

Timeline and Script for the Table Topics and International Speech Contest (Club Level)

By conducting the Table Topics and International Speech Contest at your Toastmasters club, you are giving your members a very special gift. Each contestant will walk away a better, more experienced speaker. For those who advance to compete at the Area, Division, or District level, that can change a person's life! Contest participation and organization definitely changed my life and positively impacted my career in ways too numerous to list here. It is for that reason that I've prepared this document so that you can smoothly deliver those opportunities to your participating members and grow yourself as a contest organizer and event leader.

Conducting a Toastmasters contest can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your Toastmasters career. However, if you leave planning to the last minute, it can also be one of the most embarrassing and stressful events you will ever lead. This document has been developed to help you through the planning stages and step-by-step sequence to follow during your contest day.

At least 4 weeks prior to contest day:

Contest Chairperson (Usually the VP Education is responsible for contests)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Identifies date/location for contest (Usually during club meeting time)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruits Toastmaster and Chief Judge and instructs their roles.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announces to members at Toastmasters meetings and in direct emails that the contest will be the Table Topics contest and International Speech Contest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announces requirements to compete (All members "in good standing" can compete in the Table Topics contest. All members "in good standing" AND those who have completed 6 speech objectives from the Competent Communicator manual OR Level <u>1</u> and <u>2</u> of any Pathways Path are eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest. The contest speech may be the member's 6 th speech or level completing speech.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delivers an educational 5-7 minute speech about the importance of participating in the Table Topics and International Speech Contest.

I promote “Strive for 5” where my goal is to get 5 contestants in each contest. In a 90-minute meeting club, you can usually accept up to 8 or so Table Topics contestants and still finish your contest close to normal meeting end-time, if not on-time.

Contest Chairperson should approach individual members by phone or after a meeting to personally challenge them to compete. Rarely will a person sign-up on their own to be in a speech contest for the first time. They must be encouraged and sometimes even coerced! But, they will thank you later for the experience. So it will be worth the extra effort.

At least 3 weeks prior to contest day:

Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Creates sign-up sheet and passes it around to members at each Toastmasters meeting so that members have the opportunity to sign-up as speech contestants, table topics contestants (or both).
<input type="checkbox"/>	You may elect to include sign-up spots on the sheet for judges, timers, and vote counters, but I’ve found if you do this, newer members (who should be strongly urged to compete) take the easy way out by signing up as counters and timers. My recommendation is to only include contestant fields for the sign-up sheet until a full slate of contestants is established.
<input type="checkbox"/>	TM Recruits Sergeant-at-Arms for the event and instructs to do the following:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Show up 30 minutes to an hour before contest is to start in order to welcome guests and be on hand for room setup.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Locate a room away from the contest room where Table Topics contestants will be taken so that they cannot hear or see the other participants.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>At beginning of contest, welcome the audience and introduce the Toastmaster for the Event. (Usually in a normal club meeting, the president of the club is introduced. But, club contests are notorious for starting late and going over time. You probably won't start your contest exactly on time like a club meeting. And, that's okay if the event ends on-time. Bypassing so many introductions and getting right on to the event Toastmaster cuts out several minutes.)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>When asked, the SAA will escort Table Topics contestants to the waiting area outside of the room. When it is time for each Table Topics contestant to deliver his or her Table Topics response (drawn for speaking order before the contest start time), the SAA escorts the contestant to just inside the door making sure they do not yet walk to the front of the room until called.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Immediately after the contestant delivers the Table Topic, while judges are tabulating their votes, the SAA gets next contestant and brings the person only inside the door to wait for their introduction. If there is a break (many clubs just churn right through the entire contest), SAA resounds the gavel after the 10-minute break (or less) is over and re-introduces the Toastmaster for continuation of the contest.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>At beginning of contest, welcome the audience and introduce the Toastmaster for the Event. (Usually in a normal club meeting, the president of the club is introduced. But, club contests are notorious for starting late and going over time. You probably won't start your contest exactly on time like a club meeting. And, that's okay if the event ends on-time. Bypassing so many introductions and getting right on to the event Toastmaster cuts out several minutes.)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Instructs contestants to make scheduling arrangements to be at the contest location "at least" 20 minutes before contest start time.</p>

Chief Judge

<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruits 2 timers (Can be one member and a guest).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruits 5 judges (Must be TM members).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruits Chief Counter and one additional vote counter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recruits a tie-breaker judge, for which the ballot is only used in a tie.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructs all volunteers where to be and when to be there.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finds all judging forms and contestant sheets, and prints them for the contest including:

- International Speech Contest Ballots
- Table Topics Contest Ballots
- Timer's Sheets
- Certificates of Originality and Eligibility
- Bio Sheets
- Counter's Sheets

At least one day before contest

Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepares a printed agenda showing contestant names but no speech titles. Volunteers need not be listed on the agenda. [Note: Table Topics should always be first and the International Speech Contest should be second. The speeches are considered the “main event” while the Table Topics are the “warm-up band.” The audience (and judges) need to be warmed-up before hearing contest-level speeches.]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes 10 additional copies of the agenda than you think you’ll need as there are often guests invited to support the speakers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes 10 additional copies of the agenda than you think you’ll need as there are often guests invited to support the speakers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacts contestants one more time by email or phone as a reminder of the contest, when to be there and that you’ll be looking forward to seeing them. (Be ready to do a little “selling” because surely one or two of your contestants will get cold feet and try to get out of it.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepares Certificates of Achievement for contestants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If your club budget allows, invest in 1st and 2nd place trophies with engraving, but make sure to get them at least a week in advance or your engraving might not get completed in time for the contest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brings 5 or 6 pens for contestants to use to complete forms. [If you can get contestants to complete forms prior to event day, it will save time and headaches].

At the contest but before the show starts:

Chief Judge Briefs Table Topics Contestants

<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrives at least 30 minutes before contest start time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Checks off volunteers as they arrive and supplies them with appropriate forms (Ballots, Timer sheet, Counter, Bio, Eligibility)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefs all judges and timers beginning 15 minutes (preferably) before start.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefs all contestants participating in Table Topics Contest 10-15 minutes before contest start time. (The Toastmaster does not need to sit-in on briefings of timers and judges, but, at the club level, SHOULD attempt to be present at the briefing of contestants so you're all on the same page.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shows where the timing lights are.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains Timing Green=1 minute, Amber=1 minute, 30 seconds; Red=2 minutes; 30 seconds to wrap it up
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains that the Table Topics Contest will occur first.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains that contestants will be asked to leave the room for which they will be escorted by the Sergeant-at-Arms to a designated room where the door will remain shut until each contestant is escorted back to the room when it is their turn to present.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains that the SAA will bring contestants in one by one while the others remain in the room away from the contest room and that when they are escorted back to the contest room, they should remain just inside the contest room door until their name is announced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains that the Toastmaster will introduce them as: "Our next Table Topics contestant is (contestant's name). Please help me welcome (contestant's name)" and then the contestant should walk to the front of the room, shake hands with the Toastmaster (without speaking!!), and then wait for the table topic to be read TWICE. The timer will begin when the first word is spoken by the contestant or the first gesture is made toward the audience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	SAA will bring contestants in one by one while the others remain in the room away from the contest room and that when they are escorted back to the contest room, they should remain just inside the contest room door until their name is announced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Table Topics Contestants stay in the contest room after their table topic is delivered.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Table Topics Contestants draw for speaking order.

Chief Judge Briefs Speech Contestants

<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefs all contestants participating in International Speech Contest 5-10 minutes before contest starts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shows where the timing lights are.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains timing: Green=5 minutes; Amber=6 minutes; Red=7 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disqualify at less than 4 minutes, 30 seconds or greater than 7 minutes, 30 seconds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains that the Speech contest will occur second.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explains introductions will be in the following fashion: Person's name, Title of Speech, Title of Speech, Person's name. (For best results, the speaker should remain in his or her seat until full introduction is complete, receive applause, and then approach front of the room.) The Toastmaster will shake hands with the contestant and then walk away. The contestants need to be briefed very specifically that they must not say a word after that handshake until they are ready to start delivering the speech because the clock will start upon their first word or gesture to the audience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All International Speech Contestants remain in the contest room before and after their speech is delivered.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contestants draw for speaking order.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delivers speaking order of all contestants to Toastmaster.

At the contest but before the show starts:

Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrives at least 30 minutes before contest start time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chooses a seat near the front, on the side, offering easy access to the front of the room and back to seat so as not to be distracting to contestants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Checks off contestants as they arrive.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gets them to complete Eligibility and Bio Forms if not filled out already.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Points out the Chief Judge and when and where the briefings will begin.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identifies District Officers who have showed up, verifies pronunciation of names, writes their names and position for introduction and reference.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coordinates kick-off of contest with SAA who will introduce the Toastmaster.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accumulates speaking order from Chief Judge and provides list to timers.

The Contest Begins!

Sergeant-at-Arms

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sounds the gavel, welcomes everyone, introduces Toastmaster. (Note: The Chairperson might be the Toastmaster. In that event, it's probably more appropriate to introduce that person as the Toastmaster of the day or evening. If this is not the case, the Contest Chairperson will say a few welcoming words and will quickly introduce the Toastmaster.) |
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Event Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Welcomes group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provides an upbeat introduction and overview of what the audience will see. Gives introduction to the contest itself. Ideas to cover might include why public speaking contests are important, how the contestants have chosen to participate in the contest at their club level to "step beyond their comfort zone" and gain experience in a more competitive setting. Personally, I've discovered that doing a contest International Speech correctly, with all the preparation required to win, and the experience of advancing to the Area, Division, and higher, is the equivalent of working through ALL 10 Objectives in the CC manual. I've also found that any contestant that even simply competes at the area or division level NEVER does a speech the same when they come back to the club. They are that much better of a speaker from the experience.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentions that the first place winners of today's events will go on to the Area contest to be held on XYZ Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduces district officers in the audience by simply stating their names and having them stand (if present):

- District Director
- Lieutenant Governor, Education and Training
- Lieutenant Governor, Marketing
- Public Relations Officer
- District Secretary
- District Treasurer
- Immediate Past District Director
- Division Director
- Area Director
- Others

<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduces Chief Judge and Welcomes Chief Judge to Front of Contest Room
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Chief Judge Informs Audience the Following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Contestants, judges, timers, and counters have been briefed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contestants have drawn for speaking order.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Judges will not consider timing as this is considered separately.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All cell phones, etc., should now be turned off.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No one should enter or leave the room while a contestant is speaking so that an “equal platform” can be provided for each contestant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Timing for each event.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announces: “Contest may now begin!”

Chief Judge Informs Audience the Following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Makes a smooth transition between Chief Judge's comments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	This is a great time to reiterate to the audience that, to have a fair contest, it is VERY important that each contestant be offered <u>the same equal platform to participate as the next</u> . This means no leaving the room, no doors slamming, no dropping change on the floor, etc. One of my favorite lines to get the seriousness of this message across, and yet keep things light, is when I would say, "Please turn off your cell phones now because if you get a call in the middle of someone's speech, we will have to have someone assigned to get a call in the middle of everyone's speech!"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announces "We will start this program with the Table Topics Contest. At this time, I would like to ask our Sergeant-at-Arms to escort ALL of our Table Topics contestants to the secured area."

Sergeant-at-Arms

<input type="checkbox"/>	Escorts all of the contestants outside the room to a separate location where they cannot hear the other contestants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Most clubs will allow Contestant #1 to stand near the door before being introduced. But, this is where everything gets goofed up if you choose to do this. The Sergeant-at-Arms will be inside the room, probably standing near the door, during all other contestants' presentations. So, to keep a fair contest, the Sergeant-at-Arms needs to be in the room standing near the door for the 1 st contestant too! But, he's delivering all of the other contestants to the secured room at the beginning, right? The solution is to have the 1 st contestant go to the secured room with all of the other contestants and then bring that contestant back to the room to stand inside the door with the Sergeant-at-Arms next to him or her. Then, the contest can proceed with the introduction of the first TT contestant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After the first contestant has completed his/her response, the judges will have 1 minute on the clock to mark their ballots. The SAA should immediately leave the room (after the conclusion of the contestant's TT response) and retrieve the next contestant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructs the contestant to stand just inside the door until introduced.

Toastmaster Conducts Table Topics Contest

<input type="checkbox"/>	Toastmaster calls for first contestant: "Our first Table Topics Contestant is: Person's Name. Please help me welcome: Person's Name."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contestant walks to front of room. Toastmaster extends a handshake and reads the Table Topic twice and then walks away.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After a contestant has completed the response, say: "May we please have one minute of silence while the judges mark their ballots?"
<input type="checkbox"/>	After one minute on the clock, Toastmaster says: "Judges, please prepare for the next presenter." [Note: Your SAA should already have the next contestant just inside the door awaiting introduction.]
<input type="checkbox"/>	Toastmaster introduces next Table Topics participant: "Our next Table Topics contestant is...Please help me welcome...."
<input type="checkbox"/>	After final contestant has presented, Toastmaster requests 1 minute of silence for judging. Then, after the minute is up, the Toastmaster says: "Now we will allow extra time for the judges to cast their final votes for best Table Topics. Judges, please raise your ballot in the air when you have completed your votes and our chief judge will collect the ballots."
<input type="checkbox"/>	After all ballots have been collected, the Toastmaster says: "Let's give all of the contestants another round of applause!"

[Note: At Area, Division, and District contest levels, it is at this time when all the Table Topics contestants are brought up to the front of the room for interviews.

At the club level, I strongly urge you to NOT have interviews at this time.

You may have contestants participating in both Table Topics and the International Speech Contest. It would be repetitive to interview the same contestants twice. At most club contests, you just will not have the time.

Interviews are a different and important experience for Toastmasters. So, they should be conducted; but at the right time during the contest. You will need time for counters to count all of the votes later in the program. Having interviews of contestants is a great way to eat up some of that time.

I'm just suggesting that you do all of the interviews after all the Topics and Speeches have been delivered.

Toastmaster May Announce a 10-Minute Break Between Contests.

[Note: At a Club-Level contest, a break is usually not taken in order to keep the meeting running on time. In addition, clubs often elect to have counters collect the votes from the Table Topics contest but NOT exit the room to count the ballots right away. Instead, they hold onto the votes and stay in the room so that the International Speech Contest may begin. Then, the counters exit the room after all the speakers have delivered their speeches so that they count ballots for both the Table Topics contest and the International Speech Contest at the same time.]

Contest Continues with the International Speech Contest

Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Provides transition between the Table Topics contest and the International Speech Contest. If choose to have a break, expect people to be returning from a bathroom run or phone call when you want to get started. Expect to provide some last-minute improvisation as you really want to make sure everyone is in the room and situated before the first speaker begins speaking.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announces "And now, for the International Speech Contest!"
<input type="checkbox"/>	Our first contestant, "first name, last name, Title, Title again, first name, last name."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Receive contestant by offering a handshake. Try to avoid saying anything to the contestant because if the person responds with any words, the timer will start.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask for one minute of silence while the judges mark their ballots.
<input type="checkbox"/>	At 45 seconds say "Judges, please complete your balloting" so that they know the time is drawing near for the next speaker.
<input type="checkbox"/>	At 60 seconds, announce "Our next contestant, first name, last name, title, title, first name, last name.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After last contestant, say "We will now remain silent until all judges have completed their ballots and the ballots have been collected by our counters." (There is no limit for judges to complete tallying ballots and sometimes it takes a while. Enforce silence in the audience.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	After ballots have been collected, "Let's give all of the contestants another round of applause for their very well-done speeches!"

Toastmaster...Continued

<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite contestants to the front for interviews: "At this time, while the counters are counting the votes, I'd like to call all of our speech contestants (AND TABLE TOPICS CONTESTANTS) to the front for interviews."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have each contestant introduce himself/herself and mention how long they have been in Toastmasters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pick one item from the contestant's bio sheet and ask the person to elaborate for a brief moment on that topic of interest. The Toastmaster must be very careful to limit responses to 10-20 seconds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents each contestant with a Certificate of Appreciation (if your club has prepared them), thank the person for their participation, and ask for round of applause for the participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	After all contestants have been interviewed, ask for one more round of applause as contestants are instructed to return to their seats.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite visiting District Officers to make any announcements to the audience. A good way to introduce this is: "While we're waiting for the votes to be tallied, we're going to minimize the suspense a bit by allowing our visiting District Officers to fill the time. Please help me welcome..."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order to invite District Officers to Speak: Past District Directors Area Directors Division Directors Immediate Past District Director District Treasurer District Secretary Public Relations Officer Lieutenant Governor, Marketing, Lieutenant Governor, Education and Training District Governor.

Toastmaster...Continued

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fills any extra time if votes are not completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conducts the Awards Ceremony for Table Topics Contestants first by announcing 2 nd Place winner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Then, say "And, now the person our judges have chosen to represent our club at the Area Contest on XYX date is...."
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same process for International Speech Contest awards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asks for any remarks from first place finishers (if time allows).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presents thank-you's to key participants like Chief Judge, Timers Presents any special gifts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gives ending comments and announces the date and location for the next event and encourages attendance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gives control of the event to the Contest Chairperson or closes the contest.

Contest Chairperson

<input type="checkbox"/>	Congratulates Toastmaster and Chief Judge for a job well done.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mentions the date and location of next level contest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requests first and second place finishers to remain for pictures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thank audience for attending.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Close event.

Toastmaster

<input type="checkbox"/>	Gathers bios and eligibility forms of winners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completes Notification of Winners Form.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delivers forms to Contest Chairperson of next event.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arranges contestants for group photos.

Note About Applause: The trend for the past few years at the Area, Division and District contests has been to have an abbreviated applause for each contestant. Usually, the event Toastmaster will take about five minutes to demonstrate to the audience how he or she would like abbreviated applause to happen. Then, practice will be given to the audience so that they applaud with two synchronized claps of the hands. I personally believe this is not only a waste of valuable time, but it also kills momentum for the event and lessens the value of the presenters' presentations. They have worked hard to prepare! Let them receive the full applause.

Note About Awards Distribution: If you supply trophies or certificates, plan to use proper protocol for distributing awards. Hold the trophy or certificate in your left hand and close to your chest as the winner approaches. Reach out your hand to shake theirs. After shaking hands is complete, give the trophy or certificate to the participant.