



Turning the
~~**Tables**~~
Tables
on
Table Topics!



Sales & Service Solutions Through Speaking

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OVERVIEW

- I. Objectives
 - II. Review of Table Topics
 - III. Table Topic Basics
 - IV. Table Topic Strategies
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I. OBJECTIVES

Provide basic tips to gain confidence answering Table Topics
Provide creative strategies for responding to Table Topics

II. REVIEW OF TABLE TOPICS: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

Good Table Topic Responses

Interesting, entertaining, timely, thought-provoking;
Contain catchy beginning, well reasoned middle, end with twist/oomph

Bad Table Topic Responses

Disjoint, meandering, unfocused, strings of non-sequiturs, fizzling out.

Ugly Table Topic Responses

• Not even trying • Not qualifying • Quitting in the middle • “I don’t know”

III. TABLE TOPIC BASICS

Prepare Mind

Current events, club happenings, recent family or work events

Prepare Body

Posture, breathing, lubricate lips and throat, basic body mechanics

Thoughts on Openings

Pausing, have topic repeated, repeating topic yourself (thus assuming ownership);
“Leveraging” via inflection, questioning, statements, opposing topic!
Consider going with your first instinct—don’t overthink!

Thoughts on Endings

Comedians (make biggest laugh your ending) & Gymnasts (stick your close!)

Table Topic Strategies

1. **Bridging:** Getting from what you don't know...to what you know (ASAP!)
2. **Re-framing:** Rephrasing the topic as you like it, so you can respond.
3. **Dialog:** Thinking out loud, conversing (rhetorically) with the audience
4. **Quotes, Jokes & Sayings:** Latch onto something you (and others) know, build topic from there.
5. **The Monodrama:** Take the audience with you on your journey/reasoning
6. **The Far Side:** Go to extremes, exaggerate or reduce topic to the point of absurdity. Stories become Tall Tales, Drama becomes Melodrama, etc.

7. **Moderator:** Play Oprah as you straddle the fence. Narrate a scene. Be the objective observer.

8. **Outer Space:** Put an alien perspective on earthly doings. Answer as an extraterrestrial might. Give an other-worldly perspective on the topic.

9. **Time Traveler:** Put a historical perspective (past or future) on the topic

10. **Compare and Contrast:** Contrast what you're given with its polar opposite

11. **Mystery:** Build intrigue, suspense into your response. Shroud it for effect.

12. **Gibberish / Filibusters:** When all else fails just babble on!
Stream of consciousness can be quite entertaining. Apply an accent for more fun!

13. **Questions:** Use questions to answer your topic. They can be rhetorical, or of the call-and-response type that encourage audience participation.

What is the secret to passing Organic Chemistry?

1. BRIDGING

The secret to passing *Organic Chemistry* is similar to the secret to passing Advanced Calculus. It all falls into place the third time you take it...

2. RE-FRAMING

I can't tell you how to pass, but I CAN speak authoritatively on how **NOT** to pass. Cut classes, skip labs, cram the night before midterms, date the professor's daughter...

3. DIALOG

Student: Professor, I'll do anything to pass *Organic Chemistry* this term!

Professor: Anything?

Student: Anything.

Professor: Even study?

You: And you'll never guess what happened! (leave 'em guessing.)

4. QUOTES/ JOKES / SAYINGS

How can you tell I failed Organic Chemistry? I'm like comedian Steven Wright. I bought powdered water, but I could never figure out what to add to it!

5. THE MONODRAMA

My moment of truth has arrived. Final exam day for Organic Chemistry. PASS and I become a doctor, carry on a family tradition, marry my high school sweetheart and live a life of luxury and prestige. FAIL and I become a veterinary doctor, a doggie doctor, and always wonder what could have been. I studied, prayed, ate a great breakfast, helped an old lady across the street on my way to class. I've got my blue book, my #2 pencil and my lucky charm eraser. My heart is pounding. It's a matter of seconds before the test begins... And to think, I coulda had a V-8!

6. THE FAR SIDE

To pass O-Chem I have channeled the great minds of science: Louis Pasteur, Madame Curie and Albert Einstein. I can hear them each exhorting me in. If only they wouldn't all talk at the same time. Each has their own accent. Now they're arguing with each other. This is becoming distracting...

7. MODERATOR

We're watching student Craig Harrison take his final exam. Oddsmakers listed him at 3-1 to pass. He's coasted through most classes this year, mailing it in and not cracking a book like his classmates. He's headed for a crash. He thinks he's smarter than he is. You recall earlier he blew several tiles off the ceiling with his ill-fated labwork.

8. OUTER SPACE

Earthlings are funny...studying Organic Chemistry. As Arcturians we access planetary information telepathically from vast knowledge banks. We don't need tables, calculators & charts. Give a Mork-from-Ork perspective.

9. TIME TRAVELER

In 2007 Organic Chemistry is hard. Yet in 1007 organic gardening was the tough subject. Many failed it and were forced to become hunter-gatherers, thus shortening their life expectancy.

10. COMPARE AND CONTRAST

For me, O-Chem was easy. Leisure Sports: hard. Ping Pong, Badminton & Tiddlywinks required dexterity I lacked. I kept breaking equipment. I kept getting TIME OUTS.

11. MYSTERY

Today we find out our final exam scores. Did I pass? Or Not? I feel like a defendant awaiting a jury's verdict. The professor calls out our names:

Adams,	Gamble	Banks	Hahn
Carillo	Handy	Daggett	Harkness
Engel	Harris	Fink	
Jackson, James, Johnson...			

12. GIBBERISH

Make it up!

13. Questions

Just keep asking questions.