



# Speech Contest Rulebook

## Explanation of Changes

JULY 1, 2024, TO JUNE 30, 2025	JULY 1, 2025, TO JUNE 30, 2026	EXPLANATION
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters educational program. They provide an opportunity for Toastmasters to gain speaking experience, as well as an opportunity for other Toastmasters to learn by observing proficient speakers.</p> <p>This booklet contains the rules and standard procedures for conducting the International, Evaluation, Humorous, Table Topics, Tall Tales, Online, and Video speech contests. If you are involved in conducting or competing in a speech contest, please read these rules carefully and follow them. By doing so, you will ensure a fair speech contest and an enjoyable event for everyone.</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters educational program. They provide an opportunity for Toastmasters to gain speaking experience, as well as an opportunity for other Toastmasters to learn by observing proficient speakers.</p> <p>This booklet contains the rules and standard procedures for conducting the International, Evaluation, Humorous, Table Topics, Tall Tales, <b>and Online, and Video</b> speech contests. If you are involved in conducting or competing in a speech contest, please read these rules carefully and follow them. By doing so, you will ensure a fair speech contest and an enjoyable event for everyone.</p>	<p>The Board of Directors determined that the 2024-2025 program year would be the last to include the Video Speech Contest. This contest, created for undistricted clubs and Provisional Districts, has seen declining participation over the years in both the number of total participants and the number of Districts and clubs participating.</p>
<p><b>General Rules for All Toastmasters Speech Contests</b></p> <p><b>1. Speech Contest Policy</b></p> <p>A. Toastmasters International recognizes and supports the following official speech contests: International Speech Contest, Evaluation Contest, Humorous Speech Contest, Table Topics Contest, Tall Tales Contest, Online Speech Contest, and Video Speech Contest (only for members of undistricted clubs, including Provisional Districts). No other contest types, showcases, etc., can be conducted by Districts (including Areas and Divisions) and Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions).</p> <p>1. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) must conduct the International Speech Contest. The International Speech Contest must only be conducted in English.</p>	<p><b>General Rules for All Toastmasters Speech Contests</b></p> <p><b>1. Speech Contest Policy</b></p> <p>A. Toastmasters International recognizes and supports the following official speech contests: International Speech Contest, Evaluation Contest, Humorous Speech Contest, Table Topics Contest, Tall Tales Contest, <b>and Online Speech Contest, and Video Speech Contest (only for members of undistricted clubs, including Provisional Districts)</b>. No other contest types, showcases, etc., can be conducted by Districts (including Areas and Divisions) and Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions).</p> <p>1. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) must conduct the International Speech Contest. The International Speech Contest must only be conducted in English.</p>	<p>Language throughout the <i>Speech Contest Rulebook</i> has been updated to remove content related to the Video Speech Contest.</p> <p>General Rules for All Toastmasters Speech Contests, Section 1.Speech Contest Policy, A.2 and A.3 were updated to align with changes to Policy 6.0: Speech Contests, 1.B and C. This change provides further guidance regarding the scheduling of District contests. In addition to recommending which contests are to be conducted, the District Director also recommends the event at which each contest will occur.</p> <p>Section 1.Speech Contest Policy, B was updated to align with the change to Policy 6.0: Speech Contests 2. This change permits Districts to conduct contests at the October/November event in addition to the annual District Conference. The International Speech Contest must always take place at the annual district conference. November 2024, the Executive Committee approved the addition of an October/November event as a second option for when District-level contests can be conducted.</p>

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<p>a. Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may conduct a speech contest in English using the rules of the International Speech Contest. This contest does not proceed beyond the District level. A contest using the rules of the International Speech Contest must be titled Provisional Speech Contest.</p> <p>2. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) and Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may conduct up to three (3) additional English speech contests each year. The District Director recommends which contests are to be conducted. The recommendations are subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee at its first meeting of the program year.</p> <p>3. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) including Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may also conduct up to four (4) non-English speech contests each year. The District Director recommends which contests are to be conducted. The recommendations are subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee at its first meeting of the program year.</p> <p>a. Each of these contests is conducted in a language selected by the District Director and approved by the District Executive Committee.</p> <p>b. Non- English contests are optional and must be conducted using the rules of the corresponding English speech contest. If a non-English contest is conducted using the rules of the International Speech Contest, it must follow all rules, including eligibility requirements.</p> <p>c. If the non-English contest is being conducted using the rules of the International Speech Contest, such contest must be titled using the name of the language. For example: Chinese Speech Contest. d) Non-English contests must not continue beyond the District level.</p>	<p>a. Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may conduct a speech contest in English using the rules of the International Speech Contest. This contest does not proceed beyond the District level. A contest using the rules of the International Speech Contest must be titled Provisional Speech Contest.</p> <p>2. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) and Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may conduct up to three (3) additional English speech contests each year. The District Director recommends which contests are to be conducted <b>and at which event the District-level contests take place (i.e., the annual District conference or an October/November event)</b>. The recommendations are subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee at its first meeting of the program year.</p> <p>3. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) including Provisional Districts (including Areas and Divisions) may also conduct up to four (4) non-English speech contests each year. The District Director recommends which contests are to be conducted <b>and at which event the District-level contests take place (i.e., the annual District conference or an October/November event)</b>. The recommendations are subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee at its first meeting of the program year.</p> <p>a. Each of these contests is conducted in a language selected by the District Director and approved by the District Executive Committee.</p> <p>b. Non- English contests are optional and must be conducted using the rules of the corresponding English speech contest. If a non-English contest is conducted using the rules of the International Speech Contest, it must follow all rules, including eligibility requirements.</p> <p>c. If the non-English contest is being conducted using the rules of the International Speech Contest, such contest must be titled using the name of the language. For example: Chinese Speech Contest. d) Non-English contests must not continue beyond the District level.</p>	<p>Section 1.Speech Contest Policy, B.1 was added to allow Districts additional time to host the Online Speech Contest. Districts who chose to conduct the Online Speech Contest can now do so on a separate day within the allowed time frame. This specification is to allow more convenient participation for online officials and contestants.</p> <p>Section 1.Speech Contest Policy, E was updated to align with changes to Policy 6.0: Speech Contests, 5. This change allows the Chief Executive Officer to grant exceptions to the Speech Contest Rulebook for safety reasons.</p>

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<p>e. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) are not permitted to conduct multilingual speech contests.</p> <p>B. All District-level speech contests are conducted only at the annual District Conference.</p> <p>C. Contests must originate at the club level and proceed through the Area, Division, and District levels, respectively. Only contests following this progression are permitted at the Area, Division, and District levels. All clubs are eligible to advance contestants to the Area level in all contests, regardless of the contest language or the primary language of the club.</p> <p>1. Contests conducted by Provisional Districts must follow this same progression, with the exception of the Video Speech Contest.</p> <p>D. Toastmasters International pays the travel expenses of each contestant who participates in the International Speech Contest at the semifinal level at the International Convention. The travel allowance is computed in the same manner and subject to the same restrictions as that of District leaders.</p> <p>E. The Speech Contest Rulebook is Protocol and applies to all official Toastmasters speech contests. Modifications to rules may only be made through the administrative Protocol review process. Exceptions are not permitted.</p>	<p>e. Districts (including Areas and Divisions) are not permitted to conduct multilingual speech contests.</p> <p>B. <b>All District-level speech contests are conducted only at the annual District Conference. Districts may only conduct District-level speech contests during the annual District conference and/or the October/November event. The District-level International Speech Contest must be held during the annual District conference.</b></p> <p><b>1. Districts conducting the Online Speech Contest while holding as in-person conference or event may schedule their Online Speech Contest on a separate day from the rest of the conference or event to allow for fully online participation from contestants and contest officials. The District-level Online Speech Contest must be conducted within the months of October/November or between March 15 and June 1.</b></p> <p>C. Contests must originate at the club level and proceed through the Area, Division, and District levels, respectively. Only contests following this progression are permitted at the Area, Division, and District levels. All clubs are eligible to advance contestants to the Area level in all contests, regardless of the contest language or the primary language of the club.</p> <p>1. Contests conducted by Provisional Districts must follow this same progression, <b>with the exception of the Video Speech Contest.</b></p> <p>D. Toastmasters International pays the travel expenses of each contestant who participates in the International Speech Contest at the semifinal level at the International Convention. The travel allowance is computed in the same manner and subject to the same restrictions as that of District leaders.</p> <p>E. The Speech Contest Rulebook is Protocol and applies to all official Toastmasters speech contests. Modifications to rules may only be made through the administrative Protocol review process. <b>Exceptions for safety reasons may be granted at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Other</b> exceptions are not permitted.</p>	

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<p><b>2. Eligibility</b></p> <p>C. The following are ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters speech contest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incumbent International Officers and Directors</li> <li>Region Advisors or Region Advisor applicants</li> <li>District officers whose terms expire June 30:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Director</li> <li>Program Quality Director</li> <li>Club Growth Director</li> <li>Administration Manager</li> <li>Finance Manager</li> <li>Public Relations Manager</li> <li>Division Director</li> <li>Area Director</li> </ol> </li> <li>International Officer and Director candidates</li> <li>Immediate Past District Directors</li> <li>Candidates for District positions elected by the District Council for the term beginning the upcoming July 1.</li> <li>Members who are serving in contest official or presenter roles that meet the following criteria:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voting judge, tiebreaking judge, or chief judge at any level, in any District, at the same contest type in which they would be competing</li> <li>Timer, ballot counter (counter), Sergeant at Arms, or other contest official role for the same contest in which they would be competing.</li> <li>Presenter of an education session, a contest chair, a contest Toastmaster, or an event committee chair for the event at which the contest will be held, including Area, Division, and District events, as well as the International Convention.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><b>2. Eligibility</b></p> <p>C. The following are ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters speech contest:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incumbent International Officers and Directors</li> <li>Region Advisors or Region Advisor applicants</li> <li>District officers whose terms expire June 30:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Director</li> <li>Program Quality Director</li> <li>Club Growth Director</li> <li>Administration Manager</li> <li>Finance Manager</li> <li>Public Relations Manager</li> <li>Division Director</li> <li>Area Director</li> </ol> </li> <li>International Officer and Director candidates</li> <li>Immediate Past District Directors</li> <li>Candidates for District positions elected by the District Council for the term beginning the upcoming July 1.</li> <li>Members who are serving in contest official or presenter roles that meet the following criteria:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voting judge, tiebreaking judge, or chief judge at any level, in any District, at the same contest type in which they would be competing</li> <li>Timer, ballot counter (counter), Sergeant at Arms, or other contest official role for the same contest in which they would be competing.</li> <li>Presenter of an education session, a contest chair, a contest Toastmaster, or an event committee chair for the event at which the contest will be held, including Area, Division, and District events, as well as the International Convention.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>General Rules for all Toastmasters Speech Contests, Section 2. Eligibility, E was updated to provide clarification regarding the eligibility of contest officials. In addition to being paid members, all contest officials must also be physically present for the contest which they are serving.</p> <p>The only exception is if they are an official in the Online Speech Contest.</p>

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<p>8. The winner of the World Championship of Public Speaking® held in August during the International Convention is not eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest again at any level.</p> <p>9. The winner of the Video Speech Contest announced at the International Convention is not eligible to compete in the Video Speech Contest again. Winners of the Video Speech Contest may compete in the International Speech Contest in subsequent years if all other eligibility requirements are met.</p> <p>10. Toastmasters who are members in more than one (1) club and who meet all eligibility requirements are permitted to compete in the club contest(s) in each club in which they hold paid membership.</p> <p>a. No contestant can compete in more than one (1) Area speech contest of a given type, even if the two (2) Areas are in different Divisions or Districts.</p> <p>11. Each contestant must be physically present to compete beyond the club level.</p> <p>Participation by audio, video, or other remote technology is not permitted beyond the club level. (Exceptions: participants in the International Speech Contest Quarterfinals, Online Speech Contest, and Video Speech Contest.)</p> <p>D. To be a chief judge, voting judge, or tiebreaking judge at a Toastmasters speech contest, you must meet all eligibility requirements identified below.</p> <p>1. At a club contest, be a paid member.</p> <p>2. At an Area, Division, or District contest:</p> <p>a. Be a paid member for a minimum of six (6) months.</p> <p>b. Have completed a minimum of six (6) speech projects in the Competent Communication manual or earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.</p>	<p>8. The winner of the World Championship of Public Speaking® held in August during the International Convention is not eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest again at any level.</p> <p><b>9. The winner of the Video Speech Contest announced at the International Convention is not eligible to compete in the Video Speech Contest again. Winners of the Video Speech Contest may compete in the International Speech Contest in subsequent years if all other eligibility requirements are met.</b></p> <p><b>9. 10.</b> Toastmasters who are members in more than one (1) club and who meet all eligibility requirements are permitted to compete in the club contest(s) in each club in which they hold paid membership.</p> <p>a. No contestant can compete in more than one (1) Area speech contest of a given type, even if the two (2) Areas are in different Divisions or Districts.</p> <p><b>10. 11.</b> Each contestant must be physically present to compete beyond the club level.</p> <p>Participation by audio, video, or other remote technology is not permitted beyond the club level. (Exceptions: participants in the International Speech Contest Quarterfinals, <b>and</b> Online Speech Contest, <b>and</b> Video Speech Contest.)</p> <p>D. To be a chief judge, voting judge, or tiebreaking judge at a Toastmasters speech contest, you must meet all eligibility requirements identified below.</p> <p>1. At a club contest, be a paid member.</p> <p>2. At an Area, Division, or District contest:</p> <p>a. Be a paid member for a minimum of six (6) months.</p> <p>b. Have completed a minimum of six (6) speech projects in the Competent Communication manual or earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.</p>	

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<p>1. Only members who joined Toastmasters prior to the rollout of Pathways in their region can apply speeches from the Competent Communication manual towards eligibility for judging.</p> <p>c. Be physically present at the contest for which you are serving. (Exceptions: contest officials for the Online Speech Contest.)</p> <p>3. At the International Speech Contest Quarterfinals, Semifinals, and the World Championship of Public Speaking:</p> <p>a. Be a paid member for a minimum of six (6) months.</p> <p>1. The club must also be in good standing.</p> <p>b. Be at least an Advanced Toastmaster Bronze or Advanced Communicator Bronze, or have completed at least one (1) path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.</p> <p>1. Only members who joined Toastmasters prior to the rollout of Pathways in their region can apply speeches from the Competent Communication manual to eligibility for judging.</p> <p>c. Have previously judged a Toastmasters speech contest at the Area, Division, District, or semifinal level.</p> <p>E. All other contest officials and the Evaluation Contest test speaker must be paid members.</p> <p>F. Candidates for elected District leader positions for the term beginning the subsequent July 1 are ineligible to serve as a contest official or as a test speaker at the Area, Division, or District level.</p>	<p>1. Only members who joined Toastmasters prior to the rollout of Pathways in their region can apply speeches from the Competent Communication manual towards eligibility for judging.</p> <p>c. Be physically present at the contest for which you are serving. (Exceptions: contest officials for the Online Speech Contest.)</p> <p>3. At the International Speech Contest Quarterfinals, Semifinals, and the World Championship of Public Speaking:</p> <p>a. Be a paid member for a minimum of six (6) months.</p> <p>1. The club must also be in good standing.</p> <p>b. Be at least an Advanced Toastmaster Bronze or Advanced Communicator Bronze, or have completed at least one (1) path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.</p> <p>1. Only members who joined Toastmasters prior to the rollout of Pathways in their region can apply speeches from the Competent Communication manual to eligibility for judging.</p> <p>c. Have previously judged a Toastmasters speech contest at the Area, Division, District, or semifinal level.</p> <p>E. All other contest officials and the Evaluation Contest test speaker must <b>meet all eligibility requirements outlined below: be paid members.</b></p> <p><b>1. Be paid members.</b></p> <p><b>2. Be physically present at the contest for which you are serving. (Exceptions: contest officials for the Online Speech Contest.)</b></p> <p>F. Candidates for elected District leader positions for the term beginning the subsequent July 1 are ineligible to serve as a contest official or as a test speaker at the Area, Division, or District level.</p>	

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<b>International Speech Contest Rules</b> B. If a quarterfinal video fails to meet any of the recording requirements, the contestant will be disqualified by the chief judge. The submitting District will be notified of the disqualification.	<b>International Speech Contest Rules</b> B. If a quarterfinal video fails to meet any of the recording requirements, the contestant will be disqualified by the chief judge. The submitting District will be notified of the disqualification <b>and provided three (3) business days to submit a video of their next highest-placed contestant (a second submission of the first contestant is not permitted) If the video of the next highest-placed contestant fails to meet the recording requirements, the contestant will be disqualified by the chief judge. The District will not be provided any additional opportunities to submit videos for quarterfinals.</b>	<p>International Speech Contest Rules, Section 1, B was updated to clarify the next steps for a District if their submission for quarterfinals is disqualified for not meeting video recording requirements.</p> <p>This section now states that Districts are allowed a single submission of their next highest-placed contestant in the event of a disqualification. Districts will not be able to submit a second video of their first-place contestant. If the next highest-placed contestant's video is also disqualified, the District will not be included in quarterfinals.</p> <p>To facilitate a timely quarterfinals contest, the video of the District's next highest-placed contestant must be submitted within three business days. This allows Districts time for resubmission without significant delay to the quarterfinals process.</p>
<b>Video Speech Contest</b>	<b>Video Speech Contest</b>	<p>The Video Speech Contest section of the Speech Contest Rulebook was removed following the Board of Directors' decision that the 2024-2025 program year would be the last to include this contest.</p>
<b>Contest Chair's Checklist</b> <b>Preparation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Select a place and time for the speech contest and coordinate the selection with the proper Toastmasters officer.</li> <li>Determine the agenda for the contest.</li> <li>Arrange for the supplies and services required for the event.</li> <li>Order or download certificates of participation from World Headquarters for all contest speakers.</li> </ol>	<b>Contest Chair's Checklist</b> <b>Preparation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Select a place and time for the speech contest and coordinate the selection with the proper Toastmasters officer.</li> <li>Determine the agenda for the contest.</li> <li>Arrange for the supplies and services required for the event.</li> <li>Order or download certificates of participation from World Headquarters for all contest speakers.</li> </ol>	<p>The Contest Chair's Checklist, Section 1.Preparation, 13, was updated to ensure it is clear that the contest chair has the ability to disqualify contestants on the basis of eligibility. If a contestant is found to be ineligible to compete on the basis of eligibility, it is the responsibility of the contest chair to inform them of this before the start of the contest.</p> <p>Section 2.During the Contest, 6 and 7 were updated to provide clarity and consistency regarding the responsibilities of the contest chair in the event of a protest and/or disqualification.</p> <p>Section 2.During the Contest, 6 was updated to align with the protests section of the rulebook (General Rules for All Toastmasters Speech Contests, Section 7.Protests and Disqualifications). Wording was also added to note that the chief judge will resolve any protests before the announcement that the contest is adjourned.</p>

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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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)</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.)</li> <li>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)</li> <li>12. Promote the contest in your community by sending news releases to the media.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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)</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.)</li> <li>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)</li> <li>12. Promote the contest in your community by sending news releases to the media.</li> </ol>	<p>Section 2.During the Contest, 7 was updated to specify that, while time disqualifications are announced, other types of disqualifications are not announced at any point during or after a contest. This includes disqualifications pertaining to originality, reference to another contestant or another contestant's speech, and a speech not being entirely new and different at the World Championship of Public Speaking.</p> <p>Wording was also removed in Section 2.During the Contest, 7 that previously allowed the chief judge to discuss time disqualifications with affected contestants if the chief judge so desired. Because this section was worded as an allowance for the chief judge, and not a directive, it created ambiguity that could place the chief judge in a position where they may feel pressured to discuss disqualifications even if they preferred to not discuss the matter.</p>



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<p>13. Ensure that each contestant is eligible under the contest rules before the contest, and notify contestants of disqualification if necessary. To check contestants' eligibility:</p> <p>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 ss.</p> <p><b>During the Contest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	<p>13. Ensure that each contestant is eligible under the contest rules before the contest. <b>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, and notify contestants of disqualification if necessary.</b> To check contestants' eligibility:</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>During the Contest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	

JULY 1, 2024, TO JUNE 30, 2025	JULY 1, 2025, TO JUNE 30, 2026	EXPLANATION
<p>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.</p> <p>All ballots, Counter's Tally Sheet forms, and Time Record Sheets are considered confidential.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>4. While the ballot counters are counting the ballots, the contest chair will interview each speaker.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5. When the interviews are completed, collect the contest results from the chief judge.</p> <p>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 of the winner and alternate(s). The contest chair must notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding originality or eligibility prior to the announcement that the meeting is adjourned. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, or for referencing 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 in the decision to disqualify. The contest chair can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>All ballots, Counter's Tally Sheet forms, and Time Record Sheets are considered confidential.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>4. While the ballot counters are counting the ballots, the contest chair will interview each speaker.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5. When the interviews are completed, collect the contest results from the chief judge.</p> <p>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 <b>the announcement that the contest is adjourned. The chief judge will resolve any protests before the announcement that the contest is adjourned. the announcement of the winner and alternate(s). The contest chair must notify the contestant of a disqualification regarding originality or eligibility prior to the announcement that the meeting is adjourned. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, or for referencing 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 in the decision to disqualify. The contest chair can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility.</b></p>	

JULY 1, 2024, TO JUNE 30, 2025	JULY 1, 2025, TO JUNE 30, 2026	EXPLANATION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to announcing results, the chair must announce if time disqualification(s) occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved. The chief judge may discuss the matter privately with the disqualified contestant(s).</li> <li>In closing, thank all who helped make the contest a success.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to announcing results, the chair must announce if time disqualification(s) occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved. <b>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. The chief judge may discuss the matter privately with the disqualified contestant(s).</b></li> <li>In closing, thank all who helped make the contest a success.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Chief Judge's Checklist</b></p> <p><b>During the Contest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Item 1175) from the timers.</li> <li>Collect the Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot from the tiebreaking judge.</li> <li>Resolve any eligibility or originality protests that may arise.</li> <li>Oversee the counting process. See that all ballots are counted twice to ensure accuracy.</li> <li>Provide a list to the contest chair showing placement of all contestants.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Chief Judge's Checklist</b></p> <p><b>During the Contest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instructions for Timers (Item 1175) from the timers.</li> <li>Collect the Tiebreaking Judge's Guide and Ballot from the tiebreaking judge.</li> <li>Resolve any <b>eligibility or originality</b> protests that may arise. <b>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.</b></li> <li>Oversee the counting process. See that all ballots are counted twice to ensure accuracy.</li> <li><b>Provide a list to the contest chair showing placement of all contestants:</b></li> </ol>	<p>Section 3. During the Contest, 3 was updated to provide clarity on the chief judge's responsibilities in the event of a protest. This updated section includes information on who is allowed to lodge a protest with the chief judge or contest chair, and when in the contest process it is acceptable to do so. This section also details the process for a protest and the time frame by when a protest must be resolved.</p> <p>Section 4. After the Contest was added to the chief judge's checklist, the chief judge does have multiple post-contest responsibilities. Item 5 was moved from Section 3. During the Contest to Section 4. After the Contest for clarity.</p>

JULY 1, 2024, TO JUNE 30, 2025	JULY 1, 2025, TO JUNE 30, 2026	EXPLANATION
	<p><b>After the Contest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Ensure that all contest forms are disposed of in a way that maintains complete confidentiality.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	

For more information, please refer to the [minutes](#) of the January 30, 2025, Board of Directors meeting.