

# Ah Counter/Grammarian Role Script for Gettin' Toasty

## Toastmasters Club #147

At TM #147, the roles of Ah Counter and Grammarian are combined. Historically, at TM #147 much more emphasis and focus has been given to the Ah Counter than Grammarian. However, if feel you could contribute to feedback on Grammar, please do so as it is a standard role with Toastmasters International.

There are two scripts (below) for this role. One script is for introducing your roles, the other one is for giving your reports.

This script is a guideline and can be modified as you see fit.

### Purpose of Ah Counter and Grammarian

The purpose of the Ah-Counter / Grammarian roles is to help speakers improve the mechanics of actual speaking. The Ah Counter helps speakers (in all roles throughout the evening) become aware of speaking habits they may not realize they have by letting them know of the filler words they used. The Grammarian helps speakers learn a new word each week to be able to add color and variety to their speaking.

Serving as Ah-Counter provides an excellent opportunity to practice listening skills and to notice how much people tend to use filler words. After you do it for the meeting, you will start to become aware of how prominent it is in your everyday life, even with paid professional speakers like TV Hosts.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AH COUNTER & GRAMMARIAN

**The responsibility of the Ah Counter** is to keep track for each speaker of unnecessary, filler words and sounds used by members who speak during the meeting. Words or phrases that may be used inappropriately or unnecessarily include ***and, well, but, so, and you know***. Sounds may include ***ah, um, and er***. Additionally, you can make a note of long pauses that are not in the flow of speaking, as well as ***repeats (aka "Xerox")*** of words or phrases, as well as ***false starts***. A false start is when the speaker starts a sentence, then restarts it saying either the same thing or different.

### **The responsibility of the Grammarian**

As a Grammarian, you are the guardian of proper English. Effective communication depends heavily on choosing the right word or phrase to deliver the speaker's thoughts.

Your role is to introduce new words to members, comment on good use of the language used during the course of the meeting or incorrect usage of grammar, and to provide examples of good grammar and word usage. At Club #147, this role has not been focused on as much as the Ah Counter and oftentimes it is sufficient to provide the Word of the Day, its meaning, and use it in a sentence. The word, meaning, and sentence should be written on the board before the start of the meeting.

## **ACTIONS FOR AH COUNTER / GRAMMARIAN**

### **Prior to the Meeting**

Prepare a brief explanation of the duties of the Ah-Counter for the benefit of guests. Also practice it so you are comfortable and confident with it.

Select a Word of the Day. Choose a word to help members build their vocabularies and that they can incorporate into everyday conversation. The point is not to choose super uncommon words, but words that can likely be used. You might even choose a word that is often misused to help improve grammar.

Once you have the word, be sure to write the meaning and use it in a sentence so you can put it on the board at the meeting.

### **Upon Arrival at the Meeting**

- Get the Ah Counter's log from the Sergeant at Arms. If they do not have one available, ask the President or VP of Education if they have one. If no one has one, then create a makeshift grid to tally each member's use of filler words.
- Write the Word of the Day, the meaning, and the sentence using it on the board.

### **During the Meeting**

- When introduced, you will explain the role of the Ah-Counter, having people get on board with the value of knowing what their speaking habits are that can help them improve. Also introduce your roles as Grammarian and then introduce the **Word of the Day**.
- Throughout the meeting, listen to speakers and note unnecessary words, sounds, and pauses. Tally the sounds or words each person uses throughout the meeting.
- Write any awkward use or misuse of language (such as incomplete sentences or incorrect grammar) with a note to give that speaker.

- Also, note when a member uses the Word of the Day so it can be acknowledged during the time of your report.
- Around the last 15 minutes of the meeting, you will be asked for your report. At that point, you will go down the list of the club member names and tell them how many of each of the filler words they had. If they used the Word of the Day, mention that also. You do not need to mention it if someone did not use it.
- If someone has ZERO filler words, acknowledge that person did a great job..

## **SCRIPT FOR INTRODUCING AH COUNTER AND GRAMMARIAN ROLE (GUIDELINE)**

Thank you Madame/Mr. Toastmasters, Fellow Toastmasters, Welcome Guests. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and tonight I will be your Ah Counter and Grammarian. Our goal here at Toastmasters is to become more effective at speaking, and one of the ways we do that is by removing distractions from our speaking.

As the Ah Counter, my duty is to listen carefully for and keep track of any verbal distractions or speaking crutches that you use to fill space. These are words like **“um,” “ah,” “you know,” “and-so,” “but”** and **other filler words or sounds**, or when you make noises with your mouth or tongue. *(to the ah counter: demonstrate clicking your tongue or smacking your lips)*

I will also keep track of repeating words, like **“the red ...the red,”** OR another version of repeating is a **False Start**, where you begin to say something and you start over. Finally, I will also make a note of any **distracting pauses** that you take in your speaking -- but only if they are distracting.

For each person, I will make a note of these verbal distractions and then give a report near the end of the meeting, so you have feedback on where you can improve.

### **Now, as Grammarian...**

My role as a Grammarian is to pay attention to the good use of English and provide suggestions for improvements if I see opportunities for that.

I've also selected a Word of the day which I would encourage you to use as often as possible, and for which I will give you a Bonus Point and acknowledge you for at the end of the meeting.

Now to The Word of the Day -- which we have to help you enrich your vocabulary in preparing your next speech and really every day.

***(The Word of the Day should be written on the board.)***

For tonight's meeting *(turn to the board)*, the Word of the Day is:

- *State the Word, the part of speech, and the definition.*
- *Use it in a sentence.*

Let's do it! Back to you Mr. or Madam Toastmaster.

## **SCRIPT FOR REPORTING ON AH COUNTER AND GRAMMARIAN ROLE (GUIDELINE)**

Thank you Madame/Mr. Toastmasters, Fellow Toastmasters, Welcome Guests. It was a pleasure listening carefully to you tonight. (*could poke fun at yourself*). I got a lot out of it and better me counting your ahs than you counting mine!

Now I'll give you feedback -- which is of course to bring your awareness to your speaking and to help you improve. And I know some members challenge themselves from meeting to meeting to see if they can do better than they did the previous meeting. Here we go:

### ***Give the report. Go down your list. Example***

- Bob Roberts -- You had 2 ahs and 1 false start.
- Robert Roberts -- You had 3 uhms, 1 and-uh, 2 false starts.
- Sam Roberts -- You had 8 ahs and 1 word of the day.
- Kathy Roberts -- You had 3 ahs and you frequently pause like you're thinking about what to say.
- go thru all attendees
- Go thru each speaker. If they have more than 5 to 10 of one thing, like 12 Ahs, you can just say "generous with the Ahs."
- Also do this for the guests.

And that will do it for my report. Back to you, Mr. Toastmaster.

## **Tips For Ah Counter and Grammarian**

- Do not apologize for this role or it can set a bad tone.
- Be clear that it is for the purpose of helping everyone improve their speaking.
- If a Guest has a lot of filler words, be sure to use the word "generous" use of "Uhs...." or whatever their word is.
- Get excited about the Word of the Day.