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

Table Topics 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/.

We will do that now. Please choose a letter/color, *(you turn it over)* announce the number you see on the back.

Repeat the process for all contestants, giving the exact same instructions.

Be sure you have the contestants' profile forms and eligibility forms. These forms should have been emailed to the Contest Master in advance.

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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 sent outside of the Main Contest Room by the Contest Master. After each contestant has completed their Table Topics speech, the next contestant will be asked to return to the Main Contest Room by the contest 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 also his or her club affiliation. We recommend you do this now.

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

- Green light/card at 1 minute.
- Yellow light/card at 1 minute and 30 seconds.
- Red light/card at 2 minutes.

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- 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:

CONTEST	QUAL	GREEN	YELLOW	RED	DISQUAL
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 _____ *(timing light 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
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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 with time to check your microphone, positioning and that you can see the timer.

"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. The contestant's 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. The contestant's 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, 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**."

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

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

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

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

"Do you understand the **proper introduction technique**?" **Name, The Topic, The Topic, and then your 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 (or in the Breakout Room) with all Table Topic Contestants until the last Table Topics Contestant has left to return to the Main Contest Room.

_____

Final Notes to the Contest Chair:

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