

TALL TALES CONTEST

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is the Tall Tales Speech Contest?**

The Tall Tales Speech Contest is a contest type recognized by Toastmasters International. The speech must be of a highly exaggerated, improbable nature and have a theme or plot. Humor and props may be used to support or illustrate the speech.

2. **Are the Tall Tales and International Contests two separate contests?**

Yes, the contests are separate. Both the Tall Tales Contest and the International Speech Contest begin at the club level and progress through Area, Division, and District. However, the Tall Tales Speech Contest does not advance beyond the District level. In contrast, the International Speech Contest continues through additional stages: Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final.

3. **Do we have to have a contest in order to compete at the District level?**

Each club in good standing is permitted to choose its contestant for each Area speech contest by whatever means the club desires. If a club contest is held, it must comply with the rules in the Speech Contest rulebook and the contest result is final.

4. **My club is hybrid; can our contest be hybrid?**

No. According to District 14 Leadership, club contests must be in person or online. They cannot be hybrid.

Per Toastmasters International (January 2024) all contests **above the club level** are **in person only**.

Beginning with the 2024-2025 speech contest cycle, **there will no longer be exceptions granted to the Speech Contest Rulebook to allow for online or hybrid contests**. This means that all contests past the club level must be conducted fully in person and adhere to the Speech Contest Rulebook, 2. Eligibility, C.11, which currently 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. (Exceptions: participants in the International Speech Contest Region Quarterfinals and Video Speech Contest.)”

Contest Team recommendation: Hybrid clubs may want to consider holding their contest online so all members of the club can attend.

5. I am a member of three clubs in two different Areas. Can I compete in both Area contests?

No. Toastmasters who are members in more than one club and who meet all eligibility requirements are permitted to compete in the club contest(s) in each club in which they hold paid membership. No contestant can compete in more than one Area speech contest of a given type, even if the two Areas are in different Divisions or Districts.

6. **While the contests are in person, should we consider the presence of online attendees?**

No. At the club level, the contest needs to be held entirely in person or entirely online. (please see item 4 above)

7. **Is there a minimum number of contestants that need to participate for the contest to be valid?**

No. The number of contestants is up to the clubs; however, the contestants and the clubs must meet the eligibility requirements.

Eligibility for Tall Tales: be a paid member of a club in good standing (good standing means 8 paid members, three of whom are renewals).

If a club contest is held, it must comply with the rules in the Speech Contest rulebook and the contest result is final.

Occasionally, a contest will be held with only one contestant. In such cases, a contest must still be held, and the contestant must be disqualified if they do not meet the timing, originality, and eligibility requirements.

*(There are additional eligibility requirements for the International Speech Contest. To compete in this contest, a member must have earned certificates of completion in Levels 1 and 2 of any path in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience or earned a Distinguished Toastmaster award. If a club chartered less than one year before the club contest, charter members are permitted to compete without having completed this requirement. The club must have officially chartered before the Area contest. **Rule Book-Eligibility B.1, pg.6**)*

8. **If we need help fulfilling all the contest support roles, who do we contact?**

At the club level, ask members from other clubs and your Area Director to assist with filling roles (judges, timers, ballot counters, etc.). Remember that at the Division

and District levels, the chief judge, voting judges, and tiebreaking judge must not be a member of any club in which a contestant is a member.

9. How many judges do we need?

The Speech Contest Rule Book (General Procedure, A.1, pg. 10) requires the following officials for all contests:

AT CLUB, AREA and DIVISION you only have 2 Ballot Counters. It is only at District that you have 3.

Club	Area	Division	District
Contest Chair	Contest Chair	Contest Chair	Contest Chair
Chief Judge	Chief Judge	Chief Judge	Chief Judge
Voting Judges (5 unless impractical)	Equal # of Voting Judges from each club in the Area (5 minimum)	Equal # of Voting Judges from each Area in the Division (7 minimum)	Equal # of Voting Judges from each Division in the District (7 minimum)
Tiebreaking Judge	Tiebreaking Judge	Tiebreaking Judge	Tiebreaking Judge
Ballot Counters (2)	Ballot Counters (2)	Ballot Counters (2)	Ballot Counters (3)
Timers (2)	Timers (2)	Timers (2)	Timers (2)

10. How many evaluators do we need?

None. Speech evaluators are not needed in a speech contest.

11. On the slide, five voting judges are needed unless impractical. Explain unless impractical.

The contest team recommends that the bare minimum would be **a contest master, a chief judge, two timers, two counters, three voting judges**, and a **tiebreaking judge**. At the Area level and above, the stated number of officials is required. We understand that sometimes it can be difficult to find five judges at the **club level**, therefore, we recommend that you do the best you can.

12. What is the size of a typical speaking area?

Contestants and judges need to understand the speaking area. The Contest Master and the Chief Judge must determine the speaking area ahead of time so that they can brief the contestants and judges of the exact speaking area.

Contest Team tip: Consider taping off the defined speaking area.

13. To whom do I need to submit my club's results?

The Notification of Winner's form is submitted to the next level Contest Chair or Chief Judge. It can also be submitted to your Area Director if the next level Contest Chair or Chief Judge has not been determined.

Note: The Notification of Winner's form must include all contestants' names (not just 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners) in the order that they placed (in case the top levels can't compete at the next level).

14. What percentage of the speech must be exaggerated?

There is no percentage of exaggeration specified in the Rule Book.

Per the contest rules, the speech must be substantially original. Twenty-five percent or less of the speech may be devoted to quoting, paraphrasing, or referencing another person's content. Any quoted, paraphrased, or referenced content must be so identified during the speech presentation. Contestants must not reference another contestant, or a speech presented by another contestant, during their speech at the same contest in which they are competing.

15. Can someone write the speech, and another person present the speech in the contest?

No. You must write and present your own speech. Otherwise, the speech is not original.

For International, Humorous, and Tall Tales contests, select a topic and prepare your own substantially original speech. **(Rule Book-Contestant's Checklist – Before the Contest, pg. 26)**

16. What are the grace periods on the front and back end for time requirements?

Tall Tales Contest speeches must be from **three (3) to five (5) minutes**. A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than two (2) minutes 30 seconds or more than five (5) minutes 30 seconds. Timers must not consider fractions of a second. A contestant is not qualified until their time reaches two (2) minutes and 30 seconds and is not disqualified until their time reaches five (5) minutes and 31 seconds. **(Rule Book-Timing of Speeches, pg.15)**

17. Do we have to memorize the speech?

Memorizing the speech is recommended; however, notes can be used. Keep in mind that if a judge can't break his tie between two contestants (one who used notes and the other who didn't), the judge might consider more favorably the contestant who did not use notes.

18. If I arrive late for the contest, can I still compete?

1. If the primary contestant is not present when the person conducting the contest is introduced the primary contestant is disqualified and the alternate officially becomes the contestant.
2. Should the primary contestant arrive after the briefing but before the person conducting the contest is introduced, the primary contestant is permitted to compete, provided the primary contestant:
 - a. Reports to the contest chair upon their arrival.
 - b. Has all required paperwork in good order before the person conducting the contest is introduced to begin the contest.
 - c. Waives the opportunity of a briefing.

(Rule Book – General Procedure C.1-2, pg.11)

19. Is there a deadline for lodging a protest?

Protests are limited to eligibility, originality, and reference to another contestant or another contestant's speech and must only be lodged by voting judges and/or contestants. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or contest chair prior to the contest being adjourned. There is no limit to how long the protest process can take.

20. Can I use the same Tall Tales speech in the Area Contest as I used in the Club?

Yes.

21. Where do we obtain the rulebook and paperwork?

The 2024-2025 Speech Contest Rule Book is on the Toastmasters International website under the **Resources tab** → Speech Contests.

<https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/speech-contests>

22. When and where should I hold my Tall Tales contest?

Level	Format	Deadline
Clubs	In person or online (clubs choose)	End of September

Areas	In person only	End of October
Divisions(*)	In person only	End of November
*Divisions may choose to hold the Tall Tales Contest with their International Contest in March 2025 if desired.		