

# Rotary



## **Rotary District 6780 Four-Way Test Speech Contest Manual**

**For School Year 2025-2026**

Revised September 2025



**ROTARY DISTRICT 6780  
FOUR-WAY TEST SPEECH CONTEST**

**March 3, 2026**  
Ramsey Resort & Conference Center, Pigeon Forge, TN

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## **The Four-Way Test**

The Rotary Four-Way Test Speech Contest is a way for Rotarians to support students to make healthy choices in the ethical issues that they face in everyday life as teens. The speech contest enables Rotarians to reward teens who not only set healthy and ethical life goals for themselves but who also seek to influence their peers in a positive way.

### **The Rotary Four-Way Test** *of the things, we think, say or do.*

Is it the TRUTH?  
Is it FAIR to all concerned?  
Will it build GOODWILL?  
and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?  
Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

The purpose of the Four-Way Test Speech Contest is to foster the principle of ethics in everyday life as well as in business. The contest is designed to introduce high school students to Rotary by creating interest through a competitive speech contest, sponsored by their local Rotary club.

The specific goals of the contest are:

- To acquaint many youths with Rotary and especially, the tenets of the Four-Way Test.
- To demonstrate and enhance Rotarians' commitment to youth.
- To heighten awareness of Rotary among students, parents, school officials, and the community at large.
- To recognize, encourage and reward hard work and accomplishment in our youth.
- To provide an opportunity for Rotarians to participate in a Community/Vocational Service program which focuses on the Four-Way Test as our standard of behavior.



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## **GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS**

### **RULES OF COMPETITION:**

- A. The Scholarship Competition is open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private and home-schooled students and sponsored by an active Rotary club in District 6780.
- B. Topic: The contestant should choose the topic of his/her speech. The contestant must apply the Rotary Four-Way Test to the concepts of leadership, service to others or life experience. In the event the contestant has participated in a previous Speech Scholarship Competition, that contestant shall not present a previously used speech and must develop and present a new and contemporary speech.

The topic must be specifically related to the Rotary Four-Way Test. This must be addressed during the body of the speech and not reserved for concluding statement only. **Each one of the four parts of the Four-Way Test should be addressed during the speech.** The use of each element of the test could be used to prove either a positive or negative point. Content should be relevant and in good taste.

**NOTE:** In the event the contestant has participated in a previous Speech Scholarship Competition, that contestant shall not present a previously used speech and must develop and present a new and contemporary speech. Use of a previously presented speech shall result in **DISQUALIFICATION**.

- C. Content: The speech given by each contestant must be the work of the contestant alone. No more than 75 words may be quoted.
- D. Delivery: The speech is to be presented from memory **without** the aid of podium, notes, displays, or props. Good eye contact and movement are encouraged, but the speech is not a dramatic presentation.
- E. Length: The speeches must be at least four minutes and no more than six minutes. Any speech that falls outside either of these limits will be **DISQUALIFIED**.



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**PROCEDURE:**

- A. Each contestant will receive a copy of '**Guidelines for Contestants**' from the sponsoring club and prepare a four-to-six-minute speech based on the guidelines.
- B. Contestants will draw for positions for the order of their speeches at the club contest.
- C. Local club competitions may be held in one round. Subsequent rounds can be held at the club's option. Presentation before a live audience will be helpful to the contestant selected for District competition.
- D. District competition will be held in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The first-place winner will have the opportunity to present their speech at the District Conference. All winners will be recognized at the closing banquet.
- E. The District contest is conducted using the format of forensic speech competitions. Each student will give his/her speech before a panel of judges. Contestants will be judged on content and delivery.

**SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNTS AND DISTRIBUTION:**

- A. Scholarships at the District level will be \$1,000, \$650, and \$350 for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place, respectively.
- B. Scholarship monies will be distributed in accordance with District 6780 procedures. Once the student has been enrolled in their college or university, that institution shall forward a statement for the scholarship amount to the District Chair-Vocational Services Committee for submission to the District Treasurer. Payments shall be made directly to the institution of higher learning.



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## **GUIDELINES FOR CLUB CHAIRS**

It is important for you to begin NOW to recruit student contestants from your public, private high schools and home school cooperatives. Local High School Counselors, English teachers, Speech teachers, drama teachers, and Interact Advisors should be contacted during the school year for student participation. An advertising form is included for this notification.

### **PROCEDURE:**

- A. Sponsoring clubs will give each contestant a copy of 'Guidelines for Contestants' to help prepare them for a four-to-six-minute speech based on the scholarship guidelines.
- B. Local club competition may be held in one round. Subsequent rounds can be held at the club's option. Presentation before a live audience will be helpful to the contestant selected for District competition since it is open and uses a forensic competition format.
- C. Hold local Four-Way Test Speech Competition December through mid-February, however some teachers may build this program into their fall curriculum.
- D. Recommend arranging pre-competition of entrants from all schools in front of a judging panel. Contestants should draw for positions for the order of their speeches in the club contest. The judging panel may consist up of six or nine club volunteers (or appropriate number for smaller clubs). Tabulate scores immediately at end of competition (10-15 minutes). As each participating student has put a lot of energy and effort into participating, thank all students for participating and announce finalists to present in front of your club membership (ideally within 3 to 5 days). Also, having the finalist make a club presentation.



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**E. Club Final Competition:**

You may be amazed by the improvement each contestant will make in his/her delivery following the preliminary round. It is with this understanding that I encourage you to have a preliminary round, even if you only have a few students participating. Invite parents of participating students, principals, speech and English teachers. Score immediately after close of club meeting and call results to participants' schools if they have not had a representative in attendance. Prepare letters and certificates for all participating students, letters to teachers and principals. Advise second place finisher to remain ready to fill-in at District if club's first place finisher is not able.

**CLUB WINNER:**

The first-place winner from each club will participate in the District Competition. If the first-place winner cannot participate, the second or third place winner may represent the club.

Both the sponsoring club and scholarship contestant agree that, by registering the contestant in the District competition, the presentation and any video/audio recordings, and other photographs are the property of Rotary District 6780, and that District 6780 reserves the right to use these materials for non-commercial uses.

**DEADLINE:**

Submit Registration by **February 13, 2026, deadline.** Scan application and email to: Bruce Van Cleve, Speech Contest Chair

District 6780 [brucelucyvancleve@charter.net](mailto:brucelucyvancleve@charter.net)

Use Subject title: **Four-Way Test Speech Registration Form**

**LOCATION:**

The District Scholarship Competition will be Pigeon Forge at the Tennessee Ramsey's Resort and Conference hotel. **The start time is 1:00 PM (eastern).**



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**DISTRICT 6780  
Four-Way Test Speech Contest  
REGISTRATION FORM  
RETURN BY February 13, 2026**

Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_  
***WILL*** participate in the District Scholarship Competition on **March 3, 2026**

Club Four-Way Test Speech Chair \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Contestant: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Current year in High School \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide complete contact information!**

**NOTE:** In submitting this registration form, both the sponsoring Rotary club and contestant agree that the speech materials, audio/video recordings, and other information are the property of Rotary District 6780, and this District reserves the right to use these materials for non-commercial uses.

Scan application and E-Mail to  
Bruce Van Cleve – Speech Contest Chair  
District 6780: [brucelucyvancleve@charter.net](mailto:brucelucyvancleve@charter.net)  
Use Subject title: **Four-Way Test Speech Registration Form**