

District 72 Guide to Speech Contests and Scripts

2023-2024

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This guide is a resource for speech contests and to assist in the background and preparatory work of speech contests within the Toastmasters environment.

Some notes are repeated to ensure that nothing is missed

Thanks must go to Harry and Marie Fox for their guidance towards hybrid contests, especially the technical aspects, along with peer review of this guide and the contest scripts.

Speech contest checklist and preparation tips

Contest Organiser Preparation

- Determine budget for contest, where required.
- Select place and time for contest.
- Determine contest agenda (eg, which contests will be conducted).
- Arrange supplies and services (eg, lectern, timing lights, stopwatches, pack of cards, etc),
- Select/organise Chief Judge and other officials (*See Section 5A Contest Rulebook*)
(Note: all role holders (Contest Officials) must be paid members, including any test or warm-up speaker.)
 - ♦ Judges (minimum of five plus Tiebreaker at Club and Area; seven plus Tiebreaker at Division and District level – at least one judge from each Club/Area/Division within the District, where practicable)
 - ♦ Note that the Tiebreaker Judge is known only to the Chief Judge.
 - ♦ Timekeepers (2)
 - ♦ Tally Counters (3)
 - ♦ Sergeant-at-Arms (SAA) (*minimum of one Please ensure that there are more SAAs if room has two or more doors to the venue, or for Contestants' room for the Table Topics and Evaluation Contests.*)
- Notify contest judges and officials of time and place.
- Determine the contestants and notify them of time and place at **least 14 days prior to the contest**. Remind them that they need to bring any props with them which they may be using, and they are to find someone to set these up during the one minute's silence between contestants.
- Ensure all contestants are eligible, using the Toastmasters Eligibility Checker on the Toastmasters International web site. Also ensure that International Contestants have completed L1 and L2 of a single Path. The Eligibility Checker should indicate this, but it is recommended to check membership lists or ask Club Presidents, if able to.
- Update your contest rule knowledge by reading through the relevant sections of the Speech Contest Rulebook for the current year for your contest.

Rule Book: <https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/2023-2024-speech-contest-rulebook>

In addition ...

Evaluation Contest: Select a test speaker not known to contestants, where practicable, and who speaks at a level appropriate to the level of the contest.

Humorous: Please ensure you have a warm-up speaker or tell some jokes to warm up the audience for the first contestant. *This ensures the first contestant does not end up as the warm-up speaker and is unfairly disadvantaged.*

Table Topics: Determine a 'topic' (**Which should lead to an opinion or a conclusion. It should not be too long, must be general in nature, and should not require a detailed knowledge**). Check the suitability of the topic with an experienced Toastmaster who does not have a contest role.

Publicise Contest in community where possible – you might get visitors/ potential future members.

Materials/Documentation required

- Speech Contest Scripts (shown further within this document)
- Speech Contest Rulebook (current version, ie, 2023) – *Item 1171*
- Certification of Eligibility and Originality (for Contestants) – *Item 1183*
- Speech Contestant Profile sheet – *Item 1189*
- Time Record Sheet and Timekeeper's instructions – *Item 1175*
- Judges' Guide and Ballot sheets (*for the appropriate contest*)
- Judges' Certificate of Eligibility – *Item 1170*
- Tiebreaker Judge Guide and Ballot sheet (*for the appropriate contest*)
- Envelopes (*for judges' ballots*)
- Counter's Tally Sheet – *Item 1176*
- Notification of Contest Winners form – *Item 1182*
- Results Form – *Item 1168*
- Certificates Winners and Participants
(*Recommended to also produce one for Evaluation Test Speaker and Humorous Warm-up speaker*)
- Trophies – collect from previous year's winner(s) and ensure engraving is up to date. This should be done as soon as you become the contest organiser.
- Evaluation Contestant's Notes Sheet – *Item 1177 (For Evaluation Contest)*

NOTE:

Below is a link for the above listed forms which may be downloaded and printed for free. Most are form-fillable pdfs, for use with virtual contests.

<https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/speech-contests>

Hybrid contests – important stuff

TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A hybrid contest is one where some participants (contestants, judges, contest officials and audience) are either on site whilst others are online.
- Contestants must be given the choice to be either on site or online.
- All briefings and rehearsals must be **offered** in hybrid format.
- Each level (Area, Division, District) can be different, but there must be consistency within the specific level.

FUNDAMENTALS

- All contestants must be visible and audible to both on site and online audience.
- All contestants must be able to see the timing lights.

VENUE REQUIREMENTS

- Internet access of sufficient quality (speed) and reliability.
- Breakout room(s) with internet access.
- Venue available before the contest (for setup), and after (in the event of delays and to pack up).

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Presenting on site participants online you require:

- Static camera on stand (tripod)
- Microphone – wired lapel mic recommended
- Laptop system #1
- Cables (power, USB, chargers) and cable covers
- Lighting (if required)
- Docking station (for laptop, etc)
- Zoom connection
- Room camera on stand, connected to laptop #2

Presenting online participants on site you require:

- Laptop system #2
- Docking station
- Projector
- Suitable screen or wall
- Speakers (Bluetooth recommended) connected to Laptop #1
- Zoom connection
- Cables and cable covers

Breakout room Laptop #3 with connected to Zoom Breakout Room

- Communication system for Contest Chair and Chief Judge (Txt, Messenger, email, etc)
- Backup equipment (optional but recommended):
 - Camera
 - Microphone
 - Speaker
 - Projector
 - Laptop

Tips for Running Hybrid Contests

Technology

1. Review the video <https://www.toastmasters.org.nz/videos/> **Technical Requirements for Hybrid Contests**
2. Make sure that you have people experienced with running hybrid meetings to set up and run the technology. **NO** first timers!
3. Have experienced onsite and online tech support and Zoom Masters.
4. Triple check all the technical resources well before the setup for the contests.
5. Have spares if possible, eg, projectors screens cords/cables etc.
6. Have backup options for internet access, ie, hot spotting phones for each of the onsite laptops.
7. Mark out the camera vision speaking area fully with tape and make sure on site contestants are briefed on this.
8. Conduct full sound/vision testing with online contestants, judges, etc, before commencing the contest.

Contest Administration

1. Review the cast of characters from the video.
2. **Must** have both an on site and online:
 - a. Sergeant at Arms
 - b. Timer
3. Contest Chairs should be carefully briefed in their roles in the hybrid format and use prepared scripts for their process.
4. Ideally, and **strongly recommended**, that contestants' and judges' briefings be conducted prior to the contest day. This:
 - a. Ensures that everyone is treated equally
 - b. Reduces complexity of setup
 - c. Reduces tension for contestants and officials

Note: Must have an online system for speaker order selection.
5. On site contestants should be briefed on the presence and needs of online judges.
6. Ensure that the online Timer has 'Raised Hand' in top left-hand corner of screen so they are visible to contestants.
7. Procedures should be organised between Contest Chair, Contest Organiser, main tech person and Chief Judge in case of either contestant/judge dropout, or if technical/dropout issues occur at the venue. Such events should be communicated to all contestants and judges.
8. Contest Chairs should replicate contestant preparation procedure from online contests for **both** on site and online contestants using the same words for everyone.
 - a. Check all can hear
 - b. Check all can be heard
 - c. Check all can see
 - d. Check all can be seen
 - e. Check all can see Timer
 - f. Check that contestant is spotlighted by Zoom Master
 - g. Check that contestant has selected Gallery View in Zoom for self if desired
 - h. Confirm, "Are you ready?"
 - i. **Then and only then**, introduce contestant in standard form.

Chief Judge's briefing and notes

Contest Organiser for Chief Judge: Judging checklist items

Ensure the number of forms is equivalent to the number of Judges needed for the contest level Always have spare, just in case.

1. Blank Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics Forms (1170)
2. Current Rulebook(s) (1171) for Chief Judge only
3. Notification of Winners forms (1182), one per contest
(This is completed and handed upwards: Contest Chair to Club VP Ed to Area Director to Division Director to Program Quality Director.)
4. Counter's Tally Sheet (1176), one per contest
5. Time Record Sheets (1175), one per contest
6. Results Form (1168) one per contest *(This is included with the Winning Certificates – noting Time Disqualifications, where necessary)*
7. One set per contest of 1st, 2nd, 3rd Certificates. *(Spare to allow for mistakes made when completing are wise to have on hand.)*
8. Contact list with names and phone numbers of all the Contest Officials
9. Extra pens
10. A copy of this document

PRIOR TO ALL BRIEFINGS

NOTE: A good Judges' briefing covering Judging Criteria will take up to 40 minutes, hence why it is recommended to undertake online prior to the contest

Remember ALL judges **MUST** be briefed prior to the contest start (a rule), therefore the Chief Judge needs to ensure all judges attend a briefing. As Chief Judge, you are asked by the Contest Chair near the start of the contest to confirm all judges have been briefed

If briefings are held via Zoom, ensure that the link is sent out to all who are attending, along with any relevant forms, ie, Judge's Eligibility forms. If a Judge is unable to attend the Zoom briefing, ensure that you carry out a briefing prior to the contest start

If judges are participating online, ensure all Eligibility forms are sent prior to the contest.

All judges need to be advised in plenty of time of the date and time of the briefing, along with the date and time of the contest. Include Zoom links where applicable for both events.

Ensure you have obtained the folder with the relevant forms for the contest (or printed them off yourself as Chief Judge). Also ensure that online Judges know how to send their ballots/results through to the Chief Judge.

Obtain a description of the speaking area from the Contest Chair, and a copy of the order of speaking as soon as possible.

If briefings are in person, liaise with the Contest Organiser where and when your judges' briefings will take place.

As Chief Judge, always remember to thank each of your officials for their assistance in the contest Their role is an important part of the proceedings.

Suggested Judges' briefing script

1. Thank everyone for participating as a Judge in the contest and for attending the briefing
2. Give each judge their forms : Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics Form, and relevant contest Voting Ballot form(s).
3. All judges are to sign their Judge's Certification form and return this to the Chief Judge.
4. A judge's goal is to select 1st, 2nd, and 3rd placegetters in each contest.
5. Regarding the use the Judge's Guide and Ballot:
 - It is recommended to immediately sign and name the bottom of each ballot. Unsigned ballots will not be counted.
 - Read and familiarise yourself with the back of each ballot - Judging Criteria and the Judge's Code of Ethics.
 - Judges should randomly seat themselves in the audience. Recommended they do not sit next to a contestant.
 - Write contestant names across the top of the ballot (on the columns) in speaking order, either left to right, or right to left
 - At the conclusion of a speech, you will be given one minute of silence to score the contestant based on each criteria, then add up the scores.
 - After the last speech, there will be as much silence as is required for all Judges to score the last contestant and then write down 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner names in the ballot section. There must be no ties – break your own ties Do this as promptly as you can.
 - Remember the Ballot Sheet is **your** guide You are not required to award placement based on your numerical scores. No-one else knows your scores.
 - Separate the Official Ballot from the rest of the form, fold it, and then either put it in a provided envelope or hand directly it to a Tally/Ballot Counter. When the Ballot is completed, it is recommended you raise your hand or nod to a Tally/Ballot Counter.
 - If a protest is lodged, you will participate in a protest hearing. Protest rules and procedures will be reviewed later in this briefing.
 - Destroy the top part of your Judge's Guide and Ballot after the contest. Do not discuss your notes or decision with anyone. Please refrain from public criticism of the contest. If you have any recommendations to make, please share with either the Chief Judge or Contest Organiser.
6. Judging is to be done only according to the criteria on the Judge's Guide and Ballot. The following reminders will help ensure fairness:
 - All contestants should be considered equally.
 - Age, sex, race, creed, national origin or professional beliefs are not to be taken into account.
 - Judge only on today's speakers' performances, not on past performance or a contestant's reputation. How well a contestant has done in the past or could have done is irrelevant. You are judging on today's performance against other contestants
 - The first and last speakers are not to be judged differently from those in the middle.
 - Do not give extra credit to a speaker because s/he has successfully competed in contests before.
 - Do not judge speakers based on your norms or your club norms (eg, whether or not they use the lectern, use notes, recognise the Contest Chair, etc.)
 - Judge without concern for speech time duration. Timers will handle timing disqualifications.
 - Judge also without thought to possible protests The protest may fail, given a hearing.
7. Describe the speaking area to the judges. Emphasise that going outside this space is not a reason for disqualification. It should be noted that the reason for being aware of the speaking area is because of the 'physical' judging criteria on the (International, Humorous and Table Topics) Ballot Sheet, *ie*, 'how well has the speaker utilised the speaking area'.
8. The following provides guidance about protests and the process:

- Judges can protest based only on originality in the International Speech contest and the Humorous Speech contest, AND possible disqualification if referencing a previous speaker. Quoted material may be used in a speech but it must be identified and credited.
- If a contestant does not give credit to quoted sources, this is grounds for protest.
- If a speech is more than 25% non-original AND credit is given to the source This could be grounds for protest.
- Protests must be lodged prior to the announcement of results.
- Judges are advised to note their protest on their Ballot.
- The Chief Judge will enquire from the relevant voting judge what the grounds for the protest are. They will discuss these grounds with the protested contestant who will make his/her case. If necessary, the judges will be called out of the room to discuss/consider all the evidence then vote. A majority of the judges must concur with the decision to disqualify. The decision of the judges is final.

An ideal judges' briefing will go through the relevant contest rules and the Judging Criteria, asking questions to clarify understanding of the criteria. This is especially important for new judges

Are there any questions?

Suggestions for the Chief Judge to facilitate the judges' briefings

Basic Briefing notes applicable to all contests:

- Ensure judges are eligible
- Establish which judges have judged before (why?)
- Make sure judges name and sign their Ballot Sheets and that you hold the most recent ballot sheets for the relevant contest
- Give judges an envelope for Ballot Sheet to hand to Tally Counters
- Advise judges they are to decide 1st, 2nd and 3rd There must be no ties (or vote is ineligible)
- Remind judges that they should remove all bias or prejudice and judge according to what they observe on the day; not against any past performances or if you dislike/like the contestant.
- Remind judges that this is a Toastmasters contest The Ballot Sheet is a guide to helping you rank the contestants A speech that was technically perfect, delivered smoothly, emotionally engaging or logically flawless should be marked accordingly in the relevant sections.

These are some of the questions that judges may consider when competing their Ballot Sheet They are to ensure judges are mentally present and focused on the upcoming contest The below questions are not intended to lead or direct judges, nor are they rules As the Chief Judge, you should refer to relevant sections of the Ballot Sheet as you consider the following The questions are designed so judges can consider all aspects of the contestant's presentation and to ensure a fair unbiased result.

Briefings for Contests are as follows:

Table Topics Briefing

Ask Judges for their thoughts:

- What they are looking for in a contestant's table topic?
- How do you judge a contestant who answers the topic, partially answers the topic, or does not answer the topic?
- Do they need a clear opening, body and conclusion and does the conclusion need to relate back to the opening?
- If an opinion was asked for, how would you judge if they: gave an opinion, did not give an opinion, changed their opinion during the speech, or maybe presented both sides with perhaps two opinions and gave no clear decision (ie, sat on the fence)?

Humorous Briefing

Ask judges for their thoughts:

- What are they looking for with in a Humorous Speech?
- How would you judge a series of jokes versus a speech with humorous content and/or delivery?
- How would you judge a speech delivered to entertain with a weak message as opposed a strong message with less humour?
- Does a humorous speech need to be technically well structured?

- Does it need to have a call to action, a conclusion or can you just tell a humorous story without a moral?

Evaluation Briefing

Ask Judges for their thoughts:

- What elements do you feel are required for a good evaluation?
- What do you think is best: hearing the in-depth analysis of the speech or delivering a list approach of commendations/recommendations?
- How many recommendations should an evaluator ideally give?
- How many parts does a recommendation need, ie, What? Why? How?
- How would you judge a contestant with only one comprehensive recommendation?
- What happens if the contestant finishes on a recommendation in both the body and the Summary/Conclusion?
- Should a contestant add a new information into the summary?
- How would you judge if the contestant missed the Summary/Conclusion?

International Briefing

Ask Judges for their thoughts:

(Note here: The Ballot Form has changed from previous years)

- Did the speech have a clear opening, body and conclusion?
- Did the closing tie back to the opening, ie, if a question was asked, did the question get answered?
- What do you feel is required to win an International Speech Contest: a performance, a strong message, a certain type of topic?
- Does an International Speech need to be about a traumatic life event, or just a well-presented and clear message?
- Does an International Speech require a purpose or message? If so, does it need to be clear throughout or can it be revealed at the end? Was the purpose or message supported by the body of the speech?
- How would you judge an authentic speech/speaker vs someone you feel was trying to 'tick the boxes'?
- Was it, and should it be memorable?

A reminder that these questions (briefing notes) are not rules, just geared towards assisting judges into analysing their own results.

TIMERS' BRIEFING

There should be two timing devices (stopwatch or phone are both acceptable), timing lights, and timing cards as backup in case of timing light malfunction.

Always test the timing lights at the briefing, prior to each contest, to ensure they are working properly. Timer One runs the 'official' stopwatch and records the times on the Time Record Sheets. (*Identify Timer One and hand them the Time Record Sheet(s)*).

Timer Two displays the timing signals and will operate the backup' stopwatch in case of malfunction. Timer Two's responsibility is to display the Green, Yellow/Amber, and Red lights/cards at the times listed on the Time Record Sheet for this contest.

Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or nonverbal communication with the audience. This usually will be the first word uttered by the contestant, but would include any other communication such as sound effects, gestures, or a staged act by another person, etc. *Go over the times below.*

	Int'l Speech	Humorous	Evaluation	Table Topics
Green	5:00	5:00	2:00	1:00
Yellow/Amber	6:00	6:00	2:30	1:30
Red	7:00	7:00	3:00	2:00

Display the green light/card at the appropriate time. Leave the light on/card up until it is time to display the yellow card. Leave the yellow light on/card up until it is time to display the red card. Leave the red light/card on until the speaker has concluded his/her speech. Do not give any indication or signal that a contestant has gone over the qualification time.

Are there any questions regarding speech timing requirements?

It is recommended that Timer One and Timer Two decide who times the one minute of silence between contestant speeches. Then discuss with Contest Chair how you will notify the Contest Chair (eg, voice, green light/card, raised hand). A third timing device to might be needed to perform this function, although not necessary.

After the last contestant has finished and as the judges are completing their ballots, the Chief Judge will come by and pick up the Time Record Sheet. If any timing signal malfunctions occurred, report that to the Chief Judge when they pick up the Time Record Sheet.

Where there are online contestants and an online Timer, the online Timer is to be briefed on their role, which is usually with regards to the online timing lights.

For the Evaluation Contest only:

After the test speech is completed, Timer One will accompany the Sergeant-at-Arms and the contestants to the place where the contestants have five minutes to complete their evaluation preparation. Timing will begin as soon as the Sergeant-at-Arms tells contestants they may begin. When five minutes are up, notify the SAA, then return to the room where the contest is being held to time the Evaluations.

Are there any questions?

BALLOT/TALLY COUNTERS' BRIEFING

When the contest is over, the judges will raise their hands or their ballots for collection. Space yourselves around the room and collect the ballots from the judges.

Advise the Tally/Ballot counters of the number of judges, thus number of ballots to collect. When all the ballots are collected, ballot counters will leave the room to count the ballots in a room/area designated by the Contest Chair.

Are there any questions regarding the process for collecting ballots?

NOTE: The Chief Judge may choose to do this part of the briefing just prior to counting ballots instead of prior to the start of the contest.

The process for Ballot/Tally Counting may be done as part of the briefing or after the Ballots have been collected and before they are tallied.

Firstly, check to ensure that each judge's ballot is signed, and that first, second, and third places have been entered. If there are only two contestants, then ensure that first and second places have been entered. If there is only one contestant, then ensure that first place has been entered. If there is a ballot that does not comply with these requirements, please give it to the Chief Judge to verify that it is disqualified ballot.

Once you have only valid ballots, use the Counter's Tally Sheet to tally the score.

It is recommended that the Chief Judge write the names of the contestants in speaking order across the top of the form, then write the names of the judges on the left side of the form in the order.

One Tally Counter will read each ballot: stating Judges name, then indicating which contestants were listed as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, watching to see that the Second Tally Counter writes them in the order as read.

The Second Tally counter will write the appropriate number of points given by each judge under each contestant's name. **First place receives three points, second place receives two points, and third place receives one point.**

When scores are entered for all judges, add up the score for each contestant. The first Tally Counter double checks the addition.

Another method is that the Chief Judge reads out the Ballots and each Tally Counter, has their own Tally Counting Sheet and compares with the other at the end.

Next, the Time Record Sheet is examined and it is determined if there are any time disqualifications. If there are, strike out the names of disqualified contestants.

If there is a tie for any of the positions, the ranking on the Tiebreaker Judge's ballot will be used to break the tie. For example, if there is a tie for second place, then second place will be awarded to the tied contestant that is highest ranked on the tiebreaker judge's ballot. This method is carried on down until there are no ties. This is needed for the Final Notification which lists all contestants in ranked order.

When all discrepancies are resolved and ties are broken, write down the order of finish (3rd to 1st) on the Results Form. Tally Counters should remember this, because if the winner is announced incorrectly at the end of the contest, the Tally Counter is immediately to interrupt the proceedings so that the announced results can be corrected.