

SPEECH CONTEST CHECKLISTS

Speech contests should be planned carefully and conducted professionally. Use of these checklists is not required but is strongly recommended.

Contest Chair's Checklist

As contest chair, you must:

- ▶ Plan the contest budget,
- ▶ Make arrangements for a venue, online meeting platform, and/or audiovisual equipment (as dictated by the rules for the selected contest type),
- ▶ Conduct a pre- and post-contest publicity program,
- ▶ See that all bills for the event are promptly paid,
- ▶ Make sure each speaker is eligible to compete and is familiar with the contest rules,
- ▶ Make sure that any audiovisual equipment you are responsible for providing is working,
- ▶ Make sure that the chief judge, voting judges, timers, and counters are briefed on their duties,
- ▶ Make sure that ballots are counted carefully, and
- ▶ Make sure that awards are presented to the winners in a ceremony that will make them proud.

Although you may have a committee to help you with these tasks, it is still your responsibility to make sure they are done.

Preparation

1. Determine the budget for the contest, remembering that contest income and expenses should break even. Allow for such expenses as awards, contest material, deposits, meals, printing, postage, the venue or online meeting platform (if applicable), etc.

Note: If there is an entry fee to attend the contest, that fee must be waived for contestants. Contestants cannot be charged a fee to compete.

2. Select a place and time for the speech contest and coordinate the selection with the proper Toastmasters officer.
3. Determine the agenda for the contest.
4. Arrange for the supplies and services required for the event.
5. Order or download certificates of participation from World Headquarters for all contest speakers.
6. Order trophies and/or order or download certificates from World Headquarters for the winners.

Note: It is a trademark violation to put the Toastmasters logo, or the words "Toastmasters" or "Toastmasters International," on speech contest awards not purchased from World Headquarters.

7. Toastmasters International speech contest materials are available for free download at **toastmasters.org**:
 - ▶ Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183)
 - ▶ Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Item 1175)
 - ▶ Judge's Guide and Ballot
 - ▶ Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics (Item 1170)
 - ▶ Counter's Tally Sheet (Item 1176)
 - ▶ Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot
 - ▶ Speech Contestant Profile (Item 1189)
 - ▶ Speech Contest Certificates
 - ▶ Results Form (Item 1168)
8. Select the chief judge. See the Eligibility section in this rulebook for eligibility requirements for a chief judge. Determine a method of communication or private signal with the chief judge should the contest need to be paused.
9. Appoint any supporting roles needed for the contest including Sergeant at Arms, test speaker, or other roles.
 - A. Meet with members serving in supporting roles and brief them on their responsibilities.
10. Notify the contest officials of the time and place of the contest and pre-contest briefings. (Allow ample time, e.g., two weeks, for club contest.)
11. Notify the contestants of the time and place of the contest and pre-contest briefing two (2) to six (6) weeks before the contest. Provide an information packet to each contestant at this time. The packet consists of:
 - ▶ *Speech Contest Rulebook* (Item 1171)
 - ▶ Speech Contestant Profile (Item 1189)
 - ▶ Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183)
 - ▶ Any pertinent training materials relevant to your online platform (if conducting an Online Speech Contest)
12. Promote the contest in your community by sending news releases to the media.
- ◆ 13. Ensure that each contestant is eligible under the contest rules before the contest. The contest chair can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility. If a contestant is ineligible, notify them of the disqualification before the contest. To check contestants' eligibility:
 - ▶ Verify membership status: Club officers and District leaders can use the Eligibility Assistant available in Leadership Central of **toastmasters.org** to determine if a contestant is a paid member of a paid club, or a current District leader.
 - ▶ Verify education: If the member is competing in the International Speech Contest, confirm that they have completed Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience or earned a Distinguished Toastmaster award. Contact the Speech Contests team at World Headquarters by email at **speechcontests@toastmasters.org**.

Contestants' Briefing

1. Verify the presence of all contestants and pronunciation of their names.
Note: During the contest, you also will conduct a brief informal interview with each contestant after all ballots are collected.
2. Review the speech contest rules with speakers.
3. Review Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183). Remind contestants that by signing this form they certify that they have read and understand the rules regarding eligibility and originality.
4. Review timing protocol with speakers.
5. Acquaint contestants with the exact speaking area.
 - ▶ For the International, Evaluation, Humorous, Table Topics, and Tall Tales contests, this may include a lectern, tables, lighting, microphone, etc. All contestants must have the opportunity to test any amplifying equipment before the contest.
 - ▶ For the Online Speech Contest, the contest chair works with each contestant to test their audio and video and set a standard speaking area based on the limitations in their setting.
6. Determine speaking positions, as dictated by the rules.
7. If conducting an Online Speech Contest, ensure that all contestants are comfortable using the online platform as required for the contest.

During the Contest

1. Open the contest with a brief introduction. Inform the audience:
 - ▶ The rules have been reviewed with the chief judge and contestants.
 - ▶ The contestants have been informed of the location of the timing lights.
 - ▶ The taking of photographs during the speeches is not permitted.
 - ▶ Each contestant selects their own speech topics. Some of the content may be personal in nature and contain language, ideas, or beliefs that some audiences may consider sensitive.
 - ▶ If conducting an Online Speech Contest, include the Online Speech Contest Statement in the contest introduction if it is not posted in writing.
2. Introduce each contest speaker. Do not make preliminary remarks about any speaker or the subject of their speech, or mention the name or location of the speaker's club or place of residence. Introduce each contestant slowly and clearly. Provide confirmation that audiovisual equipment is functional as described in the rules.
3. Upon completion of the speeches, ask voting judges and the tiebreaking judge to complete their ballots. At this time, the counters will collect the voting judges' ballots and the chief judge will collect and verify the Time Record Sheets from timers, as well as the tiebreaking judge's ballot. When all ballots and Time Record Sheets have been collected, the chief judge and ballot counters will proceed to the ballot counting room.
 - ▶ All ballots, Counter's Tally Sheet forms, and Time Record Sheets are considered confidential.
 - ▶ The chief judge ensures that all contest forms are disposed of appropriately.

- ▶ Keep a list showing placement of all contestants in case the winner or alternate cannot compete at the next level.
- 4. While the ballot counters are counting the ballots, the contest chair will interview each speaker.
 - ▶ At the conclusion of the contest speeches and while the results are being tabulated, introduce the contestants again, giving the club, Area, and District they represent, and present their certificates of participation. A short interview may be conducted at this time, using the contestant's biographical information as a guide.
- 5. When the interviews are completed, collect the contest results from the chief judge.
- ◆ 6. Address any protests. Protests are limited to voting judges and contestants. The chief judge, contest chair, voting judges, and contestants must not consider potential protests from audience members. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the announcement that the contest is adjourned. The chief judge will resolve any protests before the announcement that the contest is adjourned.
- ◆ 7. Prior to announcing results, the chair must announce if time disqualification(s) occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved. Disqualifications for originality, reference to another contestant or another contestant's speech, or for not presenting a speech that is entirely new and different at the World Championship of Public Speaking are not announced.
- 8. In closing, thank all who helped make the contest a success.

After the Contest

1. Provide the contact details for all contestants to the chief judge so the judge can complete the Notification of Contest Winner form (Item 1182). Confirm that the chief judge gives this form to the contest chair of the next level or to World Headquarters in the case of the International Speech Contest at the District level.
2. Send news releases (and photographs, if possible) to each winner's community newspaper and company publication, if applicable.
3. Make sure all bills pertaining to the contest are paid promptly.

Chief Judge's Checklist

Before the Contest

1. Appoint and counsel voting judges, counters, timers, and a secret tiebreaking judge.
2. Act as chief counter and provide each counter with a copy of the Counter's Tally Sheet (Item 1176).
3. Encourage all speech contest officials to view the online Speech Contest training at toastmasters.org/resources/speech-contests.
4. Conduct the judge's briefing for voting judges, counters, and timers.
 - ▶ For the International, Evaluation, Humorous, Table Topics, and Tall Tales contests, the judge's briefing may be conducted in person or online at the discretion of the chief judge. Online briefings are allowed in order to facilitate more scheduling opportunities for a thorough briefing.
 - ▶ For the Online Speech Contest, the judge's briefing must be conducted online.

5. Determine a method of communication or private signal with the contest chair should the contest need to be paused.

Judge's Briefing Checklist

1. Distribute the following to each voting judge:
 - ▶ List of contestants in speaking order
 - ▶ Judge's Guide and Ballot
 - ▶ *Speech Contest Rulebook* (Item 1171)
 - ▶ Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics (Item 1170)
 - ▶ Any pertinent training materials relevant to your online platform (if conducting an Online Speech Contest)
2. Instruct all judges on protocol and procedures to mitigate and address unexpected challenges.
 - ▶ For the International, Evaluation, Humorous, Table Topics, and Tall Tales contests, instruct all judges to sit close to the contest area in case of an outside disturbance or malfunctioning technical system.
 - ▶ For the Online Speech Contest, ensure that judges view the contest in a location where they will not be interrupted and will have secure, reliable internet access. Provide judges with guidance on how technical difficulties will be addressed.
3. Review the Judge's Guide and Ballot and speaking area.
4. Brief the ballot counters in the use of the Counter's Tally Sheet (Item 1176).
5. Review the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Item 1175) with the timers.
6. Provide a stopwatch to timer.
7. Brief the timers in the proper use of the timing equipment, if necessary.
8. If conducting an Online Speech Contest, ensure that all contest officials are comfortable using the online platform as required for the contest.

During the Contest

1. Collect the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Item 1175) from the timers.
2. Collect the Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot from the tiebreaking judge.
- ◆ 3. Resolve any protests that may arise. Protests are limited to voting judges and contestants. The chief judge, contest chair, voting judges, and contestants must not consider potential protests from audience members. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the announcement that the contest is adjourned. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, or for referencing another contestant or another contestant's speech, the contestant must be given an opportunity to respond to the voting judges. A majority of the voting judges must concur with the decision to disqualify. All protests must be resolved prior to the announcement that the contest is adjourned.
4. Oversee the counting process. See that all ballots are counted twice to ensure accuracy.

◆ After the Contest

1. Complete the Notification of Contest Winner form (Item 1182) and provide it to the contest chair of the next level or to World Headquarters in the case of the International Speech Contest at the District Level.
2. Ensure that all contest forms are disposed of in a way that maintains complete confidentiality.
3. Do not discuss the details of any protest or disqualifications (with the exception of eligibility) with any contestants. Contestants invited to respond to a protest must not be informed of the results of the protest.

Contestant's Checklist

Before the Contest

1. For International, Humorous, Tall Tales, and Online contests, select a topic and prepare your own substantially original speech. For the online Speech Contest, secure and test your audiovisual equipment.
2. Attend the Contestants' Briefing.
3. Inform the contest chair of any props you plan to use.
4. Review Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183). By signing this form, you certify that you have read and understand the rules regarding eligibility and originality.
5. Attend the Speaker's Rehearsal and take note of the speaking area.

During the Contest

1. In the one (1) minute of silence before your introduction, set up any and all props and visual aids. You may enlist someone to help you with this, but it is not the responsibility of the contest chair or any other contest official to do so.
2. After your introduction, proceed immediately to the speaking area and say, "Thank you, Contest Chair." When the contest chair responds, "You're welcome," begin your speech.
3. Check the timing signals regularly during your speech. If you see a red signal, wrap it up, even if you're not finished with your speech yet.
4. Immediately following your speech, remove any props or visual aids from the speaking area. You may enlist someone to help you with this, but it is not the responsibility of the contest chair or any other contest official to do so.