

Selecting a Word of the Day

A fun part of a Toastmasters meeting is hearing the Word of the Day (WOD), trying to use the word yourself, and seeing how others are able to work the word into their meeting roles.

When it is your time to select a Word of the Day, especially your first time in that role, you might find yourself struggling to come up with a suitable word. One approach is to look for a WOD in the course of your daily activities. You might hear or read a word that you instantly realize could be a good word for your upcoming WOD.

But if you need to more directly look for a good "Word of the Day," here are 3 good websites for finding words for the WOD.

Merriam-Webster.com

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/word/archive.php>

Dictionary.com

<http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/archive>

Wordsmith.org

<https://wordsmith.org/awad/archives.html>

One aspect to consider is what makes a good Word of the Day. There's no consensus on this. The measure of a good WOD is that people use it many times during the meeting and they enjoy hearing others use it. If they still mention the word at subsequent meetings, you know it was an exceptionally good WOD. However, we haven't been able to exactly pin down what is the best type of word for the WOD. We've been surprised many times by WODs that were quite popular and equally so by WODs that got used very little. It's still a bit of a mystery as to what consistently makes a good WOD.

I have tried different types of words in the past with varying results. My latest thoughts are the WOD should be easy to pronounce, fun to use, and have a broad enough application that it can be inserted in most people's comments/roles at the lectern. By fun to use, I mean it might be a funny sounding word and/or have an unusual, fun meaning. Overall, I am intrigued by the mystery and challenge of finding a good Word of the Day.

When you deliver the WOD, you should pronounce it a few times and identify the type of word it is, such a adjective, verb, etc. Then give a definition of the word. You also should read 1 or 2 sentences that use the WOD so people can hear the typical use of the word. The above 3 websites usually include example sentences that highlight the usage of the word, which is pretty handy. Also, it will be helpful to the audience if you have the WOD printed on a sheet of paper, which can be taped to the lecture or supporting table to remind people of the WOD during the meeting. Remember to have the WOD in big enough type on the paper, such that it will be readily visible to everyone in the room.

So give it a try and see how it goes. Don't worry about it too much and have fun finding a word that you think will be popular.

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