

The following is a suggested script for the International Speech Contest. Clubs may also use this as a template.

The script aims to ensure that contest rules, such as speaker introductions and timing, are adhered to. As long as you cover items outlined in the current Speech Contest Rulebook, you may modify the script, but do consider time carefully if you add any additional content.

During the contestant briefing, show the contestants the placement of the **Timing Lights**. Ensure the **Timing Lights** are centered on the speaking area and visible to the contestants.

If desired, you may ask each contestant, before introducing him/her, say, ***“Can you see the Timer?”*** Then ask the Timer, ***“Timer, are you ready?”***

When you receive an affirmative response, introduce the speaker. The speaker approaches the Toastmaster to shake hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin.

Italics represent the script you say. The non-italicized words are instructions.

<p>Sergeant at Arms</p>	<p>Call contest to order. Welcome:</p> <p><i>Welcome to the District 101, Division ____, Area __ International Speech Contest for 2026.</i></p> <p><i>Here is some logistical Information: (as applicable to your venue)</i></p> <p><i>Restrooms are located _____. Please try to use the restrooms during the break or moments of silence. During speeches, the audience is requested not to leave their seats.</i></p> <p><i>Please do not walk around any other areas of the building, for security reasons.</i></p> <p><i>Do not take photographs or video recordings during any contestant's speeches. Video recording is allowed only for people who have received advanced approval from the Contest Chair.</i></p> <p><i>Please take a moment to turn off or silence cell phones and any other devices that may make noise during the contest.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce Appropriate Officer</p>
<p>District P/QD/Division or Area Director</p>	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Thank you (SAA Name)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Welcome Everyone & Introduce Guests)</p> <p><i>Welcome to the (Area ____; Division ____; District ____)</i> <i>International Speech Contest portion of today's event!</i></p>

	<p><i>Before we begin, I want to recognize the dignitaries who have joined us since we began.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Announce in the following order)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ current International Director (Region 1) ◆ current District 101 officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program Quality Director ○ Club Growth Director ◆ Immediate Past District 101 Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current PR Manager ○ Current Administration Manager ○ Current Finance Manager ○ Current Parliamentarian ○ Current Logistics Manager ○ Current Division Directors ◆ Current Division Area Directors ◆ Other District 101 Area Directors in order ◆ Other Region current International Directors (non-Region 2) ◆ Other District current District Directors ◆ Other District current Division Directors ◆ Other District current Area Directors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Past International Directors (Region 2 first) ○ Past District Directors (101 first) ◆ Ask if there are any other dignitaries present who have not been introduced. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">◆ <i>We are preparing for the next office term, starting on 1 July. There are a variety of offices in the District that are up for election. The elections will be held on May 9th, 2026 at the District 101 online Business Meeting. [Remove for the District Contest on May 17.]</i></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">◆ <i>Here are the current candidates for elected positions in District 101: (use the list provided by the PQD or the District Director.)</i></p> <p><i>To help us start this celebration please welcome our Contest Chair (NAME)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce Contest Chair</p>
<p>Contest Chair</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">(Welcome)</p> <p><i>Thank you (NAME of introducing official) and thank you, everyone, for joining us today.</i></p>

	<p>(say for Area Contest)</p> <p><i>Today’s International Speech Contest winner will progress to represent Area NAME at the Division NAME contest, which will take place on (DATE; LOCATION). If a contest winner is unable to participate in the next contest level, the highest-placed available contestant will advance.</i></p> <p>(say for Division Contest)</p> <p><i>Today’s International Speech Contest winner will progress to represent Division NAME at the District 101 contests, which will take place during the Annual Conference on May 17, at Synopsis, Sunnyvale, CA. If a contest winner is unable to participate in the next contest level, the highest-placed available contestant will advance</i></p> <p><i>To guide us through the Contest, please welcome our International Speech Contest Toastmaster (NAME).</i></p>
<p>International Speech Contest Toastmaster</p>	<p><i>Thank you (NAME of introducing official) and thank you, everyone, for joining us today.</i></p> <p><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Speech contests provide an opportunity for speakers to improve their speaking abilities and to recognize the best, as an encouragement to all Toastmasters.</i> ◆ <i>It also offers an opportunity to learn by observing proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.</i> <p><i>In this contest, we will hear an original speech from each contestant. After proceeding through the various levels of the competition, this is the only contest that proceeds beyond the District level to the Semifinals and the World Championship of Public Speaking.</i></p> <p><i>To eliminate any perception of bias, I will introduce each contestant in the same way:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Name, Speech Title, Speech Title, Name</p> <p><i>There will be one minute of silence after each contestant, during which the judges will mark their ballots. After the final contestant,</i></p>

	<p><i>I will ask for silence until the judges are finished ranking the contestants and the counters have collected all the ballots.</i></p> <p><i>The contestants have agreed upon the following speaking area:</i> _____ <describe the speaking area> _____</p> <p><i>The speaking order has been chosen randomly by drawing lots, and I'll announce the order now. You may want to mark your program with the contestant's order of speaking.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the speaking order and pronounce each contestant's name the same way so it doesn't seem as if you are emphasizing any name. • Pause after each name to provide the audience time to mark the program. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ <p><i>To explain the Contest Rules help me welcome our International Speech Contest Chief Judge, NAME.</i></p>
<p>International Speech Contest Chief Judge</p>	<p><i>Thank you Mr./Madam Toastmaster</i></p> <p>Eligibility</p> <p><i>To be eligible, each contestant must be a member in good standing of the club they are representing, and the club must also be in good standing. That means, the club has 8 or more members, and their membership dues are current with Toastmasters International.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>They may not be a current District or International officer, or have declared the intent to run for, District or International office (such as, Club Growth Director, Program Quality Director, Division Director, etc.).</i> <p><i>In addition, to be eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest, a member must have earned certificates of completion in</i></p>

Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience or earned a Distinguished Toastmasters award.

- ◆ *There is one exception to the speech requirements listed above. A charter member of a club chartered less than one (1) year before the club contest is permitted to compete without having completed this requirement. The club must have officially chartered before the Area contest.*

Toastmasters who are members of more than one club and meet all other eligibility requirements can compete in each contest.

*However, if they win more than one International Speech contest, they can represent only one of those clubs at the Area level. No contestant can compete in more than one Area speech contest of a given type, even if the two Areas are in different Divisions or Districts. (**Adjust this based on the level of contest**).*

It has been confirmed that all contestants are eligible.

The subject for the International speech is selected by the contestant.

All speeches are to be substantially original - any quoted material must be identified during the speech presentation.

- ◆ *25% or less of the speech may be non-original material.*
- ◆ *All non-original material must be attributed to the source where the contestant heard it/saw it).*
- ◆ *Contestants may not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, during their speech at the same contest in which they are competing.*

Contestants are permitted to remain in the room throughout the duration of the contest.

Contestants will set up any props or visual aids in the one minute of silence before their introduction.

*The time of the International Speech is **5 to 7** minutes with **30 second** grace periods. Any speaker speaking less than **4** minutes **30 seconds** or more than **7** minutes **30 seconds** will be disqualified.*

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 timing signals are visible from the speaker area, and will be activated as follows (ensure the timekeepers activate the lights/cards as you indicate time):

- **Green** will be displayed at 5 minutes and remain displayed for 1 minute.
- **Yellow** will be displayed at 6 minutes and remain displayed for 1 minute.
- The **Red** signal will be displayed at 7 minutes and remain displayed until the speech is concluded. No notice will be given if a contestant speaks past the grace period.

*In the event of a technical failure of the timing equipment, I will grant an additional **30 seconds** to the speaker's time before being disqualified.*

Prior to announcing results, the chair will announce if time disqualifications occurred but not name the contestant(s) involved.

Judges have been instructed not to consider time in their ranking of the contestants.

There are # judges and a tie breaker judge known only to me.

All judges at Area (Division, and District) speech contests shall be paid members of a club in good standing for a minimum of six months and have completed a minimum of six projects in Competent Communication or a minimum of 2 Levels in Pathways and be physically present at the contest.

- ◆ *Only members who joined Toastmasters prior to the rollout of Pathways in their region can apply speeches from the Competent Communication manual towards eligibility for judging.*

If a voting judge, tiebreaking judge, or chief judge is competing in the Speech contest, at any level, in any District, they are ineligible to serve as a judge.

Protests based on eligibility may be entered only by the contestants or judges to either me, the Chief Judge, or the Contest Chair _____.

Once the results have been announced, all decisions are final.

The judges, timers, and ballot counters have all been briefed and are qualified to fulfill their roles.

	<p><i>Are there any questions?</i></p> <p>I return control to Mr./Madam Toastmaster</p>
<p>International Speech Contest Toastmaster</p>	<p><i>It is time to begin the contest!</i></p> <p>Introduce Contestants</p> <p>(During the contestant briefing, show the contestants where the Timing Lights are located. Ensure the Timing Lights are centered on the speaking area and visible to the contestants. You do not need to mention the Timing Lights or the location.)</p> <p><i>Our first contestant is:</i></p> <p>Contestant 1:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)</p> <p>(When they finish, shake their hand.)</p> <p><i>Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.</i></p> <p>(Timer Shows Red/Red turns off at the end of one minute)</p> <p><i>Our next contestant is:</i></p> <p>Contestant 2:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)</p> <p>(When they finish, shake their hand.)</p>

Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.

(Timer Shows **Red/Red** turns off at the end of one minute)

Our next contestant is:

Contestant 3:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Name: _____

(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)

(When they finish, shake their hand.)

Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.

(Timer Shows **Red/Red** turns off at the end of one minute)

Our next contestant is:

Contestant 4:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Name: _____

(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)

(When they finish, shake their hand.)

Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.

(Timer Shows **Red/Red** turns off at the end of one minute)

Our next contestant is:

Contestant 5:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Name: _____

(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)

(When they finish, shake their hand.)

Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.

(Timer Shows **Red/Red** turns off at the end of one minute)

Our next contestant is:

Contestant 6:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Title: _____

Name: _____

(The contestant approaches the Toastmaster, shakes hands, then returns to the center of the speaking area to begin their speech.)

(When they finish, shake their hand.)

Timer, please time one minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots.

(Timer Shows **Red/Red** turns off at the end of one minute)

Timer, please leave the Red light on until the ballots are collected and the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters have left the room.

Judges Tally and Ballot Counters Collect Ballots

Everyone please remain silent until the judges have completed their ballots, and the counters have left the room with the ballots.

Judges: raise your ballots when you are finished. (Demonstrate by holding up your arm.)

- **REMAIN SILENT!**
- Silence will be painful, but don't rush or distract the judges!
- Confirm that all ballots have been collected before you proceed.

(When the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters leave the room the Timer will change the **Red** screen/background to **Green**).**

[once the Background turns to **Green** the Toastmaster will begin the interview process]

Thank you, everyone, for your patience during the period of silence.

(Contestant Interview)

(Ask all contestants to come up and line up in speaking order.
Interview the contestants in speaking order)

(this contestant interview needs to take enough time for the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters to tally all ballots and report the results to the Contest Chair, and the Certificate Chair. Do not rush the interview.)

- Ask each contestant the name of their club and how long they have been a Toastmaster.
- Ask about their speech or some element from the contestant's bio.
- If the results are not back, have an extra question to ask each contestant.
- If you took notes during their speech, you can use points from the speech or an additional question from their bio.
- Remember to always ask each contestant the same number of questions.
 - Ask Contestant 1 a question, then ask Contestant 2 a question, you continue until each contestant has been asked the first question.
 - Then you start over with Question 2.
 - You can treat the name of their club and how long they have been in Toastmasters as question 1.
- The planned interview duration will be determined by prior discussion with the Contest Chair.
- After interviewing all the contestants, provide each with a Participation Certificate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After all contestants have their Participation Certificate • Each contestant poses for a photo with their certificate. • You may also want a group photo. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Let's have another hand for all of our contestants.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I return control to the Contest Chair</i></p>
Contest Chair	<p><i>Let's have another hand for our Toastmaster</i></p> <p>Announce any Opportunity Drawing winners</p> <p>Certificates of Appreciation</p> <p>Keep acknowledgements brief. You may call up only the Toastmasters, Chief Judges, and Contest Chair for certificates. Or you may ask them to stand as you acknowledge him/her.</p> <p>Mention the other chairs by name and let them know that their certificates, along with those for the many people who supported the contest, will be available after the contest.</p> <p><i>(say for Area Contest)</i></p> <p><i>Today's International Speech Contest winner will progress to represent Area NAME at the Division NAME contest, which will take place on (DATE; LOCATION). If a contest winner is unable to participate in the next contest level, the highest-placed available contestant will advance.</i></p> <p><i>(say for Division Contest)</i></p> <p><i>Today's International Speech Contest winner will progress to represent Division NAME at the District 101 contests, which will take place during the Annual Conference on May 17, at Synopsis, Sunnyvale, CA. If a contest winner is unable to participate in the next contest level, the highest-placed available contestant will advance</i></p> <p><i>(say for District Contest)</i></p> <p><i>Today's International Speech Contest Winner will represent District 101 at the Semi-Finals of the Toastmasters International World Championship of Public Speaking. If a</i></p>

	<p><i>contest winner is unable to participate in the next contest level, the highest-placed available contestant will advance</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Introduce the appropriate officer (District Program Quality Director (PQD)/Division or Area Director)</p>
District /Division Dignitary/ Area Director	<p>Thank you (NAME of Contest Chair)</p> <p><i>Before announcing the results, I want to announce there:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>ARE NO Time Disqualifications</i> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>IS/ARE (#) Time Disqualification(s). Those contestants affected will be notified privately by the Chief Judge.</i> <p><i>Announcement of contest winners is final unless the list of winners is announced incorrectly, in which case the chief judge, ballot counters, or timers may immediately interrupt to correct the error.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">[In contests with three (3) or more participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a third-place winner ● a second-place winner ● and a first-place winner will be announced. ● Winners will be announced in reverse order.] <p style="text-align: center;">[In contests with fewer than three (3) participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a second-place winner (if applicable) ● a first-place winner will be announced. ● Winners will be announced in reverse order. <p>[Occasionally, a contest will be held with only one (1) contestant.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A contest must still be held ● If the contestant does not meet the timing, originality, and eligibility requirements the contestant will be disqualified

	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Awards are presented in reverse order: 3rd, 2nd, and 1st, one at a time to each winner. ◆ Awards are presented by announcing the Award, presenting to the contestant, then jointly holding the certificate for a photo. displaying the Award Certificate. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce Third Place Winner (applaud) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present Certificate/Photo • Announce Second Place Winner (applaud) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present Certificate/Photo • Announce First Place Winner (applaud) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present Certificate/Photo <p style="text-align: center;">(Brief Speech if desired)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Let's welcome back our Contest Chair</i></p>
<p>Contest Chair</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thank you, Mr./Madam District/PQD/Division/Area Director</i></p> <p><i>Let's have another round of applause for all our contestants today.</i></p> <p><i>The winners and runners-up are asked to remain behind and complete the paperwork to report the results to (Division/District) for the next level contest.</i></p> <p><i>We especially want to thank our District Leaders, present and past, who shared their time with us today to make this Contest a success.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you all for attending and supporting our contestants.</i></p>

Notes for Club Contests

At the Club Level:

1. The role of the Club Vice President of Education (VPE) is to schedule and help put together the Club Contest.
 - a. The role of the Contest Chair in the script can be filled by the VPE.
 - b. If the VPE is competing, then the Contest Chair can be assigned to another club member.
2. The District/Area/Division Officer can be filled by the Club President.
 - a. If the President is competing in the Club Contest then the District/Area/Division Officer role can be filled by the Contest Chair.
 - b. In this case, adjust the script as appropriate.
3. At the Club Level, it is important that the contestants know the eligibility requirements and how the contest is conducted. Those are important elements for the contestants to know at the club level before moving to the next level.
4. The judges may be club members. This is how members can become qualified to serve as a judge at an Area Contest: by first serving as a judge at a Club Contest.