



District 53 Toastmasters

About Toastmasters Speech Contests

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Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters education program. These contests provide an opportunity for Toastmasters to gain competitive speaking experience and they provide interesting educational programs for members and the public. Toastmasters International has defined 5 types of contests.

International: 5 to 7 min prepared speech of any sort on any topic selected by the contestant

Humorous: 5 to 7 min prepared speech of a humorous nature

Tall Tales: 3 to 5 min prepared speech of a highly exaggerated or improbable nature

Table Topics: 1 to 2 min impromptu speech on a subject selected by the contest committee and unknown to the contestants until it's their turn to speak. The contestants are kept out of the room until their turn to speak so that they can't hear the previous contestants' speeches or the topic. The exact same topic is given to each contestant.

Evaluation: 2 to 3 min evaluation of a test speech. All contestants hear the test speech at the same time and then have 5 minutes to prepare their evaluations. The contestants are then kept out of the room until their turn to present their evaluation so that they do not hear the previous contestants' evaluations.

Except for the **TableTopics** and **Evaluation** contests, the contestant is free to prepare the speech on any topic of their own choosing. The speech must be substantially original.

Timing for all contests is very similar to the timing for speeches at club meetings.

	International	Humorous	Tall Tales	Table Topics	Evaluation
Minimum Time	4min, 30sec	4min, 30sec	2min, 30sec	1min, 0sec	1min, 30sec
Maximum Time	7min, 30sec	7min, 30sec	5min, 30sec	2min, 30sec	3min, 30sec

To be eligible to participate in any speech contest, the contestant must be a member in good standing (dues paid) belonging to a club in good standing throughout the entire contest period. Additionally, International speech contestants must have earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience or have earned their DTM in the legacy education program. Each contestant must complete a brief biography and a certificate of eligibility and originality in order to register as a contestant. Former first-place International Speech Contest winners, International officers and directors, and district officers whose terms expire June 30; and announced candidates for the term beginning the upcoming July 1, are not eligible to compete. District officers include: District Director, Program Quality Director, Club Growth Director, Administration Manager, Public Relations Manager, Finance Manager, Division or Area Director.

Toastmasters conducts contests in the spring of each year and conducts two contests typically on the same date. The International Speech contest is always conducted every year. Each district is allowed to select which of the other types of contest they will also run. For example, the speech contest might include the **Evaluation** contest along with the **International** contest. At the contest event, the contest committee conducts one of the contests followed by the other contest, typically using the same contest officials (judges, timers, etc.) Often a brief intermission is provided between the two contests. Members can enter to compete in one, or both contests.

The contests always initiate at the club level. At the club contest, you'll compete with your own club members. The winner of each club contest is then eligible to compete at the Area level. At the Area level you'll compete with the winners from the contests at the four or five other clubs in your Area. The Area winners are eligible to compete at the Division level, and Division winners at the District level. District is the highest level for all contests except for the **International** contest. Each contestant may use the same speech (except for **Evaluation** and **TableTopics** contests) for each level of competition, but they may prepare an entirely new speech for each level if desired. For the **International** contest, District winners compete at Regional contests and Regional winners compete at the International level and each contestant **MUST** prepare an entirely new speech for the Regional and International levels. Whew!!! Note that clubs may select their representatives to the Area contest by some other means, but a club speech contest is the recommended and desired method.

This is all a lot of fun, very entertaining, and educational for all participants. Of course, as you work your way up it starts getting a little intense. That's the nature of a competition.

Each contest must be staffed with contest officials including a Contest Master (coordinator), a Chief Judge, judges, timers, and ballot counters. At the club level, these resources usually come from your own club members. At the Area level and higher, each club is expected to provide some of the required resources. The Area and Division level contests are often sponsored by a hosting club which provides facilities and refreshments.

There are no entry fees associated with Toastmasters contests, but above the club level there may be a slight charge to cover refreshments and there may be travel costs involved.

Participation is strictly optional, but every Toastmaster should consider participating in the Club and Area contests, either as a contestant or as a contest official. But if you can't do that, at least attend for the entertainment, to learn, and to support your fellow Toastmasters.