

# *Table Topics Contest Toastmaster's Guide*

1. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with the information you need to do the best possible job as Toastmaster of the Table Topics Contest. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the contest rules before the contest.
2. You should arrive at the contest well before the event, so that you can register, familiarize yourself with the room and conduct the contestant briefing. The Contest Chair will be in contact with you and will let you know the contestant briefing time.
3. The Toastmaster briefs all contestants regarding speech contest rules, and conducts a drawing for speaking order. (See TT\_TM's Briefing for Contestants.) As Toastmaster, make sure that:
  - A. You know the speaking order as selected by the contest draw. If a contestant is not present see the B section below.
  - B. All contestants are present. If a contestant is absent from the briefing, the alternate speaker, if present, may attend the briefing in place of the primary contestant. If the primary contestant is not present when the Toastmaster is introduced to conduct the contest, the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant. If the primary contestant arrives after the briefing, but before the Toastmaster is introduced, the primary contestant: 1) reports to the contest chairman upon his/her arrival, 2) has all required paperwork in good order, 3) waives the opportunity of a briefing, and 4) will be assigned a speaking order by the Toastmaster. This may be the least-desirable speaking position; it does not have to be first.
  - C. You know the rules governing alternate speakers. See the contest rules.
  - D. All contestants know the speaking boundaries designated by the Contest Chair.
  - E. All contestants have had a chance to inspect the designated speaking area, view the timing lights and if provided, try the microphone.
  - F. You have checked with each contestant on the correct pronunciation of his/her name.
  - G. The Contest Chair has provided you with Certificates of Participation.
  - H. All contestants have completed Biographical Data forms and Certificate of Eligibility forms. You will keep the Bio forms for your interviews. The Chief Judge will keep the Certificates of Eligibility.
4. The Area Governor will introduce you towards the beginning of the event. Please send a brief introduction to the Contest Chair and the Area Governor.

5. Your introductory remarks:

A. Make a brief welcoming remark relating to the theme of the contest.

B. **At the Area Contest**, say, "First, a bit of background information for the benefit of our guests and new members. This evening's First Place winner will progress to the Division\_\_\_\_ contest, which will take place on \_\_\_\_\_. The winner of that contest will then move up to represent our division at the District ONE contest which will take place during the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference, on \_\_\_\_\_. This evening's Second Place winner will be the alternate and will represent the Area if the First Place winner cannot attend."

**At the Division Contest**, say, "First, a bit of background information for the benefit of our guests and new members. This evening's First Place winner will progress to the District One contest, which will take place during the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference, on \_\_\_\_\_. This evening's Second Place winner will be the alternate and will represent our Division if the First Place winner cannot attend."

C. Read the purpose of the Table Topics Contest, verbatim. It is:

- 1) To provide an opportunity to learn by observing the more proficient speakers who have benefited from their Toastmasters training.
- 2) To encourage development of impromptu and/or extemporaneous speaking skills and to recognize the best as encouragement to all.

D. Go over the "housekeeping" rules, unless the Area Governor already did so before introducing you. (Be sure to listen!)

- 1) Turn off cellphones.
- 2) Location of restrooms.
- 3) Do not leave or enter the room while a contestant is speaking.

E. Tell the audience that you will read the name of the contestant twice, and the Table Topic question twice.

F. Give the speaking order slowly and clearly, so the judges may write it down.

6. Be aware of any timing restrictions set by the Contest Chair on your introductory remarks. The Contest Chair will provide you with a timed agenda.

7. Introduce the Chief Judge and request his/her "remarks".

8. Request that the Sergeant-at-Arms escort all but the first Table Topic contestant from the room.

9. When the remaining contestants are out of earshot, introduce the first contestant, (Name, Question, Question, Name). All contestants must be introduced the same way. Use a clear, unemotional voice audible to the entire audience. As Toastmaster, you are not allowed to make any comments during the introductions or between speakers.

10. After you have introduced the speaker, sit down until the contestant is finished. Then return to the lectern and begin the applause for the contestant. Do not make any comments about the contestant or the contestant's speech.
11. Announce and maintain one (1) minute of silence for the judges to mark their ballots. The timer will indicate the end of the one (1) minute period.
12. Repeat steps 8 through 10 for each remaining contestant with one (1) minute of silence between each contestant.
13. After the last contestant has participated, ask for silence while the judges complete their ballots. Then, remain silent yourself. Make eye contact with the Chief Judge and wait for the Chief Judge to tell you that all the ballots have been collected. It may take more than two minutes for the judges to complete their ballots.
14. Recall all contestants to the stage, and briefly interview each one in the order they spoke. If this is the first of two contests and a contestant is participating in both, DO NOT interview the contestant at this time. The usual interview questions are:
  - A. What is the name and number of the club you are representing?
  - B. How long have you been in Toastmasters?
  - C. One question from their Biographical Data form.
  - D. Is there anyone in the audience you would like to acknowledge?Present each contestant with a Certificate of Participation and shake hands.
15. When the interviews are finished, return control of the meeting to the Area Governor.
16. Try to memorize your Toastmaster remarks as much as possible, so that you do not distract the audience by shuffling papers. Bring a copy of the contest purpose. Consider bringing 3x5 cards on which to write the contestants' names and speech titles, and the biographical question you intend to ask each contestant.