, use the **AIDA** outline. Draw their Attention to the issue you wish to address. Create Interest by showing how this issue affects them. Instill a Desire in your audience to take action. State the Action(s) you recommend and call them to join you!
- The **SMG** outline is the "Aesop's fable" approach to answering a question. You'll need to be quick in remembering or inventing an appropriate story to illustrate the point you want to make. Begin with the Story, and follow with Message or Moral of the story. Drive your point home with what the listeners can Gain from the moral.
- Still another outline is the **PPF**. Use it when your answer can be framed on a timeline or when you have three points to compare. Begin with your first point set in the Past. Move on to the next point, this time set in the Present. Lastly, forecast your point set in the Future.
- The Two-Point answer is the simplest outline. Here are some variations:

**Before and After**  
**Problem and Solution(s)**  
**Goal(s) and Result(s)**  
**Cause and Effect**  
**Advantages and Disadvantages**

You don't need to have an encyclopedia of outlines in your head. Just remember one or two. Use them each time you are called to answer an impromptu question and soon you will see improvements in your impromptu speaking skills!