

SPEAK OUT
Lexington

SPEAK OUT LEXINGTON

**Tips for
New Moderators and Reporters**

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THE MODERATOR'S JOB DESCRIPTION

As moderator, your job is to run the meeting smoothly and effectively, so that all participants are encouraged to speak and feel they have a fair chance to be heard.

Your responsibilities include these:

Before the meeting:

- o Become familiar with the contents of the Guidebook.
- o Arrive at the meeting at least 45 minutes early to help with set-up.

During the meeting:

- o Lead the meeting, following the Guidebook closely.
- o Focus on encouraging the broadest possible expression of citizen opinion during the meeting.
- o Stay neutral and treat participants fairly.
- o Keep the group on task and on time.

After the meeting:

- o Be prepared to stay 30 minutes after the meeting, if needed, to answer questions and straighten up.
- o Assist the reporter in answering the summary questions, completing the report, and sending or delivering it to the Mayor's office within 24 hours of the meeting's completion.

If needed, perform some or all site coordination duties.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MODERATORS

If no one answers the question:

- o First, wait. Wait at least seven seconds before you do anything at all. An exception is if you feel you read the question in a way that made it hard to understand. If so, read it again immediately.

Seven seconds feels like a lo-o-o-ng time, but it takes some people that long to decide to speak. Resist the temptation to jump in with more words. If you wait, almost always, some kind person will decide to bail you out of an embarrassing situation, and will speak.

- o If you wait and no one speaks, the first thing to try is simply asking the same question again. Vary your tone of voice, if you wish.
- o Look around the room. Try to engage someone's eyes. That may help encourage her or him to speak.
- o Say something to encourage participation, like "*Who has an opinion about this?*" or "*Who is brave enough to start?*"
- o After you have tried the question at least twice as written, ask one of the follow up questions, if there are any, or restate the question in different words.

If several people want to answer the question:

- o Ask people to raise their hands so you can recognize them.
- o Recognize a speaker to go first, and gesture to the other persons waiting, to indicate that you have seen them and will call on them second, third, and so on. As hands continue to go up, keep recognizing them, and keep calling on them in order. Once people know they have a place in the line, they usually lower their hands and give more attention to the speaker.
- o If necessary, appeal for order. Say something like “*Could I please ask you to speak in turn so we can all hear each one of you and get your ideas recorded?*” or “*Help! I need to ask you to speak one at a time.*”
- o If so many people want to answer the question that you feel the amount of time allocated in the Guidebook will not be adequate, here are some possibilities:
 - > Let that question run over by five minutes. Perhaps most people will be finished with it by that time.
 - > If you sense that the group needs still more time on the question, ask them if they want to keep talking about it, and either spend less time on another question, or stay a few minutes later than planned.
 - > Ask how many people still want to speak on the issue. Sometimes a discussion may seem lively but only two or three members of a larger group are keeping it going. If no one else wants to speak, suggest moving on. If a limited group has been controlling discussion, you could suggest one final short comment from each of them before going to the next question. Use verbal and non-verbal cues to make it as easy as possible for the quieter people in the group to speak on each question.

If one person tries to dominate your session:

- o Withdraw your attention, particularly your eye contact, from the over-talkative or domineering person.
- o If possible, begin encouraging other people to express their opinions. For example, “*Does anyone else have anything to say about this?*” or “*Are there any opinions on this issue that we haven’t heard yet?*”
- o If you know everyone, and know it will be acceptable, call on particular people to speak. You could say, “*Thank you, Jane. We have that opinion recorded now. Sam, do you want to tell us what you think about this?*”
- o If the person is long-winded, and others are waiting to speak, remind the person about the ground rules and ask her/him to conclude quickly. Simply say, “*Excuse me, Marsha, I need to hear from some of the others who haven’t spoken yet.*”
- o As prevention against such problems, be scrupulous in laying out your ground rules. The ground rules are there to help you out with this problem.

If all else fails . . .

- o Humor never hurts, and usually helps defuse a problem. Humor aimed at yourself is safest.
- o The session will start with participants wanting you to succeed. As long as you don't abuse the role of moderator, you can ask the group for help if you need it, and you will not look foolish. In particular, your reporter should be a good source of help.
- o Remember that your purpose is clear and valuable: You are providing a service to a group of people exercising their right to speak on issues that matter to them. If you make people feel heard, in a fair setting, you are doing your job.

The Reporter's Job Description

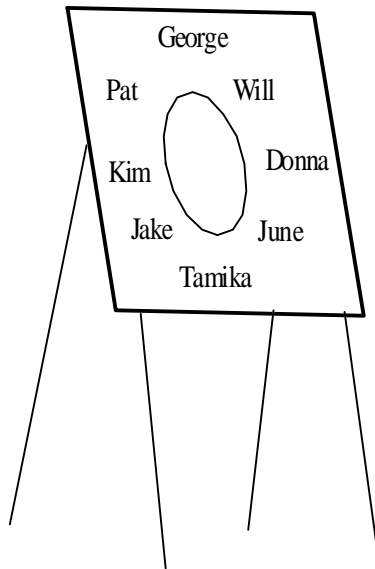
As reporter, your job is to assure citizens that they have been heard. Your work links the opinions and comments of people in one meeting with those of all the other participants in Lexington and Fayette County. You are the first analyst of the meeting. Your accuracy and timeliness are vital to the entire effort.

Your responsibilities include these:

Before the meeting:

- o Become familiar with the contents of the Guidebook.
- o Arrive at the meeting at least 45 minutes early to help with set-up.
- o Pay particular attention to the set up of the flip chart: people need to be able to see you; you need to be able to hear them.

During the meeting:



- o On the flip chart, make a “map” of the table or circle of chairs and write each participant’s first name on the flip chart so people will have an easier time remembering names.
- o During the major part of the meeting, record the gist of each person’s comments on flip chart paper, using a felt marker; print large enough so the whole group can read the notes easily.

After the meeting:

- o Be prepared to stay 30 minutes after the meeting, if needed, to answer questions and straighten up.

- o Take primary responsibility for completing a report for the meeting and mailing or delivering it to the Office of the Mayor no more than 24 hours after the meeting is completed. That report will include the following:
 - > A handwritten or typed version of the contents of the flip chart;
 - > Answers to a few summary questions about the meeting (see attached Report Form);
 - > The participant information sheets

If needed, perform some or all site coordination duties.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR REPORTERS

- o Remain impartial
- o Record as quickly as possible
- o Print or write in letters large enough for all to see
- o Record something for each speaker
- o Use people's own words as much as possible
- o Look for the kernel, or nugget, most often at the beginning or ending of what people say
- o Ask the speaker to repeat, or clarify, or re-state, if you miss something or are unsure of what to record
- o Number your pages, and write a heading for each new section
- o Make your report and send it in within 24 hours (Use the forms provided during your training session.)

Site Coordination: Preparing for Smooth *Speak Out* Sessions

Site coordination involves planning beforehand and working hard at the time of the meeting to make things go smoothly and to make participants feel welcome. If you are serving as the host of the *Speak Out* session, in addition to your role as moderator or reporter, here are some reminders:

Before the meeting:

- o Choose a time and find a place for the meeting; consider any special parking requirements. Make sure the meeting place is wheelchair accessible, unless you know that no people in wheel chairs will attend.
- o Make arrangements for picking up and returning keys, if necessary.
- o Make announcements, telephone calls, personal invitations, or use other strategies to recruit at least 15-20 participants. It will be wise to recruit 30 people in order to meet the goal of having 15-20 actually attend. People who have organized *Speak Out* sessions in previous years suggest that personal contacts were more successful than written notices in getting a group together.
- o Arrange for refreshments, if any.
- o Arrive at the meeting 45 minutes early to help set up; be present to greet people when they arrive; provide for coat storage, and assist with coats if necessary.
- o Help plan for parking before the event, and provide information about available parking, if needed, as people arrive.
- o Help solve any logistical problems that arise in setting up or running the meeting.

After the meeting:

- o Be willing to stay 30 minutes after the meeting, if necessary, to answer questions and straighten up.
- o If needed, help complete the report and send it out on time.