

FAQ



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Since
1924

DISTRICT 105

GUIDELINES & PROCESSES FOR ONLINE CONTESTS - 2021-2022

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the second document in the set of three documents as mentioned in the Contest Management Handbook. This document contains the suggested course of action in the event of technical glitches or disruptions during the contest. It is recommended that the contestants, role players, contest organizers, Contest Chair, Judges and Chief Judge read this document to know more in detail about the role that they have volunteered for during the contest.

Contest Helpline

Any queries related to the conduct of the contests may please be sent to d105contestqueries@gmail.com.

The table below elucidates the suggested course of action if any role player gets disconnected due to technical glitches.

Role Player	Suggested Course of Action
Contest Chair	The Master of Ceremony for the event takes over if the Contest Chair experiences any sort of technical disruption, after duly informing the Zoom Master and Chief Judge. It is recommended that the Master of Ceremony and Contest Chair exchange their respective scripts before the contest to be better prepared for any such instances.
Chief Judge	During the Judges' briefing, the Chief Judge designates a member from the panel of Judges to act as Chief Judge in case he / she experiences any technical failure. This information needs to be conveyed to the Contest Chair as well. If the Chief Judge were to lose connection or experience a technical failure, the designated Chief Judge will take over and communicate the same to the Zoom Master, Timers, and Tally Counters. The designated Chief Judge will continue as the Chief Judge till the end of that particular contest, even if the original Chief Judge can reconnect to the meeting, during the same contest. Once that contest is over (Humorous/International /Table Topics or Evaluation), the original Chief Judge can take over his / her role while the designated Chief Judge can return to his / her role as a voting Judge. The information needs to be communicated to the Contest Chair, Zoom Master, Timers, and Tally Counters as well.
Voting Judge	If a voting Judge loses connection during a contest, he / she needs to contact the Chief Judge and inform him / her of the same immediately. The Chief Judge needs to inform the Zoom Master and Tally counters about the absence of the Judge (if it happens in the middle of a speech – then after the speech). If he / she can re-establish a connection, he /she should refrain from voting for the contest that he / she missed. He / she can resume his/ her duties from the next contest.



Role Player	Suggested Course of Action
Tally Counter	If Tally Counter 1 loses connection, the information is relayed to the Chief Judge, who in turn instructs Tally Counter 2 to take over the duties.
Test Speaker	If the Test speaker loses connection/experiences technical glitches or is inaudible during the speech delivery, the Chief Judge assesses the situation and either instructs the Test speaker to resume the speech from the point of disruption or calls upon the backup test speaker to deliver the speech. In case of disconnection, the Test speaker has a maximum of 5 minutes to reconnect to the meeting, and if this fails then the backup Test Speaker is called to present the speech.
Tiebreaking Judge	If a Tiebreaking Judge loses connection during the contest, he / she needs to contact the Chief Judge and inform him / her of the same immediately. The Chief Judge immediately appoints another member from the panel of voting Judges as a Tiebreaking Judge (if 2 Tiebreaking Judges have not been appointed already with one being a backup). The Chief Judge should forward the digital ballot for the Tiebreaking Judge over to the new Tiebreaking Judge and request that he / she discards the original ballot sheet. Even if the original Tiebreaking Judge can reconnect to the meeting, he / she will refrain from judging in that particular contest. He / she can resume his/ her role as a Judge/ Tiebreaking Judge from the next contest based on the original arrangement with the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge needs to inform the Tally Counters that the newly appointed Tiebreaking Judge will not be sending them his/ her ballot for some technical reasons without disclosing the fact that he/ she has taken over the role of a Tiebreaking Judge. In this case the newly appointed Tiebreaking Judge should send his /her ballot to the Chief Judge only for that particular contest.
Timers	There are two Timers to cover a contest. If Timer 1 or Timer 2 loses connection or there is any time delay in displaying the timing cards to the contestants, the speaker gets a 30 second grace period. It is recommended that the Zoom Master puts the spotlight on the Contest Chair, Chief Judge, Timer 1, Timer 2, and the speaker during the entire course of the contest. When one of the Timers is disconnected then the other Timer takes over the duties of the other Timer until he/ she can reconnect again.



CONTESTS TECHNICAL GLITCHES GUIDELINES

Please find below the recommended guidelines to be applied during the different contests in case of technical glitches at all levels (Club/ Area/ Division / District)

Humorous / International Speech Contests

The contestant reports at the contest but loses connection before the start of the contest.

- i) The Contest Chair calls the next contestant to take the stage. While the next contestant is conducting his/ her speech, the Contest Chair contacts the disconnected contestant by phone / WhatsApp to check whether or not he/ she can reconnect.
- ii) The previous contestant must join back before the ongoing speech ends and will be called on as the next speaker. If unable to connect, has to forego the contest.
- iii) If the last speaker loses connection before starting, 7 minutes are given to allow the contestant to reconnect (as was given to the others).

If the contestant loses connection during the speech

- i) The Contest Chair / Chief Judge stops the contest. Timer 1 stops and notes down time elapsed. 2 minutes are given to the contestant to reconnect again (timed by Timer 1).
- ii) Once connected, the contestant picks up from the last word, and gets a 30 second grace period. The Chief Judge informs the Timers accordingly.
- iii) If the contestant cannot connect within 2 minutes, then the Judges need to judge based on what they have heard.



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Evaluation Contest

If Test Speaker loses connection – the Test Speaker is given up to 5 minutes at the maximum to reconnect. The Test speaker, as prompted by the Contest Chair, continues to deliver the speech from point where he/ she has stopped. If the Test Speaker fails to reconnect then the backup Test Speaker takes over.

- i) The contestant must forego the contest if the connection is lost: -
 - a. Before the contest.
 - b. While the Test Speaker is delivering the speech and does not reconnect before the test speaker completes the speech.
 - c. While moving to and from the breakout room from and to the main contest room
 - d. While delivering the evaluation.
 - e. While waiting in the breakout room.

Important: Please note that if the contestant rejoins the session before the test speaker completes the speech, the test speaker will not repeat the speech and the contestant will have to evaluate the speech to the extent the contestant has heard and the Judges will also judge based on the evaluation delivered by the contestant.

Table Topics Contest

- ii) The contestant must forego the contest if the connection is lost: -
 - a. Before the contest.
 - b. While moving to and from the breakout room from and to the main contest room.
 - c. While waiting in the breakout room.
 - d. While delivering the Table Topic. The Judges will judge based on what has been heard.



Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Where can I find more information or resources on speech contest?

The first place to look for further information is the Speech Contest Rule Book for the Toastmaster year 2021-22. This contains all the rules for speech contests, several checklists with common steps to run or participate in a contest, and a list of available resources. Additionally, you can find more resources included in the speech contest kits which are all available for free as digital downloads including certificates, ballots, tally sheets, and other supplies for conducting a speech contest.

Who is ineligible to compete in any speech contest?

In general, any individual who is performing the role of a contest official including judges, counters, sergeant at arms, and a contest Toastmaster cannot compete in a contest in which they are serving or in a contest in which the outcome of the contest they are officiating will be affected.

Additionally, district, region, and international leaders should not be competing in speech contests. This includes current officials and candidates for future roles. Lastly, education session presenters and event committee chairs for the event where the contest is being held may not compete.

For a full and complete list of all individuals who may not compete, please review section 2.A.4 of the Speech Contest Rulebook.

What happens if I pay my dues on time, but my club treasurer does not submit my dues to World Headquarters?

You are, unfortunately, ineligible to compete. To compete in a speech contest, you must be a paid member of a club in good standing. The only way to maintain your paid membership is to make sure your club treasurer submits your dues to World Headquarters by October 1 for the October renewal period and by April 1 for the April renewal period. For new, dual, transfer, or reinstated members, the membership application and applicable dues must be received by World Headquarters prior to competing in the first contest. Review section 2.A.1.b



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Can a member compete in two contests if the areas are in different divisions or districts?

No. A member can only compete in one area contest of a given type, review section 2 A.8.a of the Speech Contest Rulebook.

Can a member serve as a contest chair at one contest and compete in another?

Yes, as long as the contest where the member is competing and the contest where the member is serving as a contest chair are not at the same event.

Example: Jane Doe is competing at District G's annual conference in the Tall Tales Contest. She cannot serve as a contest chair for any contests at District G's annual conference.

Jane is not competing in District F's annual conference. Jane Doe can serve as a contest chair for any contest at District F's annual conference.

Are contestants required to have completed a minimum number of speeches, projects, or levels to participate in a speech contest?

The only speech contest with a requirement of this type is the International Speech Contest. To participate in any level of the International Speech Contest, a member must have completed at least six speeches in the Competent Communication manual or two levels in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience prior to the club contest. * Beginning July 1, 2019, a member must have completed at least six speeches in the Competent Communication manual or earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience.

For clubs that chartered less than one year before the area contest, the charter members are permitted to compete without having completed this requirement.

What is a contest official? Can they serve more than one role?

The following are contest officials: contest chair, contest toastmaster, event committee chairs, Chief Judge, voting judges, tiebreaking judge, timers, sergeant at arms, and counters. Officials should not serve in more than one role at the same contest (above the club level only) and they may not compete in the contest at which they are serving as an official.



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Who can be an alternate speaker?

The alternate speaker is the next person who is eligible to be a contestant after the first-place winner, when applicable. The alternate speaker is not limited to the next person in line for the contestant spot. For example, if the first-place winner from Division A is not available, then the second-place winner from Division A would be considered the alternate. If the second-place winner from Division A is unavailable, then the third-place winner would be the next alternate, and so on until the last place contestant would be the alternate as mentioned in the “Notification of Winners” (Form No.1182). If no other contestants are available, there would be no alternate.

Does the Chief Judge role involve judging the contestants?

No, while the Chief Judge is a judge, he or she does not judge the contestants. The role of the Chief Judge is to appoint and advise the judges, counters, timers and tiebreaking judge. The Chief Judge also conducts the judges’ briefing before the contest, collects the time record sheet from the timers, collects the ballot from the tiebreaking judge, handles protests and delivers the list of winners to the contest chair at the end of the contest.

Should judges remain anonymous?

Yes, the names of the voting judges must remain anonymous, as much as is practical. Judges are not known to contestants, and no judges’ names or contact information is provided in any contest materials. Judges’ decisions and identities are confidential. Sharing the names of judges could lead to confrontations with contestants or audience members who do not agree with the contest results. Anonymity helps the judges be more effective. They can make more objective decisions because confrontations after the contest are less likely.

Should Tally Counters remain anonymous?

Yes, the names of the Tally Counters must remain anonymous, as much as is practical. Tally Counters are not known to contestants, and no Tally Counters’ names or contact information is provided in any contest materials. They are only known to the Chief Judge and the voting Judges.

What does it mean that “a member serving 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?

Beyond the club level, a member cannot judge a contest where the contest result could lead to the member competing against the contest’s winner.

Example Scenarios:

John Smith wins Area B’s Evaluation Contest. He is asked to judge Area C’s Evaluation Contest. If he judges at Area C’s Evaluation Contest, he is ineligible to continue competing in the district’s Evaluation Contest.

Jane Smith is disqualified from Area B’s Tall Tales Contest. Because she is no longer competing in the Tall Tales Contest, she can judge Area C’s Tall Tales Contest. Similarly, if Jane Smith loses Area B’s Tall Tales Contest, she can judge Area C’s Tall Tales Contest.

An area with five clubs has one club that is not in good standing. Can the clubs in good standing in that area send two contestants to the area contest?

Yes. Areas with four assigned clubs or fewer in good standing may have clubs send two contestants to the area contest.



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Note: The decision whether or not to allow two contestants to advance from club to area, from area to division, and/or from division to district must be made and communicated throughout the district prior to any club contests being held. Once the decision is made, it must be implemented consistently throughout the district in all clubs, areas, and divisions affected.

What does the rulebook mean when it says a speech must be “substantially original?”

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.

If there are only two contestants in a speech contest, and the first-place winner is unable to attend the next level of competition and the other contestant is disqualified, can we nominate someone else to attend the next level of competition?

No. You cannot nominate a new contestant to compete at the next level of competition nor can you allow the disqualified contestant to compete.

What are the rules regarding usage of music, media, or props in a speech?

The use of props (which include music and Power Point presentations) are allowed during speech contests in accordance with speech contest rules. Please review the Use of Props section of the Speech Contest Rulebook for complete details.

Where can I find the Speech Contests FAQs in Toastmasters International Website?

[HTTPS://WWW.TOASTMASTERS.ORG/FOOTER/FAQ/SPEECH-CONTESTS](https://www.toastmasters.org/footer/faq/speech-contests)

Who Can I ask for help regarding Speech Contests?

For any questions related to speech contests, please reach out to your Club Vice President Education / Club President, Area Director, Division Director and / or District 105 Program Quality Team.



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What should be taken into consideration when running Speech Contests?

Speech contests should be run in a fair, professional, and consistent manner. This can be achieved by giving attention to the rules and procedure. The rules and procedures involved with running a speech contest should not vary between contests. Consistency and compliance with the rules and procedures are more important than creativity.

What should the Contest Chair do if the Table Topics' contestant could not hear the question after it was repeated twice?

The Contest Chair cannot repeat the question more than twice as per the contest rulebook and the contestant has to proceed with giving a speech on whatever he / she managed to hear of the question. In the online platform, the Contest Chair can privately send the question in the chat window to the contestant as per the updated Online Best Practices guidelines by Toastmasters International.

Is there a prescribed dress code for the contestants?

There is no officially defined dress code for the contestants. However, with the contests being conducted using the online platform, it is preferred not to wear prints that cause visual distortion like thin stripes or shiny textures. It is also preferable to contrast with the background eg:- if your background is white, wear darker shades rather than light to avoid merging with the background.

Where can we find the editable excel version of the judging ballot?

All contests resources including the editable judging forms are available in Toastmasters International website. You can also reach out to your Area / Division Director and District 105 PQD team for assistance.

Will the Judges ballot be disqualified if Judge does not sign the ballot even in Online contests?

Yes, the Judges must either print and sign the ballot or digitally sign or type their name as signature and type their name again before they send their ballot to the Tally Counter(s) and Chief Judge.



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Can family members / relatives of the contestants be allowed to remain in the virtual stage during Table Topics or Evaluation Contests?

Yes, provided they are not logging in from the same room / house. If ANYONE is logging in from the same house as the contestant, it is the moral duty of the contestant to inform upfront the Contest Chair and Chief Judge about this so that the other family member(s) in the house are taken to a separate break out room (apart from the one the contestants are moved to) along with one of the SAAs to monitor in order to ensure that no information is being passed on to the contestant.

Can contestants use virtual backgrounds?

It is recommended to avoid using virtual backgrounds as they can easily compromise the contestant's audio and video quality and that is only allowed in the International and Humorous contests and should be communicated to the Contest Chair in advance as the virtual background would be considered as a prop. The recommended setup in all contests is to use a plain clear background.

Using virtual backgrounds is not allowed in Table Topics and Evaluation speech contests as the surroundings of the contestants should be clearly visible and not obscured by any element.

Please refer to the Contest Handbook document for further details.

Can contestants who have won in previous contests have a background that displays their already won trophies?

As explained in the previous question, contestants should opt for plain and clear backgrounds, avoiding any cluttered furniture as that would obscure the mobility of the contestant and cause distraction to the audience. Additionally, contestants should remove any trophies or awards from former contests as this might influence the Judges.





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