

Toasts

Brief: A toast is a brief tribute to a person or couple given at an event such as a birthday party or a wedding that allows the speaker to acknowledge accomplishments and express best wishes for the future.

Learning Objective: Identify the attributes of a toast in general and a wedding toast in particular.

Key Terms:

- **Toast:** A brief tribute to a person or couple that allows the speaker to acknowledge accomplishments and express best wishes for the future.

What is a Toast?

A toast is a brief tribute to a person or couple given at an event such as a birthday party or a wedding that allows the speaker to acknowledge accomplishments and express best wishes for the future. Traditionally, toasts include raising glasses (generally filled with alcohol), sharing the toast, and leading others to take sips from their glasses. Often glasses are clinked together prior to sipping, to make a sound and signify good luck.



Toasts are generally brief, about 30 to 60 seconds, and are delivered at an appointed time, when everyone is present, such as when guests are seated for a dinner or when everyone has a drink in hand.

How to Prepare to Give a Toast

You may already have experienced giving toasts in formal or informal settings. There are many occasions where toasts are appropriate. At some events toasts are very spur of the moment, carrying no expectation of preparation. At other occasions, such as weddings, toasts are an integral part of the festivities and preparation is expected.

- While a toast should be prepared, try your best to come across as spontaneous. A toast should not appear to be memorized; neither should you deliver a toast from a manuscript. Plan your key points, but use your impromptu skills to deliver the words in a conversational, informal manner.
- Create a brief outline with one or two things that set the person or couple apart. Prepare to share a well-chosen personal story, a heart-felt way to connect with your audience.

- Always keep a positive tone. Use humor where appropriate, but if you're debating whether to share a humorous story because some members of your audience might not find it funny or tasteful, it is best not to share it at all.
- Make sure you're sober when delivering the toast. Alcohol can make you sluggish and less inhibited; you do not want people to remember you for the way you slurred during the speech or for anything inappropriate you might have said.

Wedding Protocols for Toasting

The protocol for toasting at weddings is comparatively elaborate. At a wedding reception, whoever is serving as host generally offers the first toast, thanking the guests for attending, offering tasteful remembrances of the marrying couple's childhood, and wishing the newlyweds a happy life together.

While gender designations of the marrying couple and their attendants may vary, traditionally the best man and/or the maid of honor propose toasts to the newlyweds. These toasts take the form of short speeches (3–5 minutes) that combine a mixture of humor and sincerity. The humor often comes in the shape of the best man or maid of honor telling jokes at the expense of a bride or groom, but within the context of heart-felt, complimentary remarks and best wishes for the marrying couple.

The actual toast is delivered at the end of the speech and is a short phrase wishing the newlyweds a happy, healthy, loving life together.

From Concept to Action

Prepare a toast for a good friend's birthday celebration. Create an outline that includes one or two well-chosen personal stories that exemplify your relationship and the qualities you admire in your friend. See if you can find a comfortable way to infuse a touch of humor.

OER IMAGE SOURCES:

"Glasses Toasting Cheers Alcohol Toast People." Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/glasses-toasting-cheers-alcohol-919071/>. Accessed 20 June 2019. [CC0]

OER TEXT SOURCES:

"Speeches for Special Occasions." Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-communications/chapter/speeches-for-special-occasions/>. Accessed 9 June 2019. [CC BY-SA 4.0]

"Toast (honor)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toast_\(honor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toast_(honor)). Accessed 9 June 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]