

Guidelines for Grammarian/Ah Counter

Dear Grammarian,

Thank you for signing up for the role. You have a very important role in the meeting. Being Grammarian is truly an exercise in expanding your listening skills. You have two basic responsibilities: First, to introduce a new word, and second, to comment on the use of English during the course of the meeting.

Please note that in other Clubs, they have two separate roles for Grammarian and Ah Counter. At American Express Toastmasters Club, we combine both into the Grammarian role.

Prior to the meeting – Select a “Word of the Day”. It should be a word that will help members increase their vocabulary – a word that can be incorporated easily into everyday conversation but is different from the way people usually express themselves. An adjective or adverb is suggested since each is more adaptable than a noun or verb, but feel free to select your own special word **which is related to the theme of the meeting which has been set by the Toastmaster.**

In letters large enough to be seen from the back of the room, print your word, its part of speech (adjective, adverb, noun, etc) and a brief definition. Prepare a sentence showing how the word is used.

Prepare a brief explanation of the duties of the grammarian for the benefit of the guests (to count the *ahs* and *ums* and other filler words such as *and*, *well*, *but*, *so*, *you know*; and improper use of English). If a speaker has incurred more than 5 filler words, please state in your report – “*Alice has used more than 5 ahs*”... *instead of stating “Alice has used more than 30 ahs”*. We don’t want to embarrass a speaker.

Upon arrival at the meeting – Place your visual aid at the front of the room where it can be seen by all. Get from the Sergeant at Arms or any Club Officer, a Grammarian’s Log or a blank piece of paper (if there is no available Grammarian’s Log) and pen ready on which to make notes.

During the meeting – When introduced by the General Evaluator, briefly explain the role of the grammarian, **within 1 minute or less**. Announce the “Word of the Day”, state its part of speech (adjective, adverb, noun, etc), define it, use it in a sentence, and **strongly encourage anyone speaking during any part of the meeting to use it.**

Throughout the meeting, listen to everyone’s word usage. Write down any awkward use or misuse of the language (incomplete sentences, sentences that change direction in midstream, incorrect grammar, malapropisms, etc) with a note of who erred. Write down who used the “Word of the Day” (or a derivative of it).

When called on by the General Evaluator during the evaluation segment, stand by your chair and give your report. Try to offer the correct usage in every instance where there was misuse instead of only explaining what was wrong. Report on who used the “Word of the Day”.

A maximum of two minutes is allocated for the Grammarian's Report. Please stay within this time limit. Here are some suggested ways to do your report in order to save time:

Grouping together all speakers who did not use any filler words, for example:

Nagendra, Sam, Samira, and Yee had no filler words; instead of individually reporting "Nagendra had no filler words, Sam had no filler words, ...

Grouping together all speakers who used the Word of the Day, for example:

"Celine, Chris, Fareshta and Guru used the Word of the Day; instead of individually reporting "Celine used the Word of the Day, Chris used the Word of the Day, ...

These suggestions could save time and time saved means time used for more speaking opportunities for our members.

You can also refer to pages 67-68 of the Communication and Leadership Program manual or to pages 71-72 of the Competent Leadership manual for additional information on Grammarian/Ah Counter.

Lastly, you can be as creative as you can possibly be. You can use props and other paraphernalia to powerfully set up the members for a fun and learning time!