

SPEECH CONTESTS FAQ

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 *Competent Communication* prior to the club contest. 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. However, a charter member of a club chartered less than one year before the club contest is permitted to compete without having completed this requirement. The club must have officially chartered before the area contest.

Who is ineligible to compete in any speech contest?

The following are ineligible to compete in any Toastmasters speech contest:

- 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
- Incumbent international officers and directors
- Region advisors or region advisor applicants
- District officers whose terms expire June 30:
 - District Director
 - Program Quality Director
 - Club Growth Director
 - Administration Manager
 - Finance Manager
 - Public Relations Manager
 - Division Director
 - Area Director
- International officer and director candidates
- Immediate past district directors
- District officers or candidates campaigning for elected positions for the term beginning the upcoming July 1
- Presenters of education sessions at the event at which the contest will be held, including area, division, and district events, as well as the International Convention

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?

Beyond the club level, a member cannot judge a contest where the contest result could lead to the member competing against the contest's winner.

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 Tall Tales Contest. Because she is no longer competing in the Tall Tales Contest, she can judge Area C's Tall Tales Contest. Similarly, if Jane Smith loses Area B's Tall Tales Contest, she can judge Area C's Tall Tales Contest.

What is a contest official? Can they serve more than one role?

The following are contest officials: contest chair, contest toastmaster, chief judge, voting judges, tiebreaking judge, timers, sergeant at arms, and counters. Officials should not serve in more than one role at the same contest and they may not compete in the contest at which they are serving as an official.

What happens if I pay my dues on time, but my club treasurer does not submit my dues to World Headquarters?

You are, unfortunately, ineligible to compete. In order to compete in a speech contest, you must be a paid member of a club in good standing. The only way to maintain your paid membership is to make sure your club treasurer submits your dues to World Headquarters by October 1 for the October renewal period, and by April 1 for the April renewal period. For new, dual, transfer or reinstated members, the membership application and applicable dues must be received by World Headquarters prior to competing in the first contest.

Can a member compete in two area contests if the areas are in different divisions or districts?

No. A member can only compete in one area contest of a given type.

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.

Example: *Jane Doe is competing at Area G's fall conference in the Tall Tales contest. She cannot serve as a contest chair for any contests at Area G's fall conference. Jane is not competing in Area F's fall conference. Jane Doe can serve as a contest chair for any contest at Area F's fall conference.*

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.

Note: *The decision whether or not to allow two contestants to advance from club to area, from area to division, and/or from division to district must be made and*

communicated throughout the district prior to any club contests being held. Once the decision is made, it must be implemented consistently throughout the district in all clubs, areas, and divisions affected.

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.

Should judges remain anonymous?

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

Does the chief judge judge contestants?

No, 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.

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.

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

No. Requiring members to pay an entry fee would be considered an addition to the eligibility rules outlined in the *Speech Contest Rulebook*. Rules can only be added through the administrative protocol with the approval of the Executive Director and International President. This provision is found under Speech Contest Policy in the *Speech Contest Rulebook*.

Example: *Contestant A is competing in a speech contest at a district conference and intends to only compete in the contest. Contestant A is not attending any of the other conference sessions. Contestant A cannot be charged a registration fee. Contestant B is attending education sessions at the district conference in*

addition to competing in the speech contest. Contestant B can be charged a registration fee.

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

The use props (which include music and PowerPoint presentations) are allowed during speech contests in accordance with speech contest rules. Please review section the Use of Props section of the 2016 – 2017 Speech Contest Rulebook for complete detail.

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

Districts determine the guidelines regarding video or audio recording of a district contest. Any guidelines established must not contradict the Speech Contest Rulebook and must consider the safety of contestants and audience members.