

BRIEFING THE CONTESTANTS

This document will guide you through the contestant's briefing. The Contest Chair and the Contest Master need to communicate during the contest planning and decide who will lead the briefing.

If you are leading the briefing, review this document prior to the contest and be sure you are comfortable with all the information included.

The contestant briefing includes the following sections. After each section, give contestants the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any confusion.

- Preparation
- Assemble the Contestants
- Forms
- General Rules
- Microphone Use
- Contest Areas
- Timing
- Introductions
- Props
- Drawing for Speaking Order
- Test Speaker Briefing (Evaluation Contest Only)

PREPARATION

- 1) Add the following information to your contest scripts:
 - The next level of competition to which the winners will be advancing
 - [Evaluation Contest] The test speaker's name and speech title.
 - [Table Topics Contest] The Topic. Be sure to read the Topic exactly the same for each contestant.
- 2) [Evaluation Contest] The test speaker must be anonymous until the contest begins. Brief the test speaker in private, following the instructions at the end of this document.
- 3) Review the Speech Contestant Profile forms for ideas of questions to ask during the contestant interviews.
- 4) Before beginning the briefing, find out the location of:
 - The speaking area
 - The timing lights
 - The staging area where contestants will wait before being introduced
- 5) Bring the following items to the briefing:
 - A copy of this "Briefing The Contestants" script
 - A copy of the contest script for each contest you will be leading. Be prepared to write the contestant speaking order and speech titles in each script.
 - A list of the contestants
 - Playing cards to draw for speaking position
 - Forms that contestants have completed prior to the contest
 - Extra copies of Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Form 1183)
 - Extra copies of Speech Contestant Profile (Form 1189)
 - DISTRICT CONTEST ONLY – Extra copies of Video Release Form (Form 1193)
 - A copy of the Speech Contest Rulebook (Form 1171)

ASSEMBLE THE CONTESTANTS

- 1) Assemble the contestants together near the speaking area.
- 2) Confirm that the contestants on your list are in attendance.
- 3) Do not delay the briefing if a contestant is late.
- 4) If a contestant arrives after the briefing has started, allow the contestant to compete if:
 - All required forms are complete before the contest begins
 - The contestant agrees to waive the opportunity for a briefing

FORMS

- 1) Collect the required forms from each contestant.
- 2) Explain the purpose of each form and how it will be used.
 - Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality (Form 1183)
 - This form certifies that you are eligible to compete and your speech meets the originality requirements.
 - Speech Contestant Profile (Form 1189)
 - The information you provided can be used during your interview after the contest.
- 3) Confirm that both forms have been signed and received from each contestant.
- 4) Keep the Speech Contestant Profile forms for your use during the contestant interviews.
- 5) Give the Eligibility and Originality forms to the Chief Judge after the briefing.

GENERAL RULES

- 1) State that this contest will be conducted according to the current Speech Contest Rulebook.
 - Ask contestants if they would like to review the rulebook after the briefing (they should have received a copy prior to the contest).
- 2) Ask each contestant to remove their badges or any items that reveal their education level.
- 3) Photography: No one will be allowed to take a photograph while you are speaking.
- 4) Video recording is only allowed with your permission.
 - Ask any contestant who wants their speech recorded to raise their hand.
 - Ask each of these contestants where the recording equipment will be positioned.
 - Ask each of these contestants to confirm their permission to be recorded.
- 5) A contestant can be disqualified for one of the following four reasons:
 - You are not present when the Contest Master is introduced.
 - Your speech does not meet the timing requirements (which will be explained).
 - You are ineligible. Eligibility requirements are listed on the form you signed.
 - Your speech violated contest rules on originality. 25% of your speech or less 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.

- 6) Only voting judges and contestants can lodge a protest based on eligibility or originality. If you want to lodge a protest, you can inform me or the Chief Judge. The protest must be lodged prior to the announcement of winners.

MICROPHONE USE

- 1) Skip this section if microphones will not be used.
- 2) Identify the sound station.
- 3) Before it is your turn to speak, you will need to visit the sound station and have the microphone equipment attached to your clothing.
- 4) For all but the Evaluation contest, the first contestant will go to sound station when the Contest Master announces the speaking order.
- 5) For the Evaluation contest, the first contestant will go to the sound station immediately when you re-enter the contest room after the five minute evaluation preparation time has elapsed. The Sergeant-at-Arms, who has your notes, will then escort you to the staging area.
- 6) Subsequent contestants in all contests will go to the sound station when the minute of silence is announced by the Toastmaster before it is their turn to speak.
- 7) As soon as the microphone system is affixed, proceed to the staging area.
- 8) We will now allow you a short time to practice. Those of you who want to practice, one at a time, have our sound person affix the microphone to your clothing, walk on/around the speaking area, and say a few words.
- 9) Allow time for contestants to practice.

CONTEST AREAS

- 1) Identify the speaking area. Instruct contestants to stay within this area while speaking. Give contestants the option to walk around the speaking area to become familiar with the space.
- 2) Identify the staging area. Inform contestants that they will be asked to proceed to this area before their speech and stand for a minute of silence prior to their introduction.
- 3) Contestants in the Table Topics and Evaluation contests will need to leave the contest room until it is their turn to speak.
- 4) [For **Table Topics Contest**] The first contestant will go to the staging area when the speaking order is announced during the contest. All other contestants will be escorted out of the room and will leave their phones with the Sergeant-At-Arms. Each subsequent contestant will be escorted back to the contest room and proceed to the staging area before it is their turn to speak.

- 5) [For **Evaluation Contest**] After the speaking order is announced, all contestants will stay in the room for the test speaker's speech. Each contestant will be provided with an Evaluation Contestant Notes form (Form 1177). Following the speech, the Sergeant-At-Arms will escort all contestants to another room and allow five minutes for you to write notes and prepare evaluations. After five minutes has elapsed, the Sergeant-At-Arms will collect all notes. The first contestant will be escorted to the staging area by the Sergeant-At-Arms, who will return the notes immediately before the contestant is introduced. Each subsequent contestant will be escorted back to the contest room and proceed to the staging area before it is their turn to speak.
- 6) [For **International Speech Contest** and **Humorous Speech Contest**] The first contestant will go to the staging area when the speaking order is announced during the contest. Each subsequent contestant will go to the staging area when the Contest Master announces that there will be one minute of silence before their turn to speak. All contestants can stay in the room during this contest.

TIMING

- 1) Share the location of the timing lights. Confirm that the lights are visible to all contestants. Any visually impaired contestant is permitted to request and must be granted a form of warning signal of his or her own choosing.
- 2) Before your speech, you will stand in the staging area for one minute of silence.
- 3) Explain that timing will begin with the contestant's first definite verbal/nonverbal communication.
- 4) Explain the intervals at which the lights will display for each contest.
 - International: Green at 5 minutes, Yellow at 6 minutes, Red at 7 minutes.
 - Table Topics: Green at 1 minute, Yellow at 1 minute 30 seconds, Red at 2 minutes.
 - Humorous: Green at 5 minutes, Yellow at 6 minutes, Red at 7 minutes.
 - Evaluation: Green at 2 minutes, Yellow at 2 minute 30 seconds, Red at 3 minutes.
- 5) Explain the timing requirements which must be met to avoid disqualification.
 - International: Between 4 minutes 30 seconds and 7 minutes 30 seconds
 - Table Topics: Between 1 minute and 2 minutes 30 seconds
 - Humorous: Between 4 minutes 30 seconds and 7 minutes 30 seconds
 - Evaluation: Between 1 minute 30 seconds and 3 minutes 30 seconds

INTRODUCTIONS

- 1) Explain how contestants will be introduced.
 - International Speech: You will be introduced by your name, followed by your speech title. Your speech title will be repeated, and then your name will be repeated.
 - Humorous Speech: You will be introduced by your name, followed by your speech title. Your speech title will be repeated, and then your name will be repeated.
 - Table Topics: You will be introduced by your name, followed by the topic. The topic will be repeated, and then your name will be repeated.
 - Evaluation: You will be introduced by your name, and then your name will be repeated. The Sergeant-at-Arms will hand you your notes as you are introduced.
- 2) When you hear your name the second time, begin moving to the speaking area.
- 3) After your speech, exit the speaking area and return to your seat in the audience.
- 4) If you are using a lapel microphone system, return it to the sound station before sitting.

PROPS

- 1) Ask if any of the contestants giving prepared speeches will be using props in their speech.
- 2) If yes, explain that each contestant is responsible for setting up their own props during the minute of silence before their speech, and removing them during the minute of silence after their speech.
- 3) Ask any contestants who will be using props if they will require help from the Sergeant-At-Arms. If so, ask them to remain after the briefing and introduce the contestants to the Sergeant-At-Arms.

DRAWING FOR SPEAKING ORDER

- 1) Complete the following steps to determine the speaking order for each contest.
- 2) Assemble all contestants to draw for speaking order.
- 3) Identify the contestant who will be Speaker #1.
- 4) Write down the speaker's name in the contest script.
- 5) Confirm the pronunciation of the contestant's name.
- 6) For prepared speeches, confirm the pronunciation of the contestant's speech title and write the title in the contest script.
- 7) Repeat steps 4-6 for each subsequent contestant.

TEST SPEAKER BRIEFING

- 1) Confirm that the test speaker has prepared a five to seven minute speech.
- 2) Write the test speaker's name and speech title in your contest script.
- 3) Confirm the correct pronunciation of the test speaker's name and speech title.
- 4) Inform the test speaker that he/she will be introduced only by his/her name and speech title, and then the speech title and name will be repeated.
- 5) Inform the test speaker that neither the educational project nor any objectives that the speaker may have shall be made known to anyone.
- 6) Inform the test speaker that his/her role as the test speaker must not be revealed to any contestants before the contest begins.
- 7) Inform the test speaker that following his/her speech, he/she will be interviewed by the contest master and then the speech will be evaluated by each contestant.
- 8) Ask the test speaker if he/she has any questions.
- 9) Thank the test speaker for participating in the contest.