

Spring 2025 Judges Instructions & Briefing Script for International and Tall Tales Speech Contests

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Chief Judge Instructions

Prior to the meeting, send the following forms to the Timers, Judges, and Ballot Counters via email.

- [2024-2025 Contest Rulebook \(Link\)](#)
- Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics forms (signed copy from each judge needed) [\(Link Certificate of Eligibility\)](#)
- Tall Tales Ballet Forms:
 - Ballot Form sent to each judge.
 - Tie Breaking Ballot Form to the Tie-Breaking judge.
- [International Ballet Forms:](#)
 - Ballot Form sent to each judge.
 - Tie Breaking Ballot Form to the Tie-Breaking judge.
- Timer's form (item 1175) to the Chief Timer and Assistant Timer. [\(Link Timers Form\)](#)
- Tally Sheet for Ballot Counters to tally the ballots. [\(Link Tally Sheet\)](#)

*Make sure you have contact info (email and phone #) for all helpers. **Judges, Tie-Breaking Judge and Timers will email forms, etc. to you.***

Please note: You are required to follow the script as provided.

We understand that some Chief Judges, Contest Chairs and Contest Toastmasters have done numerous contests in the past. We appreciate all of your support and willingness to step up, the district couldn't run these contests without you. However, for the sake of fairness to contestants in various contests, we need the messages delivered within the briefings to be the same.

Chief Judge's Briefing Script for Club/Area/Division Contest

The script below will be used for briefing Timers, Ballot Counters, Judges, and the Tie-Breaking Judge.

Note: all judges, ballot counters, timers, contestants and officials need to attend in person for the area, division and district contests. No exceptions.

The Tie-Breaking Judge is always discreetly briefed alone before anyone else. One of the first items a Chief Judge should take care of before the contest day is selecting and briefing the Tie-Breaking Judge. The briefing of the Tie-Breaking Judge must occur via a separate prescheduled meeting and must cover all the same information as the regular Judges.

The content below will be read to the Judging Team as a script.

Appreciation to All Contest Officials

First, I would like to thank each of you for serving a vital role in this contest. It takes a lot of help to run a contest, and we could not have this contest without your help. Thank you very much for helping.

Overview

In addition to the Main room, there are two breakout rooms. We are currently in the Judges breakout room. There is a Contestants breakout room for the Contestants' briefing. We will all return to the Main room when the Judges' briefing is complete. At the conclusion of each speech contest, the Chief Judge and Ballot Counters will return here to the Judges room to count ballots.

Timer role during the Speech contests

- The Chief Timer <Name> will ensure that contestants are able to view an accurate green, yellow, or red signal at appropriate times during the speeches.
- Each Timer will record the time of each Contestant on the timing record form.
- Complete one form per contest.
- For each Contestant, start timing when the contestant utters their first word, or makes a gesture to the audience, indicating the beginning of the speech. When in doubt, give the benefit to the speaker, but please be consistent.

For the International Speech:

- The green signal will be displayed at five (5) minutes and remain displayed until
- The yellow signal will be displayed at six (6) minutes and remain displayed until
- The red signal will be displayed at seven (7) minutes and remain displayed until the speech is concluded.
- A contestant is not qualified until their time reaches four (4) minutes and 30 seconds and is not disqualified until their time reaches seven (7) minutes and 31 seconds. Write the letters DQ next to the Contestant's name on your timer form if they are disqualified.
- After each contestant finishes (except for the last Contestant), set the timer for 1 minute to allow judges to complete their ballots. Display the green light at 1 minute until the Toastmaster acknowledges that the 1 minute of silence is complete.
- After the last contestant completes their speech, the Judges will have an indefinite amount of time to complete their ballots and no timer assistance will be required.
- When all contestants are finished, complete the timing sheet, and send give to the Chief Judge.
- Are there any **questions** related to the Timer role?

The Timers are now briefed and can go to the Contestants' briefing room.

Ballot Counters

- Each Judge will fill out a ballot to be collected by the Ballot Counters
- When the Chief Judge has all the ballots, the tie breaker ballot, and the timing records, they will let the Toastmaster know that all ballots have been collected.
- Each of the Ballot Counters will tally the results. We will verify scores and determine the winner.
- It is **critical** that you do not discuss the scores or placement of any contestant either during or after this contest.
- Are there any **questions** regarding the Ballot Counter role?

Judges

- You must remain anonymous during and after the speech contests.
- Please read and sign the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics forms provided to you. Send the signed forms to me via text or email (please provide your **cell phone number and email address**).
- These forms certify that you are a Toastmaster in good standing for the last 6 months, that you have completed at least Level 2 in Pathways, **or 6 CC manual speeches**, and have met the other requirements in that form.
- Are any of you a member of a club with any of the contestants listed on the contest program?

*(Area contests: If more than one judge is a member in a club with any given contestant, one of those judges will not be able to serve as a Judge in this contest. **Division contests:** No Judge may be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member.)*

Are any of you currently competing in a contest, or planning to compete in a speech contest this round? If so, you will not be able to serve as a Judge in this contest.

- You are to remain unbiased toward each Contestant. Do not be influenced by a Contestant's club, area, division, or experience in Toastmasters. Do not consider the Contestant's age, sex, race, creed, national origin, profession, or political beliefs. Instead, focus only on the factors found on the ballot for the given speech contest.

Speech Contest Judges Briefing Instructions

You will be judging the **Tall Tales Speeches** on the following:

Content (30%)

- **Speech Development** is the way the speaker puts ideas together so the audience can understand them. A good tall tales speech immediately engages the audience's attention, then smoothly builds up to a climax and conclusion.

Delivery (55%)

- **Speech Techniques** refers to the use of various tall tales skills, such as exaggeration, irony, pun, humor and surprise twist. These techniques are the essence of the tall tale, and they must be skillfully incorporated into the tale.
- **Physical** presentation of the speech carries part of the responsibility for effective communication. The speaker's appearance should reinforce the story. Body language should support the story through gestures, expressions and body positions.
- **Voice** is the sound that carries the message. It should be flexible, moving from one pitch level to another for emphasis, and should have a variety of rate and volume. A good voice can be clearly heard and the words be easily understood.

Language (15%)

- **Appropriateness** of language refers to the choice of words that relate to the speech purpose and to the particular audience hearing the speech. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and should fit the occasion precisely. Proper use of grammar and correct pronunciation will show that the speaker is the master of the words being used.

You will be judging the **International Speeches** on the following:

Content (50%)

- **Speech Development** is the way the speaker puts ideas together so the audience can understand them. The speech is structured around a purpose, and this structure must include an opening, body, and conclusion. A good speech immediately engages the audience's attention and then moves forward toward a significant conclusion. This development of the speech structure is supported by relevant examples and illustrations, facts and figures, delivered with such smoothness that they blend into the framework of the speech to present the audience with a unified whole.
- **Effectiveness** is measured in part by the audience's reception of the speech, but a large part is your subjective judgment of how the speech came across. You should ask yourself such questions as "Was I able to determine the speaker's purpose?" "Did the speech relate directly to that purpose?" "Was the audience's interest held by the speaker?" "Was this speech subject appropriate for this particular audience?"
- **Speech Value** justifies the act of speaking. The speaker has a responsibility to say something meaningful and original to the audience. The listeners should feel the speaker has made a contribution to their thinking. The ideas should be important ones, although this does not preclude a humorous presentation of them.

Delivery (30%)

- **Physical presentation** of a speech carries part of the responsibility for effective communication. The speaker's appearance should reinforce the speech, whether profound, sad, humorous, or instructional. Body language should support points through gestures, expressions, and body positioning. The speaker makes effective use of and stays within the designated speaking area.
- **Voice** is the sound that carries the message. It should be flexible, moving from one pitch level to another for emphasis, and should have a variety of rate and volume. A good voice can be clearly heard and the words easily understood.
- **Manner** is the indirect revelation of the speaker's real self as the speech is delivered. The speaker should speak with enthusiasm and assurance, showing interest in the audience and confidence in their reactions.

Language (20%)

- **Appropriateness** of language refers to the choice of words that relate to the speech purpose and to the particular audience hearing the speech. Language should promote clear understanding of thoughts and should fit the occasion precisely.
- **Correctness** of language ensures that attention will be directed toward what the speaker says, not how it is said. Proper use of grammar and correct pronunciation will show that the speaker is the master of the words being used.

Completing your Ballot

- Your evaluation and judging of each Contestant should be solely based on the presentation of this speech tonight. If you have heard a contestant speak prior to today, you should treat it as the first time you are hearing the speech. Prior performances are not to be considered.
- Do not be concerned with the time of each Contestant's speech. Focus only on the factors listed on the guide and ballot. The Timers will record the time for each Contestant, and I (the Chief Judge) will collect those records. Speeches that are under or over time will be dealt with through the timing records.
- As a Judge, you are to support the contest rules and judging standards. Refrain from public criticism of the contest, and do not reveal the scores or ranking of any Contestant. Please do not discuss how you voted in the contest.
- The judging guide and ballot contains a top portion that is a guide to score Contestants. Keep notes and scores in that portion. You may find it useful to start from the right-hand side and work to the left, so you can cover up the scores from previous Contestants. The bottom portion of the form is the actual ballot. When the last Contestant has spoken, fill in the bottom portion with your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Contestants, there can be only 1 Contestant in each place on your ballot. Otherwise, the ballot will be invalid and discarded.
- When the contest is over, please destroy the scoring sheets/guides.
- The speaking area will be communicated to you by the contest Toastmaster. If a Contestant moves outside the speaking area, you may deduct points from the Contestant. However, this is not a disqualifying violation.
- Protests can only be made by Judges and Contestants. All protests must be made to the Chief Judge or Contest Chair(s) before the contest results are announced. Protests can only be for three reasons:
 1. Eligibility
 2. Originality
 3. Referencing another speaker's speech

To lodge a protest, communicate it to me directly. You may also write "*** PROTEST ***" on the ballot. When I review the ballots, I will see that a protest was lodged. If there is a protest, the **I** will ask you to join the Judges breakout room. If you see this, please return to the "Judges" breakout room (this location), where we will review the protest and discuss it amongst each other. After discussing the protest, the Contestant will be brought in to explain their thoughts. Then, the Contestant will be excused from the Judges breakout room, and the Judges will vote (verbally or by ballot) to disqualify the Contestant or not. A majority vote will determine the outcome.

Submitting your Ballot

- Each Judge will fill out a ballot to be collected by the Ballot Counters

Tie Breaking Judge

Prior to this briefing, I selected and briefed the Tie-Breaking Judge. They are only known to me, and they will not be in this briefing. The Tie-Breaking Judge's ballot will only be opened and used if there is a tie after counting all the other judge's ballots.

Are there any questions?

End of briefing.

Briefing the Tie-Breaking Judge

The Tie-Breaking Judge should be briefed secretly. The briefing has the same content as the Judges' section, with some exceptions:

- You (the Tie-Breaking Judge) should have ballots specifically for the Tie-Breaking Judge. These ballots require you to fully rank all contestants for a contest.
- Please give me your signed/completed ballot. Do not give your ballots to anyone but me.
- For each contest, you must rank all contestants on the ballot. For example, if there are five contestants in a contest, you must rank the Contestants as 1st – 5th on the ballot.