

Rotary District 7610 – Annual Speech Contest Planning Guide

Each Club should appoint a Speech Contest chair to make contact with students in their community. The school principal, guidance counselor, debate/speech/drama club sponsor or sponsor of the Interact Club would be appropriate to contact with information about the speech contest, and ask them to promote among the students. Any student in grades 9-12 in the District is eligible.

The topic for the contest is the theme chosen by the President of Rotary International for 2023-2024: “*The Magic of Rotary.*” With this theme, the President is calling on all Rotarians “to recognize and amplify the organizations power to save lives.”

General Speech Contest Rules

1. Contestants must be high school students (grades 9-12) attending a public or private school or being home schooled.
2. The speech must be at least five minutes in length, but not more than eight minutes. A penalty will be imposed if the time frame is not kept.
3. All contestants agree to speak at the area and final levels should they advance in the competition.
4. Students may speak in only one Club competition.
5. All contestants must arrive at the designated contest location no later than ten minutes prior to the start of the contest. Late arrivals will receive a penalty. Contestants arriving after the competition has begun will be disqualified.
6. Speakers may not use notes, prompts or props.

Suggested Contest Check-List (for Club/Area/District)

- Schedule the location for the contest. Announce the date, time and place and include in contest announcement.
- Arrange for awards (Club level prizes recommended).
- Arrange for four judges (one as backup), one timekeeper and a teller.
- Arrange for a proctor/Sergeant at Arms to coordinate contestant arriving and leaving judges room.

- Confirm prizes and make certificates.
- Confirm date, time and place with students, judges, tellers and timekeeper.
- Locate calculators for tellers and Locate stopwatch for timekeeper.
- Duplicate Judging sheets, Duplicate Timekeeper’s sheet, and Duplicate Teller’s instructions.

- Arrange seating for contestants, parents, coaches/school representatives and proctor to wait while others are speaking.
- Set up tables in contest room for judges, timekeeper and tellers.

- Write thank you letters to judges, tellers and timekeeper.
- Write congratulations letter to winner and advise them of date, time and remind them of the next level contest.

Conducting the Contest

1. Be sure each contestant has completed a registration form and is in the contest room by the appointed time.
2. Welcome contestants and families, and usher to waiting room.
3. Be sure the Sergeant at Arms is on duty. The Sergeant at Arms will serve as a proctor and should stay with contestants as they wait to speak. No one is to enter the room while a contestant is speaking.
4. To begin the contest:
 - a. Call students into judge's room.
 - b. Ask students to introduce themselves and their families.
 - c. Read the contest rules.
 - d. Ask students to pick a number to determine speaking order.
 - e. Ask that the audience not applaud or talk during the speech.
 - f. Ask if judges, timekeepers and tellers are ready.
 - g. Ask all contestants except #1 to leave the room.
 - h. After speaking, each contestant should leave the room.
 - i. After a contestant has spoken, give judges time to complete their score sheets. Tellers should collect judges' and timekeeper's sheets.
 - j. When judges are ready for next speaker, Sergeant at Arms should escort that student to the judge's room.
 - k. When tellers have reached a decision, bring all contestants back to room.
 - l. Ask for applause for all contestants.
 - m. Announce results, beginning with third place, and award prizes as appropriate. ALL contestants should receive recognition and a certificate.

Area Level Speech contest conducted by Assistant Governors

1. All general rules apply to the area competitions.
2. Winners from the Club competitions will compete at the area level (unless only one Club in the area has conducted a contest. In that case, that winner will proceed to the finals.)
3. Clubs sending contestants to the area competitions will provide or arrange transportation and must accompany the student to the competition.
4. Judges may not be Rotarians from the Clubs fielding contestants.
5. All contestants at the Area level will receive certificates of participation.
- The AG report the area speech contest first place winner to Youth Contest Chair by **April 11, 2025**.

Speech Contest District Level

First place winners from each of the AG Area Speech Contests will compete on **April 19, 2025** at a location to be announced (*in area of Fredericksburg VA*).

1. A Rotarian should make arrangements for transportation and accompany the student to the District level competition.
2. All Speech Contest general rules and judging criteria apply to the District Speech Contest competition.
3. The family and coach/school representative for each student will be expected to enter and depart the contest area with their student.
4. The top three winners will receive a monetary prize. All contestants will receive certificates.

Awards have been set by the District as:

First Place	\$1000
Second Plate	\$ 500
Third Place	\$ 250

The sponsoring clubs of first, second and third place winners will make arrangements for an award ceremony and presentation of District Certificate and award check.