

SPEECH CONTEST FAQs

A. SPEECH CONTEST RULES

1. Speech Contest Policy

1.1 - Are Club Contests required to be held?

No, Club Contests are not required to be held. Clubs can choose to nominate contestants for the Area Contests. However, if a Club Contest is held and there is only one contestant, disqualification rules will still apply.

1.2 - Are Area and Division Contests required to be held?

Yes, Area and Division Contests are required to be held, even if there is only one contestant. If there is only one contestant in the contest, disqualification rules will still apply.

1.3 - Can members be charged an entry fee in order to compete in a speech contest?

Individual admission fees to a contest may be charged to audience attendees and contest officials; however, contestants may never be charged a fee to compete in a contest, and clubs may never be charged a fee to send a contestant to a contest. This does not include fees for catering.

2. Eligibility

2.1 – What has happened to the two-month grace period for members and clubs?

Effective July 1, 2016, the two-month grace period has been removed from our governing documents — specifically Policy 2.0 of Policy and Protocol.

Although the term “grace period” was never used or defined, Policy 2.0 previously described that members were considered in good standing as long as their April and October renewals were submitted by May 31 and November 30, respectively.

Policy 2.0 now reads as follows:

Good Standing of Individual Members

- A. *The admission of individual members to clubs is governed by Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws of Toastmasters International. Good standing is defined in Article III, Section 8 of the Bylaws.*
- B. *A paid member is one whose dues have been received by World Headquarters for the current dues period. An unpaid member is one whose dues have not been received by World Headquarters for the current dues period. Unpaid members are not considered to be in good standing by Toastmasters International.*
- C. *An individual must be a paid member to be nominated for or to serve in any office or leadership role in Toastmasters International.*

Membership renewals payments are now due on April 1 and October 1 for the respective periods. If members are unpaid — meaning funds have not been received and processed at World Headquarters — they are not considered to be in good standing.

2.2 - What happens if I pay my dues on time, but my club treasurer does not submit my dues to World Headquarters by October 1 or April 1?

You are, unfortunately, ineligible to compete. In order to compete in a speech contest, you must be a member in good standing of a club in good standing. The only way to maintain your good standing is to make sure your club treasurer submits your dues to World Headquarters by October 1 for the October renewals period and April 1 for the April renewals period for continuing members, or by the date of the speech contest for new, dual, or reinstated members.

2.3 - Are contestants required to have completed a minimum number of manual speeches to participate in a speech contest?

The only speech contest with a minimum manual speech requirement is the International Speech Contest. To participate in any level of the International Speech Contest, a member must have completed at least six speeches from the *Competent Communication* manual prior to the club contest.

However, a charter member of a club chartered after the previous July 1 may compete without having completed six speeches in *Competent Communication*. The club must be officially chartered before the area contest.

2.4 - What does it mean that "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" is ineligible?

At Club level, a member can judge at another club's contest where the member is still competing or intends to compete. However, the member cannot judge beyond the Club level (i.e. Area level and above) in a contest in which they are still competing.

Example Scenarios: John Smith wins Area B's Evaluation Contest. He is asked to judge Area C's Evaluation Contest. If he judges at Area C's Evaluation Contest, he is ineligible to continue competing in the district's Evaluation Contest. Jane Smith is disqualified from Area B's Humorous Contest. Because she is no longer competing in the Humorous Contest, she can judge Area C's Humorous Contest. Similarly, if Jane Smith loses Area B's Humorous Contest, she can judge Area C's Humorous Contest.

2.5 - What is a contest functionary? Can they serve more than one role?

The following are contest functionaries: contest chair, contest toastmaster, chief judge, voting judges, tiebreaking judge, timers, sergeant at arms, and counters.

They cannot serve in more than one role at the same contest and they may not compete in the contest in which they are serving as a functionary.

2.6 - Can a member serve as a contest chair at one contest and compete in another?

Yes, as long as the contest where the member is competing and the contest where the member is serving as a contest chair are not at the same event i.e. Only one contest is being held on that day. If however, multiple contests are being run at the same event on the same day, then the member can serve as either a contest chair or compete but not both.

Example: Jane Doe is competing in the Humorous contest at Area G's Speech Contests, where all contests are being held on the one day. She cannot serve as a contest chair for any contests at Area G's Speech Contests. Jane is not competing in Area F's Speech Contests. Jane can serve as a contest chair for any contest at Area F's Speech Contests.

2.7 – Can a member serve as a contest functionary of chief judge, voting judge, tiebreaking judge, timer, sergeant at arms or counter at one contest and compete in another at the same event?

Yes, they can compete in another contest at the same event where they are serving as a contest functionary other than a contest chair or contest toastmaster. They cannot serve in more than one role at the same contest and they may not compete in the contest in which they are serving as a functionary.

2.8 - Can a member compete in two area contests of a given type (e.g. Table Topics), if the areas are in different divisions or districts?

No. A member can only compete in one area contest of a given type, even if the areas are in different divisions or districts.

2.9 - If I win a Club contest and am not a member in good standing at that club by the date of the Area Contest, am I still able to compete if I am a member in good standing of another club in the same Area?

No, you can only represent the club in which you won the contest and you must be a member in good standing at that club. The only exception is where the other club that you are member in good standing of, does not run a contest at club level, and nominates you to represent the club at the Area contest.

3. Selection Sequence

3.1 - An area with five clubs has one club that is not in good standing. Can the clubs in good standing in that area send two contestants to the area contest?

Yes. Areas with four assigned clubs or fewer in good standing may have clubs send two contestants to the area contest.

3.2 - How many contestants can progress through in each round of contests?

The District 73 policy is:

Eight weeks prior to the area contests, if an area has four assigned clubs or fewer in good standing:

- The two highest-placed available contestants (or two nominated contestants) at Club level will be permitted to compete in the Area contests. Should additional clubs charter in an Area prior to the Area contests, two contestants from each club in that Area will be permitted to compete.
- For Divisions with four assigned Areas or less, the two highest-placed available contestants from each Area will be allowed to compete.

In all other circumstances, only the highest-placed available contestant (i.e. one contestant) can progress through to the next level.

3.3 - If there are only two contestants in a speech contest, and the first-place winner is unable to attend the next level of competition and the other contestant is disqualified, can we nominate someone else to attend the next level of competition?

No. You cannot nominate a new contestant to compete at the next level of competition nor can you allow the disqualified contestant to compete. This rule applies at Club level and every level thereafter.

4. Speech Subject and Preparation

4.1 - What does the rulebook mean when it says a speech must be “substantially original”?

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

5. General Procedure

5.1 - Can a judge be a member of a club in which a contestant is a member?

- At Club level, this is permitted.
- At Area level, this is permitted, as long as there are an equal number of voting judges from each club in the area.
- At Division level, NO chief judge, voting judge or tiebreaking judge can be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member.

5.2 - Should judges remain anonymous?

Yes, in so far as practical, judges are not known to contestants and no judges' names or contact details are provided in contest materials. Judges’ decisions are confidential. If judges are announced, it can lead to confrontations with contestants or audience members who do not agree with the contest results. Anonymity helps judges be more effective. They can be more objective with their decisions because confrontations after the contest are less likely.

5.3 - Does the tiebreaking judge attend the judges’ briefing?

No, the identity of the tiebreaking judge is a secret, and known only to the chief judge. For this reason, they are briefed separately to the other judges.

5.4 - Is the Chief Judge required to hand back the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics forms back after the contest? What happens to these forms?

No, the Chief Judge destroys these after the contest. Voting judges at all levels are to remain anonymous when practical. As the judges' identities will be on the forms, providing these forms to another entity is in violation of the rulebook.

5.5 - If there are 4 or fewer contestants in a contest, do we announce first place only?

No, in contests with four or fewer participants, a second-place winner and a first-place winner are announced.

5.6 - As a contestant, can I sit next to a judge?

Yes, whilst judges are to remain anonymous where possible, there is no rule which prevents a contestant from sitting next to a judge.

5.7 - Does the chief judge also judge the contestants?

While the chief judge is a judge, he or she does not judge the contestants. The role of the chief judge is to appoint and advise the judges, counters, timers, and tiebreaking judge. The chief judge also conducts the judges' briefing before the contest, collects the time record sheet from the timers, collects the ballot from the tiebreaking judge, handles protests, and delivers the list of winners to the contest chair at the end of the contest.

5.8 – Should gifts for judges be presented in front of the audience?

As per the Speech Contest Rule book, judges should remain anonymous where practical. It is with this in mind that D73 has taken the stance that for Area Contests and above, judges' gifts be presented during the Chief Judge's briefing. Although the District cannot instruct clubs on how to run their contests, it is suggested that clubs follow the District's lead on this issue.

6. Timing of the speeches

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.

7. Protests and Disqualifications

7.1 - Can the tiebreaker judge lodge a protest if they see fit?

No, the tiebreaker judge cannot lodge a protest. Protests are limited to eligibility and originality and shall only be lodged by voting judges and contestants. A tiebreaker judge is not a voting judge.

8. Use of Props

8.1 - What are the rules regarding usage of music, media or props in a speech?

A. Contestants who plan to use props (including any sort of electronic device), must notify the contest chair prior to the contest.

B. Contestants must abide by any venue restrictions on the use of props.

C. All props must be set up during the minute of silence prior to the contestant's speech and removed from the stage in the minute of silence following the speech.

1. Contestants may enlist someone to help them with props, but it is not the responsibility of the contest chair or any other contest official to do so.

2. Contestants must demonstrate to the contest chair prior to the contest that the props can be set up and removed in the allotted times.

a) If a contestant is unable to demonstrate this, the props cannot be used during the contest.

Note: *World Headquarters recommends against the use of music, media or props, as they have a tendency of eliciting negative responses from judges.*

9. International Speech Contest Rules

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.

10. Evaluation Contest Rules

10.1 – What materials can contestants use to take notes for the Evaluation Contest?

Contestants are permitted to make preparatory notes during the test speech using the Evaluation Contestant Notes sheet.

<https://www.toastmasters.org/~media/CB2C1C7174E04F4CA4269CAE3D41DE5A.ashx>

11. Humorous Speech Contest Rules

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.

12. Table Topics Contest Rules

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.

B. SPEECH CONTEST CHECKLISTS

1. Contest Chair's checklist

1.1 - Can I take photographs during the contest?

No, during the Contest, the taking of photographs during the speeches is not permitted.

1.2 - What are the guidelines regarding video or audio recording of a speech contest?

- If you wish to record a speech contest, all speakers or presenters must give their written permission to be recorded beforehand. **Any speaker who refuses must not be recorded.**
- Upon request, any speaker or presenter is entitled to one copy of the recording at no charge.
- Recording should not cause a safety hazard to any in attendance, nor should it be a distraction to a speaker or presenter.
- During a district conference, recording of speakers and presenters may only occur with the permission of the host district chair.
- Recordings of these events are controlled by the host district chair or his/her appointed representative.
- If one or more authorised Toastmasters provide recording services and tapes are made available for sale, the Toastmaster providing the services may be reimbursed only for expenses and **may not profit from the recording** nor charge for the use of equipment.
- Profits from any recording sales must be deposited in the district account.

2. Chief Judge's checklist

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.

3. Contestant's checklist

Currently, there are no FAQs for this segment.