A guide for volunteers of

Prison
Toastmasters
Clubs

A team effort by Bob, Susan, George,
Bill and Yvette

District 31 Toastmasters
Eastern Massachusetts & Rhode Island
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Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to a select group of people who love Toastmasters (TM) and want to share it with people who have: nowhere to go but up; made bad decisions, been dealt a bad hand in life; a vision for something greater in their lives. Prison toastmasters is one step in their journey.

Here’s how a former inmate describes how Toastmasters impacted his life, which included 27 years behind bars, the first decade of which he spent doing the same thing before he entered prison: behaving violently and drinking daily.

Through TM I not only learned how to appropriately and effectively express myself I developed enough courage to enter other programs to find and address my causal factor, (reasons I needed, used, alcohol and drugs criminal behaviors) so I could change from who I was, how I thought, felt and acted and have a future different from my past.

I went back and facilitated dozens of programs with outside volunteers to give back what I got and help other inmates see that change is not only possible but that life is sweet and worth living without drugs/alcohol and criminal abusive behaviors.

I gained better communication and leadership skills through TM. I was able to participate in other programs to address my underlining issue that caused and resulted in, my negative behaviors. Then I was able to give back to others.

The most important thing I got through TM participation was the ability to address my issues and reconnect to my humanity. While I am and always will be responsible for what I have done, I have 17-plus years of sobriety, and the love, respect and trust of my family and now my freedom.

Toastmasters was the catalyst. I am forever in your debt. 

Ron C.

Ron is an example of the pinnacle of success. Not every inmate will be impacted at this level. We sprinkle seeds that will mature and spread more seeds for years to come. They take away an assortment of skills, attitudes and knowledge from your contributions that range from public speaking and leadership to learning self-trust and to trust others. Inmates who participate in Toastmasters have a reduced rate of re-offense compared to the 67 percent rate of re-offense in the general prison population. There has never been a study.

Prison TM clubs are similar to typical clubs that struggle with membership, leadership, setting and reaching goals, attendance, timing and personality conflicts. We must be mindful that at the end of the meeting, we go home while they are in prison and must cultivate hope in a negative place. We must strive to be positive, and have fun while being productive.

Volunteers have said after just a few meetings, “This is the most powerful thing I’ve ever done in my life.” It is an unforgettable experience to be a part of inmates’ growth and development. Thank you for being part of this movement. You will be glad you did. We expect you to invite others to volunteer, speak and train prison clubs, and to start new prison clubs.

This manual is constantly being updated. Please share ideas and suggestions.

Susan.tordella@gmail.com, 978-772-3930.
How start a prison toastmasters club

Three things are needed to start a Toastmasters (TM) club in a prison.

1. A willing, accessible and responsive prison administrator, typically the director of treatment in Massachusetts. Start calling and/or emailing prison staff members, fill out a proposal form and follow up. If you can’t find the right person, keep asking. Find a partner and nurture that relationship. In Massachusetts it’s the director of treatment who is responsible. The first step is a phone call or email, followed by a written proposal. Take it one step at a time ☺

2. TM volunteers. A team of four to six volunteers is needed to launch the club for the first six meetings, and two to three to support it long-term once volunteers are comfortable going in alone. After two meetings, Mass. volunteers must get trained by Department of Corrections (DOC) personnel.

3. Members. To attract members, the meeting must be fun as well as fruitful. It is up to volunteers to set an inviting, non-judgmental tone with a sense of humor and purpose.

Once you have 1 and 2, set up a demonstration meeting about five weeks in advance and start recruiting volunteers. Four to six is sufficient, more is better because the demo meeting is an opportunity to expose as many volunteers as possible to prison volunteering.

EVERY VOLUNTEER must complete the required paperwork to qualify for the demonstration meeting in advance. You must close the application process a week or two in advance to give your prison administrator time to do the background searches.

Remind your prison administrator to publicize the meeting, invite inmates and to pre-qualify inmates if necessary. Try to avoid scheduling it opposite other popular programs such as AA or other programs.

Be flexible when setting the meeting time. Ask the inmates for ideas. Some clubs start at 3 pm, 6 pm and 7 pm on weeknights. Weekends may also be an option. Remember you are competing with other prison activities, including other programs, socializing, canteen deliveries, gym time, TV and more.

A gavel club

It is recommended to register the club with Toastmasters International as a gavel club instead of a traditional club to cut costs and be able to use resources to purchase manuals. Another reason to run a gavel club and not a charter club is that membership turnover can be high in a prison club. If you’re constantly raising money to pay member dues, it can be an expensive and time-consuming endeavor. Save your energy and money to run a gavel club.
In a chartered club, the members are individually recognized by Toastmasters International (TI), can participate in contests, and pay about $60 per year for membership. Gavel clubs are recognized by TI but the members are not, members cannot participate in area contests, and they do not pay membership fees.

TI charges an annual fee of $50 plus the cost of materials. When registering the club, TI will send 20 new member packets for about $100. The packets include a Competent Communication and a Competent Leadership manual along with some smaller manuals on evaluations and other skills.

Traditional and Gavel clubs use the same materials, follow the same format, and develop the same skills. Constantly remind offenders that they can join a regular Toastmasters club on “the outside” when they leave and will receive credit for speeches given.

NOTE: when a gavel club member finishes 10 speeches, submit the information to Toastmasters International with a request for two advanced manuals. TI has sent a certificate along with the advanced manuals, no charge. Offenders are very fond of the certificates and accumulate them as evidence to make a case to be granted parole.

Gavel Clubs can sometimes be funded through the facility you are seeking to start one. Prisons have special funds for “programs,” so be sure to ask if some money is available. Offer to help with the paperwork. Remember to order a free Gavel Club Kit from Toastmasters International the next time you order anything.

Some prisons that are not ready to start a gavel club test the waters with a speech craft series, which is a watered down version of a Toastmasters club.

Even though it is challenging to start a gavel club from scratch in prison where most of the members have never been to a Toastmasters meeting, a club immediately involves the offenders in leadership and controlling of their destiny, both of which empower offenders, who spend their days under the control of others.

**The demonstration meeting**

Inmates at most demonstration meetings are reticent, curious and cautious. You may have to encourage them to laugh, clap and participate. Their trust level will be very low. It takes months to build up trust and gel the club, so be patient. Usually, none of them know anything about TM.

Be aware of the length of the first meeting. At a two-hour demo meeting in a maximum security prison, some inmates got tired and put their heads down on the desks. They weren’t used to focusing for so long and some didn’t return. Many facilities have a “movement” every hour to offer inmates a chance to attend different programs that evening; they can stay where they are if they want to.
We couldn’t end the meeting early, and a solution would have been to take a 10-minute break after an hour. Keep an eye on the clock and the endurance of the participants.

Otherwise, run the demo like a typical meeting, with each role giving a brief explanation of the purpose. Focus on DOING not explaining. Doing a meeting is self-explanatory. Get them involved, smile and have fun. You’re marketing and selling Toastmasters.

This is a mentor’s summary of the first Shirley maximum security demonstration meeting in November 9, 2009.

At last night’s demo meeting, we proved that “volunteer” and “toastmaster” are two of the greatest words in the English language. The men were appreciative, attentive and risk-takers. Bill (use first names only for volunteers) gently invited them to the lectern made from a desk and paper box in the locked classroom to get them to do their first Table Topic.

At the end, invite each attendee to make a statement about their impressions, as is the custom at TM meetings. Ask if they’d like to commit to start a club and if so, some of the volunteers will return the following week. It’s essential to have weekly meetings for continuity, just like at outside TM meetings. Depending on the prison, some meetings will be cancelled for various reasons out of our control.

Stress the importance of COMMITMENT and the expectation they will gradually take over ownership of the club. Tell them they need to think about a name and electing officers. Pass out photo copies of Project One: the icebreaker and ask for volunteers to fill the roster for the next meeting. Ask for a volunteer keep a record of who will participate. You should also bring a copy home.

**Manuals**

Toastmasters charges $8 for Competent Communicator manuals. Distribute photocopies for the first three speeches. ONLY GIVE A MANUAL to a member who has completed three speeches. Give him/her a certificate for the accomplishment – which you have created ☺. See index for handouts.

The certificates are meaningful to them so make sure you treat them with care. I’ve seen club members award them with flourish and the recipient make a brief speech to thank everyone. They accumulate certificates as proof of good behavior and self-improvement, both vital to qualifying for parole.

**No ‘good time’ for TM**

Many prison programs reward inmates with “good time” for attendance that takes a few days off their sentence. Prison Toastmasters Clubs do not and will never offer “good time” for
participation. For many reasons, it is not an option. We do not want inmates to come who are motivated by “good time.” Some inmates like TM so much that they choose TM over “good time” programs.

**A typical first meeting**

After the demo meeting, the first official meeting will occur. This is from a mentor:

> It looks like the men will not be prepared to give a manual speech. Volunteers will take all the roles, and demonstrate how to be TM, evaluator, etc. It will be an exercise in replacing normal conversation with totally positive expression. Within a month, we should be just observing them run their own meetings.

It's up to you how to handle the meeting. Many prisoners can give a 4-6 minute speech with no notes or preparation when they are talking about themselves. Some new inmate Toastmasters can only talk about one minute before freezing up. Have patience while they learn.

Volunteers can be ready with “pocket speeches” on any topic. Take advantage of the opportunity to talk about the value of preparation, how to use body language and vocal variety, how to evaluate and the benefits of Toastmasters.

Pocket speeches will develop the skills of volunteers while highlighting areas the members need to work on.

At the first official meeting, set the goal to guide them to:

1. Elect officers or leaders. Some inmates associate “officer” with correctional officers. It may be necessary to call officers “leaders.”
2. Go through the democratic process to choose a name
3. Read, review and take the TM promise.
4. Fill out the Gavel Club application with the names of the officers/leaders, figure out if the prison is paying the $100 fee and submit to TI as soon as possible in order to receive the manuals.

The prison administrator may not be in any hurry to pay the Gavel Club fee, which is advised over creating a due-paying club. She or he may wait to see if the club and the volunteers commit and the club survives more than a few weeks. Elevated Expressions elected officers at the first meeting. Top Flight wasn’t ready for about a month because of various challenges.

It is recommended that volunteers have a supply of CC manuals. DO NOT depend on prison staff to send in the check to TI. If you volunteer at a maximum security prison, the manuals must be sent directly there. TRACK THEM and find out when they’re being delivered in order to avoid them being lost in a big institution.

Volunteers at lower security prisons may be able to have manuals sent directly to them. Fill out the paperwork and give it to your prison administrator. They have the money in inmate activity funds. It’s less than $100 for 20 CC manuals and 20 competent leadership manuals.
**Remember:** give inmates a manual only after they've completed three speeches - to prevent the manuals from disappearing with people who have not made a commitment. Either make copies yourself or better, ask your prison administrator or an offender who has access to a copying machine to make copies of speeches one to three.

**Note:** Ask the inmates how many “items” they are allowed to keep in their locker. A folder with a lot of material is considered ONE item. Two pocket folders will help them keep things together and organized.

Put photocopies of projects one to three in a manila folder to give to visitors and new members. They value the folders. Emphasize how to use the photocopies— the procedure with the evaluators, and save them to tape into the manual later.

You are the TM ambassador. Explain how 10 speeches is the goal for a CC and further goals. Lay it on them gradually, not all at once. They need time and experience. Give a pocket speech on how to use the manuals. It could be speech 8, using visual aids.

**Logistics**

Volunteers, save a trip to the prison in case there’s a problem and the meeting has been cancelled. Call (978) 514-6500 a recording that announces if events are cancelled for that day/night. Or hit “0” and talk to a live operator to confirm there will be a meeting. Expect you might not always get in and that inmates may not always be allowed to attend.

Meetings can be as small as one or two volunteers and two inmates. They are fun and are demanding. For this reason, and especially in the first three months, always have a “pocket speech” ready to deliver in case there aren’t enough speakers. Talk about the importance of speech research, preparation and practice, teamwork and leadership, and more. They are hungry for such information. Tell stories to illustrate your success and failures. They love to hear the failures because it frees them up to take risks and make mistakes.

Remember, YOU are the only example of TM they see. They will emulate you. So make sure your speech is organized, has a focus, a strong introduction, body and conclusion, and follows the simple universal speech format they can copy: **tell a story and make a point.**

**Volunteer Privacy**

Volunteers must use first names only with inmates for security reasons. Remember that we are forbidden to have contact with inmates:
- outside of club meetings
- after they leave prison, unless the Department of Corrections gives permission. For example, if after release, an inmate joins your TM club in the community, immediately tell your prison administrator or volunteer coordinator.
Maintain anonymity because the rate of recidivism is 67 percent for the general inmate population. For inmates who participate in TM for more than a year, the rate of re-offense is about 1 percent. If inmates know our last names, it is easy to locate us. While we want to trust our club members, it would be very awkward and discouraging for an inmate if they contact us and we have to say it is prohibited. Ensure that our friendship is real and enduring, but only in spirit outside of the club.

Two volunteers per week works best. If only one can make it, that’s fine, as long as that one person has been through the DOC volunteer orientation. Assume that unless the guards are expecting for you to bring something in (coordinated through your prison administrator), it will probably NOT be allowed. Even if the materials have been approved, guards may still prohibit bringing it in. We’ve had paperwork that was stopped at the screening station. At that time, the guards said there was no routine allowance made to bring any supplies in.

Everything brought in must be on the PASS, controlled by the prison administrator. Leave money, wallets, purses, and coats outside, in your car or in the locker. No jeans for men volunteers in men’s prisons, or jeans for women volunteers in women’s prisons so in an emergency, volunteers can be distinguished from inmates. No boots for anyone. No zippers on jackets or sweaters – they must have buttons because zippers can be a weapon.

**Timing of meetings**

Programs meeting at the same time, and the guards need to coordinate “movement.” You’re not in control! Elevated Expressions and Top Flight run from 7-8:30 pm. Volunteers must arrive by 6:15 pm for processing.

**Club Officers and Meeting planning**

It is difficult for inmates to assemble outside of class. They do sometimes see each other at chow. Because they do not have contact between meetings, start each meeting with a timed 10-minute “organization time” before the meeting officially opens. This gives them time to set everything up, give the evaluation sheets to the evaluators, fill empty roles and more. The timer can manage the 10 minutes and advise the sergeant at arms when it is time to introduce the president and open the meeting.

**Note:** some facilities will allow volunteers to meet with the club’s elected leaderes on a non-meeting time provided that a prison officer or other is present.

**The Box**

At the maximum security prison, the prison administrator has provided a box that holds 12 reams of paper to hold our supplies: a timing device, colored cards, TM magazines, photo copies of speeches and other handouts.
The guards and some inmates know the routine to ensure “The Box” is provided for each meeting. I don’t recommend keeping supplies in an unlocked cabinet in the classroom because
it is more difficult to control. Remind the guards that the box is kept in the storage room if necessary. Each club has its own box.

**Signup System**

Presto Gem is our new signup system.


Click at the top LOG IN
  - Login with your email – leave password blank – it’s not necessary.
  - Click VOLUNTEER SIGNUP on the line for your club.
  - Click on SIGN UP FOR THIS on the days you will volunteer
    it will save automatically

To see who else has signed up,
  - Click on PUBLIC HOME at the top of the signup page,
  - From the main page that lists all of the clubs, click on VIEW SIGNUPS
  - Make sure Tuesday Souza-Bar is on the drop down menu below it
    That will show the other people who have signed up.

**Ensuring club progress**

The first Elevated Expressions club president said he would start meetings by passing out the previous week’s awards. They vote for these on a piece of scrap paper at the end of the previous meeting. The certificates are for:

- Best speech of the day (voted by members)
- Best table topic of the day (voted by members)
- Completion of Third Speech, Fifth Speech, and Tenth Speech.

This idea has not been carried out and the first president has left. I believe the new president – Chris – mentioned they would look into that once they got the meetings in order. Some clubs like this competition. It requires club members and mentors to manage the system- to have the ballots and certificates ready to award. The competition might motivate the members to prepare and practice.

**Suggestions from mentors**

- How about a formal “welcome” to new members - if they want to pledge to join after three meetings, the president and VP membership can ceremoniously give them a manual with a commitment sheet they must sign of what it means to be a member, drafted by the officers.
- Suggest that they try a speech on a totally different part of their life.
- Set up Officer Training during a regular meeting – allow everyone to attend because they may someday be officers.
- Invite guest speakers from your home clubs. It’s a way to recruit new volunteers and bring in some new faces to serve as examples for the inmates. They must complete the
proper paperwork to enter. They must submit the paperwork two weeks in advance for background checks.

- Have their own Toastmaster Leadership Institute twice a year to “sharpen the saw” and get new ideas. Invite “trainers,” an opportunity to invite new volunteers.
After two visits volunteers are required to attend the volunteer orientation training. The prison administrator has the option to waive the training, but the untrained volunteers must enter the facility with trained volunteers.
- Have Theme meetings – holidays, concepts, etc
- Take five minutes to brainstorm Ideas for speeches
- Make sure every speech has a theme.
- Speeches and/or table topics be done in the persona of someone famous - living or dead.

**Improvements noticed after two–three months**

Club members have progressed in the following ways.

- Some are increasing their speech length.
- Others who spoke too long at first have decreased their speech length.
- Opening up – members have overcome crossed arms, mumbling, and other closed-off gestures.
- Speech topics are interesting and varied. Although they still dwell on their circumstances and the circumstances of their youth, they have started to cover a range of topics. Discourage focusing on the prison system during speeches.
- A few members show significant improvement.
- A few members show leadership that was initially hidden.

**Opportunities for progress – advice we can provide**

- A mentor suggested to the EE club that they reserve 5 minutes at the end of each meeting so that volunteers can provide “Sponsor Evaluation.” This mentor evaluation would be:
  - an additional general evaluation, and
  - an additional grammar report from a volunteer Toastmaster, to catch persistent errors

(Please see the grammar section elsewhere in this document.)

**Some ideas for mentors to convey**

The rest of this document contains topics that have been brought up during sponsor evaluation or that should be brought up in future meetings. Here are some areas to emphasize.

1. Avoid pomposity and fluff in speeches, as well as focusing on grousing about the prison system. Ideally, get them to point out when a speech has no theme and is full of pomposity and fluff.
2. DO NOT allow members to fall into roles they like and feel comfortable with. Instead, invite them to train someone else on how to time, run table topics and tell jokes. These seem to be preferred regular roles. Some people have a real gift to tell jokes. Encourage them to finish the CC manual by writing and delivering funny speeches, and start on the humorously speaking manual.

3. Laugh at our mistakes and have fun. We are not in the club to show how great we are as speakers. We are here because we want to improve as speakers and can do that best by working together.

4. Practice, Planning, and preparation. Present ideas on researching, writing, and practicing a speech. Remind them to bring pens & paper. Preparation and practice are still uneven – some speakers are fully prepared. Many other speeches could have used a lot more preparation.

5. At some meeting, reserve time to brainstorm on ways to practice, despite the lack of alone time. For example:
   - Are they ever in a position where two Toastmasters could practice speeches with each other?
   - Could they practice speeches on non-club members?

6. Speech ideas. One reason new TM stop coming is they can’t come up with speech ideas. Help them by scheduling some brainstorming time and modeling by giving a speech. Suggest ideas on topics they’re interested in.

7. Leadership. Get them to run the meeting with us as mentors, not participants. Have the president open and close the meeting. Encourage them to have leaders meetings and invite new members.

8. MAKE SURE they shake hands. They must be taught this habit.

9. Ensure a democratic club. If one person becomes too strong of a leader, speak about how TM is all about cooperation and consensus. Major changes should be voted on by the club, not just the “Executive Board.”

10. LANGUAGE. They know when they’re using slang and profanity. I made a list of all of the slang expressions they used, [i.e. peoples]. At the end of the meeting I read them aloud one at a time and they said back the proper way to say it. If they get nothing else but the ability to speak better, GOOD!

11. REINFORCE the value of TM.
   For visitors and existing members we have to remind them of the value:
   a. speaking before parole board, at job interviews and with family members
   b. learning proper English
c. self-confidence
d. leadership and teamwork skills
e. joining a TM club on outside [some don’t think they’re worthy of this], and they will network with people outside of their normal social circle.

12. The key to attracting & keeping members is a quality meeting. You know this! Remind them of this often. Be welcoming to guests.

Tips to engage the audience
Engage a group of three people and make eye contact with each person for 5 seconds. Then either repeat making eye contact with each of the three or move on to another group of three. Continue this around the room.

Evaluations
- General Evaluator: Evaluate each of your evaluators as soon as they finish. This should be brief and positive – no critiques. Do not evaluate the speech itself unless the evaluator missed a lot.
- Evaluator: Start by reminding the audience:
  - Speaker’s name and speech title
  - Speech # and purpose, for example: “This was CC speech #5, Your body speaks.”
  - Speech objective

Effective use of notes
If you use notes, copy the main ideas to small cards using bullet points instead of full sentences. Here’s a procedure:
1. Divide the speech into sections, based on the main topics.
2. Cut out small pieces of paper to use as cards – one card for each topic
3. Write a main topic at the top of each card.
4. Write bullet points to remind you of what you want to say – not full sentences.
5. Memorize the topic names, so you can easily find the right card if you need to look.
6. While speaking, if you forget what you wanted to say next, try this:
   - Use this as a pause, and try to remember the next topic
   - If the words don’t come, find the card for the next topic.
   - Don’t worry if it takes several seconds to find the right card – it happens.

If speakers haven’t written out cards
If you have not been able to copy notes to cards, and are using written paragraphs on paper, there are a few things you can do to make it easier and more effective.
- Draw arrows pointing to main points, so you can find the different sections quickly
- Look up as frequently as possible
• If you are done with the paper and are doing the rest of the speech from memory, or want to improvise, put the paper down – do not role it up.

**Table Topic ideas**

Table topics should typically be 7-10 different ideas on a common theme, perhaps the theme of the meeting. The topics must be easy to speak about extemporaneously. The Table Topics master MUST call on people who have not delivered a speech that night and who do not have a meeting role. In particular, do NOT call on the Toastmaster or anyone who has given a speech AND played a role, unless everyone else has taken a topic and there is extra time. The table topics master, toastmasters and timer must work together to manage the time.

You may need to model how to have a challenging interesting TT session on a theme. Have some fun and challenge them. They can get stumped on Table Topics, lack creativity, make them too easy and boring and fall into a rut.

**Training topics**

In the early states, mentors can talk about different topics, such as the importance of timing each presentation and supplying handouts to reinforce. Another 5 minute topic of instruction can be the importance of following the manual; the importance of preparation for each role, and practicing speeches in advance.

Do not interrupt prepared speeches, table topics or evaluations. Mentors may raise their hand and offer suggestions at other times.

**Prison Etiquette**

Do not ask what they are “in” for. They may volunteer it – show no reaction or judgment. You can ask how long their “bid” is. Do not ask how long they’re in for. Those who want to share, will do so. It may be considered a violation of their rights as inmates if volunteers ask what they did to get imprisoned. Just don’t go there. Let them offer an explanation if they so choose.

Volunteers must be firm with inmates. Some will try to get away with anything they can. An example is the timing of speeches. Don’t let them continually go way over or way under speech times. Also remember, no speech writing in class. Period.

Don’t ever, EVER take anything out of the facility that was handed to you by an inmate! Read that again! Have them mail it to you. Such an infraction can lead to the termination of your volunteer status. Don’t do any favors that could get you in trouble. Advise the inmate to mail the item to a post office box or a company mailbox. Never have anything sent to your home. Do not share your home address or last name.
Sex offenders
At a meeting, one inmate teased another by saying, “I saw Joe look at Bill when he mentioned the sexual predators we have here, like Bill was one of those sexual predators.” People laughed, but Bill said, “Now come on, that’s not funny.”

When I told Deacon Dave what happened, he coached me to immediately PUT A LID on that kind of insinuation. DO NOT laugh or encourage it. Stop the meeting and say, “We do not permit comments on people’s crimes. We are here to learn and help each other in a positive environment, no matter what happened before.”

Sex offenders are at risk in prison, especially perpetrators against children. They are bullied, assaulted and even killed by other inmates. Sex offenders are the lowest rung on the prison social ladder. It is best not to avoid mentioning aloud any references to sex offenders.

An inmate once sent me a note asking if I would feel comfortable if a sex offender came to the club. I brought the matter for discussion with the club, not realizing I committed a grave error because most sex offenders keep their crimes secret. I acted out of ignorance. It was probably safer for me to prevent known sex offenders from attending. If you have ANY QUESTIONS on this topic, ask your prison administrator, guards or your escort.

Patience and commitment
Connecting with the prison system will teach volunteers patience because there will be times you cannot:
1. Get action/response/information from prison officials
2. Gain admission to the facility because of a lock down or staffing issues
3. Have inmates attend your meetings.
4. Have the club become a strong cohesive team.

Be prepared. There will be occasions when no one shows up, a few show up and/or no one is prepared. For that reason, be ready with a “pocket speech” and to be creative. Table Topics are excellent as they offer endless opportunities to be creative, practice extemporaneous speaking and have fun. You will likely face challenges that TM clubs on the outside face of leadership, infighting, membership and attendance. Get help! Ask the members what to do. Get district help. Ask, “Are we having a quality meeting?”

Calvin Coolidge said: “Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.”

Conclusion
We need to keep encouraging them to adopt the Toastmasters formats for speeches and meetings. My feeling is that if new members fall outside the guidelines for a few speeches, we just remind them that learning to control and structure their speeches will help them in the long run.
The goal for a newly formed club is to teach them to follow the toastmasters format because it works.

This is really important to the success of the club.

THEY NEED To focus on THEMES of their speeches, practicing them and outlining them.

WHAT DO THEY want audiences to think, do and feel? There must be a purpose to the speech.

Have patience. Keep your eye on the long-term goal. Encourage them. Give them courage and confidence. Your club is a high point in their lives. Thanks for doing what you do. Now you are charged with inviting more volunteers to join our ranks and be an ambassador for prison Toastmaster clubs.
We have common misuses of grammar. Club members suggested that someone point these out and requested that volunteers provide correct examples. Here are some tables containing common misuses, the corrections, and the rules to remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misuse</th>
<th>Correction</th>
<th>Speech Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecting words:</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>Meaningful pauses are good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• so</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyone that wants a cat.</td>
<td>Anyone who wants a cat.</td>
<td>It’s a person “anyone”. So it needs to be “who” instead of “that”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiquettes</td>
<td>Etiquette</td>
<td>Etiquette refers to a group of agreed-upon conventions. So it’s already plural – doesn’t need an “s” on the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seen a light.</td>
<td>I saw a light.</td>
<td>“Saw” is past tense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Seen” is the past perfect (or something like that) form of the verb. It’s used to describe two past points in time (I think). For example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We had seen the problem before anyone else saw it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He axed me.</td>
<td>He asked me.</td>
<td>Just a reversal of the letters. It’s incorrect, but common in New England. Depending who you are talking to it can sound normal or wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ain’t no</td>
<td>“Aren’t any” or “Isn’t any”</td>
<td>You know!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grammarian guide for grammar goofs
### Noun-verb agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misuse</th>
<th>Correction</th>
<th>Rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student learns the rules and adapt to them.</td>
<td>The student learns the rules and adapts to them.</td>
<td>The noun and the verb need to agree in number – “student” is a singular noun, so it needs “adapts”, which is the singular form of the verb “to adapt”. Hint: It’s opposite: adding an “s” to a noun makes it plural, but an “s” on the end of a verb means it’s plural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Note that this was on a company’s website.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We was going.</td>
<td>We were going.</td>
<td>Noun and verb need to agree in number – “we” is a plural noun, so it needs “were”, the plural form of the verb “to be” Note that the sentence is talking about the past, so the verb needs to be past tense. The same misuse in present tense would be more obvious: “I is going.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the dogs that runs outside.</td>
<td>See the dogs that run outside.</td>
<td>Noun and verb need to agree in number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform the duties that needs to be done.</td>
<td>Perform the duties that need to be done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and practice is getting better.</td>
<td>Preparation and practice are getting better.</td>
<td>Two nouns so it needs the plural form of the verb “to be”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuttin’</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Timekeepers guidelines for Toastmasters Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>GREEN (Minimum time)</th>
<th>YELLOW (Time to wrap up)</th>
<th>RED (Time to stop)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President’s Opening Remarks</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute, 30 seconds</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toastmaster’s Opening Remarks</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammariarian</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Master</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toastmaster’s Introductions (each)</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
<td>45 seconds</td>
<td>60 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared Speeches</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>7 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Topic Master Opening Remarks</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Topic Master Introductions</td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
<td>20 seconds</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Topic Speakers</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute, 30 sec.</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Evaluator Opening Remarks</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute, 30 seconds</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Evaluator Introductions (each)</td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
<td>20 seconds</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Evaluators</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammariarian</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timer’s Report</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Evaluator’s Summary</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toastmaster’s Remarks</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Closing</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
<td>1 minute, 30 sec.</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** If there are 3 prepared speakers, 3 evaluators, and 7 table topic speakers, and all participants use their full time, the working part of the meeting is about 75 minutes. This leaves 15 minutes for business.
Toastmasters Evaluation Sheet

Title of speech_____________________________________ Manual

Date________________________ Evaluator

Place a plus [+\_] next to aspects of the speech that were noteworthy and effective. Place a minus [–\_] next to those parts of the speech that could be improved. Note specific suggestions for improvement where needed. Ensure that your evaluation contains at least two compliments: “What I liked about your speech was …” and at least one area for improvement. Every worthwhile evaluation MUST have at least one suggestion for improvement.

| ___ Opening captured the audience’s attention | ___ Pauses were used effectively, where needed |
| ___ Main points were supported by examples | ___ Stood at ease with confident body language |
| ___ Closing was effective and memorable | ___ Facial expressions conveyed emotions |
| ___ Made sufficient eye contact with the audience | ___ Gestures were significant and appropriate |
| ___ Vocal variety added to the message | ___ Humor was appropriate and supported the theme |
| ___ Pace of speaking changed to match sections of content | |

Suggestions:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

The part I really appreciated was:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

The best suggestion I can offer is:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

The best thing about the speech was:

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________
How to start a prison club

Source: http://www.takingflight.org/starting_club.htm, Orange, Texas.

Visit a prison club to get acclimated

Write a letter to the local warden/superintendent/director of treatment
- Give an overview of the Toastmasters program
- State when you will call him to discuss the opportunity
- If he is not there when you call, talk to his secretary; find out his schedule
- In your letter, establish credibility, background, references; start with a hook but not with an obvious gimmick

Call the warden/superintendent/director of treatment
- Ask if s/he’s read the letter
- Ask if he has any TI experience
- Ask if he has room in his program schedule
- Ask to meet with him and a coordinator
- Let him know that TI is a program only for people who want to be involved; it’s a niche program and is effective within that niche

Meet with the warden/superintendent/director of treatment
- Go over credentials and provide background of prison Toastmasters clubs
- Make a sales pitch -- help him see what it does for him
- Define what you need from him; define what you will provide. Leave room for flexibility. Give him the opportunity to “own” the program
- Issues will probably be frequency, location, number of members, volunteer presence, material storage, meeting duration
- Make things as easy as you can for the warden. Wardens like to be in control and they do not like problems.
- Explain your motives and earn his trust. He is used to people lying to him
- Schedule a series of demonstration meetings to transfer responsibility to the prison members

A typical prison population of 2000 inmates is a captive audience; only 20 are needed to make a club. Depend on the prison to screen out the curious.

First Demonstration Meeting

Give the inmates what they don’t have - control and responsibility. Give each of them the agenda. Don’t give them your wisdom. Be open. Explain your motives. You will need to earn their trust. Don’t talk down to them. Don’t assume they are stupid. You can and should assume they are in jail because of something they did. No matter how much they might look and act like people on the outside, never forget that they did something to be where they are.
Involv[es] them quickly. Have a few table topics at the firs[te] meeting for them to respond to. Ask for volunteers. Don’t force. There will be no shortage of volunteers.

**Second Demonstration Meeting**

Decide on a club name. Recruit volunteers for the next meeting. Transfer functions to them at a rapid pace. They can handle it and will put in the preparation needed to do the job right. Let them know they will be electing officers at the next meeting. Let them know they will need to make some decisions, such as: How long should the officers terms be? What is the minimum length of time a nominee should have left in his prison term? You can make some decisions for them – you are the person with experience. But let them make some of the decisions, too.

**Third Demonstration Meeting**

Take votes on length of officers’ terms. Ask people to talk about why they think the term should be X. I suggest the term be 3 months for a very short-term facility (6 months or less) and 6 months for long-term facilities. Ask people to nominate candidates. Tell the nominees they should decline immediately if they don’t want or qualify for the nomination. Have each nominee explain in 30 seconds why he should be the person elected.

Vote with ballots. If no candidate gets a majority, have a run-off between the top two. Elect the president first. Explain that if a person does not win in one position he should be open to run at the next position. People can self nominate. It’s not a statement of ego. It is a statement of being willing to work for the benefit of the club and that you are willing to step out from the group. Provide the officers with a list of things to work on so they have some structure to their initial meetings. Try to meet with the officers before the next club meeting.

Send in charter documents to TI.

**Fourth Demonstration Meeting**

Focus on the offenders picking up responsibility for their club - become almost invisible. Recruit functional stewards - someone who will be responsible for being an expert in a particular role and will have the responsibility to teach and guide others.

**Fifth Demonstration Meeting**

Focus on the members being independent. By this meeting, they should have responsibility for all functions. You should address them at the end of the meeting. Praise! Praise! Praise! Have a prison official do the same.

**Tenth Meeting – Chartering**

Focus on publicity and strengthening relationships with sponsors and officials. Give all members a personalized charter member certificate and a membership card. Atmosphere should be festive. Provide refreshments. Have media, politicians,
judges, sponsors, church people, and prison officials present. Milk this for all the long-term support and publicity you can get.

**Sustain the Club**

Once the club is started, it needs to be sustained. Because it probably won't have any experienced Toastmasters members, it will need some on-going guidance. The support from caring people means a lot to the members and will make it more likely for them to want to stay a part of Toastmasters when they are released. Visit at least once per month, but not every meeting (unless required by the prison).

Arrange for a Toastmasters club or a church group to pick up responsibilities. Many churches are looking for a low-cost, low-effort project to call their own. Develop and maintain success rate statistics. Encourage prison alumni to donate - drive the point home that they have some responsibility to the future members. Hold an area speech contest in the prison. Identify ways to get them involved in outreach programs. Keep in touch with alumni and report their successes to the members.

**Promote more prison clubs**

If you don't want to go into a prison, you can work behind the scenes to promote the spread and development of prison clubs. Here are some ways Toastmasters in remote locations can network together through an organization called Taking Flight:

1. Contact all prison Toastmasters clubs to form an information exchange.

2. Work with a university Criminal Justice Program to investigate the concept and success of prison Toastmasters.

3. Work with a university to produce a documentary to generate media attention. [This must be approved by prison officials.]

4. Contact the national media to encourage coverage - television first, then magazines, and newspapers. [This must be approved by prison officials.]

5. Contact people in political and judicial positions and encourage them to make the prison system more receptive to the program and to encourage its use.

6. Assemble a base of active volunteers.

7. Conduct Internet research to explore new opportunities.

8. Network through the Taking Flight organization to help in a coordinated effort.
Miscellaneous tips from other prison mentors

Remember to recognize leadership roles. We have a certificate for "Volunteer Excellence" when someone completes every role (Toastmaster, Grammarian, Evaluator, etc.)

Look for guest speakers. Invite talented speakers from regular Toastmasters clubs. By having an experienced speaker follow the prison club speakers, the meeting ends on a high note. A stream of new faces also helps keep things fresh. Our guest speakers get a lot of out it too. Some guest speakers are now looking to become volunteers.

We've had some success with mentors working as "Group General Evaluators." We still have a lone General Evaluator, but at that portion when the G.E. gives his meeting evaluation, other mentors weigh in. Sometimes we reinforce what the G.E. said, other times we notice things (such as side conversations, etc.) that the G.E. didn't.