

Online Contest Chief Judge's Briefing Guide

(Note: Before the briefing, send an email to all ballot counters and blind copy all the voting judges to use for turning in ballots. Create a group text to be able to communicate with Ballot counters during ballot collection.)

Thank all judges and contest functionaries for their service. Remind all that their primary role is to help create a fair contest that is run according to the rules set by Toastmasters International.

On Technical Difficulties

*(Note: this is taken directly from the Contest Rulebook. **Please read this entire section verbatim.**)*

If a contestant experiences a technical difficulty in which their audio, video, or both are severely weakened or completely lost during the contest, here is what will happen:

The Chief Judge and the Contest Chair will confer and determine whether to pause the contest.

If the contest is paused, the impacted contestant is allowed no more than ten (10) minutes to attempt to reestablish a secure connection to the contest.

If the contestant is able to reestablish a secure connection within the ten (10) minutes, the Contest Chair will indicate the last word or sentence that was heard, and the contestant will continue their speech from that point with no additional time allowance.

If the contestant is unable to reestablish a secure connection within the ten (10) minutes allowed, the contest will continue with the next contestant in the speaking order.

If a voting judge experiences a technical difficulty in which they are unable to hear or see a contestant well enough to complete their responsibilities, they must notify the Chief Judge immediately and their ballot will NOT be included in the final results of the contest.

If a Timer experiences a technical difficulty in which they are unable to hear or see a contestant well enough to complete their responsibilities, they must notify the Chief Judge immediately. **Note: be sure timers and the chief judge have exchanged numbers.**

If enough contest participants experience a technical difficulty in which the contest is unable to proceed, the Chief Judge and Contest Chair will confer and determine whether to pause the contest. If the contest is paused, it must be resumed within one (1) hour, or the remainder of the contest must be rescheduled.

The Chief Judge or Contest Chair must announce a decision to pause the contest to all participants as soon as it is practical.

If the contest is paused and can be resumed within one (1) hour and a contestant was partway through their speech at the time of the pause, the Contest Chair will indicate the last word or sentence that was heard, and the contestant will continue their speech from that point with no additional time allowance.

If the contest is rescheduled, only contestants who have not yet presented will present during the rescheduled contest. If a contestant was partway through a speech when the disruption occurred, they can begin their speech from the start during the rescheduled contest.

Contest officials will send all partially completed forms (Judges' Ballots, Time Record) to the Chief Judge to be kept until the rescheduled contest.

Timers

We have two timers, a Chief Timer and a Backup Timer. The Chief Timer uses colored screen backgrounds as the timing signal for contestants and will be the person addressed as “Timer” by the Contest Toastmaster. The Backup Timer must also be prepared to show the appropriate color background if needed.

The Chief Timer’s timing device is the device of record so long as it does not malfunction during a contestant’s presentation AND the Chief Timer makes no error in starting or stopping their timing device. The Backup Timer also uses a timing device as a backup. While the Contest Toastmaster will ask each contestant to pin the timer, it’s a good idea for both timers to raise their virtual hand just before each contestant’s turn to ensure that their virtual square is easily seen by contestants.

Follow the timing guidelines on the Time Record Sheet for each contestant. Be sure to keep the red signal displayed until the speaker has concluded. Give no indication if the speaker goes past the allotted time.

Timing of each contestant shall begin with the contestant’s first definite verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience. Timing shall end when the contestant indicates their speech has concluded, either by word or action.

The Chief Timer will complete the Time Record Sheet and email it to the Chief Judge following the last contestant’s speech.

Please join the Contest Toastmaster during their briefing of the contestants so you can reinforce the need for contestants to clearly indicate they begin and end their speeches so you can time them accurately. Also, let them know that both timers will raise their hand to be seen by the contestant.

If you see that a contestant is having a technical difficulty that weakens or disrupts their audio or video, be aware that the Contest Chair might pause the contest. You will have to take note of the contestant’s elapsed speaking time at that point so the contestant will be given the proper amount of time to finish their speech if they can reestablish a secure connection to the contest.

Zoom Host(s)

Arrive early, assign co-host capabilities to the other zoom host, Toastmaster and Contest Chair.

If needed, prepare a breakout room for contestant and/or functionary briefing.

When the Toastmaster asks people to mute and turn off their camera, you can spotlight the Toastmaster. You must monitor to ensure only the contestants and Toastmaster are unmuted. At this time, you will also disable chat, allowing chat only with the host.

When the Toastmaster calls for a contestant to set up for their presentation, they will be asked to pin the timers. After the contestant confirms that they have pinned the timers, spotlight the contestant. After the Toastmaster introduces the speaker, remove the spotlight from the Toastmaster. When the contestant presentation is complete spotlight the Toastmaster and remove the spotlight from the contestant.

Continue this process with all contestants.

New attendees are not permitted to enter the contest room while a contestant is speaking. Keep them in the waiting room until the next minute of silence between speakers. You can send a message to the waiting room to let them know they will be admitted at the end of the contestant's presentation.

During the interviews you can spotlight the Toastmaster and the contestant. All other times that cameras are allowed on, do not spotlight a speaker.

Ballot Counters

Because we can't physically collect ballots from the judges, you have received an email that the judges will use to send you their ballots

Once we have received all the ballots, I will inform the Toastmaster, and we will go to a breakout room for the counting process.

I have sent the Ballot Counter's Tally Sheet to each of you by email. Please use this during our count. If you cannot find it, let me know now and I will re-send it to you immediately.

Judges

First, you should have all sent me your Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics. A scanned copy of your signed form is acceptable, as is one that is signed with a digital signature.

(Note: if the Chief Judge has not received one of these forms, this is the time to get that form.)

Second, you should have received by email a copy of the Judge's Guide and Ballot. If not, let me know and I will email one to you right now.

Above all else, your role is to assess the quality of each contestant's presentation strictly based on their performance in this contest, on this occasion. Please do not allow any degree of familiarity or lack of familiarity with any contestant to affect your assessment and the ranking you put on your ballot.

For this Online Speech Contest, contestants must prepare their own speech, and the speech must be substantially original. From the Contest Rulebook:

Twenty-five percent or less of the speech may be devoted to quoting, paraphrasing, or referencing another person's content. Any quoted, paraphrased, or referenced content must be identified during the contest presentation.

Contestants may not refer to another contestant. From the Contest Rulebook:

Contestants must not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, during their speech at the same contest in which they are competing. This applies to all contests. (Section 4E)

If you believe that a contestant has broken the rule on originality or referred to another contestant or another contestant's speech, write the word PROTEST and the offending contestant's name on your ballot. We will then follow the procedure laid out in the Contest Rulebook to deal with the protest.

Please use the scoring grid provided at the top of the ballot sheet. Do your best to assess each contestant in the same manner. Besides your knowledge of good speaking practices, your fairness matters the most.

When you have completed your scoring, put your choices for first, second, and third place (unless there are fewer than three contestants) on the bottom section of the ballot. Then, either photograph the bottom portion of your hand-written ballot or, if you use a PDF ballot on your computer, take a screenshot of the bottom of your ballot and send that to the Ballot Counters and the Chief Judge. Use the email you received from me for submitting ballots. Be sure to reply all, so that the ballot is received by the ballot counters and the Chief Judge.

For your ballot to be valid, it must have your printed name and your signature. I encourage you to print your name and sign the ballot now, so you don't forget to do so in the rush to turn it in. A digital signature is acceptable.

When writing the contestants for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd you may not show a tie between contestants. If you have a tie on your ballot, break your own tie, or your ballot will be invalid.

Please bear in mind that the timing of the speeches should not be part of your decision.

Do not share your results with anyone else and destroy your scoring grid after the contest. Please write your choices legibly.

TIE-BREAKER JUDGE

Individually brief the tie-breaker judge in the same manner as above. You will collect this ballot yourself.