



TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 69

WHEN YOU ARE A CONTESTANT

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.

When choosing your attire and hair style please remember to consider what type of microphone will be used at the contest. Gentlemen may find that a button up shirt with jacket may best accommodate a lapel microphone. Ladies should endeavour to wear a dress, blouse/jacket that comfortably allows the attachment of a lapel microphone. The microphone battery pack will need to be attached to an item of clothing such as hooking it on to a belt, back pocket, back of a dress/skirt. If a headset is being used, the side pieces hook over the ears from the back of the head/neck area. If you have long hair you may find that wearing it up will accommodate the headset more easily. If the stage has a curtain back-drop choose your outfit colours wisely. Example; black curtain backdrop would deter you choosing a black outfit as you will blend in with the background.

If you are competing in a speech contest at any level, we highly recommend that you read the current **Speech Contest Rulebook** for the complete set of rules. The contest rulebook is available as a download from the Resource section of the Toastmasters International Website.

To be eligible to compete in any official Toastmasters speech contest, a member must be a paid member of the of the club, area, division, and district in which you are competing. The club must also be in good standing.

In addition, to be eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest, you must have completed at least six speech projects in the Competent Communication manual or a minimum of two levels in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience prior to the club contest. However, a charter member of a club chartered less than one year before the Club contest is permitted to compete without having completed this requirement. The club must have officially chartered before the area contest.

Maintain eligibility at all levels of any contest. If at any level it is determined that a contestant was ineligible to compete at any previous level the contestant must be disqualified. This disqualification must occur even if the ineligibility is discovered at a later level and has been corrected.

For the complete Eligibility list of members who may compete as well as members ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters contest, please refer to the current Speech Contest Rulebook under the eligibility section.

If you are a member of more than one club and meet all other eligibility requirements, you are permitted to compete in each club contest in which membership in good standing is held. You may represent only one of those clubs at area level, even if the areas are in different divisions or districts.

You choose the subject of your International and Humorous contest speech. Contestants must prepare their own speech which must be substantially original. Before all contests, every contestant

must certify in writing to the chief judge that the content of their speech is or will be substantially original by completing the *Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality* (Item 1183).

Twenty-five percent or less of the speech may be quoted, paraphrased, or referencing another person's content. Any quoted, paraphrased, or referenced content must be so identified during the speech presentation.

All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the Contest Chair. You will be advised of the speaking area before the contest begins. Use of the lectern/podium is optional. All equipment shall be available for you to practice with prior to the contest. You are responsible for arranging your preferred setup of the lectern/podium microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced.

Before the contest, you will be briefed on the rules by the Contest Toastmaster. You will then draw for your speaking position. If you are absent from the briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, is permitted to attend the briefing in your place. If you are not present when the Contest Toastmaster is introduced, you are disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant.

If you arrive after the briefing but before the Contest Toastmaster is introduced, you are permitted to compete, provided you:

- Report immediately to the Contest Toastmaster upon your arrival.
- Have all required paperwork in good order before the Contest Toastmaster is introduced to begin the contest.
- Waive the opportunity of a briefing.

For the **International and Humorous** contest speeches, the Contest Toastmaster will introduce you by announcing your name, speech title, speech title, and your name. Contestants in the International and Humorous contests are permitted to remain in the same room throughout the duration of the contest.

Table Topics contestants when directed will leave the room with the appropriate contest official. They will remain in the withdrawal room until the contest official escorts them back to the room to compete. For Table Topics contests, the Contest Toastmaster will introduce you by announcing your name, topic, topic, and your name.

Evaluation Contests. Contestants who choose to make preparatory notes during the test speech must use the Evaluation Contestant Notes sheet (Item 1177). More than one of Item 1177 sheet may be used. At the conclusion of the test speech all contestants shall leave the room with the appropriate contest official. When advised by the timer contestants may then prepare their evaluation using the Evaluation Contestant Notes sheet (Item 1177). Contestants will have five minutes to complete their notes. After five minutes has elapsed no further preparation shall be allowed. The contest official will collect your notes. Please ensure your notes are marked with your name. Your notes will be handed back to you just prior to your introduction.

There will be one minute of silence between contestant speeches, during which time the judges will mark their ballots.

After the conclusion of the contestant interviews all contestants shall return to their seats. The Contest Toastmaster announces the winners of the contest in reverse order.

Occasionally, a contest will be held with only one contestant. In such cases, a contest must still be held, and the contestant must be disqualified if he or she does not meet the timing, originality, and eligibility requirements.

Announcement of contest winners is final unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the Chief Judge, Ballot Counters, or Timers are permitted to immediately interrupt to correct the error.

Ensure you have full view of the timing lights.

All speeches must conform to the timing guidelines for the contest. International and Humorous speeches shall be from five to seven minutes. Table Topics contest speeches shall be from one minute to two minutes. Evaluation contest speeches shall be from two to three minutes.

Upon being introduced, you shall proceed immediately to the speaking position. Timing will begin with your first definite verbal or nonverbal communication with the audience. You should begin speaking within a short time after arriving at the speaking area and are not permitted to delay the contest unnecessarily. In all speech contests, no signal shall be given for the overtime period.

If you are visually impaired, you are permitted to request and must be granted a form of warning signal of your own choosing.

In the event of technical failure of the signal or timing equipment, you are allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.

Prior to announcing results, the Contest Chair shall announce whether time disqualifications occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved.

Protests are limited to eligibility and originality and shall only be lodged by voting judges and contestants. Any protest shall be lodged with the Chief Judge and/ or Contest Chair prior to the announcement of the winner and alternate(s). Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, the contestant must be given an opportunity to respond to the voting judges. A majority of voting judges must concur in the decision to disqualify. The Contest Chair can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility. All decisions of the voting judges and qualifying judges are final.