

District 53 On-Line Speech Contest Contestant Briefing

Intended Audience

This document is the Contestant briefing for on-line speech contests. The contestant's briefing shall be delivered to the contestants by the Contest Master.

Contestant Eligibility and Forms Required – Up to 24 Hours Prior to the Contest

- Verify all contestants are a paid member, from a club in good standing
- Verify all contestants meet the eligibility requirements of the contest
- For International Speech Contests, do the contestants meet the following eligibility
 - **Option 1** – DTM
 - **Option 2** – Completed Level 1 AND Level 2 of any Pathways Educational Program
- Ensure each contestant has completed the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility & Originality and returned this form to the Contest Master, **PRIOR** to the contest start. The Contest Master will need to email these completed forms to the Chief Judge **PRIOR** to the start of the contest.
- Review the rules listed on the Certification of Eligibility and Originality Form and ask if there are any questions about the rules you have just explained.

Technology Problems During the Contest

- Provide the contact information for the Contest Master and the Chief Judge (phone number)
- Notify the Chief Judge of any connectivity issue IMMEDIATELY if you become disconnected from the contest. The Chief Judge will explain what to do next.
- You may be notified that your audio or video has frozen for at least five seconds. In that case, your speech will be stopped by the Chief Judge. In that instance, per the Online Speech Contest Exception directive from Toastmasters International, once your technology issue has been resolved, you will resume your speech at the point which the technology failed and will be allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.

On-Line Speech Contest Prep

- Download the speaker originality and eligibility form and the speech contestant profile form from Toastmasters International (www.toastmasters.org) or the District 53 Toastmasters website (<https://toastmasters53.org/>)
- Confirm speech titles with contestants in advance of the contest.
- Remind Contestants they will be shown on camera and to avoid, busy patterns, distracting jewelry or hats, or colors that may wash them out, or blend in with their background.
- Be sure to have a process for communicating with the Chief Judge in the event contestants lose connection or wish to lodge a protest.
- Ensure all required contestant forms are received BEFORE the start of the contest.

- Identify a random list generator to use to select speaking order (<https://www.random.org/lists/?mode=advanced>).

General Contestant Briefing – Read to Contestants

1. The International Speech shall be conducted in English.
2. All International Speeches will be recorded, and the winner’s video will be sent to World Headquarters in accordance with the rule book.
3. The speaking order will be chosen randomly using a random list generator.
4. Contestants must prepare their own speeches, and each must be substantially original.
5. Speeches for all contests must be certified as such in writing to the Chief Judge by the contestants prior to the presentation of their speeches using the Speaker’s Certification of Eligibility and Originality.
6. Twenty-five percent or less of the speech may be devoted to quoting, paraphrasing, or referencing another person’s content. Any quoted, paraphrased, or referenced content must be so identified during the speech presentation.
7. “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.” (Contest rulebook, Page 9).
8. You can remain in the room while all contestants are speaking. **(FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS ONLY).**
9. **FOR INTERNATIONAL: A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than 4 minutes, 30 seconds or more than 7 minutes, 30 seconds. (Contest Rule Book, Page 14)**
10. **FOR TALL TALES: A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than 2 minutes 30 seconds or more than 5 minutes 30 seconds. (Contest Rule Book, Page 15)**
11. Your microphone should be muted, and your video turned off unless you are speaking.
12. Once a contestant has spoken, there is a one-minute period of silence. After introducing the next contestant, the Contest Chair will verify the contestant’s microphone is unmuted, and the contestant can see the timer. The Contest Chair will ask if the contestant is ready after the sound and video check. Timing will begin with begin with the first verbal or non-verbal communication to the audience once you have been introduced. If you are using a Power Point presentation, timing will begin when the first slide is shown, or when the first word or gesture is made.
13. Please remove any nametags, badges, or any identification with designation of educational awards, club affiliation, officer role, etc.
14. Judges will use the criteria on the score sheet and not to take lighting, audio, or video quality into account when scoring their ballots. Looking into the camera is considered eye contact. To ensure facial expressions may be captured and a standard speaking area, contestants must remain within three feet of their webcams. Per Toastmaster’s International Video Recording

Guidelines for the 2020 District Online Speech Contests, “If facial expressions are clear, not showing the contestant’s entire body will not lead to a disqualification.”

15. You may be notified that your audio or video has frozen for at least five seconds. In that case, your speech will be stopped by the Chief Judge. In that instance, per the Online Speech Contest Exception directive from Toastmasters International, once your technology issue has been resolved, you will resume your speech at the point which the technology failed and will be allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
16. You will have the opportunity to test your cameras and audio prior to speaking.
17. Any contestant wishing to use props, including electronic devices, must notify the Contest Chair and / or Contest Master prior to the contest. Verify each contestant’s use of props and the ability to set them up and remove them during the one minute of silence before their speech. Ultimately it is the contestants’ responsibility to provide, set up, and break down any and all props. Help
18. Is everyone able to see the colors green, yellow, and red. (NOTE: See the rule book or speak to the Chief Judge about accommodations for contestants who cannot see colors.)
19. Timing will be as follows for the **International Speech** Contest:

Timing Lights / Cards	Time
Green	5 Minutes
Yellow	6 Minutes
Red	7 Minutes

20. Timing will be as follows for **Table Topics Speech** Contest:

Timing Lights / Cards	Time
Green	3 Minutes
Yellow	4 Minutes
Red	5 Minutes

21. The timing lights / cards will come on / up and stay up / on until the time switches to the next one.
22. The red light / card will stay on / up until the speaker is done, regardless of the actual time recorded.

Contest Protests – Read to Contestants

- Protests are limited to eligibility and originality.
- It is a contestant’s responsibility to lodge a protest, if the contestant feels there is an originality or eligibility issue with another contestant’s speech. The protest process ensures all contestants are treated fairly and respectfully.

- 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 the voting judges must concur in the decision to disqualify.
- Protests are lodged with the Chief Judge and or Contest Chair **PRIOR** to the announcement of the winners.
- Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality or eligibility, a majority of the voting judges must agree in the decision to disqualify.
- Select the speaking order!**

References

2021-2022 Toastmasters International Speech Contest Rulebook

2020-2021 Toastmasters International Speech Contest Rulebook

Toastmasters International Online Speech Contest Best Practices

2019-2020 Functionary Briefing (August Wolf, DTM and Jennifer Cimilluca, DTM)