

Table Topics Contest Briefing for Judges

This form is NOT an official document; the Toastmasters Speech Contest rulebook for the current year is the sole authority of contest rules. To ensure a smooth contest, this document presents rules and recommendations in a cohesive script for briefing contestants. The following icons are used to denote portions of the document that are rules or recommendations:

rule, and
 recommendation.

Gather all Judges, Ballot Counters, and Timers and cover the following points: Brief the Tie-breaking Judge separately.

Contest officials' eligibility:

- Contest chairs, chief judges, voting judges, tiebreaking judges, timers, counters, and sergeants at arms may not compete in the contest at which they are serving in any of these roles.
- Contest officials must not serve in more than one (1) role for the same contest at the Area (when practical), Division, and District.
- To be a chief judge, voting judge or tiebreaking judge at a Toastmasters speech contest, you must meet all eligibility requirements identified below:
 - Not be a member serving as a chief judge, voting judge, or tiebreaking judge beyond the club level for a contest in which the member is still competing or intends to compete.
 - At a club contest, be a paid member.
 - At an Area, Division, or District contest:
 - Be a paid member for a minimum of six (6) months.
 - Completed a minimum of six (6) speech projects in Competent Communication or earned a certificate of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience. 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.
 - All other contest officials and the Evaluation contest test speaker must be paid members
- All voting judges and the tiebreaking judge receive the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics (Item 1170). The form must be signed and returned to the chief judge
- Voting judges at all levels shall remain anonymous when practical.

General Procedures

- Required team of contest officials:

Level	Club	Area	Division / District
	As far as Practical		The chief judge, voting judges, and the tiebreaking judge must not be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member.
Contest chair	1	1	1
Judges	Min 5	Min 5 or equal representation from clubs composing the Area	Min 7 or equal representation from the areas composing the Division or District
Ballot Counters	2	2	3
Timers	2	2	2
Tiebreaking Judge <small>Known only by Chief Judge</small>	1	1	1
Qualifying Judge	N/A	N/A	N/A

- Distribute the following forms, review their content, and provide necessary instructions:
 - Judges receive the Table Topics Contest Judge's Guide and Ballot (Item 1180);
 - Timers receive the Speech Contest Time Record Sheet and Instruction (Item 1175); and
 - Ballot counters receive the Counter's Tally Sheet (Item 1176).
- Record the name of each contestant in the order announced by the Contest Chair. Insert the names in the columns from left to right. Fold the paper under after each presentation to avoid bias in your scoring.
- Remind judges to remain objective.
- Inform the Judges to sit throughout the audience to avoid "judge clusters" and to avoid sitting next to a contestant.
- The Chief Judge is responsible to dispose of: Judge's guide, Ballots, Counter's Tally Sheets, and Time Record Sheets once the winners are announced.
- Judges will NOT discuss their results or reveal their ranking of contestants to anyone.

Contestant's Eligibility:

- 🔊 Be a member in good standing of a club in good standing at the level they are competing; i.e. dues sent and received at WHQ and maintain eligibility at all levels of any contest.
- 🔊 No contestant can compete in more than one area speech contest of a given type, even if the two areas are in different divisions or districts.
- 🔊 Area level and above: Not be presenters of educational sessions at the event at which the contest is held
- 🔊 Confirm that you have been provided the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (1183) forms for all contestants
- 🔊 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.
- 🔊 The following are ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters speech contest:
 - 🔊 member serving as a chief judge, voting judge, or tiebreaking judge beyond the club level for a contest in which the member is still competing or intends to compete,
 - 🔊 Incumbent District or International officer, nor members who have declared the intent to run for District or International office (i.e. District director, Area director, etc.)

Contest Procedures:

- 🔊 All contestants will be escorted out of the room by the sergeant at arms and will be escorted back into the room one at a time once their time to speak has arrived.
- 🔊 The Contest Chair will read the same Table Topic for all contestants. Normally a written copy of the Table Topic is shown to the contestant while the Chair repeats the topic twice.
- 🔊 If the location where the contest is held cannot prevent contestants outside the room from contacting the audience, no one will be allowed in or out of the room between the first contestant and the last contestant.
- 🔊 To eliminate perception of bias, the contest chair must instruct the sergeant at arms to escort all contestants out of the room except the first contestant and introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name, topic, topic, and contestant's name.
- 🔊 Time of speech is 2 minutes. Speeches less than 1 minute or more than 2 minutes 30 seconds will be disqualified.
- 🔊 The warning signals are lights or cards. They will be displayed as follows, (👉ensure the timekeepers display the warning signals as you indicate timings)
 - 🔊 **Green Light at 1 minute,**
 - 🔊 **Amber Light at 1 minutes 30 seconds,** and
 - 🔊 **Red Light at 2 minutes** and will remain displayed until the speaker has concluded. No signal shall be given to indicate a speaker has gone overtime.
- 🔊 If the signal or timing equipment fail, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra before being disqualified.
- 🔊 Timing starts with the first definite verbal or nonverbal communication with the audience.
- 🔊 There will be one minute of silence between speakers.
- 🔊 For a ballot to be valid, judges shall:
 - 🔊 Complete their ballots by entering their choices for first, second, and third place.
 - 🔊 Sign and print their names on the ballot.
- 🔊 All contestants will speak from the same platform or Area designated by the contest chair. All contestants, the chief judge, voting judges, and the tiebreaking judge will be advised of the speaking Area before the contest begins.
- 🔊 All equipment must be available for contestants to practice with 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.
- 🔊 Protests are limited to eligibility, and originality, and reference to another contestant's speech and must **ONLY** be lodged by voting judges and/or contestants. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the announcement of the winner(s) and alternate(s). Protests from audience members are not considered.
- 🔊 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.
- 🔊 If the list of winners is announced incorrectly, the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers may immediately interrupt to correct the error.
- 🔊 After the results are announced, all decisions are final.
- 🔊 The taking of photographs during the speeches is not permitted.
- 🔊 Recording speeches during the contest is not permitted without the preauthorization of the Contest Chair; if authorized, these will be unobtrusive to the contestants.
- 🔊 Check whether Judges have any questions.