

Table Topics Contest Chair's Script

Resources for Contest Chair

Table Topics Speech Contest Kit <https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/table-topics-speech-contest>

Rule Book - [Speech Contest Rulebook 2024-25](#)

Recommended Instructions:

It is recommended to read all instructions along with the full script prior to the Contest (i.e., as soon as you are appointed to your Contest Chair Role). This script is a general guide. It is in editable format so that you can amend it to suit your own personal style and language. Modify the flow of the script as appropriate for a multi-contest event at any level. Since some contestants are in more than one (1) contest, it is important that contestant interviews take place only after the last speech contest of the event.

IMPORTANT: Email all Contestants at least two (2) weeks prior to the contest date with all details regarding the venue, time, and date of the contest, along with the Speakers Eligibility form, Speakers Profile Sheet (1189), and a copy of the Contest Rule book.

Refer to page 21 of the Contest Rulebook for the Contest Chair Checklist and Briefing notes. Chair the Contestants' Briefing.

Obtain the speaking order and ask contestants how to pronounce their names. Space is provided within the text of this script to write in the speaking order and notes on pronunciation.

Ask contestants to complete the Speakers Profile sheet (1189) for each contestant to aid in performing the contestant Interviews.

Make sure contestants are not wearing name badges or designation pins (i.e., DTM pin).

Remember when choosing your Table Topics:

The topic is of a general thematic nature, leading to an opinion or conclusion.

- Do not make it too long and keep it relatively simple, not complex.
- Have the topic written in such a way that it leads to an opinion or conclusion... *for example:*
Poorly written Topic: Colours can be reflective of your mood. Do you think black is a better colour or is white more preferable?
Same Topic written better: "What colour is better – Black or white?"
- Print it clearly on a piece of paper, so that you can show it to the contestant at the same time as reading the topic. It is recommended to have all contestants leave the room then read the topic to the audience so that the first speaker is treated the same as successive speakers and isn't given the sounds of the audience's surprise or laughter of the topic.

Give the event MC any relevant information (if required) for your introduction as Contest Chair.

Some examples are your:

- Club name, how long you have been a Toastmaster, and
- Your Toastmaster education level and/or officer role, and
- Maybe something humorous or exciting about yourself.

Brief the Sergeant at Arms.

Option 1: All Contestants leave the room whilst the topic is read to the audience for the first time.

Option 2: With the exception of the first speaker who will remain in the room, you will escort the remaining Table Topics contestants to an outside waiting area.

After the first speaker has answered the Table Topics question and immediately after the one-minute silence begins, retrieve the next contestant from their room and have them in a ready position to the side of the speaking area until they are called by the Contest Chair to answer the Table Topics question. The contestant is to be reminded not to go onto the speaking/stage area until invited by the Contest Chair.

Area	Script Wording
Welcome & Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Welcome to all Toastmasters and guests to the Table Topics Contest for Club, Area, Division, or District level.▪ The following are the housekeeping rules for this contest<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As a courtesy to our contestants please ensure your mobile phone is either switched off or in silent mode.○ Once the contest has begun, the Sergeant at Arms will secure the doors, members of the audience are asked to refrain from leaving or entering when anyone is speaking. You are only permitted to leave the room within the 1 minute of silence.○ No photography is permitted until you are invited to do so at the end of the contest.
Speaking Order	<p>The order of the contestants was randomly selected prior to the start of the contest and is as follows. <i>Remember to say the Speakers full name</i></p> <p>First Speaker: _____</p> <p>Second Speaker: _____</p> <p>Third Speaker: _____</p> <p>Fourth Speaker: _____</p> <p>Fifth Speaker: _____</p> <p>Sixth Speaker: _____</p> <p>Seventh Speaker: _____</p> <p>Eight Speaker: _____</p> <p><i>(Advise your audience to also refer to the agenda for correct spelling. It is advisable, if possible, to have a PowerPoint slide with the list of contestants in speaking order shown, which also has correct spelling). (for Area, Division or District contests, please ensure that no reference is ever made regarding the members Club, Area or Division they represent)</i></p>
Briefings confirmed	<p>All contestants have been briefed on the rules of the contest and I can confirm that all contestants are eligible.</p> <p>Can the Chief Judge confirm that all the judges have been briefed.</p>

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<p>Protests</p> <p>Timing</p>	<p>There will be one minute of silence between speakers so the judges may complete their ballot sheets. At the end of the contest there will be unlimited silence until the Chief Judge and Tally Counters have left the room.</p> <p>Protests are limited to eligibility, originality, and any reference to another contestant's speech and can only be lodged by contestants or voting judges to either the Contest Chair (myself) or the Chief Judge.</p> <p>Announcement of contest winners is final unless announced incorrectly.</p> <p>The timing of this contest is 1 to 2 minutes.</p> <p>Can we please test the lights as I read the timing: Green at 1 minute Amber/Yellow at 1 minute 30 seconds and Red at 2 minutes. The light will stay Red until the Contestant has finished speaking.</p> <p>Thank you Timers.</p> <p>Judges have been instructed not to consider time in their ranking of speakers.</p> <p>Now to demonstrate how clapping will occur. I will introduce the speaker as: Contestant #1: Sam Smith, then I ask the audience to clap (<i>Demonstrate</i>) After they have walked onto the stage/Speaking area, I will say Contestant name, the topic is, the topic is, Contestant name.' And then we will clap again. (<i>Demonstrate</i>)</p>
<p>Rules of Contest <i>Optional</i></p>	<p><i>Contest Chair this next part may not be necessary for your speech contest if your audience are experienced toastmasters and familiar with contest rules.</i></p> <p>The rules for this contest are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All contestants will receive the same topic, which must be of a general nature. 2. The topic must be of reasonable length, not require a preamble or detailed knowledge, and must lead to an opinion or conclusion. 3. Contestants will receive no advance knowledge of the topic until the moment they are introduced by the contest chair. 4. Contestants must not use digital or other devices during the contest to gain an unfair advantage.
<p>Start Contest</p>	<p>"We will now begin the Table Topics Contest. I will read the purpose of the contest as defined by Toastmasters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To encourage the development of Table Topics skills and to recognise the best as encouragement to all.

Area	Script Wording
	2. To provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training”
Contestants leave room	<p><u>Option 1:</u> Sergeant at Arms, would you please escort all the contestants out of the room whilst the Topic is read to the audience.</p> <p><u>Option 2:</u> Sergeant at Arms, would you please escort all contestants out of the room except for the first contestant.</p>
Contestant Introduction and Topic	<p>Now I will introduce Contestant # <i>(number used not first or last etc)</i></p> <p>Contestant name, the topic is, the topic is, Contestant name.</p> <p><i>(The topic can also be written on a card and given to the contestant to read)</i></p> <p><i>After each Table Topics contestant</i> One minute silence.</p> <p><i>After one minute</i> Thank you. Now I will introduce contestant # <i>(same order as previously)</i>.</p>
End of contest	<p><i>Once all contestants have spoken</i> Could we please have silence until the judges have completed their ballot sheets and the Chief Judge and Tally Counters have left the room. A reminder to Judges: please ensure your ballot is valid by completing your name on the Ballot.</p> <p><i>(remain silent until the chief judge and tally counters have left the room. This could take 3-7 minutes, depending on the number of judges and how large your audience is)</i></p> <p>Thank you for your silence.</p>
Interview Contestants	<p>Could I invite all our contestants to come forward for interview questions?</p> <p>This is a great opportunity to get to know our contestants better, and photos can be permitted, either with each contestant or at the end for all Contestants.</p> <p><i>Check with your Contest organiser how long you have for this segment of the Contest, as it could be a max of 1 minute or 2 minutes per contestant.</i></p> <p>i.e. Timing will be 1 to 2 minutes (green 1, amber 1.30, red 2 mins).</p>

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	<p><i>Present the Participation Certificate to the contestant which has been prefilled.</i></p> <p>Which Club / Area / Division do you represent? <i>Refer to the Speech Contestant Profile sheet for questions to ask.</i></p> <p><i>All contestants must be given the same equal time for interview questions regardless of when the results may be received.</i></p> <p><i>If there is another contest to be held – adjourn this contest and hand over to the contest chair for the next contest to start proceedings for that contest.</i></p>
<p>Announcing the Results</p> <p>New Rule M4 page 13 Multiple Contests at one event</p>	<p><i>At the end of the event, announce the first contest winners, followed by the second contest etc.</i></p> <p>Congratulations to all our contestants.</p> <p>There were NO time disqualifications OR there were #_____ time disqualifications. <i>(never name the contestant disqualified)</i></p> <p>The 3rd place winner is _____ The 2nd place winner is _____ The 1st place winner is _____</p> <p><i>(if less than or equal to 3 contestants you still announce all Contestants in winning order)</i></p> <p>Congratulations to the winner of (Club/Area/Division) Table Topics Speech Contest who will represent us at our Area/Division Contest on _____ (date x) Or District 72 Contest which will be held on _____ May 2025. <i>(Allow photo opportunities if required)</i></p> <p>Thanks to the contest officials, our contestants and to you, our audience. Either I will now hand over to _____. or I declare the contest (event) closed.</p>