

# Speech Contest Checklist

---

## ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Determine the budget for the contest, remembering that contest income and expenses should break even. Allow for such expenses as awards, contest materials (see below), deposits, meals, printing, postage, etc.
- Select a place and time for the speech contest and coordinate the selection with the proper Toastmasters officers. For Regional and International contests, coordinate with Toastmasters International's World Headquarters.
- Determine agenda for the contest.
- Arrange for the supplies and services required for the event. Consult "Put On A Good Show"–Toastmasters Meeting Planning Handbook (Catalog No. 220) for information on conducting a large public meeting.
  1. Order certificates of participation for all contest speakers and trophies for the winners from World Headquarters. (**NOTE:** It is a copyright violation to put the Toastmasters International name or logo on materials not purchased from World Headquarters.)
  2. Order the following contest materials from World Headquarters as necessary:
    - Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Catalog No. 1183)
    - Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Catalog No. 1175)
    - Judge's Guide and Ballot (Catalog No. 1172)
    - Counter's Tally Sheet (Catalog No. 1176)
    - Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot (Catalog No. 1188)
    - Speech Contestant Biographical Data Sheet (Catalog No. 1189) [For Regional and International contests, order Contestant's Previous Speech Outline (Catalog No. 1185) and Qualifying Judge's Sheet (Catalog No. 1186)]
    - Speech Contest Manual (Catalog No. 1173)
    - Speech Contest Rules (Catalog No. 1171)
- Select the chief judge. [The chief judge selects a tiebreaking judge known only to the chief judge, and also selects contest judges, counters, and timers. In addition, the chief judge appoints qualifying judges for the Regional and International contests. See "Requirements and Duties of Contest Officials" in the Speech Contest manual (Catalog No. 1173) for guidelines in selecting judges.] The chief judge should conduct the Speech Contest Judges Training Program (Catalog No. 1190) for all contest judges to ensure the judges understand their responsibilities and use of the Judge's Guide and Ballot.
- Notify the officials of the time and place of the contest and pre-contest briefings. (Allow ample time, e.g., two weeks for Club contest and six weeks for International.)
- Notify the contestants of the time and place of the contest and pre-contest briefing two to six weeks before the contest. (See appendix of Speech Contest Manual for sample letter.) Mail an information packet to each contestant at this time. The packet consists of:
  1. Speech Contest Rules (Catalog No. 1171)
  2. Speech Contestant Biographical Data Sheet (Catalog No. 1189)
  3. Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Catalog No. 1183)
  4. Contestant Previous Speech Outline (Catalog No. 1185) [This applies to Regional International contests only.]Be sure to give contestants a deadline for returning all necessary information.
- Promote the contest in your community by sending news releases to the media. Consult the publicity and promotion handbook, Let the World Know (Catalog No. 1140), available from World Headquarters.
- Insure that each speaker is eligible under the contest rules before the contest, and notify contestants of disqualification if necessary. [Eligibility requirements are listed in the Speech Contest Rules (Catalog No. 1171) and may not be changed. Eligibility of each contestant must be verified before each contest in which he or she competes. Call World Headquarters for assistance in verifying membership.]

## PRE-CONTEST BRIEFINGS

- Verify the presence of all contestants and pronunciation of their names. (**NOTE:** You may also want to conduct a brief formal interview with each contestant at the conclusion of the contest. If this is the case, mention that you will be doing so.)
- Draw for speaking positions.
- Have the chief judge review the Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Catalog No. 1175) with timers and speakers.
- Review Speech Contest Rules (Catalog No. 1171) with speakers.
- Have the chief judge review Judge's Guide and Ballot (Catalog No. 1172) with contest judges.
- Instruct contest judges to sit close to the contest area in case of an outside disturbance or malfunctioning technical system.
- Acquaint contestants with the exact speaking area, such as lectern, tables, lighting, microphone, etc. All contestants shall have the opportunity to test any amplifying equipment before the contest.
- Review Speech Contest Rules (Catalog No. 1171) with speakers.
- Have the chief judge brief qualifying judges in the use of the Contestant Previous Speech Outline (Catalog No. 1185) and Speaker Qualification Sheet (Catalog No. 1186) for Regional and International speech contests only.
- Brief the chief counter (usually the chief judge) and have him brief three other counters, using the Counters' Tally Sheet (Catalog No. 1176).
- Have the chief judge brief qualifying judges in the use of the Contestant Previous Speech Outline (Catalog No. 1185) and Speaker Qualification (Catalog No. 1186) for Regional and International speech contests only.

## CONTEST

- Open the contest with a brief introduction. Inform the audience that:
  - a) the rules have been reviewed with the chief judge and contestants
  - b) the speaking order of the contestants has been determined
  - c) the contestants have been informed of the location of the timing lights, and
  - d) the taking of photographs during the speeches is not permitted.
- Introduce each contest speaker.
  1. Do not make preliminary remarks about any speaker or the subject, nor mention the name or location of the speaker's Club or place of residence.
  2. Announce each contestant's name and speech title twice, slowly and clearly.
  3. Allow one minute of silence between speeches to permit the judges to complete their notes. Do not comment on the speeches or on any of the contestants.
- Upon completion of the speeches, ask judges to complete their ballots. All judges will deliver the first, second, and third place results as quickly as possible. Have counters collect the ballots and the chief judge collect, check, and verify the Time Record Sheets from timers (and Speaker Qualification Sheets from qualifying judges at the Regional and International contests), and ask them to leave the room to tabulate the results.
  1. All Judge's Guide and Ballots, Counters' Tally Forms, and Timer Record Sheets are considered confidential.
  2. Give all forms to the chief judge for disposal.
  3. Keep a list showing placement of all contestants in case the winner or alternate cannot compete at the next level.
- Interview each speaker.
  1. At the conclusion of the contest speeches and while the results are being tabulated, introduce the speakers 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 speaker's biographical information as a guide.

2. NOTE: The contest chairman may appoint a Toastmaster to perform any one or all of the duties listed above.

- Collect the contest results from the chief judge.
- Upon receipt of the results of the judging, notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding originality and receive his or her agreement, or resolve a protest by a majority vote of the judges. Disqualifications for reasons of time may be announced at the discretion of the contest chairman, although it is recommended that the name(s) of the disqualified contestant(s) not be announced. In contests with five or more participants, announce a third place winner (if wanted), second place winner, and first place winner. In contests with four participants, a second place winner may be announced in addition to the first place winner. In contests with three or fewer participants, announce only the first place winner. If the list of winners is announced incorrectly at any time while the list is being announced, the chief judge, ballot counters, and/or timers may interrupt to correct the error.
- In closing, thank all who helped make the contest a success.
- Announcement of contest winners is final.

## POST-CONTEST

- After the contest, secure the name, address, and phone number of the winner and second place winner. Give this information to the contest chairman of the next contest or, in the case of District and Regional contests, to World Headquarters.
- Send news releases (and photographs, if possible) to each winner's community newspaper and, if applicable, to their company publication.
- Make sure all bills pertaining to the contest are paid promptly.

## REQUIREMENTS AND DUTIES OF CONTEST OFFICIALS

### TIMERS

- Two timers are to be appointed by the chief judge. One is provided with a stopwatch, and the other with an electric speech timer (with indicator lights).
- The electric speech timer must be in full view of each contestant.
- The timer with the stopwatch maintains and delivers to the chief judge the written record of elapsed time of the speeches on the Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (1175).
- The timer managing the electric speech timer follows the light procedure outlined in Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (1175).

### COUNTERS

- Three counters should be appointed by the chief judge acting as chief counter.
- At the conclusion of the contest speeches, counters collect the sealed ballots from the judges. The counters will leave the room and post each speaker's points on the Counter's Tally Sheet (1176) previously prepared for that purpose. Counters will count *all ballots twice* to insure accuracy.
- In posting the points, counters will allow three points for first place, two points for second place, and one point for third place. Any ballot which does not specifically designate first, second, and third places, or which does not contain the names of three speakers, cannot be counted.

### JUDGES

- Chief Judge**
  1. Appoints and counsels contest judges (including qualifying judges at the Regional and International contests), counters, timers, and a secret tiebreaking judge. The chief judge does not vote unless appointed as a voting judge.
  2. Distributes an information package to each contest judge before the contest. This package consists of:
    - a. List of contestants
    - b. Judge's Guide and Ballot (1172)
    - c. Contest Rules (1171)

3. Provides judges with a brief pre-contest orientation including the following steps:
  - Review of the Speech Contest Rules
  - Review and explanation of the judging form
  - Reminder not to consider timing as a judging criterion
  - An admonition against bias of any kind
  - Review the speaking area
  - Reminder that failure to comply with any rules should be taken into consideration when judging.
4. Acting as chief counter, appoints three assistant counters and provides them with a posting sheet.
5. Provides a stopwatch to timer.
6. Oversees counting process. Sees that all ballots are counted twice to insure accuracy.
7. For Regional and International contests, supplies qualifying judges with copies of the completed Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (1183), Qualifying Judge's Sheet (1186), and Contestant's Previous Speech Outline (1185) (District outline for the Regional contests; District and Regional speech outlines for the International contest).
8. Provides a list showing placement of all contestants to the contest chairman.

**Contest Judges**

1. Qualifications
  - The judges should be members in good standing. Insofar as practical, all judges at Area, Division, District, Region, and International speech contests should have been a Toastmasters member in good standing since July 1 of the previous year and have completed at least six Communication and Leadership manual projects. In addition, if practical, at Regional and International contests, judges should be at least an Able Toastmaster or Advanced Toastmaster Bronze and have previously judged a Toastmasters speech contest at Area, Division, District, or Regional level.
  - At Area, Division, and District contests, judges should be selected from Clubs, Areas, or Divisions not represented by a contestant. If this is not practical, and given each Club, Area, or Division sending a contestant also sends a judge, the chief judge shall carefully brief the judges on the importance of not showing bias in the judging procedure. All judges shall judge all contestants.
  - At the District or Division level contests, there should be at least seven judges or equal representation from the Areas composing the District or Division.
  - At the Regional or International contests, there should be at least nine judges or equal representation from the Districts or Regions respectively.\* Furthermore, no judge shall be a member of the Club represented by a contestant. Additionally, at the International contest, a judge should not be from any contestant's District.
2. Duties are to select a first, second, and third place winner from among the contestants of a speech contest.

**Qualifying Judges**

1. Requirements
  - Five qualifying judges are needed at the Regional and International contests.
  - Any contestant receiving three or more disqualifying votes shall be eliminated from the contest.
2. Duties are to determine that the speech presented is entirely new and different (Regional and International contests only). Copies of the speaker's previous District speech outline will be provided by the chief judge at the Regional level. Copies of the speaker's District and Regional speech outlines will be provided by the chief judge at the International contest.

**Tiebreaking Judge**

1. Requirement is that the identity of the tiebreaking judge will be known only to the chief judge.
2. Duties
  - Ranks all contestants numerically on the special Tiebreaking Judge's Ballot, with the winner as #1, second-best as #2, etc.
  - Submits sealed ballot to the chief judge, who will open it and count it only in the event of a tie by the contest judges.
3. In the event of a tie in any of the three places, the contestant who ranks higher on the Tiebreaking Judge's Ballot will be awarded the contested place; the other tying contestant will be awarded the next lower place, if any. No place higher than the tying position will be affected. (For example, if the tie occurs in second place, the tying contestant ranking higher on the Tiebreaking Judge's Ballot will be awarded second place. The other tying contestant will be awarded third place. First place is unaffected.)

\* Maintaining equal representation, the number of judges may be increased to a maximum of 18.