

Online and Hybrid Speech Contest Best Practices

2023-2024 Toastmasters Contest Cycle





TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

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Table of Contents

Contest Requirement	1
Hybrid Versus Online Contests	2
Hybrid contest	2
Online contests	2
Preparation and Technology	3
Choose your platform and settings (contest chair)	3
Test your platform and settings (contest chair)	4
Hybrid: Select technology (contest chair)	4
Hybrid: Run a mock contest (contest chair)	6
Establish processes (contest chair and chief judge)	6
Appoint supporting roles (contest chair and chief judge)	10
Thoroughly brief contest officials (chief judge)	11
Train timers (contest chair)	13
Conduct a contestants' briefing (contest chair)	14
Conduct an AV check and set speaking area for online contestants (contest chair)	17
Conducting Your Contest	19
Share updates	19
Share expectations (contest chair)	19
Begin the contest (contest chair)	20
After the contest	22
Finish paperwork (chief judge and contest chair)	22
Evaluation and Table Topics Speech Contests	22

Missions, Values, and Promises

Toastmasters International Mission

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders.

District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.

Toastmasters International Core Values

- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Service
- ▶ Excellence

Toastmasters International Brand Promise

Empowering individuals through personal and professional development.

This is the promise Toastmasters International makes to club members. Once we have reached this goal consistently, through all clubs across the globe, we will have achieved club excellence.

A Toastmaster's Promise

As a member of Toastmasters International and my club, I promise

- ▶ To attend club meetings regularly
- ▶ To prepare all of my projects to the best of my ability, basing them on the Toastmasters education program
- ▶ To prepare for and fulfill meeting assignments
- ▶ To provide fellow members with helpful, constructive evaluations
- ▶ To help the club maintain the positive, friendly environment necessary for all members to learn and grow
- ▶ To serve my club as an officer when called upon to do so
- ▶ To treat my fellow club members and our guests with respect and courtesy
- ▶ To bring guests to club meetings so they can see the benefits Toastmasters membership offers
- ▶ To adhere to the guidelines and rules for all Toastmasters education and recognition programs
- ▶ To act within Toastmasters' core values of integrity, respect, service, and excellence during the conduct of all Toastmasters activities

Contest Requirement



For the 2023-2024 speech contest cycle, the decision of the Board of Directors was that Districts must select a format of in-person only, online only, or in a hybrid format for each level of the contest (Area, Division, District). The format selected for a level must apply to all contests that take place at that level.

Online and hybrid contests are an exception to General Rules for all Toastmasters Speech Contests, 2. Eligibility, C., 11. which states, "Each contestant must be physically present to compete beyond the club level. Participation by audio, video, or other remote technology is not permitted beyond the club level." Other than this exception, the *Speech Contest Rulebook* must be followed as far as it is applicable.

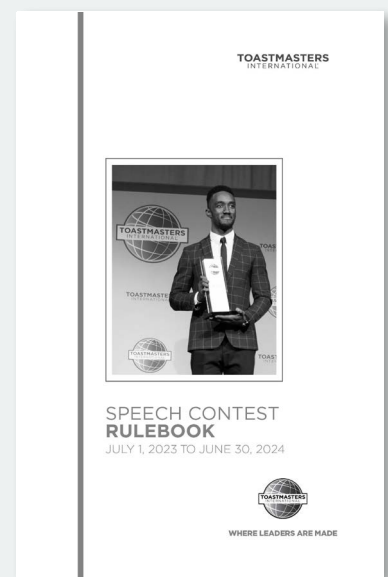


Overview

The best practices and tips outlined here will help you prepare for and conduct a successful online or hybrid speech contest. While using this guide to help plan your contest, it is critical that you also review and follow all rules outlined in the *Speech Contest Rulebook*.

If you are conducting your District-level International Speech Contest, remember that the contest must be recorded. In addition to the International Speech Contest Rules in the *Speech Contest Rulebook*, make sure to also review the **Video Recording Guidelines for District Online and Hybrid Speech Contests**.

All notes related to specific online platform features and functionality are based on Zoom capabilities at the time of publication. Online and hybrid contests can be conducted using any platform of choice that meets the needs of the contest. Other online meeting platforms likely have similar features to those mentioned here, but please note that names and terminology may vary.



Hybrid Versus Online Contests



When selecting a contest format of either online or hybrid, Districts should keep in mind the definitions of each as outlined below. Read through the best practices and recommendations in this document and consider the resources that will be required of your District in conducting each format. Take into consideration safety concerns, local restrictions, and the needs and limitations of members. Ensure that your District is ready to support contestants in your selected format.

Once a format is approved for each level, no changes can be made.

In-person contests are defined as those in which all participants are onsite at the specified contest location. Online contests are defined as those in which all participants are online. Hybrid contests are defined as those in which some participants (contestants and judges) are onsite in a physical location, and others are online.

If you do not know the format selected for your level of the contest, contact your Program Quality Director. Speech contest format for the 2023-2024 cycle is selected by the District Executive Committee based on the recommendation of the Program Quality Director.

Hybrid contest

A hybrid contest is defined as a contest in which some contestants and/or contest officials participate onsite and some participate online. Hybrid contests must allow each contestant to select the format in which they will participate (onsite or online). Contestants cannot be penalized for selecting one format versus another.

Contestants competing online must use equipment that they obtain themselves. All contestants and contest officials must participate in the contest live, in real-time.

If a contest is hybrid, all briefings and rehearsals must also be covered in a hybrid format. As much as possible, it is recommended that judges for hybrid contests are split between the onsite and online audience.

Online contests

An online contest is defined as a contest in which all contestants and contest officials participate online from physically distant locations. Online contests do not provide the option for any in-person or onsite components.

Contestants competing online must use equipment that they obtain themselves. All contestants and contest officials must participate in the contest live, in real-time.

If a contest is online, all briefings and rehearsals must be conducted online.

Preparation and Technology

Choose your platform and settings (contest chair)

Determine how you would like to run and organize your contest and select a platform and settings that will meet your needs. Whether your contest is exclusively online or will have a hybrid component, you'll need a platform that will facilitate online participation. In either scenario, consider the following:

- ▶ How audience members will view your contest
 - If you are pre-recording an online contest to stream for an audience later, verify that your selected platform supports recording.
 - If you are streaming live for audience members and plan to have them attend over the online platform, ensure it allows the number of audience members you expect. Research the audience member experience and confirm the platform facilitates your expectations.
 - For example, some platforms, such as Zoom, will allow you to organize your contest as either a meeting or a webinar.*
 - If using virtual backgrounds, you may want to consider having your timer cover their camera lens. This will ensure that only their background shows and their facial expressions do not become a distraction to contestants.
 - » A meeting will allow you to create separate breakout rooms but will also mean that audience members can unmute themselves and turn on their cameras at any time.
 - » A webinar does not allow for breakout rooms but will automatically keep all audience members muted with cameras off.
- ▶ The needs of your contest, including the type of contest you will be conducting
 - Table Topics and Evaluation Contests will have different requirements from other contest types. For these, you may want to consider a platform and settings that include breakout rooms.
 - If your contest will have a large live audience, it might be important to ensure audience members can't accidentally unmute themselves. In this instance, you may choose a webinar over a meeting that includes breakout rooms.
- ▶ How many contestants are participating online
 - Verify that your platform will allow all contestants to join with the ability to turn on their video.
 - Check if your platform will allow a host to mute and unmute contestants should they forget to do so during the contest.
- ▶ How your judges will be accounted for and kept confidential
 - You may want to ensure your platform allows renaming so that judges can be named Judge 2, Judge 3, etc.
 - This allows you to quickly see that all judges are present and accounted for.
 - If you use this method, establish that judges will leave their video off through the entire contest.
 - If you are conducting your contest as a webinar, you could have judges join as panelists well before the contestants arrive. This would allow you to ensure everyone is present, rename them (if desired), and share last-minute reminders. Before contestants join, judges would be moved into the attendee list on your webinar where they would be unable to accidentally unmute or turn on their cameras.

* Notes regarding Zoom-specific functionality reflect platform capabilities at the time of publication in November 2022.

Test your platform and settings (contest chair)

It's important to know exactly how your platform works well before the day of your contest. The best way to do this is to run test sessions and potentially even conduct a mock contest. You could set up a test call with your contest officials and perhaps bring in a few members to serve as mock contestants. This will allow you to ensure that you know what settings are available and determine the best way to use each one. Settings you may want to test include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Chat, messaging, and Q&A features
 - If your platform allows these features, find out if they can be turned off or what constraints can be placed on them. You may want to disable or place limits on these features to prevent contestants from directly messaging contest officials or confirm that audience members can't post messages intended to sway judges.
 - If you are leaving a chat feature on during the contest, ensure you know who will receive chats and that messages won't be inadvertently sent to contestants while they are speaking. Ensure contestants and officials know how they should be using chat. You will likely want a chat moderator to help manage chat during your contest. (**See the *Appoint supporting roles* section for more information on this role.**)
- ▶ Breakout rooms
 - If you plan to use breakout rooms during your contest (for ballot counting, protests, or as holding rooms), make sure you know how they work and how you will move contestants and officials from the main room to the breakout rooms.
 - Confirm that your settings prevent audience members from moving into these rooms.
 - If you plan to use chat in these rooms, ensure that the platform keeps the communications in the breakout rooms confidential.
- ▶ Pinning, spotlighting, and video/audio control
 - Ensure that you know how to allow a host to control participants audio and video. If a contestant, contest official, or audience member accidentally unmutes or turn on their camera, you will want the ability to mute them and turn off their camera to limit disruptions to the contest.
 - Spotlighting allows you to dictate the view for audience members, and pinning allows contestants to manage their own view.
 - Spotlighting a contestant will ensure that their video is the only one audience members can see. If your timer will be using video, this ensures that the audience isn't distracted by the timing signals.
 - Allowing contestants the ability to pin the timer (or enabling dual pinning so they can pin the timer and themselves) ensures each contestant can set the view they would like during the contest.

Hybrid: Select technology (contest chair)

If you're conducting a hybrid contest, selecting your platform is only the first step in setting up your full contest experience. Once you've tested and finalized the best settings for your online platform, you'll need to determine what technology you're using onsite and how you'll connect all components of your contest.

Remember that you will need full audio and video in your contest room and will need to check that the physical contest room is able to join the online platform as a participant.

One way to do this is to have a laptop in the room that is connected to your onsite video and audio sources. Have this laptop join your online platform. You may want to make this laptop the host and make sure it is monitored throughout the contest.

When selecting technology for your contest room:

- ▶ Pick camera equipment that will provide a full, in-focus view of the stage.
 - It is recommended that you have this mounted for stability and staffed by a camera operator who can verify the camera remains on and functions well throughout the contest.
 - For hybrid speech contests, it is recommended that your camera stays in a fixed position that shows the full speaking area and does not zoom.
 - Since online contestants will have a fixed camera that only shows one view, this setup will help to create an equitable experience between those onsite and those online.
 - A fixed camera will also ensure that judges and audience members viewing online do not miss important gestures.
 - » If your camera operator zooms in on a contestant's face right before they use a critical hand gesture or employ other body language, this motion could be missed by those viewing online. A fixed view of the entire speaking area ensures the contestant's entire body is visible at all times.
 - If you are setting up for a District-level contest, keep in mind that the video recording rules require your camera to be mounted and prevent zooming. View the **Video Recording Guidelines for District Online and Hybrid Speech Contests**, and **Speech Contest Rulebook** to ensure you are adhering to all rules for your region quarterfinal video submission.
- ▶ Select audio equipment that will integrate with your online platform. It is recommended to have all your in-person audio sources managed through an audio mixer. An audio mixer will allow you to plug in all of the microphones required for your in-person participants (contest chair, contestants, etc.), adjust their relative volumes, and finally combine each microphone's adjusted audio signal to a single audio signal that can be sent to your online platform for recording and/or streaming.
- ▶ Determine how onsite audience members will see online participants
 - To ensure everyone onsite has a clear view of contestants, you'll need at least one large monitor or projector screen positioned in the room. Test the ability to stream the online platform portion of your contest to this screen. It is recommended that you show onsite contestants on this screen as well; confirm this functionality during your testing.
- ▶ Decide how many laptops you will need in the contest room. As you think through the flow of your contest, how logistics will be handled, and what additional supporting roles will be appointed (**see the *Establish processes* section**), you'll start to get a sense of where you may need devices to help monitor and run the contest. For example, you may want separate devices for each of the following:
 - Connection to your audio and video sources in the room
 - Monitoring connections for all online contestants and contest officials
 - Monitoring that all contestants and/or audience members remain muted
 - Spotlighting contestants when it is their turn to speak
 - Managing communications with judges, contestants, and contest officials
- ▶ Consider your internet connection. While you might be meeting in a room that is Wi-Fi enabled, it is recommended that all devices connected to your online platform use a hard-wired internet source. This will help support a strong and stable connection. If you are unable to use a hard-wired internet source (such as an Ethernet cable), you will want to make sure that attendees and/or other events taking place at your venue are not connected to your same Wi-Fi source. If others are using your internet connection, it is more likely to slow down or freeze.

Hybrid: Run a mock contest (contest chair)

Once you have selected your hybrid technology, you will want to do a full AV test that includes your onsite camera, sound equipment, and other devices. It is recommended that you run this test in the same room where your contest will take place. If you can't access the room well enough in advance for this test, still test your connections and contest flow early on so you have time to make adjustments. Then, on the day of your contest, be sure to test that all connections and technical elements are working smoothly.

To ensure this test is as thorough as possible, it is recommended that you run an end-to-end mock contest. This should take place ahead of your contestant rehearsal so you can work out any issues before contestants are present and ready to practice.

Bring in everyone who will be supporting your contest (including your contest chair) and recruit a few members to serve as mock contestants and mock audience members (both onsite and online). Run through all transitions that will be included in the contest and verify the experience is as expected for everyone. You will want to test the following:

- ▶ Devices can connect to the online platform as expected
- ▶ Mock online contestants and audience members can access the platform without difficulty
- ▶ Mock online contestants can turn on and off video and mute and unmute as needed
- ▶ Contest chair's microphone can be heard both in the room and online
- ▶ Mock online contestants can be seen and heard in the room and online
- ▶ Mock onsite contestants can be seen and heard in the room and online
- ▶ Transitions from onsite to online contestants are smooth
- ▶ Spotlighting or other selected methods for highlighting contestants work as expected
- ▶ Contestant interviews will appear as desired and transitions between online and onsite interviews are smooth (See "Contestant interviews and results announcement" in the Conduct a contestants' briefing section.)

Establish processes (contest chair and chief judge)

Any contest that includes an online component requires additional processes and procedures to ensure things run smoothly.

- ▶ **Platform training:** Verify that all participants (contestants, officials, and other supporting roles) are ready to use your online platform. Encourage everyone to download and familiarize themselves with the platform ahead of time. Prior to the briefings and the contest, share tutorials for the platform with contestants, contest officials, and attendees.
- ▶ **Chat:** Decide if you plan to leave the chat function on during the contest and if so, whether or not you want chat enabled for attendees. If you leave the chat function on for attendees, keep in mind the spirit of respect shown during in-person speech contests, in which audience members do not talk during speeches. Allow chat only in ways that align with this spirit of respect.
 - It is recommended that reaction buttons and emojis are not used during speech contests, as these could cause distractions for contestants and could be seen as intended to sway judges.
 - If you are using chat, it is recommended that chat is allowed only before speeches begin and following the final minute of silence (during contestant interviews and the results announcement). This will eliminate potential distractions for contestants and maintain the spirit of the contest.

- Plan to post on your platform to inform attendees how chat and reactions can and cannot be used and have someone prepared to monitor this throughout the contest. (**See the *Appoint supporting roles* section.**)
- ▶ **Minute of silence:** If your contest chair is online, you will need a way to signal the minute of silence. You may also want to consider what will show in the online platform during this time.
 - A screen share of a graphic or PowerPoint slide could be used during the minute of silence. Taking this down could signal to an online contest chair that the minute has concluded.
 - Regardless of what you show in the platform during this time, be sure you do not include audio in order to respect the minute of silence.
- ▶ **Timing:** Determine the method you plan to use for signaling time during your contest.
 - If your online platform allows virtual backgrounds, your signaling timer could use green, yellow, and red backgrounds to signal time. (Download timing backgrounds [here](#).)
 - If using virtual backgrounds, you may want to consider having your timer cover their camera lens. This will ensure that only their background shows and their facial expressions do not become a distraction to contestants.
 - If your platform does not allow virtual backgrounds, another option is to have the timer hold up green, yellow, and red cards or paper in front of their camera at the appropriate times.
 - You may want to have the timer sit just out of frame of their camera, so their facial expressions do not become a distraction to contestants.
 - If you are conducting a hybrid contest, you will need a set of timers onsite and a set of timers online in your virtual platform.
 - Onsite timers will signal and record official time only for contestants present in the room.
 - Online timers will signal and record official time only for contestants present online. Having the official time for online contestants recorded by a timer who is online helps to ensure that streaming delays do not alter the recorded time.
- ▶ **Format for judges and counters:** If your contest is hybrid, determine the format in which judges and counters will participate.
 - It is recommended that approximately half of judges participate onsite and half online. This will ensure that judges account for both audiences to which contestants are speaking (onsite and online) and that the final results account for how the speech comes across in the larger room, as well as on a smaller, personal device.
 - If possible, it is recommended that your chief judge is onsite as this will allow them to oversee the room and lead counting in a physical counting room.
 - Counters can participate either onsite or online. However, if your chief judge is onsite, you may want to consider having all counters onsite so they can more easily meet with the chief judge in a physical counting room.
- ▶ **Contestant AV checks:** Contestant AV checks: Determine what procedures you will put in place for supporting online contestants in ensuring their audio and/or video are working as expected.
 - It is recommended that you conduct AV checks with all online contestants at least a week in advance of your contest. This can be part of your rehearsal or a separate meeting. Conducting this in advance of your contest will allow contestants time to acquire additional lighting or other technology to enhance their setup if desired. (Keep in mind, however, that each contestant works with the equipment available to them and the quality of their equipment should not be counted against them.)

- Use this time to test the equipment and setup each contestant is working with. Help contestants adjust their lighting, sound, and camera as necessary.
- You may also use this time to set and adjust the speaking area for each contestant. If this meeting is separate from your rehearsal, ensure contestants take careful note of their setup so they can come to the rehearsal prepared.
- In addition to AV checks, you may want to incorporate the opportunity for the contestant to say a word or phrase before their speech begins. For example, following their introduction, contestants could say “Thank you, contest chair.” This would not count as the start of their time and provides an opportunity to confirm that they’ve unmuted and turned on their camera.
 - If the contest chair can hear and see them, they would say “You’re welcome.” This serves as confirmation that the contestant can be seen and heard. The contestant’s time would then begin with the first verbal or nonverbal cue following this confirmation.
 - If the contest chair cannot see and/or hear the contestant, they should pause the contest as determined by the chief judge in advance. (See “Technical difficulties” below.)
 - If your contest is hybrid, it is recommended that this is implemented in both formats for consistency and to allow onsite contestants the same opportunity to ensure their microphone is working.
- ▶ **Technical difficulties:** Set a process for how you will respond if a contestant experiences technical difficulties and ask the chief judge to approve the plan in advance. Ensure this process is thoroughly communicated during contestant and judges’ briefings.
 - If an online contestant loses connection or experiences a poor enough connection that judges are unable to hear the contestant, it is recommended that the contest chair pause the contest to provide the opportunity for the contestant to regain connection.
 - The chief judge must decide ahead of the contest how long the contest will be paused in the event of a technical issue. Consider what may be a reasonable amount of time, both for the contestant to attempt reconnection and for the audience to wait in silence. A good starting place is 10 minutes, but your chief judge may select more or less time.
 - If a contestant loses connection during the contest but is able to regain connection within their allotted time, they should pick up their speech at the point where they left off. The contest chair can indicate the last word or sentence that was heard so they know where they lost connection.
 - If a contestant who loses connection is unable to rejoin in the allotted amount of time, the contest should continue with the next contestant. Judges must judge the speech based on the portion of the speech they heard.
 - Judges viewing online should have a way to quickly reach the chief judge if they experience difficulties hearing or seeing a contestant. If several judges contact the chief judge, the chief judge may decide to pause the contest even if they are not seeing the issue.
 - The chief judge and contest chair should have a way to communicate or a signal that can be used to indicate that the contest should be paused.
 - If the contest chair sees an issue with a contestant’s audio or video, they should automatically pause the contest based on the prior approval of the chief judge.
 - If the chief judge sees an issue with a contestant’s audio or video or hears that multiple judges are experiencing difficulties, they should signal to the contest chair to pause the contest.

- ▶ **Backup officials:** Decide if your contest will include any backup officials and put in place a plan for how they will participate in the contest.
 - If you have judges viewing your contest online, you may want one or two backup online judges who view and judge the contest as if they are official judges. Results from these judges would only be consulted if a primary judge loses connection or experiences technical difficulties that prevent them from viewing and scoring all speeches. If you choose to use backup judges, before the contest begins, determine the order in which the backup judge ballots would be used.
 - In case your online timer loses connection, you may want to have a backup timer in the platform who is ready with your selected timing signals and ready to step in as timer.
 - If the primary timer loses connection and your backup timer steps in, this is considered technical failure of the signal or timing equipment, and the speaker is allowed 30 seconds extra overtime before being disqualified.
- ▶ **Protests:** Determine a process for protests in advance and be ready to share this with judges and contestants during your briefings.
 - Online contestants and judges will be unable to walk up to the chief judge to lodge a protest and will need a way to easily reach them. Consider providing an email address or direct chat where protests can be sent. Ensure this is being monitored by the chief judge and that they confirm whether a protest was submitted.
 - Should a protest occur, you may need judges to meet with the chief judge to confer. Whether your contest is fully online or hybrid, consider having a confidential meeting link ready in advance. Tell online judges to remain available and monitor the selected communication channel (this may be email or a private chat) until results are announced.
- ▶ **Submission of ballots:** Establish a process for submitting ballots and time record sheets and ensure all contest officials are aware of the plan.
 - As much as possible, maintain the standard process for speech contest results submissions. All contests must use the official Judge's Guide and Ballot specific to the contest type.
 - Avoid using external voting systems.
 - Online judges and timers will need an email address or private chat where they can submit results confidentially. Your chief judge and counters should have easy access to the email and/or chat where results will be submitted.
 - You might consider asking judges to submit results by email to counters and the chief judge. If you select this method, remember to provide judges with all necessary email addresses. This will ensure that results are received as promptly as possible.
 - If you are conducting a hybrid contest and your chief judge and/or counters will be onsite, confirm ahead of time that they are able to access their email or the chat thread.
 - After the last speech and before the contest resumes, the chief judge must confirm that all ballots have been submitted. This includes ballots from judges viewing the contest online.

- ▶ **Counting room:** For online and hybrid contests, counting rooms require some additional forethought, as you'll need to be prepared to meet with online contest officials and count ballots submitted digitally.
 - If your contest is fully online, ensure you've set up a separate meeting link and provided this to your counters and chief judge in advance. Depending on the platform you're using, you may need to set this up under a different account than your contest. Some online meeting platforms, such as Zoom, only allow one active meeting or webinar per account at a time.*
 - If your contest is hybrid, it is recommended that you have all counters onsite, if possible. This will make it easier for them to meet with the chief judge and tabulate results. If you do have counters online, confirm you have a meeting link ready. Either way, you'll want to include a Wi-Fi connected laptop in the counting room so counters can view digital ballots and you can bring online judges into a protest call, if needed.

Appoint supporting roles (contest chair and chief judge)

Whether your contest is fully online or hybrid, you will need to appoint additional roles to help with the technical elements and logistics inherent in these formats. Review your processes and logistics and consider the following roles:

- ▶ **Online moderator/technical expert:** This person is responsible for setting up the online platform and handling the technology. Make sure the person assigned to this role is comfortable with the platform you are using.
 - If your contest is hybrid, you might place this person in charge of organizing hybrid logistics, including appointing individuals for the additional roles (see below) that you may need in the hybrid setting.
- ▶ **Contest recorder:** If you are recording your contest, you may want a technical expert whose primary responsibility is to ensure the contest is recorded. While this may sound like a simple role, someone who has other responsibilities may easily become distracted and forget to press record on contest day.
 - Make sure the person assigned to this role is familiar with how recording works on your selected platform.
 - Have them test recording in advance to confirm you know where your recording will save and that your platform has enough storage space for your full contest length.
- ▶ **Spotlighter:** You may want to appoint someone whose sole responsibility is to spotlight (or highlight) contestants when it is their turn to speak. If you are using Zoom, audience members will only be able to see the video that is highlighted, even if someone else on the platform (such as a timer) has their video turned on. The person serving in this role will need to be a host or co-host. If you are using a platform other than Zoom, it likely has similar capabilities, though it may use different terms.*
- ▶ **Judge moderator:** If your judges are joining the online platform with attendees, it can be helpful to place one person in charge of confirming everyone is present. This is particularly helpful if your contest is hybrid and the chief judge will be onsite. Before the contest begins, the judge moderator confirms for the chief judge that all judges are accounted for. During the contest, they will monitor the list of judges to ensure everyone maintains connection. Should a judge lose connection to the contest, they should be equipped to connect with them easily over email, phone, or a messaging app separate from your main platform.
- ▶ **Contestant moderator:** Should contestants joining online have difficulty accessing or staying connected to the platform, it's important they have someone they can easily contact. The contestant moderator should be accessible to contestants and should be equipped to connect with them easily over email, phone, or a messaging app separate from your main platform in case they lose connection during the contest. In addition to monitoring contestant connection, the contestant moderator will want to ensure contestants stay muted

* Notes regarding Zoom-specific functionality reflect platform capabilities at the time of publication in November 2022.

with video off when it is not their turn to speak. If a contestant forgets to mute or turn off their video after their speech, the contestant moderator should be ready to do this for them.

- ▶ **Results monitor:** Since some (if not all) judging results will be submitted virtually, you may want to appoint someone whose specific role is verifying that all results are submitted before the counting room opens. This person should monitor the email box or chat where ballots will be submitted and confirm with the chief judge once all online judges have sent in their results.
- ▶ **Chat moderator:** If you plan to leave chat on in your platform, consider how it will be used and appoint a moderator who is specifically in charge of chat. If your platform settings allow, you may have decided to limit your chat to presenters and hosts. If you are leaving chat on for participants, ensure the chat moderator sends messages communicating when and how it can be used and responds appropriately to any chats that should not be sent. This could include sending direct messages to anyone who is using chat in a manner not permitted within your contest.
- ▶ **AV technician(s):** If your contest is hybrid, you will need an AV team that is familiar with your platform and the equipment you'll be using in the room. You will need someone to ensure that the sound and video in the room are working properly and are correctly connected to the primary platform computer in your room. You'll also want someone in charge of the computer audio and video. They should ensure that the computer audio and video are correctly connected to the contest room so online contestants can be heard and seen. You will likely need more than one person to ensure your AV is running smoothly.

Thoroughly brief contest officials (chief judge)

The format for your briefing should match the format selected for your contest. If your contest will be fully online, hold an online briefing. If your contest will be hybrid and some judges will view onsite, with others online, it is recommended that you conduct your briefing in this same format.

If possible, use the same online platform and settings you plan to use for your contest. This will help you familiarize yourself with the platform and give you an opportunity to confirm that contest officials are able to access the platform.

When briefing judges and counters for the online or hybrid environments, you'll want to cover the information you would normally include in a judges' briefing, but you'll also want to include details specific to your setting and environment. If your contest is hybrid, be sure to indicate what elements of your briefing are specific for online judges, versus which are specific for onsite judges.

You may want to invite any supporting roles you added for the online or hybrid environment to your briefing or conduct a separate meeting to talk these individuals through their responsibilities and expectations for contest day.

Incorporate the following into your briefing:

- ▶ **Required forms:** Judges accessing your contest and briefing online will need to receive and submit forms digitally.
 - Ensure contest officials receive all necessary forms in advance of the contest. Fillable versions of all speech contest forms are available on the Toastmasters International website.
 - Have judges sign and submit the Judge's Certification of Eligibility and Code of Ethics ahead of your contest. Digital signatures are accepted, and the fillable version of this form includes a digital signature field.

- ▶ **Logistics for the platform:** Cover any logistics your contest officials should know for accessing and using the platform, including:
 - A reminder that they must leave their video off and remain muted during the entire contest.
 - Instructions for how to rename themselves, if you are requesting that judges and/or counters use a generic name (such as Judge 1, Judge 2, Judge 3) that allows you to easily see if all contest officials are present.
 - Basic training for how to use features in your platform, along with time to ask questions and ensure they are comfortable with how things work.
 - Directions to help ensure anonymity in the platform. If judges are renaming themselves, it will become even more critical that their video remain off for the duration of the contest. If your platform allows participants to upload a photo, ensure all judges and ballot counters have removed their photo or replaced it with a generic image.
- ▶ **Process and procedures:** Share with judges the process and procedures put in place for your contest. (**See the *Establish processes* section.**) This should include:
 - Contestant AV checks
 - Outline any changes you've made to the contest flow to ensure that contestants can test their AV before their speech.
 - Technical difficulties
 - Backup officials
 - Ensure that anyone who is assigned to be a backup official understands that this is their role
 - Have backup judges include "Backup Judge" in their document file name and/or email subject line when submitting ballots so the chief judge and counter can easily remember not to consult the ballot unless it is needed.
 - Submission of ballots and time record sheets
 - Protests
 - Counting rooms
 - Ensure counters know how they will receive completed ballots and that they have the link or location for the counting room.
- ▶ **Considerations for judging in an online or hybrid format:** While the Judge's Guide and Ballot remain the same, judges should be aware of differences in the online and hybrid formats. They should be briefed on how to use the ballot in these settings, without taking into consideration the format in which a contestant is presenting. Be sure to cover the following:
 - The judging criteria remains the same; judges should adhere to the items outlined in the Judge's Guide and Ballot, just as they would in an onsite contest.
 - When a contestant is presenting online, looking at the camera is considered eye contact.
 - Judges should not take into consideration a contestant's audio or video quality.
 - How you've defined the speaking area for online contestants. The speaking area looks different in hybrid and online contests. When a contestant is presenting online, they are typically presenting from a limited space, and judges will not be able to see their entire body. These limitations should not be counted against contestants. Judges should focus on how each contestant used the speaking area as it was defined to them.

- In the hybrid setting, contestants will be presenting from a stage, as well as from their own devices. Judges should take extra care to ensure they do not consider a contestant's format.
- ▶ **Communication methods:** It is important that online judges have a quick way to contact the chief judge, contest chair, or meeting moderator during the contest.
 - If possible, use an instant messaging service as the primary form of communication, so that your conversations take place outside of the contest platform.
 - Confirm that all contest officials and contestants have an account for whatever service you're using.
 - If you are using a messaging device, you may want to setup multiple chats. Whether using instant messaging or another method, ensure that the following communications can take place privately:
 - Contestants can communicate with the chief judge
 - Contest officials can communicate with the chief judge
 - Timers can communicate with the chief judge
 - Timers can communicate with each other
 - Tiebreaking judge can communicate with the chief judge (as in all contests, the tiebreaking judge should remain anonymous)
- ▶ **Backup devices:** Recommend that online contest officials have a backup device that is ready to use on contest day, if possible. The computer and/or internet connection they are planning on could fail just before or during the contest. A backup plan will reduce the chances that they won't be able to complete their role.
 - A tablet could be used as a backup device should the primary computer fail.
 - A mobile hotspot or secondary internet connection could be easily connected to should the primary internet connection stop working.
- ▶ **Technical difficulties:** Let judges know how you plan to handle technical difficulties that occur during a contestant's speech. Ensure they know how long the contest will be paused and what to do if a contestant does not regain connection. (See **"Technical difficulties" in the *Establish processes* section**.)
 - If a contestant is unable to regain connection, judges must judge the speech based on the portion they heard, even if this was only a few minutes.
 - If a contestant regains connection within the established timeframe, they will be asked to resume their speech in roughly the same place they left off.
- ▶ **Expectations for contest day:** Confirm that judges know when they should arrive and what to expect on the day of your contest. For example, you may ask judges to arrive earlier than contestants so you can ensure they are renamed and fully anonymous before contestants arrive. If this is the case, ensure judges are aware of why it's important for them to arrive on time. If they'll be waiting through contestant AV tests (See **"Expectations for the day of your contest" in the *Conduct a contestants' briefing* section**), ensure they are aware of this in advance.

Train timers (contest chair)

Timers must be briefed using the platform and settings you plan to use for your contest. It's important that timers are comfortable with the online technology and have confirmed their device is compatible with the platform. (See **"Timing" under the *Establish processes* section of this document for guidelines on how to set up timing for an online contest.**)

If you are conducting a hybrid contest, you'll have timers both onsite and online. You may want to hold separate trainings with each group of timers, as the process and method will be slightly different for each. In both briefings, cover the basics for timing the type of speech contest you are conducting, remind timers that they will only time contestants in their same format, and determine who will record the official time and who will run the signaling device. When meeting with your online timers, also cover:

- How they should name themselves on your platform. It's recommended that at least the timer running the signaling device is clearly named so contestants know whose video to pin or fix in their view.
 - You could have timers name themselves Timer 1, Timer 2, and Backup Timer. Then ensure contestants know whether Timer 1 or Timer 2 is running the timing signals.
- Uploading and using virtual backgrounds or other selected signaling devices.
 - Have the timer who will be running the signaling device practice this to ensure they are comfortable with the process and that the backgrounds or another method works on their device.
- The role of the backup timer. If you are using a backup timer, ensure they are aware of their role and responsibilities.
 - The backup timer should keep time for all contestants presenting online. They will submit this to the chief judge only if the primary timer loses connection and is unable to time one or more contestants.
 - The backup timer should also be ready to step in if the primary signaling device timer loses connection. The backup timer should be ready with the virtual backgrounds or other signaling methods and should monitor the primary timer to make sure they remain connected.
- How the minute of silence will be timed. If your contest is hybrid and your contest chair is onsite, you may not need the online timers to time the minute of silence. If your contest chair is online, you will want to discuss and practice a method for indicating when each minute of silence has concluded. (See **"Minute of silence" in the *Establish processes* section.**)
- Timing allowances and procedures for the online setting.
 - Ensure timers are aware of circumstances under which a contestant receives 30 seconds extra before being disqualified. These circumstances are:
 - » If either the signaling device OR the stopwatch fails
 - » If either timer loses connection
 - If you are implementing contestant AV checks into your contest procedure, ensure timers know what this will look like. (See **"Contestant AV checks" in the *Establish processes* section.**)
 - » If contestants will be permitted to verbally test their audio, ensure that timers know this does not constitute the start of their time and that they are aware of when each contestant's time will begin.
 - » If your contest is hybrid, ensure both online and onsite timers are aware of this allowance.

Conduct a contestants' briefing (contest chair)

When your contest includes a hybrid component, it's important to incorporate additional details into your briefing to ensure everyone knows what to expect. Hold your briefing in the same format and on the same platform with the same settings as will be used for your contest. If your contest is hybrid, you'll want to bring contestants from both formats together so they all get the same information and can start to become familiar with the hybrid setting.

Ahead of an online or hybrid briefing:

- Confirm you are aware of any accommodations that need to be made for contestants who have a disability; speak with them privately about accommodations for things like timing signals, accessing technology, etc. Provide contestants with the opportunity to practice with any alternative signaling methods.
- Determine a way to draw for speaking order that promotes fairness, and ensure contestants know how speaking order will be determined.
 - When some or all of your contestants are online, one option to determine speaking order is to use an online randomization tool and screen share as the randomization takes place.
- Provide required forms to contestants. Contestants participating online will need to receive and submit forms digitally. If your contest is hybrid, you may decide to have all contestants submit digital forms.
 - Fillable versions of all speech contest forms are available on the Toastmasters International website and digital signatures are accepted.
 - Have contestants sign and submit the **Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality**. This form is required before the contest, but you might decide to ask contestants to submit this ahead of the briefing.
 - » Run a thorough eligibility check on each contestant to confirm that they are eligible to compete.
 - If you are planning to record your contest, ensure contestants also sign the **Video Release Form**.
 - If you are recording your District contest for region quarterfinals, also ensure all contestants sign the **Region Quarterfinals Video Release Form**.

During your briefing, cover the details normally included in your contestants' briefing for your contest type. Be sure to also include the following for the hybrid and online settings:

- ▶ **Communication:** Ensure online contestants know how to reach the chief judge, contest chair, and other meeting moderators or contest officials they may need to connect with during your contest.
 - Communicate the process and appropriate channels for online contestants to submit protests.
- ▶ **Contest streaming:** Remind contestants that they will be shown on camera during the contest and should consider this in their attire and location.
 - Contestants will want to avoid busy patterns, distracting jewelry or hats, or colors that may wash them out or blend in with their background. (The contest chair will be on camera and will want to keep these guidelines in mind as well.)
- ▶ **Platform logistics:** Confirm that all online contestants are familiar with the platform and settings that will be used for your contest. Provide any tips or training that will be helpful.
 - Ensure contestants know how to control their audio and video and are aware of cues for when to turn these on and off. (When a contestant is speaking, all other participants should mute their microphone and turn off their camera, except for the current speaker and the timer.)
 - Talk through how the platform will be used and how you plan to handle transitions between online and onsite contestants.
 - If you will be using pinning, spotlighting, or other similar features, ensure contestants know how these features work and are comfortable using them.

- ▶ **Online speaking area:** Ensure online contestants know how the speaking area will be set.
 - If you conducted a separate AV check, this may have been covered there. (See “Contestant AV checks” in the *Establish processes* section.)
 - If you did not conduct a separate AV check and set speaking area, take time to do this during your contestants’ briefing.
- ▶ **AV checks:** If you plan to allow an audio test for each contestant, make sure they are aware of this and understand the process put in place to determine when their time will start. (See “Contestant AV checks” in the *Establish processes* section.)
- ▶ **Backup devices:** Recommend that your online contestants have backup devices ready to turn on should their audio, video, or internet fail on contest day. For example:
 - A tablet or iPad could be used as a backup device and/or camera should the primary computer or camera fail.
 - A built-in laptop microphone could be used in place of the selected audio source should the contestant’s microphone cut out.
 - A mobile hotspot or secondary internet connection could provide a useful backup should the primary internet connection stop working.
- ▶ **Onsite logistics and speaking area:** If your contest is hybrid, prepare onsite contestants for what they can expect in this setting and anything that might be different from a contest where all other contestants are in person. Be sure to cover:
 - Transitions from online to onsite contestants (and vice versa). Talk through what contestants can expect in the room, including how they will see online contestants and whether their video will also show on the screen in the room while they are speaking on stage.
 - Speaking area and camera setup: Let contestants know what the speaking area is and how much of the stage will be visible in the camera that is streaming to online audience members and judges. Ensure they are aware that the camera will be set in a fixed position and will not pan or zoom. (See *Hybrid: select technology* section.)
- ▶ **Contestant interviews and results announcement:** Talk through the logistics for contestant interviews and the results announcement. Ensure contestants are aware of how the transitions will work and when they should turn on their camera and unmute their microphone.
 - If your platform allows you to spotlight contestants, you might ask that all online contestants turn their cameras on when it is time for interviews and again when results are about to be announced. You will then be able to control the audience’s view by spotlighting contestants at the appropriate times.
 - Ensure contestants know when to unmute their microphone and whether they should speak or remain muted if their name is read during the results announcement.
 - If your contest is hybrid, let contestants know if a trophy will be held up in the onsite room and what the expectations are for when their name is read and their video is shown.
 - If video will be shown for online winners, let them know whether or not they are permitted to have friends and family on video with them. Ensure they are aware that everyone on video must sign the **Video Release Form**.
- ▶ **Timing:** If your contest is hybrid, let contestants know that timers will be present both onsite and online and will only time contestants in their same format. Whether your contest is hybrid or online, ensure online contestants know the method that will be used for timing and are comfortable with how this works in the online setting.

- ▶ **Expectations for the day of your contest:** Ensure contestants know how early to arrive and have the information they need to access the event based on their format.
 - If your contest is hybrid, you may have different arrival times for online contestants versus onsite contestants.
 - When determining how early online contestants should arrive, consider the following:
 - How early you plan to let audience members into the platform. You'll want to ensure you have plenty of time to do a quick AV test with contestants before audience members join.
 - » While contestants should come with technology setup as it was during the briefing, you will want to allow time for a quick test to ensure everyone's audio is working as expected.
 - When you plan to have online judges join the platform. Coordinate so that judges can join in a way that maintains anonymity while allowing you to verify they are all present in advance of the contest start time.
 - » Depending on the settings you are using for your contest, you may ask judges to arrive earlier than contestants so you can ensure they are re-named and fully anonymous before contestants arrive.

Conduct an AV check and set speaking area for online contestants (contest chair)

You will need to work with all online contestants to test their audio and video and set a standard speaking area based on the limitations in their setting. You can include AV checks and the speaking area as part of your contestants' briefing. If your contest is hybrid, you might consider holding a separate meeting just for AV checks since contestants competing onsite won't need to attend.

During this meeting, be sure to cover the following:

- ▶ **Speaking area:** While all contestants will be speaking in their own space, using their own technology, the speaking area should be set to roughly the same size for each contestant. When setting the speaking area, the goal is to maximize the view of the contestants without sacrificing audio quality.
 - Have each contestant stand roughly the same distance from their camera. For example, you may want to have everyone start 3 to 5 feet from their camera.
 - Have each contestant check their audio and ensure that their microphone is clearly picking up their voice from where they are standing.
 - If a contestant has a limitation that prevents them from standing as far back as you direct (such as wired headphones), have all contestants step forward until everyone is roughly the same distance from their camera. This will be the main center point of their speaking area.
 - Work with each contestant to ensure they know how far they can go to each side (as well as forward and back) without stepping out of frame.
 - Contestants should carefully mark their entire speaking area. You will want them to come to the rehearsal and contest with these marks in place, ready to speak.
 - If recording your District International Speech Contest, keep in mind that you will need to submit video for region quarterfinals, and review the **Video Recording Guidelines for District Online and Hybrid Speech Contests**.
 - For all online speech contests, provide each contestant with an opportunity to practice with their equipment at the contestants' briefing and work with them on any necessary adjustments.
 - Have contestants practice any planned movement, gestures, and prop use to ensure they will remain in frame throughout their speech.

- ▶ **Device:** Ensure that contestants use the same device and equipment for the AV check that they plan to use for the contest. Recommend that contestants avoid using a mobile device, if possible.
 - If a contestant will be using a mobile device, have them practice to be certain their device is set up to capture the best possible image and that they are able to see the timer.
- ▶ **Camera equipment:** Work with each contestant to ensure their camera setup is optimized.
 - Place the camera equipment eye level with the speaker, if possible.
 - For the sake of an online contest, looking at the camera is considered eye contact. (This note should be shared with all contestants.)
 - Ensure that the camera is mounted or secured to prevent movement during the speech.
 - Contestants should avoid having someone hold the camera, as this can cause unwanted movement. For region quarterfinal submissions, the rules require that cameras are mounted.
- ▶ **Lighting:** When adjusting each contestant's camera take note of the lighting and provide guidelines to help them optimize their lighting to ensure audience members will have the best view possible.
 - If possible, have the main source of light be from behind the webcam to illuminate the speaker's face and body.
 - If relying on natural light, practice at the same time of day as the contest will be held.
 - If the contestant's face is shadowed, have them fix a light in front of them and behind the camera, even if this means someone outside of camera view holds a cell phone with a flashlight on.
 - Ensure that no light sources are pointing directly at the camera.
- ▶ **Background and props:** Check the background contestants will use for the contest and make sure it optimizes the audience's view. Have contestants practice with any props they plan to use to ensure they are visible on camera and against the contestant's background.
 - It is recommended that contestants do not use virtual backgrounds for an online contest.
 - Virtual backgrounds can become easily distorted, particularly when using gestures or movement, and this distortion could distract from a contestant's speech or cause audience members and judges to miss an important gesture.
 - If a contestant chooses to use a virtual background, this is considered to be a prop; ensure that they tell you in advance and practice with it during your briefing.
 - It is recommended that contestants set their speaking area in front of a neutral background with limited distractions such as a blank wall. Alternatively, a sheet could be hung to eliminate distractions in the background.
- ▶ **Audio:** It is critical that audience members and judges can hear contestants clearly. During your AV check, take careful note of the audio and ask questions to verify contestants are using the best setup possible.
 - Have contestants set up their technology in a space that reduces echo and background noise as much as possible.
 - Test any microphone or audio options on the platform you will be using and select the one that allows for the clearest sound.

Once online contestants have set their speaking area, technology, equipment, and lighting, it is recommended that they leave everything in place until after the contest. This will ensure that their setup is optimized when they arrive to compete.

Conducting Your Contest

Share updates

Once you have completed briefings and determined speaking order, share any necessary updates with contest officials and others who are helping with your contest in supporting roles. For example, if your contest is hybrid, it will be helpful to ensure that those in charge of technical transitions and Zoom spotlighting not only have the speaking order, but also know which contestants are onsite and which are online.

If you learn of specific contestant needs or special circumstances in the contestants' briefing, check that those supporting your contest are aware of anything that impacts their role.

Share expectations (contest chair)

Ahead of the contest, provide online audience members with a link, tutorials, and any other necessary information about your platform. Encourage them to arrive early so they have time to join the platform and troubleshoot any technical issues they may experience. Base the time you ask them to arrive on the times you've determined for your contestants and contest officials. Depending on your platform settings, you can make use of a meeting waiting room or webinar practice mode to ensure audience members won't be able to join until you're ready.

At the start of your contest, cover the following to set expectations.

- ▶ **Hybrid audience:** If your contest is hybrid, welcome and acknowledge attendees in both formats. Cover anything that will be different from a fully online or fully onsite contest.
 - Acknowledge that contestants are presenting in multiple formats and the view that audience members have will vary based on the contestant's format, as well as the format in which they are viewing.
 - If you have judges in both formats, share this with audience members and let them know that judges are scoring contestants based on the Judge's Guide and Ballot and will not take into consideration a contestant's format, audio, or video quality.
 - Let audience members know how you plan to transition from onsite to online contestants, particularly if these transitions may take longer than audience members are used to.
 - Explain how the onsite camera is set up. If your camera will be fixed to show the full speaking area and will not pan or zoom (**See the *Hybrid: Select technology* section.**), share this with audience members and explain that this is to create an equitable experience between those onsite and those online and ensure that those viewing online do not miss important gestures.
- ▶ **Platform:** Provide guidance to online attendees on how to use the platform; be sure to point out any features that they may need to be aware of in advance.
- ▶ **Camera and microphone use:** If you are using a meeting feature or another setup that allows participants to unmute and turn on cameras, ensure they are aware of how and when these features should be used (if at all).
 - Confirm that judges are aware their webcams need to remain off during the entire contest to maintain anonymity.
 - Tell audience members that they must keep their webcams turned off and microphones muted during contestant speeches and the minutes of silence. If there are any points before or after speeches have concluded that you would like them to use video, ensure they know when this is allowed.

- Webcams can slow down internet bandwidth and distract from a clear view of contestants.
- While verbal reactions (e.g. laughter) from audience members are often welcome in a speech contest, microphones in an online speech contest setting will also pick up distracting background noise.
- Many platforms limit the number of participants who can speak at once and audio from an audience member's microphone could completely cut off the speaker's audio. It is recommended that audience members' audio not be allowed at any point during your contest.

- ▶ **Chat features:** If you have chat, Q&A, reactions, or other features turned on, set expectations for how you would like this to be used. (See *"Chat" in the Establish processes section.*)
- ▶ **Online speech contest statement:** Whether your contest is online or hybrid, you will need to read the virtual speech contest statement or include it in writing in a location that will be visible to all attendees and participants.

Virtual Speech Contest Statement

By attending this remote or hybrid Area, Division, or District speech contest, you agree to the privacy policy of Toastmasters International as well as the unassociated remote hosting service. Some of your personal information, such as name, image, and any shared messages may be shared with other meeting participants and will be recorded by Toastmasters International who may use the recording in the future as it sees fit. Your remote attendance hereby discharges Toastmasters International from all claims, demands, rights, promises, damages, and liabilities arising out of or in connection with the use or distribution of said video recordings, including but not limited to any claims for invasion of privacy, appropriation of likeness or defamation.

- ▶ **Announcement of results:** Set expectations for when results will be announced. If your contest is hybrid, collecting both onsite and online ballots can take more time than in a fully online or fully onsite contest. Ensure audience members know that they may need to wait longer than they are used to for results. If multiple contests are taking place as part of a larger conference or event, winners from all contests must be announced before the end of the conference or event. If this applies to your contest and results will not be announced before the contest adjourns, ensure the audience knows this in advance.

Begin the contest (contest chair)

Begin your contest as you would any other Toastmasters speech contest. As the contest chair of a hybrid contest, you may be onsite or online. Work with your technical team in advance to confirm you will be visible to all audience members (regardless of format) when you are speaking.

- ▶ If you have included an AV check in the flow of your contest, remember to say, "You're welcome," once a contestant says, "Thank you, Contest Chair."
- ▶ If an online contestant has a technical difficulty, pause the contest as previously agreed upon with the chief judge. Ensure that the contestant moderator and/or online moderator work to get the contestant reconnected while the contest is paused. (See *"Technical difficulties" in the Establish processes section.*)
 - It is recommended that you maintain silence during this time out of respect for the contestant and to ensure the audience is ready to continue listening to their speech once they reconnect.
 - If the contestant does not reconnect in the agreed upon amount of time, proceed with the contest. Judges will judge the portion of the speech that they heard.
 - If the contestant regains connection within their allotted time, share with them the last sentence you heard them say so they know where to resume their speech.

- ▶ Observe silence as normal between speeches. Following the last speech, observe silence until all ballots have been collected.
 - If your contest is hybrid, silence must be maintained until the chief judge confirms they have received all onsite and online ballots.
- ▶ Conduct contestant interviews in your online or hybrid format. When conducting your mock contest, ensure you include contestant interviews. Verify that those supporting your contest are familiar with how transitions will be handled for this portion of the contest. For example, you may have all online contestants turn on their video and then spotlight each one when it is their turn to interview. (See “**Contestant interviews and results announcement**” in the *Conduct a contestants’ briefing* section.)
- ▶ Unless your contest is part of a larger conference or event, results must be announced before the contest concludes. If your contest is one of several taking place as part of a larger conference or event, results can be delayed but must be announced before the conclusion of the event. If delaying the results announcement, ensure it is made in the same format as your contest so that contest attendees from all formats can attend the announcement.
 - Whether your contest is hybrid or online, showing video of contestants as results are read is a great way to include their actual reaction and ensure this portion of your contest is engaging.
 - To accomplish this, you could have all online contestants turn on video (but remain muted) just before results are announced. Then, when a contestant’s name is read, spotlight them so attendees can see their video.
 - » If using this method, be sure to only show the winning contestants’ videos, as those who learned they just lost may not wish to be on camera in the contest room and/or online platform.



After the contest

Finish paperwork (chief judge and contest chair)

- ▶ Ensure that all online contest officials delete digital files that include information about scoring, contest results, or judging notes.
- ▶ File any documents you need to hold onto (such as contestant forms).
- ▶ For your District-level International Speech Contest, submit video including only first-place winner and their introduction to World Headquarters within one week of completing the contest. In addition to the video, submit the Region Quarterfinals Video Release Form, the Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality form, and the Notification of Contest Winner form.
- ▶ If you have digital certificates or other types of awards, ensure these are provided to contestants.

Evaluation and Table Topics Speech Contests

If you are conducting an Evaluation or Table Topics contest, arrange a method for online contestants to leave the main meeting to a location where they can be monitored until it is their turn to speak. If your contest is hybrid, you may consider including devices that will allow for a hybrid meeting in your onsite holding room, so that all contestants are waiting in the same location, regardless of format.

Some online platforms will allow you to set up breakout rooms. In this instance, all contestants could be moved from the main meeting room to a breakout room. Alternatively, you could set up a separate meeting link for contestants to join; contestants would sign out of the main meeting, join the secondary meeting, and then re-join the main meeting when invited to do so. In either instance, the Sergeant at Arms should be present in the contestant room and main meeting to monitor contestants and ensure they know when to return.

- ▶ Table Topics and Evaluation Contests:
 - When contestants are invited back, they should enable their microphone and camera, then say "ready," indicating that the equipment is working. This does not count as the start of their time.
- ▶ Make sure the contestant's hands are visible in the frame of the camera. This will allow you to confirm that they are not using a device.
- ▶ Evaluation Speech Contest:
 - If your contest is hybrid, your test speaker may be onsite or online. Either way, ensure that all contestants can clearly see and hear the test speaker, regardless of format.
 - If the test speaker is online, make their name on the platform "Test Speaker" and have them keep their camera off until they are announced by the contest chair.
- ▶ Table Topics Contest
 - Audio lag could cause the topic to be missed by online contestants, so it is recommended that it is typed privately in chat directly to the contestant, as well as read out loud. If your contest is hybrid and you take this approach, you will also want to ensure that the onsite contestants see the topic in writing to provide a consistent experience. For example, the contest chair could show them a piece of paper that includes the topic.



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