



# SPEECH CONTEST **JUDGES TRAINING**

Presenter's Guide



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**



# SPEECH CONTEST JUDGES TRAINING

## Presenter's Guide

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# SPEECH CONTEST JUDGES TRAINING

## CONDUCTING THE TRAINING

The *Speech Contest Judges Training* is a seminar that helps define and refine a Toastmaster's speech contest judging skills. This product consists of two parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech

### In Your Own Words

The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.

Here are some tips on using this presentation to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline in this manual carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster, including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. You are encouraged to use them. In the outline, there are indications for placement of each visual. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual. Please note that the first visual is not included in this numbering system.

You may copy the material on the visuals onto a flipchart. Do this before the presentation. Use a heavy marking pen that does not seep through the paper, and write on every third or fourth page so succeeding visuals will not show through. Also, make your letters large and heavy with plenty of space between them.

Follow these tips when using visual aids:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners. Place your projector so it projects a large, high, undistorted image on the screen. Focus the image.
- ▶ Bring spare equipment, including a projector bulb, extension cord, extra marking pens, etc.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flipchart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flipchart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

## **INTRODUCING THE PRESENTER**

### **Tips for the Presenter: Write Your Introduction**

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Explain why training contest judges is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You're the Introducer* (Item 1167E) for further details on giving a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### **Tips for the Introducer**

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

# WHEN YOU'RE THE JUDGE

## INTRODUCTION

Toastmasters speech contests have three purposes:

1. Provide competitive speaking experience for Toastmasters members
2. Provide interesting educational programs for members and the public
3. Provide the audience an opportunity to learn by observing proficient speakers

It's important that all speech contests are conducted properly and good judging is vital to this. Good judging imparts a feeling of fairness to contestants and the audience and that the right choice was made.

### Presenter:

Ask participants to raise their hands if they have ever left a speech contest feeling that the judges selected the wrong contestant as winner. Ask why they believe an incorrect selection was made. Record these on a flipchart or whiteboard. Discuss with the entire group some ways to avoid the situations the audience mentioned. Write these on a flipchart too.

## JUDGES HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO:

- ▶ **Contestants.** Contestants are entitled to a truly professional performance by each judge. Contestants expect—and deserve—fairness and impartiality. They should receive nothing less.
- ▶ **Toastmasters International.** Toastmasters has a reputation for speech training, excellence in meetings, and excellence in speech contests. Bad judging creates animosity and demeans the contest, the officials, and our leaders.
- ▶ **The Audience.** The audience deserves a good speech contest. This includes fair and unbiased judging. Whenever judges fail to make the best choice, the audience is cheated. They're also discouraged from attending or participating in other contests.
- ▶ **Themselves.** As a Toastmaster, judges have made a personal commitment to self-improvement. This commitment includes being dedicated to making the correct decision when judging a contest.

## JUDGING VS. EVALUATING

A judge's purpose is to select the speaker who has given the best speech on that day. Judges do not evaluate. Evaluators appraise a speech, measuring the speaker's presentation against his or her purpose and then advise the speaker on how to improve the speech.

Judges' decisions are confidential and judges are not to explain their decision to contestants, or tell contestants how they could improve. To do so distracts judges from their purpose, and can cause them to judge improperly. The result is a bad decision.

V1

V2

V3

### Presenter:

Ask if any audience member has been a part of or a witness to an interaction between a contestant and a judge after a contest. Ask them to briefly describe the event and then discuss with the group how the judge reacted and also give some alternative, constructive reactions that could have been used.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD JUDGES

### Presenter:

Ask participants to brainstorm qualities of a good judge by asking, "If you were organizing a speech contest and had to select judges, what qualities would you look for?" Write answers on a flipchart and refer to them later when appropriate. The following qualities should appear on your list. If not, add them, and then discuss all five.

### Good judges must be:

- ▶ **Accurate.** Good judges are committed to making a correct decision. They complete the judging form correctly.
- ▶ **Fair.** Good judges are totally impartial and don't allow friendship, affiliation, age, sex, race, creed, national origin, profession, or disapproval of speech topics to interfere with their decision.
- ▶ **Trustworthy.** Good judges realize that all contest participants have entrusted them with the responsibility of selecting the best speaker as winner. They live up to that trust.
- ▶ **Knowledgeable.** Good judges know the current contest rules. They study the rules before each contest, and they make no exceptions to the rules. They are familiar with the judging form and know how to judge properly.
- ▶ **Good listeners.** Good judges listen carefully to each speaker. They don't become distracted.

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## BARRIERS TO OBJECTIVITY

1. **Speaker position:** When people are presented with a list or series they often recall the end of the list first because it is the most recent addition to short-term memory. Similarly, people may remember the beginning of a list better than the middle because it serves as a reference point. Judges must compensate for this effect by paying close attention to every contestant.
2. **Champion for the underdog:** People tend to believe that underdogs put forth more effort than an advantaged or more powerful opponent and are thus more deserving of success. Judges must use only the criteria on the judge's guide and ballot to select winners.
3. **Halo effect:** This is an inclination to admire all of a person's actions, work, etc., because of another admirable quality. Judges must focus on how each contestant performs using the criteria on the judge's guide and ballot. For example, if a contestant happens to be

V5

a speech teacher, this does not automatically make her contest presentation the best. Likewise, a dynamic delivery style does not signify compelling content.

4. **Reverse halo effect:** This is a tendency to disapprove of all of a person's actions, work, etc., because of an unrelated unworthy quality or action. Resist downgrading a score in one area because you are not happy with the contestant's performance in another area.
5. **Second time around:** It is common for individuals to see the same contestant compete at different contest levels during the same contest cycle or compete from one year to the next. Judges must remember not to compare an individual's current performance or delivery to previous presentations.
6. **Not the norm:** A false consensus occurs when an individual believes that the majority of others share their own opinion, regardless of what that opinion is. For example, in some geographic areas it is typical for a contestant to stand behind a lectern when speaking. Judges accustomed to this behavior may harshly judge a contestant who does not do so. This behavior is a custom and does not relate directly to the judging standards.
7. **Prejudices and personal preferences:** Judging is a subjective process that we try to make objective. The individual opinions of each judge are based on his or her likes and dislikes and there is no way to control the tastes of judges. It is almost impossible for anyone to be totally objective so contests use panels of judges to restrict the effect of any single judge's bias.

## SOME MISCONCEPTIONS

As stories and reminiscences about contests circulate, some of them transform into common-knowledge rules. These aren't part of any official rules but people accept them as such. Unfortunately, these common-knowledge rules can be purveyors of misinformation. For example, many Toastmasters believe that International Speech Contest entries must be serious or motivational or inspirational. But the contest rules state only that contestants create their own substantially original speech. There is no reference to content or style so a humorous speech is definitely acceptable in a contest.

Similarly, the use of props or visuals is not restricted in any way beyond the bounds of safety and good taste. Confirm that any common-knowledge conceptions abide by official contest rules and procedures.

### Presenter:

Ask for questions and/or ask the audience if anyone has had an experience with a non-documented "rule" either as a contest official or as a contestant. Use the Speech Contest Rulebook to facilitate a discussion about the rule. Spend only about 10 minutes on this activity.

Depending on the audience's experience, you may wish to devote more time to the discussion. But be sure you will still have plenty of time to cover the rest of the material. If the audience has more questions you can have them send an email to you or to World Headquarters ([speechcontests@toastmasters.org](mailto:speechcontests@toastmasters.org)). Be sure you also provide the location of the Speech Contest Rulebook online: [www.toastmasters.org/rulebook](http://www.toastmasters.org/rulebook).

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# THE ART OF JUDGING

## Presenter:

Display the judging form visual as you explain its use in the judging procedure.

## THE JUDGE'S GUIDE AND BALLOT

There are two sections to the form. The top portion is a guide judges can use to help them select a winner and will not be turned in to the counters with the ballot. The bottom portion is the official ballot.

A ballot must be complete before it is given to the counters for tallying. A ballot is complete when:

- ▶ Three different contestants are listed for first-, second-, and third-place
- ▶ The judge has signed the ballot

If any portion of the ballot is not complete or is unreadable, the chief judge will discard the ballot.

## SELECTING A WINNER

The purpose of the guide is simply to help judges make their decisions and select winners. The guide is not given to counters and judges may use the guide as they wish. There is no single accepted method for using the guide.

### Suggested Methods for Using the Judge's Guide:

1. Avoid bias by not filling out the guide during the speech. Instead, take notes and catalog what the speaker did well or poorly. Use these notes to enter point values for each category on the guide when the speech concludes. This helps the judge focus on the speech instead of the guide and ensures the judge is not overly influenced by one category.
2. Use point values suggested for each rating (excellent, very good, good, fair).
3. Use other points available in the range (e.g., if "excellent" is 20 points judges can assign fewer points if the contestant did not epitomize excellence).
4. Use a system of pluses and minuses to rate speakers as they compete. After all contestants have spoken, assign points.
5. Put the first contestant's name in the far right column and mark the ballot. Fold that column under, then judge the next speech. Fold that speaker's column under. Judges won't be influenced by their rating of previous speakers.

## THE JUDGING CATEGORIES

There are three judging categories:

- ▶ Content
- ▶ Delivery
- ▶ Language

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V8

V9



1. **Content** = 50% of the speech points. Speech development, effectiveness, and value.

**Areas to consider:**

#### Speech Development

- Did the speech have a clearly defined opening, body, and conclusion?
- Were the speaker's ideas presented in an easy-to-follow, logical sequence?
- Did the speaker use effective transitions while moving from one concept to the next?
- Was the speech purpose clear?

#### Speech Effectiveness

- Audience reactions?
- Subject relevant to audience?
- Subject presented clearly?
- Speech purpose? (entertain, inform, persuade, inspire)
- Did the speaker achieve his or her purpose?

#### Speech Value

- Did the speaker have a substantive, logical, clearly-defined message?
- Were the speaker's thoughts original?
- Was the speech in good taste?

2. **Delivery** = 30% of the speech points. How was the content presented?

**Areas to consider:**

#### Physical:

- appearance, body language (appropriate and purposeful?), use of speaking area

#### Voice:

- flexibility and volume, modulation to show emotion, adequate volume? Enunciation?

#### Manner:

- confident, enthusiastic, show concern for the audience?

3. **Language** = 20% of the speech points. Reflects word choice and grammatical skill.

**Areas to consider:**

#### Appropriateness

- Does the word choice fit the speech, audience, and occasion? Does the word choice promote understanding of the message as the speaker intended?

#### Correctness

- grammar, pronunciation, word selection. Does language reflect study and preparation? Effective word choice?

**Note:** The guide does not include a space for speech time. Timing of speeches is the sole responsibility of the timers. Judges are not permitted to time the speeches and will not consider the possibility of under-time or overtime when judging a contestant's speech.

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V11

V12

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

### Presenter:

As time permits, have the audience discuss some of the following scenarios and pose solutions. Write topics and answers on a flipchart.

1. **Q.** What are the reasons for which a contestant may be disqualified?
  - A.**
    - Eligibility
    - Originality
    - Timing
2. **Q.** What happens if:
  - Four judges sign and print their names on their ballots.
  - One judge only prints his name on his ballot, but does not sign it.
  - One judge neither signs nor prints his name on his ballot.
  - One judge only signs her name on her ballot.**A.** Only five of the seven ballots will be counted. The ballots that were not signed must not be counted.
3. **Q.** What happens if one judge leaves the blank for the third-place winner's name empty on her ballot?**A.** The ballot is not counted. Ballots cannot be counted if they do not contain complete information regarding the ranking of contestants.
4. **Q.** What is the appropriate action to take if a member approaches a contest official and asks to see the points awarded to contestants?**A.** All contest forms are confidential, including ballots. Judges are not to explain their decision to contestants, or tell contestants how they could improve. After the contest, the ballots are to be disposed of. They cannot be made available to contestants or other individuals. (This is true for timing reports as well.) The appropriate response would be to politely explain the policy of confidentiality regarding judges' decisions and all information on official contest forms (counter's tally sheet, timer's record).
5. **Q.** What is the appropriate action for the following situation? Contest results are announced and the contest meeting is adjourned. After this an individual from the audience complains that judging was unfair.**A.** Protests are limited to contestants and judges and may regard eligibility and originality only. Audience members are simply observers and have no rights to protest. Valid protests, from judges or contestants, must be lodged prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned. After that, all judging decisions are final.

**Presenter:**

Lead a discussion about speech originality. Use the following examples to demonstrate speeches that would not be considered substantially original.

- A speech in which 25% is devoted to quoting another person or published work, even though the quote is properly attributed to its source.
  - A speech in which part of the material is taken from another source that is not credited.
  - A speech that has been taken entirely from another source which may or may not have been credited.
6. **Q.** During a contest, what is the procedure for addressing a protest regarding the originality of a speech?
- A.** When a contestant's speech is thought to be unoriginal, any judge or contestant may protest to the chief judge and/or contest chair before the announcement of the winner and alternates. The contest chair notifies the judges, who then gather together with the chief judge to discuss the speech in question. The judges must call in the contestant to discuss the allegations. After the contestant leaves the room, the judges should discuss the situation again and then vote. If the majority votes to disqualify the contestant on the basis of originality, the contest chair will notify the contestant of the disqualification prior to that announcement before the meeting at which the contest took place is adjourned. All decisions of the judges are final.
7. **Q.** What is public domain? How does it affect speech originality?
- A.** Generally speaking, in the United States a work becomes part of the public domain when the copyright of that work expires.
- Many jokes, stories, and anecdotes have been around a long time. They appear in many places and have been told many times by many people. Such jokes, stories, and anecdotes are considered to be in the public domain, and their sources cannot be cited. However, if a contestant relates one of these stories, jokes, or anecdotes, even though the exact source is not known the speaker still must acknowledge that it comes from another source.

**Presenter:**

You may wish to reference #5 above regarding what portion of a speech can be devoted to quotes.

8. **Q.** The speech contest rules state that all contestants will speak from the same area designated by the contest chair. If a contestant steps out of the designated speaking area, is he or she disqualified for this rule violation?
- A.** No. Judges cannot disqualify the contestant for the rule violation. (Remember, contestants can only be disqualified for eligibility, originality, and timing.) However, judges may take this rule violation into consideration and award lower marks for that contestant.

**Presenter:**

Use the following case studies to facilitate discussion of each topic.

## CASE STUDY #1

Three members compete at an area contest. One contestant is disqualified for speaking overtime. The two announced winners are not able to compete in the division contest. Can the disqualified contestant compete in the division contest?

### Presenter:

Get responses, and then give the following answer.

No. The disqualified contestant may not compete under any circumstances. If the winner and alternate are unable to attend the division contest, no one else may take their places. The area will go unrepresented.

## CASE STUDY #2

Just before an area International Speech Contest begins, you find out a contestant has completed only five projects in *Competent Communication*. The contest speech will be his sixth speech.

### Presenter:

Get responses, and then give the following answer.

The International Speech Contest rules state that a contestant must have completed at least six speech projects in the *Competent Communication* manual. This requirement must be met **before** the contestant entered the club contest. The contestant does not meet this requirement so he is not eligible to compete and must be disqualified. However, a charter member of a club chartered since the previous July 1 is permitted to compete without having completed the first six speeches in *Competent Communication*. The club must be officially chartered before the area contest.

Always check contestants' eligibility at every contest level.

# A WORKSHOP IN CONTEST JUDGING

## **Purpose:**

To help participants learn the judging process and the use of the Judge's Guide and Ballot

## **Time:**

30 minutes

## **Materials:**

Copies of the **Toastmasters International Judge's Guide and Ballot** (1172)  
Flipchart, pad, easel, and marking pens

## **Method:**

1. Arrange for three good speakers to each give four-minute addresses.
2. Conduct a mini speech contest just as it would be conducted for the International contest. Each participant judges the speakers.
3. After all the speakers have spoken, collect and count the ballots, and determine first and second place winners. Report the results to the group.
4. Discuss the results, asking the following questions:
  - Why did you score the speakers as you did?
  - Did your decision match the decision announced? Why does a difference exist?
  - Could you have been biased in your decision?
  - What can we all do to make better judging decisions?

*The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.*

~ George Eliot

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