



International Speech Contest Rules

1. PURPOSE

- A. To provide an opportunity for speakers to improve their speaking abilities and to recognize the best as encouragement to all.
- B. To provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.

2. APPLICABILITY

These rules, unless otherwise noted, apply to all Toastmasters speech contests which select contestants for the annual International Speech Contest, which is conducted in English only. These rules may not be supplanted or modified, and no exceptions may be made.

3. SELECTION SEQUENCE

- A. Club, Area, Division, District. Each club in good standing may select a contestant to compete in the area contest. A club may choose its contestant by whatever means the club desires. If a contest is held, it must comply with all these rules and the contest result is final. The area speech contest winner then proceeds to the division contest (if applicable). The division winner then proceeds to the district contest. Should an area or division contest winner be unable to participate in the next level contest, the highest placed available contestant will advance to that level. NOTE: The district contest chairman informs World Headquarters of the name and address of the winner and alternate in the district contest. Information concerning the regional contest is then mailed to the winner and alternate.
- B. In those areas with four assigned clubs or less eight weeks prior to the area contest, districts have the option to allow the two highest placed available contestants from each club to compete in the area contest. Should additional clubs charter prior to the area contest, the two highest placed available contestants from each club may compete. In those divisions with four assigned areas or less, districts have the option to allow the two highest placed available contestants from each area to compete. In districts with four assigned divisions or less, districts have the option to allow the two highest placed available contestants from each division to participate in the district contest.

The decision whether or not to allow two contestants to advance from club to area, from area to division, and/or from division to district must be made and communicated throughout the district prior to the commencement of the contest cycle – i.e. prior to any club contests being held. Once the decision is made, it must be implemented consistently throughout the district in all areas and divisions affected. If a district decides to allow two contestants to advance from club to area, its decisions regarding the number to advance from area to division and/or from division to district need not be the same.

- C. Each region shall select a winner and an alternate. The contest chairman, usually the first-year director, informs World Headquarters of the name and address of the winner and alternate in the regional contest. Information concerning the International Speech Contest is then mailed to the winner and alternate. One speaker from each region competes in the International contest. An additional speaker or speakers, selected in special speech contest(s) among districts outside of the United States and Canada, also will compete in the International contest.

4. ELIGIBILITY

- A. To be eligible to compete at any level of the International Speech Contest, an individual must:
 - 1. Be a member in good standing of the club in which he or she is competing. The club also must be in good standing. A new, dual, or reinstated member must have dues and membership application current with World Headquarters.
 - 2. Have completed at least six manual speeches in the *Competent Communication* manual prior to the club contest. However, a charter member of a club chartered since the previous July 1 may compete without having completed six manual speeches in the *Competent Communication* manual. The club must be officially chartered before the area contest.
 - 3. Maintain eligibility at all levels of any contest. If at any level it is discovered that a contestant was ineligible to compete at any previous level, the contestant must be disqualified even if the ineligibility is not discovered until a later level and has been corrected.
- B. The following are ineligible to compete in this contest: incumbent international officers and directors; district officers (governor, any lieutenant governor, secretary, treasurer, public relations officer, division governor, or area governor) whose terms expire June 30; international officer and director candidates; immediate past district governors; district officers or announced candidates for the term beginning the upcoming July 1; presenters of educational sessions at the area, division, and district event at which the contest will be held; presenters of educational sessions at regional conferences and/or the International Convention. An individual may not be a judge at any level for a contest in which they are still competing.

- C. The winner of the contest finals held each August during the International Convention is not eligible to compete again at any level.
- D. Toastmasters who are members in more than one club and who meet all other eligibility requirements may compete in each club contest in which membership in good standing is held. However, should they win more than one club International Speech Contest, the contestant may represent only one of the clubs at the area level. No contestant can compete in more than one area International Speech Contest, even if the two areas are in different divisions or different districts.
- E. A contestant must be a member in good standing of the club, area, division, district, or region being represented when competing in a speech contest at the next level.
- F. Each contestant must complete the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (form 1183) and submit it to the chief judge prior to the contest.
- G. Each contestant must be present to compete. Participation by audio and video tape and teleconference is not permitted.

5. SPEECH SUBJECT AND PREPARATION

- A. Subject for the prepared speech shall be selected by the contestant.
- B. Contestants must prepare their own five- to seven-minute speeches, 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 (on form 1183, Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality). Any quoted material must be so identified during the speech presentation.
- C. All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the contest chairman. All contestants and judges will be advised of the speaking area before the contest begins. The contestants may speak from any position within the designated area and are not limited to standing at the lectern/podium.
 - 1. A lectern/podium will be available. However, the use of the lectern/podium is optional.
 - 2. If amplification is necessary, a lectern/podium fixed-mounted microphone and a portable microphone should be made available, if possible. It is suggested that the fixed-mounted microphone be nondirectional. The selection and use of a microphone is optional for each contestant.
 - 3. All equipment will be available for contestants to practice prior to the contest. Contestants are responsible for arranging their preferred setup of the lectern/podium microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced by the Toastmaster.
- D. Every participant must present an entirely new and different speech for the regional and for the International contests than given in any contest that same year. Up to and including the district contest,

contestants may use the same speech, but are not required to do so.

- E. Winners of each district contest shall present a detailed outline of their winning speech in the district contest to the chief judge of the regional contest. Winners of the regional contest will prepare and mail to World Headquarters outlines of their district and regional winning speeches, which will be given to the chief judge at the International contest.

6. GENERAL PROCEDURE

- A. At the club level contests, a contest chairman, chief judge, at least five judges, a tiebreaking judge, three counters, and two timers are appointed, as far as practical.

At the area level contests, there should be at least five judges or equal representation from the clubs composing the area in addition to a contest chairman, chief judge, a tiebreaking judge, three counters and two timers.

At the division or district level contests, there should be at least seven judges or equal representation from the areas composing the division or district in addition to a contest chairman, chief judge, a tiebreaking judge, three counters, and two timers. At the district contest, no judge shall be a member of the club represented by a contestant.

At the regional or International contest, there should be at least nine judges or equal representation from the districts or regions respectively; no judge shall be a member of the club represented by a contestant. In addition to these judges, five qualifying judges, a contest chairman, chief judge, a tiebreaking judge, three counters, and two timers are appointed.

All judges will judge all contestants.

- B. Before the contest, contestants are briefed on the rules by the contest chairman. Judges, counters, and timers are briefed on their duties by the chief judge. Contestants will then draw for their speaking position with the contest chairman.
- C. If a contestant is absent from the briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, may attend the briefing in place of the primary contestant. If the primary contestant is not present when the person conducting the contest is introduced to conduct the contest, the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant. Should the primary contestant arrive after the briefing but before the person conducting the contest is introduced, the primary contestant may compete, provided the primary contestant: 1) reports to the contest chairman upon his/her arrival, and 2) has all required paperwork in good order before the person conducting the contest is introduced to begin the contest. The primary contestant waives the opportunity of a briefing.
- D. Introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name, speech title, speech title, and contestant's name.

- E. There will be one minute of silence between contestants, during which the judges will mark their ballots.
- F. Contestants may remain in the same room throughout the duration of the contest.
- G. In contests with five or more participants, a third place winner (if wanted), a second place winner, and a first place winner will be announced. In contests with four or fewer participants, a second place and first place winner will be announced.
- H. Announcement of contest winners is final unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers may immediately interrupt to correct the error.

7. TIMING OF THE SPEECHES

- A. Speeches will be five to seven minutes. A contestant will be disqualified from the contest if the speech is less than four minutes 30 seconds or more than seven minutes 30 seconds.
- B. Upon being introduced, the contestant shall proceed immediately to the speaking position. Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or non-verbal 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, a staged act by another person, etc.
- C. Timers shall provide warning signals to the contestants, which shall be clearly visible to the speakers but not obvious to the audience.
 - 1. A green signal will be displayed at five minutes and remain displayed for one minute.
 - 2. An amber signal will be displayed at six minutes and remain displayed for one minute.
 - 3. A red signal will be displayed at seven minutes and remain on until the conclusion of the speech.
 - 4. No signal shall be given for the overtime period.
 - 5. Any visually impaired contestant may request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing. Acceptable warning signals would include, but not be limited to: a buzzer, a bell, or a person announcing the times at five, six, and seven minutes. If any special device and/or specific instructions for such signal is/are required, the contestant must provide same.
 - 6. In the event of technical failure of the signal, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
- D. Prior to announcing results, the chairman should announce if time disqualification(s) occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved.

8. PROTESTS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

- A. Protests concerning eligibility and originality will be limited to judges and contestants. Any protest will be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chairman prior to the announcement of the winner and

alternate(s). The contest chairman shall notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding originality or eligibility prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned.

- B. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, the contestant must be given an opportunity to respond to the judges. A majority of the judges must concur in the decision to disqualify.

The contest chairman can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility.

- C. At regional and international contests, should qualifying judges determine that a contestant did not present an entirely new and different speech, the chief judge shall notify the contestant of a disqualification prior to the announcement of the winner and alternate(s). The disqualified contestant does not have the opportunity to respond to the qualifying judges. A contestant receiving three or more disqualifying votes from the qualifying judges is disqualified.

- D. All decisions of the judges and qualifying judges are final.

9. TRAVEL ALLOWANCES

- A. Toastmasters International shall pay the travel expenses of each district's contestant participating in the International Speech Contest at regional, inter-district and International levels. Neither Toastmasters International nor its districts shall reimburse these contestants for any other expenses. Reimbursement shall be as follows:

1. Air, Bus, or Train – Full reimbursement, round trip at the lowest rate (coach air fare, or discount fare if applicable) between the commercial airport or passenger terminals nearest the regional conference or convention site and the home of each contestant.
2. Car – On the basis of reimbursement at 32 cents per mile by the most direct route not exceeding the lowest air fare rate (coach or discount if applicable).
3. Any other mode of transportation – Actual costs incurred not exceeding the lowest air fare rate (coach or discount if applicable).

A person riding with another person receiving reimbursement is not entitled to reimbursement.

- C. Reimbursement will be made by World Headquarters as soon as practicable on receipt of certification of attendance at the regional, interdistrict and International levels or at speech contest by the district governor and on receipt of ticket receipt(s) for air, bus, or train travel, or mileage for car travel.

- D. Hotel or room accommodations are not included in allowances for contestants, unless otherwise stated.

10. INTERNATIONAL TAPED SPEECH CONTEST

- A. Members of undistricted clubs and provisional districts are invited to participate in the International Taped Speech Contest. Tapes must be in English.

- B. The Toastmasters International Speech Contest Rules are to be followed as far as they are applicable. Naturally, there is no area, division, district, or regional competition, nor are there any travel allowances. To enter, clubs should conduct a speech contest and submit a tape of the winning speech. Only one taped speech per club may be submitted.
- C. The tape shall be made using the following procedures:
 - 1. Use fresh tape and record on a standard audio cassette before a live audience. Video tapes will not be accepted.
 - 2. Time the speech carefully to comply with the speech contest rules.
 - 3. Clearly mark the audio tape and container with the participant's name and club number and be sure to enclose a completed Certification of Eligibility and Originality form.
 - 4. Tapes must be received at World Headquarters on or before 5 p.m. Pacific Time March 31 to be eligible for competition.