

RUNNING A LOCAL CLUB **TABLE TOPICS** SPEECH CONTEST WITH JUST A CONTEST CHAIR

IN PREPARATION, THE CONTEST CHAIR SHOULD READ:

Current Speech Contest Rulebook

Current Contest Manual (which contains valuable information and many of the needed forms) Note:

These materials were provided to each Club President.

AT THE CLUB MEETING BEFORE THE CONTEST:

- Determine the contestants. Be sure each meets eligibility requirements. (club must be a club in good standing as well as member in good standing. There are no other requirements, such as completing a given number of speeches).
- Describe how the contest will be run. All contestants shall receive the same topic (one will be made up by the Contest Chair which should not require a detailed knowledge and should lead to an opinion or conclusion), and shall speak for two minutes. Contestants who speak for less than one minute or more than two minutes, 30 seconds shall be disqualified.
- Tell them you will be serving as Contest Chair, Contest Master and Chief Judge and that you need judges. Tell them each person who attends the contest will receive a judging form (show the Table Topics Contest Judges Form), with only some, however, to be collected and counted. These will have “Official” on them and will be given to the club’s most experienced Toastmasters. State that the duty of a judge is not to evaluate the speakers but to pick a winner – to select the speaker who has given the best speech on that day. Time permitting, discuss the necessity to be absolutely objective and go over in detail the criteria on the Judges Form.
- Tell them you need timers, preferably 2, and describe the duties of timers and that judges must not pay attention to timing.
- Tell them you need ballot counters to collect the ballots and tally them along with you (serving as Chief Judge).
- Be sure you have 2 or more contestants, 3 judges, 2 timers, and at least 1 ballot counter arranged for in advance so you know they will attend. You also need a tie breaking judge whose name shall be secret (it might be you).

AT THE CONTEST MEETING

Have all needed forms with you. They may be found in the current Contest Manual.

- Have a topic ready that you make up in advance. Make it no more than 4 words. The topic should be of a general nature, not requiring detailed knowledge, and should lead to an opinion or conclusion.

- Brief the speakers on the timing requirements as listed above and have each complete a Certification of Eligibility and Originality form.
- Give everyone a Judges Form, with “Official” handwritten on the ones you will collect and count. Be sure all the timers, ballot counters, and official judges understand the procedures to follow.
- Designate the speaking area and announce that judges can give lower scores if contestants go outside it.
- Draw for speaking positions.
- When the contest begins, all contestants except the first shall leave the room. The topic is then read to the first contestant, who shall then speak on the topic.
- Introduce each speaker by announcing the contestant’s name twice. Use no preliminary remarks about any speaker.
- Allow 1 minute of silence after each speech for judges to mark their ballots.
- After all speakers have spoken, ask the judges to complete their ballots, indicating first, second, and third place results, and then sign their ballots. Have the counters collect them. Collect the Time Record Sheet yourself.
- Leave the room with the counters to tabulate the results, using the Counters’ Tally Form.
- After the tabulation is complete, return to the contest room and announce the winner(s). If three or more compete, announce a second place winner as well as a first.
- The names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the first and second place winners should be given promptly to the Area Contest Chair, who shall promptly provide this information to the Area Governor.

Note: Regarding disqualification, protests are limited to contestants and judges. Such matters should be resolved with the speaker before the announcement of a winner, which, once made, is final unless incorrectly stated and immediately corrected.

Note: In the event of a tie, the Tiebreaking Judge’s ballot will be opened, and the contestant who ranks higher on the Tiebreaking Judge’s Ballot will be awarded the contested place.