

Holding a Club Speech Contest

Set a Date

There are 4 contests in total:

- International
- Humorous
- Table Topics
- Evaluation

It is usual to hold two of these contests in one night, and then hold the other two contests on another night some weeks later. Normally it would be Humorous and Table Topics on one night, and then International and Evaluation on the other.

If there are not many contestants in each contest e.g. only 2 or 3, it might be possible to hold all four contests on one night. An alternative is to run all four contests in one day.

Judges

There are normally eight judges. There is a Chief Judge, a Tie Breaker Judge and at least five Voting Judges.

The Chief Judge doesn't vote. The Chief Judge is known to the audience but all the other judges are anonymous. The Tie Breaker Judge's votes are only counted when it's necessary to break a tie.

Regular club members can be judges at club level contests. It is usual for the judges to receive a small gift (value \$10 usually). These are normally given to them discreetly so they remain anonymous.

BTW – the Notification of Winner form for each contest is filled in by the Chief Judge, and is then later given to the Area Director. It's quite important, because if a winning contestant can't attend the next level of contest, the next person in line needs to be notified.

Test Speaker

A Test Speaker is required for the Evaluation Contest. It is usual to get a person who is at speech 5 or 6 in the Competent Communicator manual. It needs to be a speaker who is unknown at your club and hasn't been previously heard by the contestants.

Note: therefore, they are anonymous, and their name doesn't appear on the agenda.

Roles to Fill

You will need a Contest Chair for each contest, 2 x Timers, 2 x Counters and 2 x Ushers (ushers are essential for the Table Topics and Evaluation contests. In the other contests, they are generally used to stop people from barging into the room mid-contest).

The Contest Chair role is a good project to have signed off in the Competent Leader manual (Project 8), so you can use this as a selling tool.

A question that is commonly asked is whether contestants are eligible to compete, and also fulfil contest roles, in more than one contest at the same event. Here, it is important to define two terms: event and contest. An event may be two, three or four contests held on one day. The contest is simply the individual contest e.g. humorous.

The answer is this: a person can't be a contest chair for one contest at the event, and then be a contestant in another contest at the same event. They can, however, be a contestant in one contest, and then fill a smaller role in another contest e.g. timer, ballot counter, or usher.

Agenda

There is a speech contest agenda that you can select in Easy-speak but a manual agenda is usually created for speech contests.

Forms/Documentation

There are a number of forms that need to be completed for each contest and they are:

- Judges voting forms (x number of judges)
- Tie breaker judge form (x 1)
- Judges eligibility form (x number of judges)
- Notification of Winner (x number of contests i.e. 1 per contest)
- Counters Tally Form (x number of contests)
- Timers Report (x number of contests)
- Contest Rule Book (x number of judges)
- Contestants Eligibility Form (x number of contestants)
- Contestant Profile Form (x number of contestants)
- Participation Certificates (x number of contestants)
- First, Second and Third Place getter forms (i.e. 1 of each per contest)

These documents are available in digital form from Toastmasters International.

Click on each Kit that you want and scroll right to the bottom of the information and the digital downloads are there. (Yes, printing these is an enormous waste of paper, but that's how it is.)

Trophies - Clubs normally give the first place getters a small trophy. You are not allowed to use the Toastmasters logo on any trophy not produced by Toastmasters International. This means that if you are getting the trophy made at your local Trophy store, you can only use a generic image as artwork.

Here is an example of the engraving -

Happy Valley Toastmasters Club

2016

Table Topics

Contest Winner

Supper - As the contest meetings are a bit special and there are usually some visiting judges it is an idea to have a better supper. It's possible to ask a few people to contribute to the supper on that night. It could be organised by one person but whoever does this job needs to be reimbursed from club funds. The executive needs to set a budget for the supper.

Finally...

There are always people that you can ask about conducting contests. If you have any questions, the best guide is the rulebook issued by Toastmasters International. Otherwise, members of the District Leadership team are well versed on the rules, policies and procedures.