

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics  
(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

**Table Topics Speech Contest**

In advance: Please have a method to assign the speaking order such as Alphabet letter or colored paper or items with numbers written on one side for the contestants to choose from.

**BRIEFING FOR CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER, AND SERGEANT AT ARMS**

Announce:

“My name is: \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the Contest Chair for the Table Topics Speech Contest. It is (state the time) and I am bringing this briefing to order.”

“Thank you for participating in this contest and for attending the briefing. The briefing has several purposes, including determining the speaking order, completing required forms needed for the contest, and reviewing the rules and procedures for the contest.”

**Contestants’ Briefing:**

**Speaking Order:** “The first order of business is to draw for the contest speaking order.

Determine how you want to draw for order; name in alphabetic order or in the order they arrived at the Briefing. Use slips of paper with letters on one side and numbers on the other. Let each contestant select a letter or color, turn it over, and show them the number. Consider using <https://www.random.org/lists/>.

- Repeat the process for all contestants, giving the exact same instructions.
- **Enter** the speaking order on the Contest PowerPoint slides or send it to the Contest Master and Zoom Technical Coordinator. The Contest Master can read the names from the Zoom Technical Coordinators PowerPoint slides.
- Be sure you have the contestants’ profile forms and eligibility forms. These forms should have been emailed to the Contest Master in advance.

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics**  
**(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

**Rules and Procedures:** “We will now review the rules and procedures for this contest. Your speech must comply with ALL current Toastmasters International rules. You should have already reviewed this year’s rule book that was shared electronically. We have one here for easy reference.”

“The speaking area for the contest is: \_\_\_\_\_.”  
“You are advised to stay within the assigned speaking area for this contest, which has been determined in accordance with the Toastmasters International Rule Book.”

Describe the speaking area. Ideally, point to the end points of it and point out the boundaries, if there are any boundaries.

(Announce):

“For **Table Topics**: Contestant # 1 will stay in the Main Contest Room while the other contestants will be moved to a Breakout Room by the Zoom Technical Coordinator. After each contestant has completed their Table Topics speech, the next contestant will be asked to return to the Main Contest Room.

“Your webcam must be turned on at all times, your hands must be visible, and you must be engaged with the Sergeant at Arms.”

Are there any questions?

Address any questions. When that is done, have the Contest Master or you inform the Chief Judge that the speaking area has been determined to be: \_\_\_\_\_ and that it has been described to the contestants.

*Note:* Do not invite objections about the speaking area; this issue can and should be determined prior to the contest.

“Each contestant should remove any badge or other items that reveal his or her educational level and his or her club affiliation. We recommend you do this now.”

“We will now do an audible and visual check of each contestant.”

- Have each contestant do an audible check.
- Review the lighting on each contestant – have them adjust, as necessary

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics**  
**(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

“We will now **review the time limits** for your speech, according to the rule book. For the Table Topics speech contest, the qualifying time is 1:00. The timers will display a:

- Green virtual background at 1 minute.
- A yellow virtual background at 1 minute and 30 seconds.
- A red virtual background at 2 minutes.
- You will be disqualified if you speak less than 1 minute or more than 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

Fill in the blank lines above using this information:

**Speech presentation time limits:**

| <u>CONTEST</u> | <u>QUAL</u> | <u>GREEN</u> | <u>YELLOW</u> | <u>RED</u> | <u>DISQUAL</u> |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|
| Table Topics   | 01:00       | 01:00        | 01:30         | 02:00      | 02:31          |

(Announce):

“The Timers have been instructed by the Chief Judge that the start time of your speech begins upon your first word or any clearly visible movement, indicating you’re starting the speech, whichever occurs first.”

“The Timer will be using a virtual background or colored cards. Both Timers will be timing and recording the time on the Timer’s Record form”. This is important.

“Do you have any questions on the timing indicators or about qualifying and disqualifying times?” “Does anyone want an audible timing?” That is for the timers to say aloud: Green / Yellow / Red?

Answer any questions that contestants have about the lights and time boundaries. Upon entering the contest room, demonstrate the timing lights.

(Announce):

“Here is **how you will be introduced**

The Contest Master will announce **your Name, The Topic, The Topic, and then your Name again**. When you hear your name the second time, that’s your cue to begin.”

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics  
(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

The Contest Master has been informed of the proper pronunciation of your names.

Contest Master reviews name pronunciations.

“When you return to the main room, there will be a minute of silence. The Contest Master will provide you time to check your microphone, lighting, positioning, and pinning of the timer.”

“Contestants have 5 minutes from the time their Contestant number is called by the Contest Master to walk onto the stage or move from the Virtual Breakout room into the Main Contest Room and be acknowledged by the Contest Master. After 5 minutes, you will be disqualified.”

“Contestants can be **disqualified for any of the following four reasons:**

1. The contestant is not present when the contest is called to order. Please refer to your agenda when the contest is scheduled to come to order.
2. Contestant speech is timed as under the qualifying time or over the disqualifying time.
3. The contestant is determined to be ineligible. To be eligible, one must be a member in good standing and of a club in good standing.
4. Contestant speech violates contest rules on originality. This requires a consensus of judges.

“**Contestants and judges may lodge protests** with the Chief Judge or with me, as the Contest Chair, before the contest winners are announced. The Chief Judge will resolve protests according to the current Toastmasters International Rulebook under the section “Protests and Disqualifications”. **All decisions of the judges are final.**”

**The audience will be muted, and webcams and chat will be turned off.** Please mute your phone, iPad, any watches, or other wearable technology. Consider putting your phone on Do Not Disturb.

Only ONE timer’s webcam will be turned on; that will be Timer 1’s webcam.

**Please notify the Zoom Technical Coordinators if you have two devices that need to be moved to the Breakout room.**

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics**  
**(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

**While you are in the Virtual Breakout Room**

You have 5 minutes from the time your Contestant number is called by the Contest Master to move from the Breakout Room into the Main Contest Room and be acknowledged by the Contest Master. After 5 minutes, you will be disqualified.

If you accidentally disconnect or lose your internet connection while in the Breakout Room before being called by the Contest Master, you are disqualified. However, if you are logged into the Breakout Room with 2 devices (a phone, tablet and/ or computer) and the SAA can clearly see your hands through both devices, you will not be disqualified.

**While you are in the Main Contest Room**

If your technology fails while in the Main Contest Room, the Chief Judge will pause the contest until the technology issue is resolved for a maximum of 10 minutes. You will resume your speech at the point at which the technology failed and will be allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified. The maximum time allowed will be 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, you will be disqualified.

**You will resume your speech at the point at which the technology failed and will be allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.**

Please close all additional internet connections in the house to help provide you with maximum bandwidth. If possible, use a hard-wired internet.

Keep your email with the link to the main room available. Keep your WhatsApp available. My telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_ – text me if you have any questions or problems and cannot access the WhatsApp group chat. The Chief Judges telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

That covers the information required for the contestant briefing. There is still time to address any questions. Do any of you have any questions?

Answer any questions the contestants have.

Hearing no (further) questions, this briefing is concluded

Thank you again for your participation, and good luck.

**Contest Master’s Briefing**

These items should have been addressed with the Contest Master in advance.

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics  
(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

“Are you comfortable with the **name pronunciations and speech titles**?”

“Do you understand the **proper introduction technique**?”

Contestant Name, The Topic, The Topic, Contestant Name

“Do you have the contestant profile forms from the contestants, and have you prepared your questions for the interview portion(s) of the contest(s)?”

“Have you reviewed your other duties, including the announcements to timers – asking them to time a minute of silence between speeches (to give judges time to mark their ballots) and before the first contestant speaks, as well as saying that the judges will now have as much time as they need to mark their ballots once the final contestant speaks?”

“Do you have any questions or concerns?”

**Sergeants at Arms Briefing**

The SAAs will accompany and remain outside the contest room and/or in the Breakout Room with all the Table Topic Contestants until the last Table Topics Contestant has left to return to the Main Contest Room.

***(Announce):***

“All Table Topic contestants will be in the breakout room until you are contacted by the Technical Coordinator to direct the next contestant to the main Zoom room. Contestants should click Leave the Breakout room and have the main Zoom room number available in the event they accidentally leave the meeting.”

“Reminder: If a contestant loses connection or leaves the breakout room before being called, they will be disqualified. However, if the contestant is logged in with 2 devices (a phone and a computer) and the SAA can see their hands on both devices, they will not be disqualified.”

“Contestants must always have their webcam and microphone on while in the breakout room. Their hands **MUST** be visible, and they must have the ability to interact with you. Be sure to tell them they cannot use their phones during this time.”

“Do you have any questions or concerns?”

---

Final Notes to the Contest Chair:

**CONTEST CHAIR BRIEFING – Table Topics**  
**(CONTESTANTS, CONTEST MASTER AND SERGEANT AT ARMS)**

Provide the Contestants' Eligibility forms to the Chief Judge.  
Notify the Chief Judge that you are done with this Briefing.