

Contest Chair

Table Topics Script

About this script:

Taking on the **Contest Chair** role of a Table Topics speech contest is both challenging and exhilarating – even for experienced contest chairs! Knowing what to say at each stage of the contest is important for ensuring a fun, fair and well run contest.

Why put all this effort into a contest? Because everyone gains! You become even better at managing and motivating a team and organizing and delivering an event with lots of moving parts. The contestants gain valuable – and long lasting – knowledge and experience practicing and delivering their impromptu answers and seeing how they do relative to the other contestants. Audience members enjoy the experience of listening to the Table Topic question responses and may decide to enter future competitions.

This Table Topics Contest Script is intended to help the **Contest Chair** at Club and Area level contests (where there is sometimes little or no experience in producing and delivering fair and well run contests). Division and District Contest Chairs may also find this script valuable.

Note: This script is NOT a replacement for the TI **Speech Contest Rule Book**. The **Speech Contest Rule Book** should be your primary reference guide.

Rodney G. Denno, DTM

Rodney is an avid writer and sharer of his Toastmasters leadership and communication experiences. You can find more writings by him at <https://www.rodnydenno.com/toastmasters.php>



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Created by Rodney G. Denno, DTM and friends
in District 96 (British Columbia, Canada)

30 minutes prior to contest starting

1. Ensure all contestants have filled in and signed the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality and Contestant Profile forms.
2. Ensure Contestant Profile forms have been given to the Contestant Interviewer.

20 minutes prior to contest starting

1. Ensure that the Chief Judge briefs Contest Judges, Timers and Ballot Counters (see 'Chief Judge – Contest Checklist' here <https://www.rodneydenno.com/toastmasters.php> and the 'Chief Judge Checklist' in the Toastmasters International **Speech Contest Rule Book**)
2. Contest Chair briefs contestants (Ensure all contestants can see the timing lights from the speaking area) (see Contest Chair Checklist in the Toastmasters International **Speech Contest Rule Book**)

5 minutes prior to contest starting

Call for all attendees to take their seats

Call the Table Topics Contest to Order

1. Welcome all attendees and contestants.
2. Recognize dignitaries in the audience.

Start Contest

Note: To calculate the amount of time this portion of the contest will take – allow about 4 minutes for each contestant (30 sec to introduce contestant + 2 min 30 sec for each contest speech + 1 min judges)

State: “We will now begin the Table Topics contest. The contest will consist of the same question being asked of each contestant and each contestant will have 1 – 2 minutes deliver an impromptu speech based on the question. The Sergeant-at-Arms will escort all contestants – except contestant number one – from the room. Each contestant will be invited back into the room only after the previous contestant has completed their speech. The speeches will be judged by a panel of judges.”

State: “All contestants and judges participating in this contest are eligible for their roles as per the Toastmasters International Speech Contest Rule Book.”

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State: “Contestants and judges are the only ones who may lodge a protest over eligibility or speech content. There is a protocol in place to deal with protests if they arise. Protests will be resolved before the announcement of winners. Once the winners are announced the results are final.”

State: “The winner will represent {Club Name, Area Name, Division Name} on _____ at the {Area, Division, District} contest to be held at _____”

State: “These proceedings are designed to ensure that we run a fair contest and that each contestant is given a level playing field on which to compete. The following announcements are made in the interest of having a distraction-free environment for our contestants.”

1. Please place all cell phones or other devices that make audible noises either off or on silent.
2. No photography of the contestants is allowed during the contest. There will be photo opportunities after the contest. Videotaping is allowed only if the contestant has given their approval in advance.
3. Once the contest has begun, members of the audience are asked to refrain from leaving and/or re-entering the room. If you must leave, please do so during the times of silence between contestant speeches. The sergeant-at-arms will not allow anyone to enter the room during a contestant’s speech.”

Ask: “Chief Judge, have the Contest Judges, Timers and Ballot Counters been briefed and are we ready to proceed with the contest?” *Wait for an affirmative reply.*

State: “As contest chair I have briefed all the contestants regarding minimum and maximum time limits and stage area.”

State: “In order to allow the judges time to mark their ballots, we will have one minute of silence after each contestant’s speech, and we will have two minutes of silence after the last contestant’s speech until all the ballots have been collected.”

Ask: “Timer, will you signal me when one minute has elapsed between contestant speeches?” *Wait for an affirmative reply.*

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State: “The speaking order for the contest was determined earlier by having our contestants draw for position. The speaking order for the contest will be:”

1. Name _____

2. Name _____

3. Name _____

4. Name _____

5. Name _____

6. Name _____

Ask: “Are there any questions? If not, we will now proceed.”

State - “Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort all contestants from the room except for contestant number one.”

For each contestant, State - “Contestant number #, (state the question), (repeat the question), Contestant number #.”

NOTE: *Lead applause before and after each speech. Provide one minute of silence between speeches.*

1. Name _____

2. Name _____

3. Name _____

4. Name _____

5. Name _____

6. Name _____

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After the last speech, State: “May we please have silence until all the ballots have been collected? Judges, please hold your ballots up when you have completed them.”

***Note:** At this time the Ballot Counters and the Chief Judge will collect the ballots. After all the ballots have been collected and the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters have left the room you can introduce the Contestant Interviewer.*

Contestant Interviews

Contestant Interviewer interviews each contestant – using materials from the Contestants Profile - and presents each contestant with their Certificate of Participation.

Note: While a protest is very rare - this is the most likely time for it to be lodged. It must be dealt with immediately. Protest can only be based on eligibility and speech originality and must be lodged with the Chief Judge and Contest Chair only by another contestant or by a judge. (See the section titled 'Protests and Disqualifications' in the Toastmasters International **Speech Contest Rule Book**.)

During the contestant interviews the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters will be processing the judges ballots and tabulating the results. When this is completed the Chief Judge will return and provide you with the Results Form and the filled in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place certificates. The Results Form will indicate if there were any disqualifications based on time.

Announce Contest Results and Present Certificates

Invite the highest level dignitary in the room to help present the awards.

State: “There were no {or one, two, etc.} disqualifications.”

You may wish to present the certificates in reverse order so suspense is built up in anticipation of who the winner will be.

Thank the Chief Judge, Timers, Ballot Counters and Anonymous Judges for their contributions to making this a fair and well run contest.

Thank the contestants for their efforts and courage to compete in this contest.

Thank any other volunteers that may have helped make the contest a success.

Adjourn the Table Topics contest.

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Contest Wrap Up Paperwork

Ensure that the Chief Judge has completed the Notification of Contest Winners form and sent it to the next contest level...

Club Contest – send to Area Director

Area Contest – send to Division Director

Division Contest – send to District Chief Judge

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Rodney G. Denno, DTM



Since late 2006 I've spent a lot of time in the laboratory that is Toastmasters! It's a wonderful place to develop new skills and hone existing ones.

Through the years I've served in most of the club officer roles multiple times and as Area and Division Director, District 21 Public Relations Officer and District 21 Communications & Technology Officer.

In 2008 I led the effort to create and deliver the first Online Club Officer Training program in the Toastmaster world.

While I was busy learning, enjoying myself and giving back to Toastmasters I received the highest Toastmasters honors in District 21 and 96 (the province of British Columbia, Canada) - the **2009 District 21 Rookie of the Year Award** and the **2010 District 21 Toastmaster of the Year Award** and **2018 District 96 Toastmaster of the Year Award**.

I believe that in order for a society to grow and prosper we must give back more than we take. Over the years I've volunteered whatever time I could to various non-profit organizations. Since 2006 my volunteer efforts have been focused, through Toastmasters, on the development of leadership and communications skills in the almost 6,000 Toastmasters throughout British Columbia.

I write about what I'm involved with in Toastmasters so I can share it with other Toastmasters and hopefully make their Toastmasters journey more enjoyable and valuable to them and to the Toastmasters organization worldwide.

You can find more Toastmaster writings by me at <https://www.rodneydenno.com/toastmasters.php>

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