
Speech Contest Rules & Duties

Speech contest rules must be followed by all club, council and national contestants and committees. These rules shall be in effect from August 1, 2015 until July 31, 2017. The POWERtalk Australia Board of Directors reserves the right to make changes as may be necessary.

1. DISQUALIFICATIONS

- 1.1 Failure to follow the speech contest rules will result in disqualification of the contestant. If the contest itself is not conducted according to the rules, the winner shall not advance to the next level.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1.1 **Active.** An active member is one who pays national and club dues and fees and council assessments as required, participates in the activities of the club, assumes regular assignments, and maintains regular attendance. The club, not the individual member, shall determine whether a member is "active".

- 2.1.2 **Club in Good Standing.** A club shall be in good standing only after all the following dues, fees and assessments are paid:

2.1.2.a Per capita dues for each member.

2.1.2.b National and council dues, fees and assessments, as applicable.

2.2 MEMBERS ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE

- 2.2.1 All active members of clubs in good standing, except those specified in Item 2.3. below, are eligible to compete in the speech contest providing:

2.2.1.a only members who are a part of a club may participate in the speech contest

2.2.1.b the continuing member has paid current dues. Former members rejoining are eligible, provided all dues are paid

2.2.1.c all other dues, fees, and assessments have been paid to the appropriate levels

2.2.1.d the member has not won the final contest in the last two (2) consecutive years at club, council or region. For example

- ❖ Mary Jones was the 2015-2016 club contest winner

- ❖ Mary Jones was the 2016-2017 club contest winner

- ❖ therefore – Mary Jones is not eligible to compete in the 2017-2018 speech contest.

2.2.1.e the member, if a transferee, did not compete that term in the club from which the transfer was made

2.2.1.f a member of more than one club may compete in only one club contest in any one year.

2.3 MEMBERS NOT ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE

2.3.1 Members not eligible to compete in addition to those who do not meet the requirements in paragraph 2.2. are:

2.3.1.a Speech contest committee chairmen at all levels

2.3.1.b Members-at-large

2.3.1.c Honorary Members

2.4 ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT

2.4.1 The contestant's eligibility statement shall contain a certification signed by the club president and treasurer that all dues, fees, and assessments for all levels were paid and shall state the words, phrases or combination provided to the winner at club level.

3. CLUB – COUNCIL – NATIONAL CONTESTS

3.1 Three (3) words, phrases or a combination of both, totaling three (3) subjects, shall be provided at club level only. A member chosen to speak at a higher level, when there is no club contest, shall still receive their three (3) subjects from the club level.

3.2 A new and different prepared speech may be given at club, council and national levels, or the same speech may be used at any or all levels.

3.3 Revision is allowed when the same speech is used. Speeches shall be original, and acknowledgment made if any published material is used.

3.4 Should a natural disaster occur which precludes the holding of a contest, the chairman at that level should reschedule the contest at the earliest possible date, but within the deadline as established by POWERtalk Australia. The chairman at the next higher level shall be contacted if there is a dispute. The national speech contest chairman shall be contacted if there is a dispute which cannot be rectified at the lower level or if the natural disaster precludes the competition from taking place within the stipulated deadlines prior to the next level's competition. A decision will be made in conjunction with the National President whether an exception to the time requirements will be granted.

3.5 Notes, including notes on electronic devices, can be used at all levels.

3.6 **The Traditional Contest** for any club or council will continue with first, second and third place winners. The first place winner can proceed to the next level, and the second place winner may proceed if the first place winner is unable to compete at that level. If neither the first nor second place winner can proceed then the third place winner may proceed.

3.7 **The non-Traditional Contest** applies only when there are three (3) or fewer clubs in a council or three or fewer councils nationally.

3.7.1 There shall be two (2) winners of equal status and one (1) alternate announced at both the club and council level. If either of the two (2) winners is unable to compete at the next level, the alternate may compete in their stead. Two (2) winning contestants from the council level may compete at the national contest.

3.8 Where there are more than three (3) councils, a council with three (3) or fewer

clubs may use non-Traditional Contest Rules with clubs sending two (2) winners to the council level contest, BUT the council can only send one (1) winner to the national contest.

- 3.9 Traditional Speech Contest Rules at the national contest even if some contestants have competed in non-Traditional Contests at lower levels. In all cases, the regular rules of announcing first, second, and third place winners shall apply.

4. CLUB

- 4.1 Any eligible member wishing to compete must be allowed to do so.
- 4.2 Club contests shall be completed at least three (3) weeks prior to the council speech contests. The winners' (first, second, and third place if using the Traditional Rules or the two (2) winners and alternate if using the non-Traditional Rules) eligibility statements must be postmarked to the council speech contest chairman within one week of the club's final contest with a copy of the communication forwarded to the first place winner(s), as evidence that the information was submitted in a timely manner.
To avoid any doubt, the winner(s) may submit a letter of intent to participate to the next level speech contest chairman, consistent with time requirements as stated. In the event the chairman of the speech contest committee does not submit the eligibility statement, this letter of intent will serve in lieu thereof and the contestant(s) shall be eligible to compete.
- 4.3 Suggested Timing: Complete final club contest by February 28.

5. COUNCIL

- 5.1 If a club is unable to hold a contest because only one member is eligible or wishes to compete, that member may represent the club at the council level contest. The member representing the club must submit an eligibility statement as discussed in Item 2.4.1 (above) at least three (3) weeks prior to the council speech contest. This eligibility statement must also be signed by the club speech contest chairman as evidence that the member will represent the club in the council contest. Only one member may proceed if no contest is held.
- 5.2 Council contests should be completed at least three (3) weeks prior to the national speech contest. A council consisting of only two (2) or three (3) clubs is eligible to hold its competition using either the Traditional or non-Traditional Rules.
The winners' eligibility statements must be postmarked to the national speech contest chairman within one week of the council's final contest with a copy of this communication forwarded to the first-place winner(s), as evidence that the information was submitted in a timely manner. To avoid any doubt, the winner(s) may submit a letter of intent to participate, to the next level speech contest chairman, consistent with time requirements as stated. In the event the chairman of the speech contest committee does not submit the eligibility statement, this letter of intent will serve in lieu thereof and contestant(s) shall be eligible to compete.
- 5.3 Suggested Timing: Complete final council contest by April 20.

6. NATIONAL

- 6.1 In cases where a council is unable to hold a contest because only one contestant is eligible to compete, or chooses to compete, that contestant may represent the council at the national level. The member representing the council must

submit an eligibility statement as discussed in Item 2.4.1 (above) at least three (3) weeks prior to the national speech contest. This eligibility statement must also be signed by the council speech contest chairman as evidence that the member will represent the council in the national contest. Only one contestant may proceed.

- 6.2 Contestants from clubs-at-large may participate in the national contest. The eligibility statement for the member must be submitted at least three (3) weeks prior to the national speech contest.

7. GENERAL

- 7.1 The speech given at any contest final must be essentially the same speech given at the preliminary rounds of that level of competition. Only minor modifications are allowed.
- 7.2 Only one contestant shall advance from each level within the Traditional Rules. Only two (2) contestants of equal status may advance from club and council level within the non-Traditional Rules.
- 7.3 At a preliminary speech contest, the two (2) contestants awarded the highest point scores shall be announced as winners and advance to the final contest.
- 7.4 Microphones may be used at any level and will be used at the national level.
- 7.5 If a speech contest is postponed at club, council, or national level due to circumstances beyond control, such as weather conditions, contestants shall retain the subjects previously assigned.
- 7.6 Clubs and councils may conduct contests in languages other than English if desired, provided judges understand the language spoken by contestants.
- 7.7 At club level, three (3) different subjects shall be provided for each contestant four (4) weeks in advance of the time scheduled for the contest. Again, each contestant shall select one of the three (3) subjects as the premise of the club speech contest. These subjects may be single words, phrases or a combination of both. New subjects are not given at any other level. These three (3) subject choices may be single words or phrases, or a combination of two (2) single words and one (1) phrase, or two (2) phrases and one (1) single word. Clubs are responsible for giving subjects even if no club contest is held. At council and national levels, the same or modified speech may be given, or a new speech developed using any of the subjects provided at the club level.
- 7.8 If eligibility forms are not received within two (2) weeks of the contest the committee will notify the appropriate president of possible disqualification. As pre-notification, wherever possible, an email should be sent to advise the next level chairman of the winner's name, subject, title, contact data (including email address) and willingness to compete at the next level. The eligibility forms should still be forwarded to the next level chairman within the stipulated timeframe as required. A grace period of seven (7) days will be allowed from that date or until two (2) weeks prior to the contest, whichever is earlier. The winner may submit a letter of intent to participate to the next level speech contest chairman, consistent with the time requirements as stated. In the event the chairman of the speech contest committee does not submit the eligibility statement, this letter of intent will serve in lieu thereof and the contestant shall be eligible to compete.
- 7.9 No camera shall be used during a contest. Video equipment may be used from the back of the room or in a location approved by the speech contest chairman.
- 7.10 All cellular mobile phones, pagers or any device that could cause a distraction

must be turned off.

8. SPEECHES

8.1 Speech content must be designated under one of the following categories:

8.1.1 Speech to Inform

8.1.2 Speech to Persuade

8.1.3 Speech to Inspire

8.1.4 Speech to Entertain

8.1.5 Research Speech

8.1.6 Current Event Speech

8.1.7 Speech content shall not contain strong reference to political or religious bias and may be in the form of a narrative. Contestants are referred to speech construction in the Master Manual for guidance. Equipment for PowerPoint and audio equipment may not be available.

9. TIME LIMITS

9.1 Speeches at all levels shall be a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of eight (8) minutes. Speakers failing to observe these limits shall be penalized one (1) point for each second under- or over-time.

9.2 Timing shall begin when the contestant uses any verbal or non-verbal communication as part of the speech and shall end when all verbal or non-verbal communication ceases.

9.3 An allowance shall be made in regard to recognising a cultural ceremonial courtesy, as bowing in Japan, as long as bowing is not intended to be part of a contestant's speech and the bow happens before the contestant takes the 'speaking' place on the stage. However as soon as the contestant has taken their (speaking) place on the stage, the timing would start with any verbal or non-verbal communication.

9.4 Contestants shall be given a lighted signal at five (5) minutes. The light shall remain on for one (1) minute. Speakers will be stopped at nine (9) minutes.

9.5 An audible signal shall be arranged for visually impaired contestants at all levels.

9.6 The chairman of timers shall read the timers' report after the judges have completed their ballots.

10. JUDGING

10.1 Judges must receive necessary information regarding contest rules and procedures prior to the contests at all levels.

10.2 Contestants shall be judged on image, voice effectiveness, body language, structure of speech/presentation, content and language.

10.3 Three (3) judges shall be used at all levels. (Judges may be non-members or members if qualified under Items 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7). It is recommended that at least one of the judges be a member of POWERtalk Australia.

10.4 All judges' ballots shall be counted. The alternate judge, if there is one, shall judge the contest and complete a ballot. The alternate judge's ballot envelope shall be marked "Alternate" and shall be used only in the event of a tie. In the

event of a tie occurring in the points awarded, the alternate judge's ballot will be opened and counted. If there is no alternate judge, the judges and the speech contest chairman shall retire to determine the placement of tie positions.

- 10.4.1 **Traditional Rules:** if the tie is in first position, all positions shall be reconsidered. If it is in second position, only the second and third positions shall be reconsidered. If it is in third position, only third positions shall be considered.
- 10.4.2 **Non-Traditional Rules:** a top-level tie would allow the two tied contestants to serve as the two (2) winners and next highest, the alternate if desired. If there is one contestant with a higher number of points and there is a tie for the next winner, the judges shall retire to determine the second winner; the other contestant would serve as alternate if desired. The speech contest chairman shall moderate such a discussion in Traditional and Non-traditional contests.
- 10.5 A speech contestant shall not be judged by the same judge at a higher level.
- 10.6 A POWERtalk Australia member may NOT serve as judge at any final contest if from the same club as a contestant in that contest.
- 10.7 After winning any place in the final club contest, a member shall not act as a judge for any contest during the current term.
- 10.8 Judges may be asked to provide brief verbal comments on the overall contest.

11. PROTESTS

- 11.1 **Timing:** Any protests or questions regarding timing shall be directed to the program leader immediately following the timers' report. The program leader shall immediately refer such protest or question to the speech contest chairman involved, for resolution.
- 11.2 **Decisions:** Any protest regarding the speech contest decision shall be made to the speech contest chairman of the level involved within one (1) hour of the decision being announced. The protester must make a written confirmation of the protest within one (1) hour of the announced decision. The speech contest chairman must review the decision with the highest-ranking officer at that level, who shall verify or correct the decision within seven (7) days of receipt of the written confirmation and notify the parties of the decision in writing.
- 11.3 **Appeal:** An appeal from a protest decision at any level, together with applicable, verified details shall be filed within 24 hours with the national speech contest chairman for a ruling from the National President.

12. SPEECH CONTEST COMMITTEE

A speech contest committee is responsible for arranging and supervising the speech contest in accordance with the speech contest rules. The committee shall:

- 12.1 Verify all contestants' eligibility to avoid disqualification. The club treasurer shall sign the eligibility form as evidence that the contestant has paid at all levels.
- 12.2 Observe deadlines for the receipt of information required at club, council or national levels.
- 12.3 Determine the method of gathering subjects for the contestants.
- 12.4 Ensure that the Speech Contest Eligibility Form (for first, second, and third place or the two (2) winners and alternate) is completed and forwarded to the next level speech contest chairman postmarked or emailed within one (1) week of

the contest, with a copy to the contestant and president of the relevant level. As pre-notification, wherever possible, an email should be sent to advise the next level chairman of the winner's name, subject, title, contact data (including email address) and willingness to compete at the next level. The eligibility forms should still be forwarded to the next level chairman within the stipulated timeframe as required.

- 12.5 Provide contestants three (3) different subjects four (4) weeks prior to the club contest. Contestants may present the same speech at club, council and national levels.
- 12.6 Provide judges with the names of speakers, subjects, and titles of speeches before beginning the contest.
- 12.7 Select the judges and alternate judge and provide them with the necessary information regarding the contest. Judges shall have the opportunity to review the judges' forms, the speech contest rules, and the balloting procedures before the contest but by latest during the judges' briefing.
- 12.8 Appoint the program leader (with the approval of the president), evaluators, timers, tellers, and pages, and outline their responsibilities.
- 12.9 After verifying all judges' ballots, tellers' tally sheets, and timekeepers' report submit names of winners to the program leader.
 - 12.9.1 **Traditional-rule** winners shall be listed in reverse order and identified as third-, second-, and first-place in that order.
 - 12.9.2 **Non-Traditional rule:** the two (2) winners shall be announced alphabetically by last name, and if there is to be an alternate, the alternate announced prior to the two (2) winners.
- 12.10 A minimum of three (3) participants is required for a contest.
 - 12.10.1 Where there are only three (3) contestants, only one (1) winner will be announced.
 - 12.10.2 Where there are only four (4) contestants, only two (2) places will be announced.
 - 12.10.3 Where there are more than four (4) contestants, three (3) places will be announced.
- 12.11 Ensure that judges are not personal friends, associates, or relatives of contestants. See Judging Rules (Items 10.5; 10.6; 10.7) to confirm judges' qualifications.
- 12.12 Wherever possible, ensure that at least one (1) of the judges in each contest is a member of POWERtalk Australia
- 12.13 It is the responsibility of the speech contest chairman at all levels to ensure that the competition is run using the latest copy of the Speech Contest Rules and Duties and current forms as posted on the National Website.

13. PROGRAM LEADER

- 13.1 Have the contestants draw for speaking positions. Allow no exchange of positions among the contestants after the drawing.
- 13.2 Before the contest begins, verify that the contestants and judges are present.
- 13.3 Introduce the timers and verify that the time signal is visible (or audible for the visually impaired).
- 13.4 Introduce the tellers and pages.
- 13.5 Announce that the judges will be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to

complete the worksheets and make comments. The program leader should confer with the contestants to ensure that the subject and title are correctly given, pronounced and emphasized.

- 13.6 Announce the contestants first by name, and then announce the speech category, the subject and title. Repeat speech category, subject, title, and contestant's name.
- 13.7 After the three (3) minutes allowed for marking the worksheet of the last contestant are finished, direct judges to complete ballots by announcing the judges have 3-5 minutes to complete their ballots.
- 13.8 Direct tellers to collect judges' ballots and evaluations and remain in the room for the timers' report.
- 13.9 Request the chairman of timers to read the timers' report.
- 13.10 Direct tellers to collect timers' report.
- 13.11 Receive protests. (See Protests Item 11)
- 13.12 Briefly introduce the contestants and the judges to the assembly and express appreciation for their participation. The program leader can ask judges to provide verbal comments on the contest.
- 13.13 Present the awards or introduce the person to present awards and announce results of the contest.
 - 13.13.1 **Traditional Contest:** Announce the third, second and first place when there are more than four (4) contestants, the second and first place when there are only four (4) contestants; or winner only when there are three (3) contestants, at all final contests.
 - 13.13.2 **Preliminary Contest:** Winners shall be announced in alphabetical order.
 - 13.13.3 **Non-Traditional Contest:** Announce the alternate and then the names of the winners.

14. TIMERS

Two (2) timekeepers, one to be designated chairman, are recommended at all levels. Each timekeeper shall be supplied with a stopwatch, and a lighted time signal to ensure the verification of time. An audible signal shall be supplied for the visually impaired. Timekeepers shall:

- 14.1 Synchronize stopwatches prior to contest.
- 14.2 Be seated in a position clearly visible to all contestants.
- 14.3 Count the time when the contestant uses any verbal or nonverbal forms of communication.
- 14.4 Give a lighted signal when the minimum time, five (5) minutes, has been reached. Maintain this signal for sixty (60) seconds only. At nine (9) minutes the chairman of timers shall stand to indicate speaker must stop and be seated. For the visually impaired, audible signals will be used.
- 14.5 Track the time allowed for judges, three (3) minutes, and signal when time has elapsed if a signal has not yet been received.
- 14.6 Maintain an accurate record of time taken by each contestant. The chairman of timers shall read the timers' report of the contestants by speaking order in the contest, not by name, when called upon by the program leader.

15. TELLERS AND SCORING

- 15.1 The scoring shall be the same for Traditional and non-Traditional Rules. Scores shall be tallied as follows:
- 15.1.1 For first place winner 12 points
 - 15.1.2 For second place winner 7 points
 - 15.1.3 For third place winner 3 points
- 15.2 A minimum of two (2) tellers is required, one to be designated chairman.
- 15.3 The tellers should be briefed verbally in advance on their role and the method of scoring.
- 15.4 The speech contest chairman or, at a minimum, one other committee member, will review the tellers tally sheet for scoring and arithmetical accuracy before the results are announced.
- 15.5 Record names of winners according to third, second, and first place for the final Traditional contests when there are more than four (4) contestants; the second and first place when there are only four (4) contestants; or winner only when there are three (3) contestants. Record the names of the alternate, then the two (2) winners of the final non-Traditional Contest. Preliminary contest winners' names shall be recorded in alphabetical order.
- 15.6 Give to the speech contest chairman all judges' ballots, tellers' tally sheets, timekeepers' report and list of winners, for verification. (Judges may retain their worksheets.)

NOTE: an explanation of the Traditional and non-Traditional Contests can be found under Club-Council-National (Item 3. of these rules).

16. PAGES

- 16.1 One page is to be stationed at each entrance to ensure that no person leaves or enters the room while a contestant is speaking.
- 16.2 There should be a sign on the outside of each entrance door advising that no one will be allowed to enter or leave during a speech and that no knocking is allowed. It should further advise that doors will not be opened during speeches and that pages will open doors in between speeches to see if anyone is waiting.

End of Speech Contest Rules