

District 73  
Contest Chair Resource

October 2019

Table Topics® Contest Script

* The following script is designed to be used by Contest Chairs for the Table Topics® Contest at Club, Area, Division and District Levels in District 73
* The following script was designed to comply with the rules contained within the Speech Contest Rulebook effective from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020
* The script is a suggested format. Any modifications must comply with the Rulebook.
* The script is a resource for Toastmasters in District 73 and its main purpose is to assist members who take on the contest chair role.

The contest script is divided into four parts and they are as outlined below:

A) Before Contestant Briefing

Ensure that the following items are obtained, as they will be used during the contest

* Speaker’s Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Item 1183)  
   - 1x per contestant
* Participation Certificates - 1x per contestant
* Spares should be prepared if needed
* Check with the contest organizer whether Contestant names were printed on the Certs. If not, the Contest Chair has to write them in
* Contest Rulebook 2019/2020 – for reference.
* Tool to determine speaking order. The following are some tools/items that

can be used for this purpose:

* Playing cards
* Paddle Pop Sticks

Please note that once a tool has been decided 0n, it should be used   
 consistently and fairly throughout the contest in order to determine the  
 speaking order in a random manner

* Speech Contestant Profile (Item 1189) *– if used*
* Contest Trophies for placegetters and Perpetual Trophy for winner

*– if applicable*

B) Contestant Briefing

The following is a suggested order for the briefing. The order can be switched around, depending on how the Contest Chair would like to conduct the briefing. Please ensure the Ushers/Sargent at Arms attend this briefing.

1. **Eligibility Form (Form 1183) and additional rules for the Table Topics® contest**

* Ensure that all contestants sign Form 1183.
* Check that all contestants are eligible to compete in the contest, referring to the eligibility criteria, and rulebook if necessary
* Ensure that all contestants understand the rules contained within the rulebook.
* All contestants must receive the same topic, which must be of a general nature, and the topic is selected by the contest chair.
* The topic must be of reasonable length, must not require a detailed knowledge, and must lead to an opinion or conclusion.
* Contestants will receive no advance knowledge of the topic until the moment they are introduced by the contest chair.
* Contestants must not use digital or other devices during the contest to gain an unfair advantage.

1. **Speaking order**

* Order is drawn using the item in A)
* Draw should be conducted in consistent but fair manner to ensure that the speaking order is allocated at random.
* Repeat the order to contestants so that it is clearly defined.
* For contestants that are scheduled to compete, but are not present at the briefing, the speaking order is drawn for them on their behalf.
* Contestants will not be able to compete if they arrive after the contest chair is introduced to the audience.

1. **Contestant name**

* Verify the pronunciation of contestants names, and that the names are correctly spelt on the agenda

1. **Speaking area**

* Acquaint contestants with the exact speaking area, including the lectern, tables, lighting, microphone, etc. All contestants must have the opportunity to test any amplifying equipment before the contest.
* Area should be clearly defined to contestants, and contestants are to speak within the designated area

1. **Timing**

* Contest chair should ensure that contestants can clearly see the timing lights by testing the lights to ensure that they are working
* If a contestant has a visual impairment, ensure that alternative arrangements are available eg: a bell/chime.
* Contestants should be briefed about the following:
* Timing will begin with the 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
* Contestants should begin speaking within a short time after arriving at the speaking area and are not permitted to delay the contest unnecessarily
* Table Topics® speeches must be from one to two minutes. A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than one minute or more than two minutes 30 seconds
* A green signal will be displayed at one minute and remain displayed for 30 seconds
* A yellow signal will be displayed at one minute and 30 seconds and remain displayed for 30 seconds
* A red signal will be displayed at two minutes and will remain on until the speech is concluded
* No further warning will be given after the red light has been turned on
* In the event of technical failure of the signal or timing equipment, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified

1. **Props/Visual Aids**

* Contestants who plan to use props (including any sort of electronic devices) must notify the contest chair prior to the contest
* Contestants must abide by any venue restrictions on the use of props
* 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
* 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
* Contestants must demonstrate to the contest chair prior to the contest that the props can be set up and removed in the allotted times
* If a contestant is unable to demonstrate this, the props cannot be used during the contest

1. **Recordings**

* Any contestant who wishes to record their speech would need to obtain the approval of the contest chair to do so. The contest chair would then announce this in the audience briefing
* The contestant must ensure that the recording can be done without substantially disrupting the contest

1. **Protests**

* Protests are limited to eligibility and originality and must only be lodged by voting judges and contestants
* Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the announcement of the winner and alternate(s)
* The chief judge, contest chair and voting judges must not consider protests from audience members.

1. **Any further questions**

* Clarify that all contestants are clear about the rules that have just been explained.
* Ask whether there are any further questions, before closing the briefing.

C) Audience Briefing and the actual Contest

The following is a sample/suggested script for the audience briefing.

Contest chairs are able to change the order of information presented below. Variations to this are permitted, only if they conform to the rules in the Contest Rulebook.

Please note that Contestants will not be able to participate in the contest if they arrive after the Contest Chair is introduced.

“Welcome to the (fill in name of Club/Area/ Division or District) Table Topics® Speech Contest

First Place/Top 2 Placegetters

(cross out the irrelevant option) will proceed

on to compete at the

(fill in name of next Area/Division/District) Table Topics® Contest

to be held on the

(fill in the date/time/venue of the next level contest – if available at this stage)

I am (insert your name), and I shall be the Contest Chair

for this contest.

There are (insert number of contestants) contestants competing in the contest today, and the speaking order is as follows:”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Order** | **Name (clearly pronounced)** |
| Speaker #1 |  |
| Speaker #2 |  |
| Speaker #3 |  |
| Speaker #4 |  |
| Speaker #5 |  |
| Speaker #6 |  |
| Speaker #7 |  |
| Speaker #8 |  |
| Speaker #9 |  |
| Speaker #10 |  |

Note: In order to save time during the audience briefing the speaking order can be given to the judges during the judges briefing. Provided judges have been given the speaking order it is not necessary for the contest chair to announce the speaking order to the audience. They can do so if they wish but it is not necessary to spell the contestants names as they are usually printed on the program or agenda.

“The speaking area is defined as the area from

to (define speaking area)”

“If you have a mobile phone, kindly turn it to silent, or turn it off. This is to prevent it from being a distraction to the contestants”

“Please keep all aisles clear of obstructions”

“No photography and videos are to be taken when the contest is in progress.”

(If any contestants were granted permission to record their speech, then the following is said)

“However, (insert Contestant name/names) will be recording their speeches, and permission has been granted for the contestant/these contestants to record their speeches.”

“No one is permitted to enter or leave the room when the Contest is in progress. The Sergeant-at-arms, will secure the doors Prior to the first contestant being introduced.”

“Please note that there will be a minute of silence between contestants for the judges to mark their scoring sheets. After the last contestant has spoken, there will be silence until all ballots have been collected.”

“The Chief Judge for this contest is . Judges,

timers, counters and ushers (if applicable) have been briefed.

“Chief judge, are we ready to proceed? If so, Let the Contest Begin!”

“I would like the ushers/sergeant-at-arms to escort all contestants, except for the first Contestant, out of the room. These contestants shall remain under the supervision of the contest ushers/sergeant-at-arms”

Introduce contest speakers by their Name, The Topic, The Topic and Name. Do not make preliminary remarks about any speaker or the subject, nor mention the name or location of the speaker’s club or place of residence. Introduce each contestant slowly and clearly

For example:

“Please join me in welcoming Fran Tastic, What is your favourite fruit?, What is your favourite fruit?, Fran Tastic”

The topic should be clearly printed out and placed on a lectern, and all contestants should clearly see the topic

Shake hands with the Contestant to hand over control. After he/she has finished, regain control of the stage by shaking their hand, and announce

“We shall now observe 1 minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots. Timers, please indicate the end of this minute with a Green Light”

The next speaker is invited into the room during the 1 minute of silence.

Repeat this process until all Contestants have spoken. Announce the following after the last contestant has finished

“We shall now observe silence until all ballots have been collected by the ballot counters.”

Whilst the ballot counters are counting the ballots the contest chair will interview the contestants.

* Whilst the ballots are counted, re-introduce the Contestants on stage, and present their certificates of participation. A short interview may be conducted at this time, using the contestant’s biographical information as a guide.

D) Announcement of Results

When the Chief Judge returns with the results, announce one of the following, depending on what is written on the Results Form

**If there were time disqualifications**

**“**Unfortunately there was/were time disqualification(s)”

**If there were no time disqualifications**

“There were no time disqualifications”

Invite District Officers (if available) to present trophies/certificates to the winners

If there were 3 or more contestants, the Top 3 places are announced

If there were 2 contestants, the Top 2 places are announced

If there was only 1 contestant, the winner is announced

“In 3rd Place, Please Congratulate ”

“In 2nd Place, Please Congratulate ” ”

“And finally, in 1st Place, Let us Congratulate ”

“That concludes the Table Topics® Contest. I will now hand you over to

(hand over control)”