



ROTARY 2024-2025 SPEECH CONTEST

Guidelines, Rules and How to Set Up a Speech Contest

1. Speakers must be students in attendance in grades 9 through 12 at a public or private school, or charter school within Rotary District 5220 and within your club boundaries. No student may be a contest in more than one club contest in any year. A student may participate over multiple years, but if they win the district contest that cannot continue to participate.
2. Select the date for your club contest and get it on your official club calendar today! Connect with your Assistant District Governor for your area speech contest. He/She will work with you to set the date, time and location for the area contest.
 - a. Hold the Club Contest: Between January 1 – 31, 2025
 - b. Hold the Area Contest: Between February 1 – 29, 2025
 - c. The District Contest is scheduled for
Saturday, March 15, 2025 at the Merced County Office of Education,
632 West 13th Street, Merced in Room J2 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
More guidance will be provided to each area winner.
3. **September/October call your high school principal to discuss the speech contest and find out who would be your contact to share the information and recruit students.** The target is 3-5 speakers for your club contest. You may need to have a preliminary contest to identify the best participants if you have more than 5 students.
 - a. For assistance with communicating with the school, see document entitled:
Communicating with the School.
 - b. Send your school contact the following documents to share with students: *Speech Contest Flyer, Speaker Information Agreement Form (be sure to personalize for your club before sharing), Judges Scoring Sheet, Speech Contest Seeding and Prizes Sheet.*
4. **Check in with your high school contact multiple times before the contest date but especially the week before the Contest.** Remind them each speaker must fill out and have their parent and student sign the Speaker Agreement Form, and have the student bring the completed form with them to the contest or the school contact can scan and email it to you. Collect the sheets prior to the contest so that you can use them to introduce students after the contest!

5. Several weeks prior to the club contest:

- a. Identify 3 judges, a scorekeeper (someone to tally the judges scores) and a timekeeper.
 - b. Send a copy of the judge's guidelines and score sheet to the judges prior to the contest.
 - c. Prepare club level certificates, plaques, trophies, etc. at club discretion. Certificate samples are provided.
 - d. Highlight club level contest in the club bulletin and at meetings to encourage high attendance.
 - e. Confirm the number of attendees to adjust your meeting arrangements accordingly.
6. Score keeping of the contest at each level must be kept confidential. Any protest relative to the conduct of a speaker or the operation of a contest, at any level of the contest, must be made to the Chair of that contest before the winner is announced. The decision of the chair shall be final.
7. Judges should have a full understanding of the rules, scoring and ranking process. The timekeeper will track penalty points for time to be deducted one time at the end of the contest.
8. **NEW:** *Each speech must be within 4 minutes and 30 seconds or 5 minutes and 30 seconds to avoid a time penalty. A speech under or over the time frame will be assessed a 2-point penalty by each judge.*
9. **NEW:** *Note cards are allowed but will result in a 2-point deduction for delivery if relied on too heavily. Students may have the cards at hand in case of a mental blank out. The speech cannot be read. To maximize a student's chance to score well, the students are advised not to use note cards.*
10. **NEW:** *Each Club and Area is encouraged to consider increasing the prize amount. Please see Contest Seeding and Prizes for 2024-2025.*

11. The Day of the Contest

- a. Arrange seating for contestants and guests
 - b. Have prepared a method of randomly determining order of speakers, e.g. drawing cards or numbered slips from a hat.
12. **After the Club Contest: Provide your Area Contest Chair/Assistant District Governor with the information on your winner as soon as possible.**

If you have questions or need assistance, feel free to contact me:

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