



# Ah Counter

## Intro Script

*“As the Ah Counter, my job is to make people aware of their use of filler words (such as um, ah, etc.), any repeated words, and awkward pauses. Each time there is an ah or um, I will use the bag of marbles (demonstrate). We DO NOT drop marbles during speeches or on guests. At the end of the meeting, I will send around the Ah Counter sheet so you can personally see how many ahs or ums you may have used.”*

## Before the Meeting

- Collect all role supplies from the Sergeant-at-Arms and remember to return them at the end.

## Role Supplies

- Pen
- Marbles and cup (or clicker if preferred)
- Ah Counter form
- Clipboard

## During the Meeting

- Provide your role description when called upon by the Toastmaster. You may use the script above or adjust it to fit the meeting. You have a minimum of 30 seconds to a maximum of 1 minute for this. (You might also provide your theme-related response before this). This is a great opportunity to practice brevity.
  - Begin recording filler words as soon as the Sergeant-at-Arms calls the meeting to order. There is no need to wait beyond that point. Drop a marble in the cup each time you hear an infraction. The sound may seem unfriendly and annoying, but it helps members become aware of their misuse of pauses.
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DO NOT DROP MARBLES DURING PREPARED SPEECHES AND DO NOT CLICK GUESTS.

- At the end of the meeting, pass around the Ah Counter tally sheet to the audience when the General Evaluator says, "The Ah Counter will now pass out the tally sheet."
- Return supplies to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

### **Tips**

- Choose an aisle seat that is close enough for most people to hear the marbles drop, but not so close that the sound becomes distracting.
- Note that "so," "like," and conjunctions are legitimate English words when used properly. Excessive use of conjunctions and "so", especially at the beginning of a sentence or when used to connect unrelated sentences, and any use of "like" other than as a comparison or to express a sentiment ("I like ...") are fillers
- You may choose to withhold marbles if you find the speaker is using them to excess or if the sound is disrupting the meeting or the speaker's ability to finish. It is more important to record the infractions than to drop marbles, and you most likely will not get them all, but do your best to notice most of them, even if late.