

Table Topics Contest Rules

These rules apply to all Table Topics Contests, which are conducted in English only. These rules may not be supplanted or modified, and no exceptions may be made.

1. PURPOSE

- A. To provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.
- B. To encourage development of impromptu and/or extemporaneous speaking skills and to recognize the best as encouragement to all.

2. SELECTION SEQUENCE

- A. 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 contest level, the highest placed available contestant will advance to that level.
- 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.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- A. All Toastmasters who are members in good standing, in a Club in good standing, are eligible to compete. New, dual, or reinstated members must have dues current with Toastmasters International.
A member must 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 any contest: incumbent International Officers and Directors; District Officers (Governor, any Lieutenant Governor, Division Governor, Area Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, or Public Relations Officer) 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.
- C. Toastmasters who are members in more than one Club and who meet all other eligibility requirements may compete in each Club Table Topics Contest in which membership in good standing is held. However, should they win more than one Club Table Topics Contest, they can represent only one of the Clubs at the Area level. No contestant can compete in more than one Area Table Topics Contest, even if the two Areas are in different Divisions.

- D. A contestant must be a member in good standing of the Club, Area, or Division being represented when competing in a speech contest at the next level.
- E. 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.

4. TOPICS

- A. All contestants shall receive the same topic, which shall be of a general nature, and shall speak for two minutes.
- B. The topic shall not require a detailed knowledge but should lead to an opinion or conclusion.

5. GENERAL PROCEDURE

- A. A contest chairman, contest sergeant at arms, chief judge, at least five judges, two counters, and two timers are appointed. These appointments will be as far as is practical at Club levels, but required for Area through District levels of this contest. All judges will judge all contestants.
- B. Before the contest, contestants and the contest sergeant at arms 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 be included in place of the primary contestant. When the contest Toastmaster is introduced, if not present, the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant. Where the primary contestant arrives and makes his presence known to the contest chairman and has all required paperwork in good order prior to the introduction, and missed the briefing, disqualification shall not occur and the primary contestant may speak in the drawn order, but waives the opportunity of a briefing.
- D. All contestants will speak from the same platform or area designated by the contest chairman with prior knowledge of all the judges and all the contestants. 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 for their preferred setup of the lectern/podium microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced by the Toastmaster. When the contest begins, all contestants except the first shall leave the room. The topic is then read to the first contestant, who shall then speak on that topic for two minutes. Introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name twice.
- E. There will be one minute of silence between contestants, during which the judges will mark their ballots.
- F. 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.

6. TIMING

- A. Speeches shall be two minutes long. Contestants who speak less than one minute or more than two minutes 30 seconds shall be disqualified.

Time 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.
- B. The green light will be turned on at one minute and remain on for 30 seconds. The amber light will be turned on at one minute 30 seconds and remain on for 30 seconds. The red light will be

turned on at two minutes and remain on until the speech is concluded. No audible device, such as a buzzer, shall be used for the overtime period.

- C. Any sightless 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.
- D. In the event of technical failure of the signal, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
- E. Prior to announcing results, the chairman should announce if time disqualification(s) occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved.

7. PROTESTS

- A. Protests 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 eligibility prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned.
- B. The contest chairman can disqualify a contestant on the basis of eligibility.
- C. All decisions of the judges are final.

8. WINNERS

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.

9. CONTEST SCHEDULE

Districts conducting Table Topics Contests should announce the date of the District contest and establish dates by which the Division, Area, and Club contests must be completed.