

Table Topics Contest Briefing for Contestants

Gather all speakers and cover the following points:

1. Confirm that all contestants have provided their Eligibility forms to the Chief Judge.
2. Ensure that all contestants are members in good standing from a club in good standing (Their dues have been sent and received by World Headquarters, they should check with club Treasurer).
3. Confirm that no contestant is a District or International officer nor have they informed anyone of their intent to run for any of those offices. (They can't be an officer of District 4 or any other District)
4. At the beginning of the contest, after the Chief Judge has covered the rules, all but the first contestant will be escorted from the room by the Sergeant at Arms.
5. All contestants will receive the same topic, which is of a general nature, and will speak for two minutes. The topic will not require a detailed knowledge but should lead to an opinion or conclusion.
6. Each contestant will be called in turn to present their speech
7. Contestants may remain in the room in which the contest is being held after they have spoken. They may not enter before their name is called.
8. To eliminate perception of bias, introduce each contestant as follows:
Contestant #, Name, Present Question/Topic, Repeat Question/Topic, Repeat Name, Contestant #
9. Verify pronunciation of contestants' names.
10. Speeches are 2 minutes. Speeches less than 1:00 or more than 2:30 will be disqualified.

Note that according to Toastmasters International's published rules, there is no "15-second grace period" used by many clubs for Table Topics minimum speaking time. The disqualification time is less than one minute rather than less than 45 seconds.
11. Inform contestants where timekeepers are located.
12. The lights will be activated as follows:
 - a. Green Light at 1 minute,
 - b. Amber Light at 1 minutes, 30 seconds and
 - c. Red Light at 2 minutes and will stay on until the speaker concludes. No notice shall be given should a speaker go over time.

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13. In the event of any errors in displaying time signals (either due to equipment failure or Timer error), 30 seconds grace period will be granted to the speaker.
14. Timing begins with first word uttered, first purposeful gesture or when any other form of communication is used.
15. Per the Toastmasters International rulebook, we cannot impose a time limit of how quickly contestants must respond after hearing the question. However, judges may choose to mark down a contestant who takes an excessively long time to respond.
16. Disqualifications are for:
 - a. Time - Chief Judge and Timers. If there is a disqualification for time, it will be announced (no name) before the announcement of the winners.
 - b. Eligibility* - must be member in good standing of a club in good standing and not a district officer
17. Only judges and other contestants can protest. Protests must be lodged with Chief Judge or Contest Chair and before winners are announced
18. Once a winner has been declared, all decisions are final. Note: The Chief Judge and Counters can correct the Contest Chair if he reads the winners incorrectly.
19. Define speaking area. Explain that if the contestant steps out of the speaking area they are not disqualified but may be marked down in Delivery by the judges.
20. Once all contestants have spoken, an interview will be conducted. (If one or more contestants are competing in both contests, you should wait until both contests are concluded to conduct your interview of the contestants who are in both contests).
21. Draw for speaking positions
22. Have contestants remove name tags and any other indications of Toastmasters education level or club affiliation before competing.
23. Are there any questions?