Speech Contest Planning

A Guide for Toastmasters
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Objectives of Toastmasters Speech Contests

Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters International educational program. They provide:

- an opportunity for proficient speakers to gain contest experience.
- interesting educational programs for members and the public.
- leadership opportunities for members.
- judging experience for members.
- opportunities for members who are not participating in the contest to learn by observing proficient speakers.

The following contests are held in District 42:

Fall Contests:  Humorous Speech Contest  
               Table Topics Contest

Spring Contests:  International Speech Contest  
                  Evaluation Contest

Roles and Responsibilities of Contest Officials

Contest Chairman
The contest chairman for the club contest is generally the Vice President Education, but could be taken on by any member. For the Area contest, the Area Governor generally takes on the responsibility or he or she may choose to offer the leadership opportunity to a member in the Area. In any case, the contest should be planned well in advance of the date, and all those members who will be involved should be notified.

Duties include:
- Pre-Contest -
  - Set a date. The date of the contests should be set according to the deadlines provided by Toastmasters International and District 42. Deadlines are provided for completion of Club, Area, Division and District contests. Try to have the contest two weeks before the next level.
  - Find a suitable location. For club contests, the location will generally be the same as that of your regular club meetings, unless you choose to have it in a larger venue to accommodate guests or to provide a different speaking experience for your members. For Area contests, the facility should be decided at your Area Council meeting. Each club in the Area should be given the opportunity to host a speech contest. You will therefore need to know which club(s) hosted
the events last year and which clubs wish to host this year. If you are an Area Governor in your own Area, it is probably best that you not use your home club location as visiting contestants may prefer a “neutral” location. The Division Council should decide on the location for the Division Contest.

- Keep the costs to a minimum, keeping in mind the many expenses such as room rent, refreshments, keeper trophies, engraving of all trophies, certificates and other miscellaneous costs. Clubs are responsible for their own contest costs. Area Councils may agree that all clubs contribute an equal amount toward covering expenses, or a charge may be assigned at the door.

- Appoint a Chief Judge and five judges, who should be recruited from the list of trained judges. The Chief Judge may choose to find the tie-breaking judge. For Club and Area contests, at least five judges and a tie-breaking judge are recommended. At Area level, judges should be from outside of the Area or provide equal representation from all Clubs. At Division level, at least seven judges and a tie-breaking judge from outside the Division are recommended. If this is not possible, each Area should have equal representation. At District level, Divisions are equally represented with two judges each.

- Ensure the eligibility of each contestant. It is essential that the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality form be completed by each contestant.

- Advise the Chief Judge of the names and clubs of the contestants.

- Appoint a qualified Toastmaster for each contest.

- Appoint a Sergeant At Arms.

- Arrange for Timers (2) and ensure there is a set of lights with suitable covering, a back-up set and two stop-watches with a back-up.

- Arrange for Counters (2).

- For Table Topics Contest: Decide on a suitable topic that asks for an opinion on a general subject. The question should be straightforward and have a one-part question, rather than several parts that require an opinion.

- For Evaluation Contest: Arrange for a sample speaker.

- Locate and collect all necessary travelling trophies. Arrange for engraving.

- Purchase keeper trophies and arrange for engraving.

- Obtain all necessary certificates. The district provides certificates for Area contests and above. These will come from the Lt. Governor Education and Training. You will need Participation Certificates for each contestant and First, Second and Third Place Certificates for each contest. Complete Participation Certificates.

- Print the program. Ensure the correct spelling of the names and do not have the speaker's designations (i.e. CTM, ATM, DTM) or Club affiliation.
- **Contest** -
  - Have a copy of the Contest Rules and Regulations as well as the judges ballots, timer forms and counter forms.
  - Meet with the contestants for order of speaking. The Chief Judge may wish to be present for this exercise. You may, at this time, wish to remind the contestants to remove their name tags prior to their presentation.
  - Provide Speaker’s Certification of Eligibility and Originality forms to the Chief Judge.
  - Awards Presentation. An assistant or the Toastmaster should be appointed to assist you in handing out the certificates and trophies at the appropriate time. You may choose to have a calligrapher available or collect the certificates for printing and redistribution. Some Clubs print two sets of clear computer labels with contestant’s names to be affixed to participation certificates. The second set is used for first, second and third place certificates.

- **Post-Contest** -
  - Arrange for engraving of travelling trophies.
  - Collect names, addresses and phone numbers of contest winners and provide this information to the contest chairman at the next level.
  - Pay bills.

**Sergeant At Arms**
The Sergeant At Arms serves as master host and makes the proper physical arrangements for the facility. Assistants will be required to help move furniture, lectern, etc. for all contests as required.

Duties include:
- Arrange for coffee and/or meal service if necessary
- Arrange the room layout
- Set out materials and equipment
- Arrange for hosts
- Introduce the Toastmaster for each contest
- Table Topics Contest: escort all contestants, except the first speaker, to the waiting area until it is their turn to speak. Escort each speaker to the room as they are called. (See Contest Rules.)
- Evaluation Contest: escort all contestants to the waiting area until it is their turn to speak. Announce time remaining for preparation and collect notes at the appropriate time. Escort each speaker to the room as they are called and provide their notes to them at that time. (See Contest Rules.)
**Toastmaster**
The Toastmaster runs the contest and does introductions of officials and contestants and conducts contestant interviews.

Duties include:
- Introduce the Chief Judge to give the rules of the contest. The introduction should be brief and include his/her qualifications for the position.
- Ensure that you can pronounce the contestants names correctly.
- Introduce each contestant by contestant name, speech title; repeat the speech title and then the contestant name.
- Ensure that there is one minute of silence for the judges between each speaker.
- Arrange a brief interview with each contestant at the conclusion of the contest. Information that the audience is interested in learning is the home club of the contestant and how long he/she has been a member. Present a Certificate of Participation to each contestant at the interview session. **NOTE:** If a contestant is in more than one Contest they are not interviewed until the conclusion of the last Contest. The Toastmaster of the last contest will conduct the interview and present the Certificate of Participation.

**Chief Judge**
The Chief Judge should be thoroughly familiar with each of the Contest Rules as provided by Toastmasters International and be willing to follow the rules as provided.

Duties include:
- Ensure days before the Contest that all the necessary forms are available. These include Judging Forms, Ballot Counters and Timers Reports.
- Obtain Eligibility and Originality Forms from the Contest Chairman.
- Arrange for a Tie-breaking Judge.
- Arrange for briefing of Judges, Timers and Ballot Counters and discuss with Judges how they should advise you when they have completed their ballot. Ensure that judges are seated throughout the room.
- Being present at the briefing of the contestants (optional). Ensure the contestants can see the timing lights.
- Give rules of the Contests when called upon to do so.
- Deal with protests as required. If a contestant or judge lodges a protest, meet with all judges before the results are announced and come to a decision on how to deal with the situation. The contestant should also be given the opportunity to speak on his/her behalf.
- Oversee counting of the ballots. Give the Contest Chairman the results.

**Judges**
Contest Judges must be Toastmasters members in good standing and have completed at least six
Communication and Leadership manual projects. Where practical, judges should be selected from Clubs, Areas or Divisions not represented by a contestant.

Duties include:
- Select a first, second and third place winner from the contestants.
- Detach the official ballot with first and last names of winners, sign and print your name and include your club and the date.

**Timers**
The two timers will keep the times of the speeches independently of one another. One will run the lights. The Timer Record Sheet is filled out and provided to the Chief Judge.

**Counters**
The two counters will collect the ballots from the judges and leave the room. The Chief Judge oversees them. The counters will count all ballots twice to insure accuracy and post each speaker's points on the Counter's Tally Sheet. The final results are provided to the Chief Judge.

**Contestants**
Contestants must ensure they are eligible to compete in the Speech Contest and be aware of the Contest Rules. Enjoy yourself and do your best!

**Contest Rules**

The following rules are excerpts from the *Speech Contest Rulebook*:

**Eligibility**
All Toastmasters who are members in good standing, in a Club in good standing, are eligible to compete. For the International Speech contest, contestants must have competed at least six projects in the Communication and Leadership Program manual, with one exception. Charter members of a Club chartered since the previous July 1 are eligible to compete. The Club must be officially chartered prior to the Area contest. District Officers (i.e. Area and Division Governors, District Executive) are not eligible.

**Speech Subject and Preparation**
Subject for prepared speeches (International and Humorous) must be selected by the contestant.
Contestants must prepare their own five to seven minute speech which must be substantially original and certified as such in writing to the Chief Judge by the contestants prior to the presentation of the speeches. Any quoted material must be so identified during the speech presentation.

For the **Humorous Speech Contest**, the speech must be thematic in nature (opening, body and close) and not be an act or monologue (series of one-liners).

For the **International Speech Contest**, every participant must present an entirely new and different speech for the Regional and for the International Contests than given in any contest in that same year.

**Evaluation Contest**
At the beginning of this contest, a five-to seven-minute sample speech will be presented. The sample speech should be either a contest-type speech, or taken from one of the assignments in the Communication and Leadership Program manual. Contestants may make preparatory notes during the sample speech using materials of their choice. It is recommended that at all levels of the contest, the Toastmaster giving the sample speech is not a member of the same Club as any one of the contestants. The sample speaker shall be introduced by announcing the speaker’s name, speech title, speech title, and the speaker’s name. Neither the manual project nor any objectives that the speaker may have shall be made known to the contestants, judges or audience.

At the conclusion of the sample speech, all contestants shall leave the room. They then have five minutes to prepare their evaluation using materials of their choice. Timing and preparation supervision shall be under the control of the Contest Sergeant At Arms. After five minutes has elapsed, no further preparation shall be allowed. With the exception of the first contestant, who shall be called as first evaluator, all others shall hand all written material to the contest Sergeant At Arms. Preparation material shall be handed back to contestants as they are called to present their evaluation. Evaluations are two to three minutes. Contestants who speak less than one minute 30 seconds or more than three minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.

**Table Topics Contest**
All contestants shall receive the same topic, which shall be of a general nature, and shall speak for two minutes. The topic shall not require a detailed knowledge but should lead to an opinion or conclusion.

When the contest begins, all contestants except the first shall leave the room. The topic is then read to the first contestant twice, who shall then speak on that topic for two minutes. Contestants who speak less than one minute or more than two minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.
**Sample Speech Contest Planner**

Host Club:

Date:

Location:

Time:

Cost per Club:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>CLUB RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Arrange facilities          |                  | - Arrange room set up  
- Is there a break-out room and space for contestants?  
- Refreshments                                                                  |
| Hosts/Greeters             | "     "         | Hosts/Greeters:                                                                                                                    |
| Sgt. At Arms               | "     "         | Sergeant At Arms:  
- escorts contestants                                                                |
| Assistants to Sgt. At Arms | "     "         | Assistants:  
- help move equipment                                                                  |
| Chief Judge and judges     | Contest Chairman | Chief Judge:  
Judges:  
- include a tie-breaker judge                                                        |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Contestant's Packages    | Contest Chairman and Chief Judge           | - contest rules  
                          |                            | - forms to be completed   |
| Judges Packages          | Contest Chairman and Chief Judge           | - contest rules  
                          |                            | - copy of the form        |
| TableTopics Contest      | Contest Chairman and Chief Judge           | - have a suitable topic                                   |
|                         |                            | Choose a suitable topic                                   |
| Evaluation Contest       | Contest Chairman                          |                                                            |
|                         |                            | Sample Speaker                                            |
| Toastmaster              |                                            | Toastmaster:                                               |
|                          |                            | - Speaking order                                          |
|                          |                            | - Introduce Chief Judge                                   |
|                          |                            | - Introduce contestants and speech title                  |
|                          |                            | - Interview contestants and present Participation Certificates |
| Timers (2)               |                                            | Timers:                                                   |
|                          |                            | - Arrange for lights with suitable covering and a back up set. Two stop watches with backups. |
| Ballot Counters (2)      |                                            | Ballot Counters:                                          |
|                          |                            | - supervised by Chief Judge                               |
| Locate travelling trophies | Contest Chairman                        |                                                            |
| Obtain certificates      | Contest Chairman                          | - certificates of participation  
<pre><code>                      |                            | - 1st, 2nd, 3rd place    |
</code></pre>
<p>|                          |                            | - certificates of appreciation                            |
|                          |                            | - certificates of eligibility and originality             |
| Purchase keeper trophies | Contest Chairman                          |                                                            |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calligrapher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Contest Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Awards</td>
<td>Contest Chairman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
Sample Speech Contest Budget

**REVENUE**
- Registration Fee  
- Club Contribution(s)  

**TOTAL INCOME**  

**EXPENSES**
- Facility Rental Fee  
- Meal Cost  
- Refreshment Cost  
- Advertising  
- Registration Material  
- PA System Rental  
- Printing (program, etc.)  
- Trophies and Awards  
- Engraving  
- Other (please specify)  

**TOTAL EXPENSES**  

**Profit or Loss**
Sample Contest Agenda

6:30  Registration
     Contest Briefing (Contestants and Officials)

7:00  Sergeant At Arms:
     Call to Order
     Program Changes
     Introduction of Contest Toastmaster

7:05  Contest Toastmaster:
     Introduction of Chief Judge and Officials
     Chief Judge:
     Review Contest Rules

7:10  Table Topics Contest
     Sergeant At Arms escorts contestants

7:40  Toastmaster:
     Contestant Interviews
     Participation Certificates

7:45  Break

7:55  Sergeant At Arms:
     Call to reconvene
     Introduction of Contest Toastmaster
     Contest Toastmaster:
     Introduction of Chief Judge
     Chief Judge:
     Review Contest Rules

8:00  Humorous Speech Contest

8:50  Toastmaster:
     Contestant Interviews
     Participation Certificates

8:55  Contest Chairman:
     Announcement of Contest Results
     Thank yous
     Announcements
Pre-Contest Briefing for Speakers

Checklist

To be completed in advance of the contest:

_______ Speakers complete **Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality**. Verify Eligibility. (Submit to Chief Judge.)

_______ Speakers complete **Speech Contestant Biographical Information**. (Submit to Contest Chairman.)

To be completed at the contest:

_______ Verify pronunciation of **contestant names**.

_______ Verify **speech titles**.

_______ Review **Contest Rules** and **Rules for Protests**:

Any judge or contestant may protest for originality to the Chief Judge and/or Contest Chairman prior to the announcement of the winners.

_______ Review **Timing**

**International/Humorous**: 5 to 7 minutes. Lights at 5, 6 and 7 minutes. Contestants who speak less than 4 minutes 30 seconds or more than 7 minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.

**Table Topics**: 1 to 2 minutes. Lights at 1, 1.5 and 2 minutes. Contestants who speak less than one minute or more than two minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.

**Evaluation**: 2 to 3 minutes. Lights at 2, 2.5 and 3 minutes. Contestants who speak less than one minute 30 seconds or more than three minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.

** Timing begins with the first verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience.**

_______ Review location of the **timing lights**.

_______ Confirm the **speaking area**.

_______ Draw for **speaking position**.
Pre-Contest Briefing for Judges

Checklist

______ Information package to each judge:
- List of contestants with eligibility forms
- Judges Guide and Ballot
- Contest Rules

______ Verify eligibility of speakers.

______ Review Contest Rules.

______ Review the Judging Form.

______ Review Rules for Protests:
Any judge or contestant may protest for originality to the Chief Judge and/or Contest Chairman prior to the announcement of the winners.

______ Reminder not to consider timing as a judging criteria.

______ Reminder that seating arrangement of judges should be well dispersed among the audience.

______ Review location of the timing lights.

______ Confirm the speaking area.

______ An admonition against bias of any kind.

______ Introduce the counters who will be collecting the ballots.
References

*Toastmasters International Speech Contest Manual*
Includes:
- Speech Contest Checklist
- Requirements and Duties of Contest Officials
- Copies of all Judges Ballots, Official Report Forms, Certificates of Eligibility and Originality, and Contestant Biographical Information.

*Toastmasters International Speech Contest Rulebook*
Includes:
- International Contest Rules
- Evaluation Contest Rules
- Humorous Speech Contest Rules
- Table Topics Contest Rules

*Judges List*
Includes:
- name, phone number, Club and Division of trained judges.

*Area and Division Governors*

*Lt. Governor Education & Training*

This *Speech Contest Planning Guide* was developed by Linda Hawk, DTM
Thank you to Melodye Kunnas, ATM and Dan Hardie, DTM for your guidance and expertise. It was much appreciated.

Original: Fall 1995
Revised: Spring 2000, Spring 2002
Appendix

Speech Contestant Biographical Information

Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality

International Speech Contest - Judge's Guide and Ballot

International Speech Contest - Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot

Evaluation Contest - Judge's Guide and Ballot

Evaluation Contest - Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot

Humorous Speech Contest - Judge's Guide and Ballot

Humorous Speech Contest - Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot

Table Topics Contest - Judge's Guide and Ballot

Table Topics Contest - Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot

Counter's Tally Sheet

Time Record Sheet

Notification of Speech Contest Winner

The Ten Commandments of Judging