

## Speech Contests

What you need to know  
as a Contestant!

By Dale Hartle, DTM

## Table Topics Contest

- The Topic
- Timing
- Judging Criteria
- Do's and Don't's



## The Topic

- Everyone gets the same topic
- General, no specific knowledge needed
- Should lead to opinion or conclusion

## The Timing

- Timing begins with the first definite verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience.
- **Green light** at 1 minute for 30 seconds.
- **Yellow light** at 1 minute 30 seconds for 30 seconds.
- **Red light** at 2 minutes and remains on until speech concluded.

If you speak for less than 1 minute or more than 2 minutes 30 seconds, **you will be disqualified.**

## Judging Criteria



- **Speech development - 30%**  
Opening, body, close, organisation, smoothness
- **Effectiveness - 25%**  
Logic, directness, enthusiasm, achievement of purpose
- **Physical - 15%**  
This relates to your appearance and body language
- **Voice - 15%**  
Voice volume and flexibility
- **Language - 15%**  
Appropriate to speech, purpose and audience, used good grammar, pronunciation and word selection

## Do's

- ✓ Speak to the topic
- ✓ Have a good structure, 3 good points
- ✓ Open and conclude well (opinion, result)
- ✓ Use voice and body language
- ✓ Relate to audience, use personal experience
- ✓ Use all available time, aim for 2-2.10 minutes
- ✓ Watch the timing lights closely
- ✓ Practise, practise, practise – any topic will do!

## Don't's

- ✗ Don't waste time addressing everyone  
“Mr/Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen ... ”
- ✗ Don't get off the topic
- ✗ Don't get disqualified because of timing

## Humorous Contest

- The Topic
- Timing
- Judging Criteria
- How to Prepare
- Useful links



## The Topic

- Any topic, substantially original
- Identify any **quotes**
- **Avoid** potentially objectionable language, anecdotes and offensive material.
- The speech must be **thematic** in nature (opening, body and close) not a monologue (series of one-liners).

## The Timing

- Timing begins with the first definite verbal or non-verbal communication with the audience.
- **Green light** at 5 minutes for 1 minute.
- **Yellow light** at 6 minutes for 1 minute.
- **Red light** at 7 minutes and remains on until speech concluded.

If you speak for less than 4 minutes or more than 7 minutes 30 seconds, **you will be disqualified.**

## Judging Criteria



- **Content - 55%**  
Includes Speech Development (15 points), Effectiveness (15 points), Speech Value (15 points) and Audience Response (10 points)
- **Delivery - 30%**  
Includes Physical presentation (10 points), Use of Voice (10 points), and Manner (10 points).
- **Language - 15%**  
Includes Appropriateness of language and choice of words (10 points), and Correctness of language (5 points).

## Preparation

- Use a CC Manual assignment – helps with structure
- Review previous evaluations for ideas
- Base speech on personal experience
- Research and identify any quotations
- Use props, voice, big gestures
- Prepare notes, deliver without notes
- Practise, practise, practise!

## 4 Useful Links



- [www.earnestspeakers.com/humorous-speech.html](http://www.earnestspeakers.com/humorous-speech.html)
- [sixminutes.dlugan.com/video-critiques/](http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/video-critiques/)
- [www.write-out-loud.com/humorous-speech.html](http://www.write-out-loud.com/humorous-speech.html)
- [prohumorist.com/articles/](http://prohumorist.com/articles/)

**Good  
luck!**

