

# D101 General Rules

## Fall Fusion Contest Rules for the Table Topics and Humorous Speech Contests

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### 1. Introduction

Speech contests are an important part of the Toastmasters educational program. They provide an opportunity for members to gain speaking experience, as well as an opportunity to learn by observing proficient speakers.

Toastmasters International decided to retire the set of Fall Contests as an official part of their program in 2018. However, District 101, seeing the benefit to its members, has decided to continue this tradition as part of its Fall Fusion education program. As such, the Fall Fusion Speakers is a friendly (non-official) event, and these contests and their winners will not be officially recognized by Toastmasters International. Each year, the Fall Fusion will feature two of the following contests:

- Table Topics
- Humorous Speech

The official "Speech Contest Rulebook" can be used as a loose guideline on how to organize a club contest. However, the Fall Fusion accommodates some exceptions. **The following rules are official to our contest and should be applied at the Semi-Final and Final levels.** These rules take precedence over any verbiage in the Speech Contest Rulebook.

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### 2. Speech Subject and Preparation

A. The subject of the Humorous Contest speeches shall be selected by the contestant. Contestants must create their speeches, and each must be substantially original.

- The speech must be thematic in nature (opening, body, and close), not a monologue (series of one-liners).
- The speaker shall avoid potentially objectionable language, anecdotes, and material.

- 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.
- Before all contests, every contestant must declare to the chief judge by signing the Contestant Eligibility and Original Content Form that the content of their speech is or will be substantially original.

B. The subject of the Table Topics is for all contestants to receive the same topic, which must be of a general nature. The topic is selected by the contest chair.

- The topic must be of reasonable length, must not require 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.
- When the contest begins, all contestants except the first must leave the room or be placed in a breakout room (for online contest) and remain there under the supervision of the contest sergeant-at-arms.
- Introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name, the topic, the topic, the contestant's name.
- At the conclusion of each speech, the next speaker is invited into the main room.

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### **3. Eligibility**

#### A. Contestants

1. The following are eligible to compete:

- All Contests are open to all paying members, regardless of experience, and open to all clubs, so long as the club is in good standing (more than 8 paid members at the time of the contest).
- Area, Division, and District officers are also invited to participate as contestants.
- At the club contest level, each member is welcome to participate in all contests in all clubs of which they are a member. However, they can only represent one club per contest in the qualifier (quarter-final, semi-final) and final rounds.
- Toastmasters who are members in more than one club and who meet all other eligibility requirements are permitted to compete in each club contest in which paid membership is held.

2. The following are ineligible to compete:

- A member who serves 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.
- Presenters of education sessions at the event at which the contest will be held are ineligible.
- Contest chairs, chief judges, voting judges, tiebreaking judges, timers, counters, sergeants at arms, and test speakers may not compete in the contest at which they are serving.
- No contestant can compete in more than one quarter-final, semi-final (qualifier) contest of a given type.

3. Each contestant turns on the camera to present the speech to compete. Participation by audio, video, or other remote technology should be tested in advance.

## B. Contest Officials

1. To be a chief judge, voting judge, or tie-breaking judge at a Speaker Showcase speech contest, you must meet all eligibility requirements identified below.

- At a contest, be a paid member.
- At a final contest, be a paid member for a minimum of six months.
- Judges for contests beyond the club level are not eligible to compete in the same contest type during the same contest cycle.
- All judges must have completed a minimum of six speech projects in Competent Communication or a minimum of two levels in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.

2. To be eligible to be any other contest official or functionary role, you must be a paid member of a club in good standing, and physically present at the contest for which you are serving.

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## 4. Selection Sequence

Each club in good standing is permitted to send one (1) contestant for each speech contest, if it elects to do so, and by whatever means the club desires (by club contest or by an alternative form of club consensus). If a contest is held, it may elect to follow the “[Speech Contest Rulebook](#)” or else comply with the rules in this document. In either case, the rules that are being followed should be clearly stated at the beginning of the contest and the contest results are final.

The club speech contest winner then proceeds to the quarter-finals. The quarter-final or semi-final contest (TBD) contests should follow the rules herein in all cases.

Quarter-final or semi-final contest (TBD) winners then proceed to the final contest at Fall Fusion.

The final contests should follow the rules herein in all cases.

If a club contest is held:

- The highest-placed available contestants from each run-off competition will advance to the next-level contest.

- Should a club or quarter-final or semi-final contest winner be unable to participate in the next-level contest, the highest-placed available contestant will advance to that level.
- Based on the number of club responses to the Declaration of Intent form, your club will be assigned a quarter-final or semi-final club contest. The Contest Chair of this contest or Fall Fusion Chair will reach out to you with additional information about time and venue.
- If a qualifying contestant is not able to attend the Quarter or semi-final contest to which they are assigned, they are allowed to trade places with a contestant from a different qualifier competing in the same contest. However, the Fall Fusion Chair and Contest Chairs of said contests have no obligation to accommodate any such requests, and this is solely at their discretion and goodwill to do so.

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## 5. General Procedure - Before the Contest

A. At each level of a Toastmasters speech contest, a specified number of voting judges and officials are required.

- At the club, quarter-final and semi-final contests, a Contest Chair, chief judge, at least five voting judges, a tiebreaking judge, three Ballot counters, two Digital Moderators, and two timers shall be appointed, unless impractical.
- At the finals contest, there shall be a minimum of seven voting judges. In addition to these voting judges, a Contest Chair, chief judge, tiebreaking judge, three counters, two digital moderators, and two timers shall be appointed.
- Voting judges at all levels shall remain anonymous when practical.

B. The Contest Chair may appoint a contest Toastmaster to perform any of the chair's duties. In such cases, the term, "contest Toastmaster" should be considered synonymous with "Contest Chair." A contest Toastmaster is also ineligible to compete in the contest at which they are serving.

C. Before the contest, contestants are briefed on the rules by the Contest Chair and then draw for their speaking position.

If a contestant is absent from the briefing, they are still allowed to participate if they:

- Report to the Contest Chair upon his/her arrival.
- Have all required paperwork in good order before the person conducting the contest is introduced to begin the contest.
- Waive the opportunity of a briefing.

If the contestant is not present when the person conducting the contest is introduced, they are disqualified. There shall be no system of alternates.

D. Before the contest, voting judges, counters, and timers are briefed on their duties by the chief judge.

Each voting judge and tiebreaker judge receives the appropriate ballot for the contest. The form must be signed and returned to the chief judge

E. Before the contest, digital moderators are briefed on their duties by the Contest Chair and chief judge. A dry run before the contest is recommended for smooth flow in transitions.

F. Before the contest, the chief judge selects a member to act as a tiebreaking judge.

- The identity of the tiebreaking judge is secret and known only to the chief judge.
- The tiebreaking judge does not attend the judges' briefing.
- The chief judge shall provide a Judge's Guide and Ballot to the tiebreaking judge before the beginning of the contest. They shall rank all contestants and use this ranking to determine a winner should a tie occur.

G. Each timer and counter receives the appropriate documents for the contest:

- Timers receive the Time Record Sheet. If necessary, they also receive instruction in the proper use of the timing equipment.
- Ballot counters receive the Counter's Tally Sheet. If necessary, they also receive instruction in the gathering of ballots and the counting room procedure (described below).

H. Contestants who plan to use props (including any sort of electronic devices) must notify the Contest Chair before the contest.

- All props must be set up during the minute of silence before the contestant's speech.
- Contestants may enlist someone to help them with props.
- Contestants must demonstrate to the Contest Chair prior to the contest that the props can be set up. If a contestant is unable to demonstrate this, the props cannot be used during the contest.

I. All contestants will speak from the same area designated by the Contest Chair.

- For online contests, a distance of 4-5 feet from the camera is recommended. Standing is optional.
- If amplification is necessary, a fixed-mounted microphone and a portable microphone shall be arranged by the contestants themselves.

All equipment shall be available for contestants to practice with before the contest in the dry run. Contestants are responsible for arranging their preferred setup of the microphone and other equipment in a quiet manner before being introduced.

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## 6. General Procedure - During the Contest

A. For the Humorous Speech contest, the contest Toastmasters should introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name, speech title, speech title, and contestant's name. Contestants are permitted to remain in the same room throughout the duration of the contest.

B. For the Table Topics contest, the contest Toastmasters should introduce each contestant by announcing the contestant's name, the topic and contestant's name. Contestants must stay out of the main room (and remain in the breakout room) until the preceding speaker has completed his or her response, as outlined in the Table Topics Contest section of this rulebook.

C. Two timers are appointed by the chief judge. One is provided with a stopwatch, and the other with a signaling device that displays green, yellow, and red colors.

- The signaling device must be in full view of each contestant.
- Timers are advised to use Timer Background, as per TI.
- The timer with the stopwatch maintains and delivers to the chief judge the written record of elapsed time of each speech on the Time Record Sheet.
- The timer managing the timing device ensures that contestants are able to view an accurate green, yellow, or red signal at appropriate times during the speech.
- All speeches delivered by contestants must conform to the timing guidelines for that contest.
  - Humorous speeches shall be from five to seven minutes, with a 30-second grace period. A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than four minutes 30 seconds or more than seven minutes 30 seconds.
  - Table Topics speeches shall be from one to two minutes, with a 30-second grace period at the end of the speech. A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than 30 seconds or more than two minutes 30 seconds.
- Upon being introduced, the contestant shall proceed immediately to the speaking position.
- Timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal or nonverbal 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.
- The speaker should begin speaking within a short time after arriving at the speaking area and is not permitted to delay the contest unnecessarily.
- Timers shall provide warning signals to the contestants, which shall be visible to the speakers but not obvious to the audience.

1. For Humorous Speech contests:

- A green signal will be displayed at five minutes and remain displayed for one minute.
- A yellow signal will be displayed at six minutes and remain displayed for one minute.

- A red signal will be displayed at seven minutes and will remain on until the conclusion of the speech.

2. For Table Topics contests:

- The green signal will be displayed at one minute and remain displayed for 30 seconds.
- The yellow signal will be displayed at one minutes and 30 seconds and remain displayed for 30 seconds.
- The red signal will be displayed at two minutes and remain displayed until the speech is concluded.

D. In all speech contests, no signal shall be given for the overtime period.

- Any visually impaired contestant is permitted to request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing, with technology to be provided by the contestant or by other means that the contest planning committee is able to accommodate or facilitate.
- Acceptable warning signals would include, but not be limited to, a buzzer, a bell, or a person announcing the times at five, six, and seven minutes.
- In the event of a technical failure of the signal or timing equipment, a speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.

E. Before announcing the results, the Contest Chair shall announce if time disqualifications occurred, but not name the contestant(s) involved.

F. There will be one minute of silence between contestant speeches, during which voting judges and the tiebreaking judge will mark their ballots. All voting judges and the tiebreaking judge will judge all contestants; the chief judge does not judge contestants.

- When the last contestant finishes speaking, the Contest Chair will ask for silence until the ballot counters have collected all ballots.
- For a ballot to be valid, judges shall:
  - Enter their choices for first, second, and third place (for quarterfinal and final)
  - Enter their choices from fist to last for each contestant (for semifinal)
  - Print their names on the ballot.
- When voting judges have finished marking their ballots, they must sign the bottom portion of the ballot. For online contests, voting judges must complete the DOC, HUB, or PDF and take a screenshot of their ballot or fill out Google form and share/submit it with the ballot counters, Chief Judge and Judges.
  - The top portion of the ballot is not provided to the ballot counters and must be discreetly discarded by the voting judge after the contest.
- The chief judge personally collects the tiebreaking judge's ballot, which must contain all contestants ranked in order by the tiebreaking judge.

- As the voting judges and the tiebreaking judge are completing their ballots at the end of the contest, the timers complete the timing record sheet, place it in the provided envelope, and gives or sends it to the chief judge.
- Once all the ballots have been collected by email, the ballot counters and the chief judge will leave the contest room and proceed to the breakout counting room.

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## 7. General Procedure - Tallying the Winning Contestants

A. In the breakout counting room, the ballot counters will tabulate the results of the contest using the Counter's Tally Sheet.

- For Quarter Final and Final contests - On the Counter's Tally Sheet, each contestant receives points for being ranked first, second, or third place on a voting judge's ballot.
  - Three points are scored for each first-place ranking.
  - Two points are scored for each second-place ranking.
  - One point is scored for each third-place ranking.
- For Semi Final Contests – On the Counter's Tally Sheet, each contestant receives points for being rank from 1 to the total of contestants
  - If there are 8 semifinal contestants, 1 point is the lowest score; 8 points is the highest score
  - The 5 contestants who receive the most points will advance to Final
- Once all points are entered, the ballot counters compute the total points for each contestant and enter the totals on the bottom of the tally sheet.
- Point totals must be verified by all ballot counters before results are entered on the sheet.
- Contestants are then ranked on the bottom of the tally sheet according to the number of points scored.
- In the event of a tie, the chief judge will consult the tiebreaking judge's ballot.
- The tied contestant who received the highest ranking on the tiebreaking judge's ballot will gain the contested place, and any other tied contestants will be ranked in order behind that contestant.
- Once the results have been tabulated and verified, the chief judge records the ranking of all contestants on the Results Form. These results will be submitted to Fall Fusion Chair to proceed to the next level.
- All ballots and the tally sheet will be kept by the chief judge until the winners have been announced.

- After the winners have been announced, the chief judge will destroy all ballots, the time record, and the tally sheet.

B. After the conclusion of the contestant interviews, the Contest Chair announces the winners of the contest in reverse order.

- In contests with three or more participants, a third-place winner, a second-place winner, and a first-place winner will be announced.
- The announcement of contest winners is final unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers are permitted to immediately interrupt to correct the error.

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## **8. Protests and Disqualifications**

- Protests are limited to eligibility and originality and shall only be lodged by voting judges and contestants. Any protest shall be lodged with the chief judge and/or Contest Chair before the announcement of the winner.
- Before a contestant can be disqualified based on originality, the contestant must be allowed to respond to the voting judges. A majority of the voting judges must concur in the decision to disqualify.
- The Contest Chair can disqualify a contestant based on eligibility.
- All decisions of the voting judges and qualifying judges are final.

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**Questions?** Contact the current assigned Fall Fusion Chair or current District Program Quality Director.

***Have a great contest!***