

District 46

INTERNATIONAL and TABLE TOPIC SPEECH CONTESTS SCRIPT

This script has been developed for ONLINE CONTESTS and will need to be adjusted for in-person contests.

DRESS REHEARSAL

It is paramount to have a DRESS REHEARSAL before the contest, inviting contestants, timers, sergeants-at-arms, zoom master, chief judge, and contest chair. Do not invite the judges to this meeting. Use the same zoom account to be used for the actual contest.

During the dry run go through the entire agenda to test the technology aspects, which include spotlighting speakers, muting all, creating breakout rooms, allocating attendees to breakout rooms, accepting invitation to breakout rooms, and return to main room. Also confirm the 'speaking area' for the contestants. Screen sharing is allowed under the clause permitting the use of props.

Gather contact details and agree on back channel communication process in advance – WhatsApp group, text or email. Do not use zoom chat or live talk where everyone can see/hear.

Remember, the more you prepare and practice, the more relaxing it will be, and certainly the smoother it will appear. Be prepared to fill 'dead' space because of technology interruptions.

Note, the traditional contestant briefing can be combined with the dress rehearsal, but the dress rehearsal does not replace it. Judges will need a separate briefing, with the Tiebreaking Judge briefed separately from the other judges.

JUDGES/TIMERS

The Chief Judge is responsible for the following:

Email ALL FORMS to officials at least five days prior to the Contest. Request that officials review the materials, including the briefings, and address questions. Ensure that completed Judge's Certification forms are submitted to you at least two days prior to the Contest. In case of any contest above club-level, reconfirm that a judge is not in a club with a contestant if the contestant slate has changed.

During the judges briefing, emphasize that they will have ONLY the one minute to mark their ballot for the speaker, and urge them to really be familiar with the ballot and the process so that they do not delay the contest at the end in sending their completed ballot ranking to the chief judge. Judges should never leave a tie on their ballot – they must find a way to break any ties. If they are taking a picture of their ballot, remember it is only the bottom section, NEVER the whole page.

Agree in advance how the voting results from each judge will be received. Similarly, the timer reports from the Timers. This could be via email, text or WhatsApp. Toastmasters ballots could be completed,

signed and scanned/photographed and sent, or a software application can be used. Note that the chief judge must feel comfortable that any software application has been properly tested for accuracy and security. Do not use zoom chat to communicate with judges.

Note: You may send voting judges a separate “cut away ballot” to vote electronically, via email. The Tiebreaking Judge should send their ballot to the Chief Judge ONLY. All other judges should send their ballots simultaneously to both ballot counters as well as the Chief Judge. The Timers should send their report to the Chief Judge.

Have judges rename themselves as JUDGE with video off during the contest, and main timer rename themselves as TIMER. The Timer who will be displaying the timing cards should have downloaded the appropriate virtual backgrounds. It is recommended that the TIMER display a tri-color background to indicate their position whenever one of the Green, Yellow, or Red cards are not being displayed. (These are available on the District 46 website under Contest Resources). Verify that judges have renamed themselves, their video is off so that only the word JUDGE shows, and not a picture.

CONTESTANTS

Email ALL FORMS to contestants at least five days prior to the Contest. Ensure that completed Certification of Eligibility and Originality and Speech Contestant Profile forms are submitted to you at least two days prior to the Contest. Ensure that contestants are aware of all relevant rules. Draw for speaking order using any objective method that ensures a random draw.

DAY OF THE CONTEST, BUT BEFORE THE OFFICIAL START TIME:

- Open meeting well in advance of official starting time.
- Appoint co-hosts as needed. Co-host can mute, allow entry from waiting room, and allocate people to the breakout rooms.
- Create breakout rooms. This can only be done by the host.
- Pre-populate breakout room allocations (preferred, where possible), or do this ad hoc.
- Preliminary technical check for Contestants Video and audio (in breakout room).
- Remind Main TIMER to always have video on to allow it to be pinned. If using virtual backgrounds, cover the camera to only show background, reducing distractions. Make sure alternate timer has backgrounds and/or physical timing cards to show. If using virtual backgrounds, cover the camera lens to only show background reducing facial expressions and other distractions.
- When the meeting starts, all participants will be muted, and chat disabled until after the contest.
- Test screen sharing.

Meeting starts

SERGEANT AT ARMS:

Good morning/afternoon/evening, on behalf of club/area/division. I am one of the sergeants at arms for the contests today and want to share a few housekeeping rules of zoom etiquette.

Chat will be turned off until after the last contestant has spoken.

Please remain muted unless you have the 'virtual' stage.

Decide in advance, but no later than the start of the contest, whether to ask all attendees, except the timers and contestants to turn off their videos to preserve bandwidth/signal strength.

Feel free to applaud using the Zoom Reaction buttons at the bottom of your screen or use 'jazz hands' to indicate applause.

Note that the moment the sergeant at arms introduces the meeting to the contest chair, any late arriving contestants are disqualified.

Sergeant at Arms turns the meeting over to the Contest Chair

CONTEST CHAIR:

Welcome to the contest. Why do we do contests?

The purpose of a speech contest is to provide an opportunity for speakers to improve their speaking abilities, to recognize individual Toastmasters who want to pursue competitive speaking, and to provide an opportunity for all Toastmasters to learn by observing speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.

No speech will be recorded unless requested by the speaker. Anyone who does not want to be recorded, please turn off your video.

To remind us all about the contest rules, please welcome our chief judgeto the virtual stage.

The Contest Chair introduces the Chief Judge

CHIEF JUDGE:

As Chief Judge I am here to ensure the contest is fair and follows the official rules of Toastmasters International for this contest.

Note that the majority of the rules apply to both the International Speech and Table Topics contests and I will only highlight the differences when we get to the Table Topics contest. (This script assumes the International Speech contest comes first; should you choose to do it in the reverse order, review/revise the order of relevant lines appropriately.)

The contestants, judges, timers, ballot counters, and sergeants at arms have all been briefed earlier about the contest rules and procedures.

The contest chair has confirmed that all contestants are eligible to compete.

I can confirm that all judges and functionaries are eligible.

Specific rule pertaining to the International Speech Contents are:

The speech must be substantially original with no more than 25% being quoted or paraphrased. The source of any quoted or paraphrased content must be clearly cited in the speech.

Contestants must not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, from the platform at the same contest in which they are competing.

Any contestant wishing to use props must notify the Chief Judge and the Contest Chair prior to the contest and set it up prior to being introduced.

The speech time will be 5-7 mins. Our main timer tonight is and has renamed themselves as TIMER. Contestants, please ensure you pin the timer before starting your speech.

Contestants must speak for 4 minutes and thirty seconds and no more than 7 minutes 30 seconds, or they will be disqualified. At 5 minutes, the Timer will display the Green (timer changes to green to illustrate), at 6 minutes the Yellow (timer changes to yellow to illustrate) and at 7 minutes the Red (timer changes to red to illustrate). The Timer will keep each color up until it is time for the next color to display. At 7 minutes the Red card will remain up until the contestant is finished speaking. No indication will be given if the grace period is exceeded. This section is different for Table Topics, see later.

Timing will start at the first gesture or sound to the audience after the contestant has confirmed their technology (audio/video) and pinned the timer. Make a definitive end to your speech, saying 'Contest Chair' so that the timers know when your speech has ended.

Protests can be lodged with the Contest Chair and Chief Judge and can only be lodged by the voting judges and contestants, and only based on originality, eligibility and referencing another contestant's speech. Once the winners have been announced the results are final, unless the contest chair makes a mistake during the announcement, when it can be corrected.

Because we are on a virtual platform, the following special rules apply:

- Should a contestant experience any technical difficulties during their International speech, the contest chair will instruct the timer to stop the timing.
- The contestant will then be allowed a reasonable time (in D46 we define this as a one-time 5 minute maximum interruption) to rejoin the meeting.
- Be aware that, should a speaker have to join the meeting again after technical difficulties, a speaker might go to the waiting room upon signing back in, so the zoom host needs to be on the lookout to allow them back into the main room.
- Once the contestant returns and has confirmed that their audio and video are working and the timer is pinned, the timer restarts the clock from where it was stopped. Note: The contestant is NOT told what the timing is restarting at, but the Chief Judge or Contest Chair will tell them the last words that were heard of their speech, which is where the contestant must begin again. An additional 30 seconds is allowed to complete the speech, in other words, speaker is disqualified for time if the speech time exceeds 8 minutes. Green, yellow and red will still go up at 5, 6 and 7 minutes respectively.
- If a Table Topics contestant experiences any technological difficulties, this special dispensation does not apply, as a break will give the contestant an unfair advantage to have more time to think about their reply. That means that the table topics contestant is simply finished and will be judged on whatever portion of their answer the judges could hear and the next contestant will be called.

Chief Judge returns the virtual stage to the Contest Chair.

CONTEST CHAIR:

Thank you, Chief Judge

Before we start the contest, are the judges ready? [Chief Judge replies ‘Yes’]

Contest chair makes a general introductory statement such as – “Now that we know all the rules, let’s start the contest”

The speaking order for the International Speech contest was determined earlier by having our contestants draw for position. The speaking order for the International Speech contest will be:

Contestant No.1_____

Contestant No.5_____

Repeat the speaking order verbally, and then show speaking order via screen share.

Are there any questions from the contestants or the officials before we get started? Contestants or functionaries can unmute themselves. If judges had any questions at this time, they should communicate with the Chief Judge through their backchannel.

We will now begin the International Speech Contest.

*Call up the first contestant: Name of first contestant, say John

*John, can you confirm you have unmuted yourself, pinned the timer, and your video is working?

*[Contestant confirms vocally: Yes.]

*Then, announce each contestant with their Name, Speech title, Speech title, Name. This section is different for Table Topics, see later.

*SAY NOTHING ELSE, because your words or tone can be interpreted as bias for or against the contestant.

*After the speech: Mister/Madame Timer, may we have one minute of silence while the judges mark their ballots. Timer changes to Red to indicate 1 minute is over, and could also unmute and announce 'one minute'

Judges should be able to do their scoring in the one minute and can complete any remaining scoring or addition after the final contestant.

*Repeat for all contestants.

After the last contestant, ask for 2 minutes on the clock from the timer. Timer changes to Red to indicate 2 minutes are over, and could also unmute and announce 'two minutes'

Contest chair asks the Chief judge whether all ballots have been received, or whether the judges need more time. Chief judge replies "Yes, all ballots received", or "No, we need more time". Contest chair then asks the Chief judge to announce when all ballots have been collected.

Once the Chief judge has confirmed that all ballots have been received, the Contest chair asks the Sergeant at Arms to send the Chief judge and ballot counters to the breakout room, or if there is no break, the next contest continues. Timers send their reports to the Chief Judge per agreed method.

DO NOT DO INTERVIEWS OF CANDIDATES BETWEEN CONTESTS IF THERE IS AN OVERLAP IN CONTESTANTS THAT ARE PARTICIPATING. You do not want to give the judges more information about any contestant, hence wait for interviews till after both contests are over.

While the ballots are being counted, let's get to know our contestants. Please welcome to the virtual stage, our Contestant Interviewer.

Contest chair hands over to Interviewer

Thank you, Contest Chair.

Mister/Madam Timer, can we have one/two minutes on the clock for each contestant:

Go through all contestants with a brief interview.

- How long have you been in TM?
- What club are you representing?
- Third question, using biographical form for material or speech contents

Shorten number of questions asked based on time constraints

Interviewer hands back to Contest Chair

CONTEST CHAIR:

Acknowledge all the functionaries who assisted with the contest. Do this BEFORE the winners are announced, which is the highlight of the evening and the high note on which to complete the contest.

And now the moment we have all been waiting for ... the announcement of the winners. . .

First, we'll announce the winners of the [Table Topics] contest. Even if the order of the contests were reversed, suggest ending with International Speech results.

Do say: There were (no) disqualifications. (Do NOT announce the names of anyone disqualified.)

And now.... dramatic pause....

The 3rd Place winner is _____.

The 2nd place winner is _____. This person will represent the club/area/division if the 1st place winner cannot attend the next round for any reason.

And now, put your hands together for the 1st place winner of the Table Topics Contest will represent (the Club at the Area contest on _____)

or (the Area at the Division contest on _____)

or (the Division at the District contest on _____)

is _____.

Next, we will announce the winners of the International Speech Contest.

Do say: There were (no) disqualifications. (Do NOT announce the names of anyone disqualified.)

And now.... dramatic pause....

The 3rd Place winner is _____.

The 2nd place winner is _____. This person will represent the club/area/division if the 1st place winner cannot attend the next round for any reason.

And now, put your hands together for the 1st place winner of the International Speech Contest will represent (the Club at the Area contest on _____)

or (the Area at the Division contest on _____)

or (the Division at the District contest on _____)

is _____.

Note: If the announcement of winners made at the end of the Contest is different from the order on the electronically remitted Tally Sheet, Chief judge or Ballot counters must immediately interrupt the proceedings so that the announced results can be corrected by saying: "Point of Order! Contest Chair/Chief Judge, please check the results before proceeding.

Wrap up the contests, and hand it over to the presiding officer as relevant.

ADJUSTMENTS FOR TABLE TOPICS

CHIEF JUDGE RULE ADJUSTMENTS:

Procedure:

All contestants except for contestant #1 will be sent to a breakout room to wait their turn. After contestant #1 has finished her/his answer to the question, the other contestants will be brought back one at a time, based on the speaking order, to answer the same question. Contestants must not use digital or other devices during the contest to gain an unfair advantage.

Timing:

The speech time will be 1 -2 minutes. Our main timer tonight is and has renamed themselves as TIMER. Contestants, please ensure you pin the timer before starting your speech.

Contestants must speak for 1 minute minimum and no more than 2 minutes 30 seconds, or they will be disqualified. At 1 minute, the Timer will display the Green (timer changes to green to illustrate), at 1.5 minutes the Yellow (timer changes to yellow to illustrate) and at 2 minutes the Red (timer changes to red to illustrate). The Timer will keep each color up until it is time for the next color to display. At 2 minutes the Red card will remain up until the contestant is finished speaking. No indication will be given if the grace period is exceeded.

Note: Unlike with the International Speech contest, if a Table Topics contestant experiences any technological difficulties, this special dispensation does not apply, as a break will give the contestant an unfair advantage to have more time to think about their reply. That means that the table topics contestant is simply finished and will be judged on whatever portion of their answer the judges could hear and the next contestant will be called.

During a Table Topics Contest, when the contestants exit the primary broadcast and temporarily enter the holding breakout room, they must keep their webcam ON so they remain under the supervision of the contest sergeant at arms. Contestants must not use digital or other devices during the contest to gain an unfair advantage.

CONTEST CHAIR SCRIPT ADJUSTMENT:

Introduction of contestants:

Announce each contestant with their Name, Question, Question, Name

State the question throughout the contest the exact same way for all contestants.