



# Toastmasters Speech Contests in District 74

## A guide for judges

by Rod Taylor, DTM

### **About the Author**

Rod Taylor is presently the Chief Judge for Toastmasters District 74.

He is a member of Transformers Toastmasters (Club #4500/74) and has been a member of several clubs around the country. Considering he has been a member of Toastmasters for around 30 years, that's not surprising.

Rod was District 74's first Able Toastmaster Bronze and Able Toastmaster Silver. He has completed the Able Toastmaster Silver from scratch three times and has now started again with the new system of awards and has almost completed the Advanced Toastmaster Gold. He also has a DTM. He has won three District speech contests and, over the years, has taken part in more than 150 speech contests and judged about the same number.

Rod owns and manages Direction Training, a company dedicated to teaching communication-based skills. He has been a full time professional trainer and speaker for the last twelve years. In addition, Rod has more than twenty years experience in line management in the process and manufacturing industries from shop floor to board level, and from technical to marketing. He has an Honours degree in Chemistry from the University of London, a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Cape Town, and is a qualified Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

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# Toastmasters Speech Contests in District 74

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### About this Guide

This is intended to be a fairly comprehensive guide to judging Toastmasters speech contests in Southern Africa. It is not a manual on how to run a speech contest. It is clearly focussed on judging and therefore primarily of interest to present and aspirant speech contest judges. However, it will also be of value to contestants, who ought to understand the basis on which they will be judged. I believe it will assist contestants better to understand the effects of the diversity inherent within the judging process and to understand the factors that may (and the factors that may not) influence their chances of winning.

The guide deals with judging speech contests to District level. The International Speech Contest is the only contest that goes beyond District level. There are some minor differences in the qualifications for judging this contest at the Regional and International levels. Different speeches are required from contestants. For those that are interested, the details are covered in the *Speech Contest Manual* and the *Speech Contest Rulebook*.

The guide deals with all five of the 'official' Toastmasters speech contests. These are:

- The International Speech Contest
- The Impromptu Speech Contest
- The Evaluation Contest
- The Humorous Speech Contest
- The Tall Tales contest

Districts may conduct up to four contests per District year. One of these must be the International Speech Contest and all contests must be from those listed above.

Throughout this guide, I have used the terms 'contest' and 'contestant', rather than 'competition' and 'competitor'. There is really no difference between the terms, and both are widely used. TMI seems to prefer 'contest'. In a similar vein, I use the term 'Impromptu' rather than 'Table Topics' because that is the form that is generally used throughout our District, notwithstanding TMI's preference for 'Table Topics'. The same applies to 'Tall Story' as opposed to the American 'Tall Tale'.

The process of judging is a very rewarding one. It makes a judge much more aware of the construction and delivery of speeches. I believe that experience as a judge as well as a contestant will help anyone to become a better speaker. Regular workshops on judging are presented around District 74, and I encourage everyone to attend these workshops and learn to hone their skills.

This guide deals with speech contests and procedures in general. Separate supplements are available that deal with the particularities of each speech contest. These supplements include the rules for the speech contest concerned, the criteria used for judging and notes for the judges' briefing particular to each speech contest.

### The Great Myth

There is a popular myth in Toastmasters that there is an absolute 'right' answer in terms of choosing the winner of a speech contest. This myth goes hand in hand with the belief that, with appropriate knowledge, experience, training (or whatever else), together with the use of the Judge's Guide, we should all be able to reach the same conclusion and agree as to the choice of winner. Worse still, there is a belief that those that disagree with our personal opinion are 'poor judges'.

The reality is that we all perceive things differently. What one may consider a pleasant speaking voice, another may find harsh, or nasal. Body language or gestures that one may consider appropriate, another may not. What one considers poor taste, another may find acceptable. Diversity is normal and healthy. We can only manage this diversity by understanding it and trying to ensure that this diversity is encompassed within the statistics of the judging process.

If there were no such diversity of opinion and all ‘good’ judges agreed in their rankings, there would be no need for a plurality of judges. A single judge would suffice. Indeed, throughout Southern Africa, there are hundreds of non-Toastmasters speech contests held each year in schools and colleges that have only one or sometimes two or three judges. There seems to be no more (or less) controversy with these decisions than there is when it comes to Toastmasters speech contests.

There is no absolute right answer as to what is ‘best’ or what is ‘right’. Diversity of opinion is a reality and we cannot make it disappear no matter how we may try to redesign the Judge’s Guide or the judging criteria.

### **Some Basic Statistics**

Who, then, should be the arbiter of who presented the best speech? Which of the diverse opinions represents the ‘right’ choice?

Let’s put reality aside for a moment and assume a perfect world where everyone is honest and unbiased. It’s now difficult to argue against the stance that, were the entire audience at any speech contest to ballot their opinion as to the relative merit of the contestants (according to the agreed criteria), these ballots would represent different individual opinions, but together would select a winner. Some members of the audience would disagree with this result.

In theory this may be sound, but in practice we live in a real world where (aside from diversity of opinion) bias of one kind or another is a reality. Asking the entire audience at a speech contest to ballot their choice would allow a speaker to pack the audience with supporters. (If all speakers were to adopt this approach equally, we might neutralise some of the bias but we’d certainly have greater attendance at contests!) The counting would also take a great deal longer.

If we cannot have the entire audience balloting their choice of best speaker, we opt for selecting audience members to do so. We call them judges. Often we select our judges poorly. Selecting judges is a process known as sampling. The judges are a sample of the total audience. The sample, therefore, should be as representative as possible of the total audience. We should understand that judges, because of (or in spite of) their training, will also have different opinions. If the judges are sufficient in number and represent a valid sample of the audience as a whole, the diversity of opinion within the group of judges will represent the diversity of opinion within the audience.

I have seen a contest where the audience was 70% male and mostly young and four of the five contestants were male. There were four judges, all female, all divorced and the youngest was in her late forties. The speeches were not of a particularly good standard. The female contestant won, and there were many complaints about the result. I doubt there would have been the same dissatisfaction had the same contestant been placed first by a larger and more representative group of judges.

No matter what the result, there will always be those that are dissatisfied. Their concerns will have far less credibility if there are a large number of judges who are representative of the demographics of the total audience.

## Comparisons with Other Contests

Speech contests are sometimes compared with other contests such as gymnastics or skating. This is particularly so when it comes to discussions concerning publication of the judges' marks or ballots. That subject will be dealt with as a separate issue later on. In terms of the process of choosing a winner, there are certainly some similarities between, for example, skating, gymnastics, speech and other contests, but the differences are often greater than the similarities and each type of contest has its own problems and disagreements. Music and singing contests, like speech contests, have a high subjective element in their assessment and probably have more in common with speech contests than skating and gymnastics. In debating contests, adjudicators are ranked as well as individuals and teams.

Skating, like presenting a speech, is certainly subjective. However, the skater has to choose and execute particular movements to score points. Points in skating are awarded for difficulty as well as execution. The number of potential movements - figures, turns, jumps, twists and the like - is small in comparison to the number of variants in presenting a speech. Presenting a speech is so much more than a series of set pieces.

A speech is more than simply the sum of its parts. In presenting a speech, we have an unlimited variety of subject matter, material and approach. Further, we are influencing people's thoughts and feelings, and deliberately so. We are all different, which is why you may well find that many members of the judging panel or the audience choose one speaker and wonder how another managed to win. What one person considers a stale and over-used joke may be fresh and lively to another. What is acceptable to one may be considered in poor taste by another. What one considers lively use of body language may be seen as theatrical or overdone by others.

Still further, we are addressing a particular audience on a particular occasion. If we wish to influence that audience, then our approach must be to target them as specifically as possible. It is unlikely that an entire audience of any size will all agree on any issue. Why, then, should we expect different judges to agree on which speech had the best ideas, logic and original thought?

## Subjectivity, Objectivity and Diversity

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (10<sup>th</sup> edition) gives the following relevant definitions:

**subjective** • *adj.* based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions.

**objective** • *adj.* not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering or representing facts.

These definitions clearly illustrate the problem with judging a speech contest. To be objective, we must put our personal feelings aside when dealing with facts. Fair enough, but what facts? There are very few!

Let's consider word meanings themselves. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is not the only dictionary. Word meanings vary from place to place and from culture to culture and they change with time. Dictionaries describe rather than prescribe usage.

What constitutes 'good' grammar, style or word usage depends on which of many expert texts you may prefer. Another reference from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (10<sup>th</sup> edition) gives an appropriate example:

**gotten** *N. Amer.* past participle of GET.

USAGE: **gotten**

The term **gotten** is very common in North American English, though even there it is often regarded as non-standard.

Most Toastmasters in this District would rightly consider such usage to be poor. If it were acceptable, are there to be no standards at all? There is no world standard for the use of language. Language usage changes with time and (often) through error. The traditional meaning of ‘hopefully’ has metamorphosed into two meanings and the more modern usage (‘I hope that’, or ‘it is to be hoped that’) is now the dominant one, accounting for more than 90% of citations for ‘hopefully’ in the British National Corpus. Technically and traditionally, Latinate words took Latinate plurals (stadium – stadia), but usage is changing and dictionaries reflect this (stadiums). ‘Data’ is now, in modern non-scientific use, often treated as a mass noun, similar to the word ‘information’ which cannot normally have a plural and which takes a single verb (Data was collected...). Some dictionaries are now recording ‘kudo’ as a back-derivative from the mistaken belief that ‘kudos’ is a plural. At what point do these changes become acceptable as opposed to being considered as errors? Who determines this?

Pronunciation is another tricky area. In this District we are becoming used to a very wide range of different pronunciations. Some are culture-specific; others will be considered aberrant. Which syllable ‘should’ be stressed in the word ‘kilometre’? Which phonetic sound should be used for the second syllable? The English that is used in Southern Africa is different to that used in the UK, the USA, Canada and elsewhere. Each version of English is different. At what point do sub-sets of English, such as Ebonics and Pidgin, become languages in their own right? Further, there is no authority to which we can refer. Even the fairly authoritative and comprehensive *English Pronouncing Dictionary* (Daniel Jones) clearly indicates that it represents only generally accepted pronunciations and that there are many variants.

We may consider ourselves fortunate that, in judging speech contests, we don’t have to deal with spelling as well!

As in religion, politics and similar arenas, we do not all perceive things in the same way. ‘Facts’ may often be interpreted differently. Eyewitness accounts often differ. One of the most well documented areas worldwide today is the law, yet expert legal minds still differ concerning the interpretation of the law itself as well as the rulings of the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court.

This indicates that even if we try to subdivide the Judge’s Guide still further, we will be unable to eliminate subjectivity. We could make the Judge’s Guide much more complex and have still further subdivisions for (for example) the use of alliteration, metaphor, simile, hyperbole and the like. Sadly, this won’t help because we can still debate what is ‘good’ use of alliteration, what represents a ‘good’ metaphor and so on. We might try making the rules more comprehensive or more complex, but no matter how hard we try, we will never be able to eliminate the subjective element of diverse opinions. If we can’t eliminate diversity, we must either encompass it or abandon the idea of contests completely.

### **Mindreading**

Apart from diversity within a given audience, there will be diversity between audiences. What appeals to those from Cape Town is different to that which appeals to those from Johannesburg and elsewhere. What appeals to us in this District may not appeal to a predominantly American audience and vice versa. We cannot perceive how others may think and neither should we attempt to. Contestants must try to target their speeches to the audience on a particular occasion and we must assess them accordingly. In judging, we must only assess ‘this speaker addressing this audience on this occasion’. Apart from the immorality of judging on past or potential performance, it is unfair to other speakers who have rightly used their skills to target their speech to the audience they are addressing. Contestants who advance to higher levels may need to adjust their speech (or create new speeches) for each target audience. Making assumptions as to how well this might be done by a particular speaker is pure mindreading and has no place in judging a speech contest of any kind at any level.

From the Judges' Workshops I have run throughout this District, I have, on occasion, used the same five videotapes in the same order to different audiences with different results. Can the collective opinion of such large audiences be wrong? If so, which is right and how is this 'rightness' to be assessed? What absolute standards could be used? There are very few judges, no matter how experienced or trained, who will rank five videotaped speeches in exactly the same order after a period of 12 months (unless, of course they have deliberately remembered their previous assessment). Time may change the relevance of a speech to an individual. The speeches remain the same, but the target audience changes with time and place.

'This speaker addressing this audience on this occasion' (or 'this evaluator evaluating this demonstration speaker's speech on this occasion) is the ONLY fair way of judging.

### **The Process of Judging**

Each judge independently ballots their choice for first, second and third place. The completion of the ballots is a secret process - a judge's ballot will be seen only by the tally counters and the chief judge. The ballot should reflect the individual judge's honest and unbiased opinion as to the relative merit of the speakers. Conscious bias should be laid aside in completing the ballot.

The ballots are then collected, points awarded for each first, second and third place, and the overall result is calculated. Each judge therefore contributes to the final result.

Because of normal diversity, individual ballots will probably differ. In some cases this difference may be significant, but often it is small. Where there is not a great range in the quality of the speeches, the variance in judges' opinions may be considerable. Where one or two speakers are notably better than the rest, this is invariably reflected in the judges' ballots. Choosing a winner when there is a very marked difference is an easy task. Where the difference is slight, the task becomes more difficult.

### **Bias**

Bias is a problem in any kind of assessment and bias may be conscious or unconscious.

Conscious bias usually relates to affiliation. This may relate to Club, Area or Division loyalties, to personal associations, or even to deliberate prejudice of one form or another. Most rational people are able consciously to put such biases aside and judge fairly. It is prudent, however, to try wherever possible to balance potential loyalties among the judges by having, for example, equal representation from each Area at a Division contest.

We can all try to eliminate conscious bias and, indeed, are enjoined to do so. At a conscious level this is possible, but I think we all know that our subconscious mind has enormous power.

Unconscious biases are those of which we are unaware. Some of these relate to our own beliefs, values and norms. These are the things that direct our choices and preferences. An individual's choice of what constitutes a good speaking voice is one example. There is no absolute answer and even experts and professionals disagree. There are vocal qualities that most will agree are undesirable and others that most will agree are desirable, but the overall balance and quality is, of necessity, a subjective matter. A particular accent may sound pleasant to one listener and less so to another.

Other areas of bias relate to the consideration of how well a speaker has done in the past, or how well they may fare at higher levels of competition. A judge of integrity will judge only on the quality of 'this speaker presenting this speech to this audience on this occasion.' It is utterly immoral to judge on expectations or on what one might believe to be desirable at other levels of a contest.

Probably the biggest area of bias is having an inadequate number of judges to represent the audience properly. The matter of numbers of judges will be dealt with later as a separate issue using a practical example. Having insufficient judges may lead to a poor result because the sample (number of judges) is too small for valid conclusions to be drawn. Some statistics and examples will be discussed later for those that are interested. Unfortunately we rarely see an adequate number of judges at contests below District level. Having an adequate number of judges is far more important than their experience or their Toastmasters pedigree.

## **The Judging Form**

The judging forms for each of the speech contests are included in the appropriate supplement. The judging forms for all the contests are similarly structured although, naturally, the criteria differ. The form is structured in three parts – the heading, the guide and the ballot.

### **The heading**

Note that the heading describes the form as ‘Judge’s Guide and Ballot’. It is a guide. It is not an absolute scoresheet. It is for the use of the judge only as a guide to completing the ballot. No one other than the judge concerned has the right to see the guide. Indeed, there is no compulsion for a judge to use the guide at all, although it is an excellent guide and it would be foolish in the extreme not to use it.

### **The guide**

The guide itself comprises a number of categories with suggested point values for each category and descriptions of recommended point ranges. The possible total is 100 points.

The purpose of having these different categories is to define the criteria against which the speeches are to be assessed and to encourage judges to think about how well the speaker performed in each of the categories. They also serve to help reduce some of the subjectivity inherent in the assessment and to make the process a little more objective. These criteria are described in greater detail in the Judging Criteria and Judge’s Code of Ethics sheets applicable to each contest and are included on the appropriate supplements. Judges are asked to quantify their opinions by allocating points. The point ranges and values are suggestions; they are not absolute. There is no prohibition on, for example, allocating 22 points for ‘speech development’ if you started by allocating the first speaker 18 points and subsequent speakers were better and better still. It’s much easier doing it that way than trying to alter all your previous point allocations. Remember that it’s a guide to help you complete your ballot and not a hurdle to make your life difficult. Use it as a guide and it will serve you well.

### **The ballot**

This is the most important part of the form. This is where you, the judge, commit yourself to declaring your honest and unbiased choice of the best three speakers and their relative merit.

The judge must sign the ballot. Your name should be printed clearly as well. Some of the older ballot forms don’t have space for this, but write it in, nonetheless. It’s difficult for the tally counters to correlate the ballots of fifteen judges when the signatures alone are often illegible.

There can be no ties. If there are at least three contestants, there must be a first, second, and third place filled in. Any discrepancy on the ballot (not signed, a tie, only two names with three or more contestants, etc.) disqualifies the entire ballot. The speakers have put a lot of work into their speeches. You and the other judges have put in a lot of time and effort in travelling, listening, and completing your guide and ballot. It would be a shame if all that were wasted due to a moment’s carelessness, so please check that you have completed the ballot properly.

Your completed ballot is the only part of the judging sheet to be handed in. The guide is yours to dispose of as you please. Please do NOT show the guide to anyone or leave it on the table when you leave.

Your ballot is your contribution to determining the overall result of the contest. It's not important whether or not other judges agree with your choices or vice versa.

### **Using the Judge's Guide and Ballot**

This section deals with the practicalities of using the guide. For more information on the suggested point allocations for the relevant categories and their constituent elements, see the appropriate supplement relating to the particular contest. In those supplements, the criteria are discussed in greater detail.

As has already been explained, the way you use the guide is up to you.

Some judges prefer to write the names from the right and then fold the form so that they cannot see their previous point allocations; others fold to and fro; some keep the guide fully open. Some judges prefer to begin marking their guides part of the way through the speech and adjusting their first impressions in the light of changes in the contestant's presentation while others prefer to wait until the speech or evaluation is complete before marking their guide. There is no right way, nor is there a wrong way. It's your guide, use it as you please, but please use it! There's a belief that hiding the point allocations of previous speakers somehow makes the exercise more objective because the judge then can't compare the speakers. The whole idea of the guide, however, is to help the judge to compare the speakers. Having done so, the judge completes the ballot as a contribution to the overall result. Whether the comparison of speakers is done on an ongoing basis or after hiding individual's point allocations is a matter of personal choice for the judge concerned.

There are probably almost as many ways of using the guide as there are judges! Some believe in giving the first speaker a 'standard' mark and comparing subsequent speakers to that standard. Others choose to use an external standard, perhaps the minister at their church or a well-known politician. Still others believe they can assess 'absolute' scores. Again, it really doesn't matter.

One thing about the guide that does matter is the arithmetic! No matter how you choose to fill in or use your guide, if you're working with numbers you should take care to check that you've added up correctly. At least you'll know what your guide is indicating to you. If you fail to add up correctly, no matter what system you're using, your guide will become a very sad joke.

Even when you've checked your arithmetic, please remember that you're still working with a guide. You may have to break a tie (remember, no ties are allowed on your ballot, so you have to make a choice). You don't HAVE to allocate first place to the speaker to whom you have allocated the highest points, but if you choose to do otherwise, you need to ask yourself, honestly, why you don't feel that speaker deserves first place. Feel free to change your point allocations if necessary, as long as it's done consciously and for valid reasons. When you're confident that, having seriously considered all the elements of all the speeches, you can fairly allocate a first, second and third place, complete your ballot, fill in ALL the details, sign it, detach it from the Judge's Guide, and hand it in.

### **The Tiebreaking Judge**

There are two important differences between the tiebreaking judge and the other judges.

The identity of the tiebreaking judge is known only to the chief judge. Because of this, it is best that the tiebreaking judge be briefed separately and should not attend the judges' briefing with the other judges.

The tiebreaking judge uses the same guide as the other judges, but the ballot is different. The tiebreaking judge ballots ALL of the speakers. Should a tie occur when the judges' ballots are counted, the tiebreaking judge's ballot is used to resolve the positions of the tied contestants only. Having the tiebreaking judge rank all the contestants ensures that a tie in any position can be broken.



There is a school of thought that believes that one of the judges at the briefing may be the tiebreaking judge, unbeknown to the other judges. If the sergeant collects this ballot, the identity of the tiebreaking judge will be known to the tally counters unless the chief judge first removes that ballot. The system can be made to work that way, but in my opinion the anonymity of the tiebreaking judge is best preserved by using a tiebreaking judge who is separately briefed and who deals directly and confidentially with the chief judge.

### **The Chief Judge**

The chief judge has many responsibilities and this task should not be taken lightly. The duties of the chief judge include:

- The chief judge appoints and advises the judges. Note that this is the chief judge's responsibility, not that of the contest chairperson (who appoints the chief judge). Often you will find that, when you are asked to be chief judge, other judges have already been appointed. Remember that the responsibility for the choice of judges is yours as chief judge. Choose judges to represent the expected audience. Pay particular attention to the mix of gender, ethnicity, age, marital status and the like. Also try to balance potential loyalties to Club, Area, Division and so on. There's no need for a quota system or precise ratios, but it's important to ensure balance and representivity. It's easier to achieve this balance with a large number of judges than with just a few.
- The chief judge should ensure (preferably before the contest) that all judges are familiar with the rules and the appropriate judging form and criteria. If necessary, provide copies of the appropriate documents.
- The chief judge also appoints a tiebreaking judge. The identity of the tiebreaking judge should be known only to the chief judge and the tiebreaking judge's ballot is only used to break any ties resulting from the ballots of the other judges. If the chief judge is not also a voting judge, he or she may act as the tiebreaking judge, but it is best to choose someone else. It is not generally a good idea to use a voting judge as the tiebreaking judge although this is not specifically prohibited in the rules.
- The chief judge co-ordinates the judging process, ensures that all the necessary documents are received (judges' ballots, timekeepers' report, certificates of eligibility and, if appropriate, originality) and advises and checks the tally counters.
- Together with the contest chairperson and taking cognisance of the contestants' wishes, defines the speaking area.
- The chief judge is responsible for checking the eligibility of each contestant. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

Contestants must be members in good standing of a Club in good standing. This simply means that the contestant's dues must be current with WHQ for the club that the contestant is representing. That the contestant has paid dues to the club is irrelevant; the club **MUST** have forwarded these to WHQ in good time or the contestant is ineligible. The contestant's status as an active or inactive member is irrelevant, as is the contestant's attendance record.

New, dual or reinstated members must have dues current with WHQ. Strictly, this is redundant since if such dues are *not* current with WHQ, the contestant does not qualify as a 'member in good standing of a Club in good standing'.

Holders of, and candidates for, various District and other offices are ineligible to compete. Details will be found in the rules for the particular contest.

There is an additional eligibility requirement for the International Speech Contest ONLY. This requirement is that the contestant must have completed six projects in the Communication & Leadership manual PRIOR to the Club contest. This rule prohibits a contestant from using their contest speech as their sixth speech in the C&L manual. The rule does not specifically require the completion of Project VI, any six projects from the Communication & Leadership manual will satisfy the requirement.

Certificates of eligibility and, if appropriate, originality, should be completed by each contestant and handed to the chief judge. Notwithstanding this certification by the contestant, the contestant's eligibility should be checked.

It is vitally important that eligibility is checked. Do not assume that the chief judge at the previous level has done so. Eligibility must be maintained at all levels. If at any level it is discovered that a contestant was ineligible to compete at any previous level, the contestant must be disqualified. This must happen even if the ineligibility has subsequently been corrected or the ineligibility is not discovered until a later level of the contest. It would be grossly unfair to other contestants not to check eligibility and WHQ is happy to assist in confirming whether or not a member or club is in good standing. If, as chief judge, you fail to check eligibility and the contestant is later disqualified at a higher level, you will incur the just wrath of the eligible contestants who were beaten by the ineligible contestant and thus denied the opportunity of advancing further in the contest.

- The chief judge briefs the judges, timekeepers and tally counters. Detailed briefing notes are included in the supplements for each particular contest.
- The chief judge is normally a co-ordinator and administrator and does not vote. There is no prohibition on the chief judge acting as either a voting judge or as the tiebreaking judge.
- The chief judge checks the timekeepers' report and rules on any disqualification relating to time. The chief judge must notify the contest chairperson of any such disqualification.
- The chief judge oversees the tally counting process, ensuring accuracy.
- The chief judge deals with any protests. Protests are dealt with in a separate section. The most important points are that the contestant MUST be given the opportunity to respond to the protest and that a majority decision of the judges is necessary to disqualify a contestant. [Note that it is the contest chairperson's responsibility to notify the contestant should disqualification occur.]
- The chief judge notifies the contest chairperson of the results and any disqualifications. The announcement of the results is made by the contest chairperson and not by the chief judge. The chief judge (or any tally counter or timekeeper) may interrupt if the contest chairperson announces the results incorrectly. Unless so corrected, the results are final once announced.

### **Qualifications for Judges**

According to the *Speech Contest Manual*, Judges should be members in good standing. Insofar as practical, all judges at Area level and above should have been members in good standing since 1 July of the previous year and have completed at least six projects in the Communication and Leadership Manual.

In this District, it is not difficult to find members that meet these simple and straightforward requirements.

The Speech Contest Manual also recommends that at Area, Division and District contests, judges should be selected from Clubs, Areas or Divisions not represented by a contestant.

This latter requirement is usually inappropriate in this District since it is unusual not to have all clubs represented at Area contests, all Areas represented at Division contests and all Divisions represented at the District contest. The best alternative is to balance representation by having equal numbers of judges from each Club, Area or Division represented. Add some judges from outside the Club, Area or Division whenever possible. At Division contests, try to avoid using judges from the same Club as a contestant and at the District contest, avoid using judges from the same Club or Area as a contestant.

Note that these requirements are in the *Speech Contest Manual* and not the *Speech Contest Rulebook*. Technically, therefore, they are guides rather than rules.

There is no specific prohibition on using non-Toastmasters as judges. However, I would counsel against using such people as judges in the strongest possible terms. The use of non-Toastmasters as judges is likely to lead to arguments and protests and it is inadvisable to provide any opportunity for anyone to be critical of the manner in which our speech contests are conducted.

My recommendations are as follows:

- CLUB CONTEST: bring in six or seven judges from outside the Club. The Chief Judge may be from within the Club.
- AREA CONTEST: ask each Club President to ensure that the Club sends two judges as well as their contestant.
- DIVISION CONTEST: ask each Area Governor to ensure that there are three judges from each Area as well as the Area's contestant. These judges should be from clubs other than that of the Area's contestant.
- DISTRICT CONTEST: use approximately equal representation from each Division. Judges should never be from clubs represented by a contestant and preferably not from an Area represented by a contestant.

Sometimes it is difficult to achieve an ideal state where representation is equal and no judge is from the same Club or Area as a contestant. In such cases the chief judge should ensure that:

1. The number of judges is sufficiently large that the effect of any possible bias due to loyalties (or other factors) is minimised.
2. Caution all judges at the judges' briefing concerning bias of any kind. (Notes for the judges' briefings for each contest are included with the appropriate contest supplement and this issue is addressed therein.)

### **The Guiding Documents**

The formalities of Toastmasters speech contests are governed by the *Speech Contest Manual* and the *Speech Contest Rulebook*. The titles of both documents contain the year to which they apply.

All judges should study both documents and be thoroughly familiar with their contents. Failure to read and understand both documents may be a major source of some of the typical problems associated with judging speech contests. Any judge that is not familiar with the rules, procedures and prescribed criteria will not be treating the speakers fairly.

The *Speech Contest Rulebook* contains the rules for all five of the 'official' Toastmasters speech contests. These rules may not be changed or supplanted. The rules are established by Toastmasters International's Board of Directors. The Board reviews the rules regularly and any recommended changes are made the following year. The *Speech Contest Rulebook* controls all decisions regarding Toastmasters speech contests.

The *Speech Contest Manual* contains additional information on speech contests. The comments in the *Speech Contest Manual* and TMI training materials are intended to give guidance but are NOT rules.

There are a number of customs and conventions that are not in either the *Speech Contest Manual* or the *Speech Contest Rulebook*. That such rituals have no support base does not necessarily mean that they are not good ideas.

### **Seating arrangements**

There is nothing in the rules to preclude a judge from sitting next to a contestant or another judge! It's probably a very good idea that such people are not seated next to one another. Often at speech contests, particularly at club level, with a large number of judges and contestants, this is nearly impossible to achieve. The important thing is not to be fanatic about re-seating everyone. I have seen situations where it has taken 20 minutes of 'musical chairs' to try to reorganise the seating arrangements and judges have even been moved to sit alone on chairs away from a table.

When it's convenient to do so, separate judges and contestants. When it's awkward, do the best you can and that will be good enough.

### **Visibility of the timing lights**

The timing lights should be 'clearly visible to the speakers but not obvious to the audience'.

Note that it is not necessary for the lights to be invisible to every member of the audience, just 'not obvious'. In any event there will always be reflections and, in many cases, there will be an audible click as the timekeeper operates the switches. There is no need for fanaticism and time wasting in going to extremes to try to render the lights invisible to all except the speakers. 'Not obvious' is good enough.

Please remember that if it's in the *Speech Contest Rulebook*, it's a rule and cannot be changed. If it's in the *Speech contest Manual*, it is a guide and NOT a rule.

## **What Makes a Good Judge?**

Most people can be good judges. Among the most important factors are integrity, an understanding of the judging process, good listening skills and an open-minded approach. Experience is useful, but not essential.

### **Integrity**

This is probably the most important quality needed in a judge. A judge should be able to put aside any biases and, as objectively as possible, use the subjective criteria of the Judge's Guide to complete their ballot so that it reflects their honest and unbiased choice of the best three speakers and their relative merit.

Aside from the ability to judge fairly, a judge's integrity should extend to avoiding situations that may lead to complaints or criticism. A judge *may* be able to put personal relationships aside and fairly assess the merits of a group of contestants including the judge's spouse, but others may rightly question such an ability. A judge of integrity will avoid judging in any situation in which a close personal relationship may exist, or at the very least, should declare the relationship to the chief judge. Under the 'close relationship' category I would include present and past relationships, whether marital or otherwise, familial relationships, close friendships, close business associations, mentor/protégé relationships and the like. You may feel that some of these are irrelevant, but avoiding these situations or declaring them improves the integrity of the total judging process by making it less vulnerable to criticism.

### **Listening skills**

It is important to be able to listen actively and objectively; to follow the flow of ideas presented by a speaker; to tame emotional responses and to focus on what the speaker is saying and doing.

The Toastmasters programme *How to Listen Effectively*, from the Success/Communication series provides an excellent overview of listening skills. If you wish to improve your listening skills have this module presented in your club, or present it yourself.

### **Open-mindedness**

This quality overlaps in some ways with the ability to eliminate bias. It refers to the willingness to assess how well ideas are presented, whether or not you agree with them. It also relates to your sense of taste, language etc.

People with extremist views, bigots, pedants and fanatics generally don't make good judges. Such people usually find it difficult to accept that other views to theirs may also have validity and this, in turn, affects their ability to listen objectively and to discriminate solely on the basis of the criteria against which the speech is to be assessed.

Being open-minded and being broad-minded are not the same!

### **Experience**

Experience as a speaker or as a judge is useful but not essential. Judges have to start somewhere.

According to the *Speech Contest Manual*, judges should be members in good standing. This simply means that the individual's dues should be current with WHQ. [Note that the requirement in the *Speech Contest Rulebook* for a speaker's eligibility to compete is to be a member in good standing of a Club in good standing.]

The *Speech Contest Manual* also recommends that judges should have been members in good standing since 1 July of the previous year and should have completed at least six projects from the C&L manual. These are recommendations and not rules.

### **Education**

Education, vocabulary, language skills, general knowledge and the like are not, *per se*, requirements for judging speech contests. Contestants sometimes express concern as to whether their 'well-chosen words' will impress the judges or go over their heads. If the speaker targets the speech to the audience to be addressed and the judges are sufficient in number and representative of that audience, the appropriateness of the level of language will be reflected in the decisions of the judges.

## **Speaking Order**

There are a number of beliefs among contestants as to the good fortune or otherwise of speaking first, last or anywhere in between. These beliefs tend to be inconsistent and vary with the type of contest. The results from a large number of judges' workshops provide no evidence to support any speaking position having an advantage over any other. My experience over 30 years as a contestant and judge has led me to the same conclusion. [As part of the workshop, videotapes of speakers are used. The choice of speakers and speaking order is varied from workshop to workshop. Much useful statistical data has now been accumulated from a large number of such workshops.]

The order of speaking is determined by a draw conducted by the contest chairperson. This, of necessity, involves chance but is fair to all. Judicious use of the Judge's Guide by each judge should ensure that all contestants, no matter the speaking order, are treated fairly.

## **About the Numbers**

It has already been mentioned that the judges should be representative of the audience as a whole and that there should be sufficient judges to provide a valid sample of the audience.

The *Speech Contest Rulebook* (remember, these are RULES, not guides!) prescribes the following:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Club contest     | At least five judges (as far as is practical) |
| Area contest     | At least five judges                          |
| Division contest | At least seven judges                         |
| District contest | At least seven judges                         |

The tiebreaking judge is not included in these totals.

I consider these rules to represent the absolute minimum. At District contests in District 74, there are typically 18 judges (plus the tiebreaking judge and the chief judge). This ensures a satisfactory representation at that level of competition and a result that is difficult to dispute. The difficulty is that sometimes, at that level, we may be judging the ‘wrong’ contestants because better speakers have been eliminated at lower levels due to poor judging practices. I believe that having insufficient and unrepresentative judging is the major cause of dissatisfaction with the results of speech contests.

The chief judge is often the co-ordinator of the contest judges and does not complete a ballot. There is no reason why the chief judge should not also act as a voting judge. In some instances, particularly at Club level, this may be desirable to increase the number of voting judges. The chief judge, if not voting, may act as the tiebreaking judge. It is not generally a good idea to use a voting judge as the tiebreaking judge.

For an Area contest, it’s a good idea to ask each competing club to send at least two judges as well as their contestant. This will ensure both numbers and representation. Similarly, for a Division contest, ask each Area to provide at least three judges.

### A Practical Example

This example was drawn from one of my judging workshops where 41 valid ballots were received, each ranking all five of the videotaped speeches.

If you’re not interested in following the numbers, just ignore this section and take my word for it that a large number of judges is essential to ensure a fair result.

For those that are interested, there is a useful statistical technique known as Spearman’s Coefficient of Rank, which allows any judge’s ranking to be compared to any other. Thus, in comparing an individual judge to the ‘right’ (collective) result, we can assess the degree of agreement. A coefficient of +1 indicates complete agreement and a coefficient of -1 indicates complete disagreement with a variety of degrees of agreement in between. Obviously the validity of the comparison increases with the number of speakers ranked.

The first question is to ask what is the ‘right’ answer in terms of the placement of the speakers. In this case, the overall result was defined as the collective result from all 41 ballots.

The votes were as follows:

| <b>Overall Placing<br/>41 judges</b> |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                      | <b>Speaker A</b> | <b>Speaker B</b> | <b>Speaker C</b> | <b>Speaker D</b> | <b>Speaker E</b> |
| <b>First place votes</b>             | <b>13</b>        | <b>15</b>        | <b>7</b>         | <b>3</b>         | <b>3</b>         |
| <b>Second place votes</b>            | <b>14</b>        | <b>10</b>        | <b>5</b>         | <b>4</b>         | <b>8</b>         |
| <b>Third place votes</b>             | <b>8</b>         | <b>9</b>         | <b>11</b>        | <b>11</b>        | <b>2</b>         |

As usual, three points were awarded for a first place, two for a second and one for a third. In terms of points, this result reduces to:

**Winner (speaker A) 75 points**  
**Second (speaker B) 74 points**  
**Third (speaker C) 42 points**  
**Fourth (speaker D) 28 points**  
**Fifth (speaker E) 27 points**

As can be seen, this result is very close indeed.

If it requires 41 judges to discriminate between first and second place (and between fourth and fifth place) by a mere one point, how would a lesser number of judges fare? Fortunately, statistical sampling can answer that question. If we select groups of 15 from the total of 41 to represent our sample of judges, we can observe the result derived from each of these groups of 15. There are more than 63 billion possible ways of choosing a group of 15 from our total of 41, but to make things simpler, a random set of thirty such groups was chosen.

Here are the results:

| <b>Overall Placing</b>             |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>30 random sets of 15 judges</b> |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|                                    | <b>Speaker A</b> | <b>Speaker B</b> | <b>Speaker C</b> | <b>Speaker D</b> | <b>Speaker E</b> |
| <b>First place</b>                 | <b>18</b>        | <b>12</b>        | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         |
| <b>Second place</b>                | <b>12</b>        | <b>18</b>        | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         |
| <b>Third place</b>                 | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         | <b>24</b>        | <b>3</b>         | <b>3</b>         |

18 times out of 30, (60%), exactly the same result is obtained. [Note that Speaker C remains in third position and speakers D and E, who were also separated by only one point among 41 judges, are still equal] In the remaining 40% of cases, the order of the first and second placed speakers is reversed. Considering that it required 41 judges to discriminate between first and second by one point, this must be considered fair. If there were only 15 judges, the result would be fair but close whichever of the two speakers (A or B) was placed first, since we would not have the benefit of the input from the additional 26 judges or from other groups of 15 judges.

So 15 judges will produce a fair result even in a very close contest. What happens if we reduce the number of judges still further?

If we select groups of four from the total of 41 to represent our sample of judges, we can observe the result derived from each of these groups of four judges. There are more than 100 000 possible ways of choosing a group of four from our total of 41, but once again, a random set of thirty such groups was chosen for convenience.

Here are the results:

| <b>Overall Placing</b>            |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>30 random sets of 4 judges</b> |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|                                   | <b>Speaker A</b> | <b>Speaker B</b> | <b>Speaker C</b> | <b>Speaker D</b> | <b>Speaker E</b> |
| <b>First place</b>                | <b>16</b>        | <b>12</b>        | <b>2</b>         | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>         |
| <b>Second place</b>               | <b>13</b>        | <b>9</b>         | <b>6</b>         | <b>1</b>         | <b>1</b>         |
| <b>Third place</b>                | <b>0</b>         | <b>6</b>         | <b>10</b>        | <b>6</b>         | <b>8</b>         |

In 16 out of 30 cases (53%), the same result as before is found with Speaker A winning. Speaker B wins in 40% of the cases. However, we now find that in 2 out of 30 cases (7%), Speaker C, who was placed third by groups of 15 judges (and by the entire group of 41 judges) has now been elevated to first place. Speaker C is also now placed second 20% of the time while speakers D and E are occasionally elevated to second place.

Just for interest, using a single, randomly selected judge will return the following results:

- Speaker A wins in 32 % of cases
- Speaker B wins in 37 % of cases
- Speaker C wins in 17 % of cases
- Speaker D wins in 7 % of cases
- Speaker E wins in 7 % of cases

Also, with a single, randomly selected judge, Speaker A is not placed at all in 15 % of cases and Speaker B is not placed in 17 % of cases.

Clearly the variability of the result and the risk of error has risen significantly. It is just these problems that lead to complaints about the result when there are too few judges.

Can it be said that the variability is due to poor judging? That’s a matter of opinion and, as in judging, all opinions are valid. What is certain is that, even if you believe that those judges who have variant opinions are poor judges, their effect is minimised by using a large number of judges.

Another very important difference between using a large number of judges and using a small number is the question of bias. Whether the diverse opinions we observe between individual judges’ ballots is simple diversity or deliberate bias, the effect is still minimised by using a large number of judges.

In the examples above, let’s assume that we have one judge who, for reasons of his or her own, wishes to discriminate against Speaker A and therefore deliberately and maliciously does not place Speaker A on their ballot. In the case of using four judges, one of whom is radically biased, Speaker A’s probability of being declared the winner is reduced from 53% to 20%, and in 33% of cases is not placed in the first three. That represents a very dramatic swing in Speaker A’s fortunes due to the influence of one biased judge. It’s not surprising that such a speaker would complain bitterly about the result and would have many supporters in doing so.

In the case of using fifteen judges, one of whom is radically biased, Speaker A’s probability of winning is reduced from 60% to 33%, but is never not placed first or second. Speaker A’s probability of being placed second increases from 40% to 67%. The effect of the bias is still there, but it is not nearly as dramatic. Remember that the difference between first and second place was extremely small.

These results are summarised below.

|                                    | All judges honest |          |         | One biased judge |          |         |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|------------------|----------|---------|
|                                    | 15 judges         | 4 judges | 1 judge | 15 judges        | 4 judges | 1 judge |
| <b>Probability of first place</b>  | 60%               | 53%      | 32%     | 33%              | 20%      | 0       |
| <b>Probability of second place</b> | 40%               | 43%      | 34%     | 67%              | 27%      | 0       |
| <b>Probability of third place</b>  | 0                 | 1%       | 19%     | 0                | 20%      | 0       |
| <b>Probability of no place</b>     | 0                 | 3%       | 15%     | 0                | 33%      | 100%    |

This shows very clearly the enormous advantage to having a large number of judges and particularly the effect in helping to neutralise bias, whether deliberate or otherwise.



## Advice and Tips for Judges

This section provides some food for thought regarding some of the common beliefs about judging Toastmasters speech contests.

### Mr (or Madam) Toastmaster

There is no obligation for a speaker to begin or end their speech with these words. It is courteous to acknowledge the contest chairperson, but this may be done equally well with a gesture or a nod.

### Attribution of quotations

There is often a great deal of pedantry when it comes to the attribution of quotations. Quoted material should certainly be acknowledged, but there are some phrases that have become part of our language through common usage, irrespective of their origin.

The purpose of requiring quoted material to be attributed is to prevent speakers passing off the work of others as their own, rather than to insist that every line be checked to ensure that no one has used a particular phrase before. A typical example is the phrase "All that glitters is not gold". In reality, this is not a quotation from anywhere, although its origin is Thomas Gray's *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes*:

....  
*Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes  
And heedless hearts is lawful prize,  
Nor all, that glisters, gold.*

If you believe that quoted material has not been attributed, please be very sure that it is not you that are in error. In the case of large amounts of unattributed material (which amounts to plagiarism) you have the right to lodge a protest. Protests are dealt with in a separate section. In most cases, if you believe that parts of the speech have been plagiarised, mark your guide as though the material was original and then lodge a protest. If the protest is upheld, the speaker will be disqualified; if not, the speech must be considered original. It would be unfair to damage a speaker's chances because of an unsubstantiated idea.

### Quantity vs quality

There is a common misconception concerning vocal variety, body language and the like which equates quantity with quality. This misconception, common among both contestants and judges, leads to deliberate leaping around the speaking area, including both bellows and whispers, and so on. More vocal variety or range is not necessarily better than less and a paraplegic in a wheelchair should be capable of scoring as highly as an Olympic gymnast when it comes to body language.

A good speaking voice should have a variety of pitch, rate and volume for emphasis, while body language should support points through gestures, expressions and body positioning. Extremes of either are not, of themselves, necessarily a good thing.

The real test is whether the action is natural and appropriate to the speaker and the message. What may be natural and appropriate for one may not be so for another. Avoid simply allocating points for quantity.

### The speaking area

The contest chairperson and the chief judge will define the speaking area. This information should be communicated to the judges and contestants at their respective briefings. The speaking area is usually defined for convenience in terms of lighting, visibility, sound amplification and the like, together with any special requirements of the contestants. There are no penalties prescribed for a speaker moving outside the defined area, but judges should consider whether this was necessary.

### **Language, humour and good taste**

You should use your own judgement when it comes to matters of good taste and what is offensive. If you find something offensive, feel free to mark the speaker down accordingly. Don't be overly politically correct and try to decide what may be offensive to others. Leave that to those who ARE offended. If the judges are sufficient in number and reflect the diversity of the audience, the results will accurately represent the overall audience's opinion.

### **Protests**

Protests are limited to judges and contestants only and must be lodged with the chief judge or the contest chairperson prior to the announcement of the results. Once the results have been announced, they are final.

The contestant or judge lodging the protest should have first-hand knowledge of the reasons for the protest. It is not necessary to have concrete evidence. For example, if you believe that a speech has been plagiarised from a source on the Internet, you don't need to be able to quote the URL or, if the plagiarism was taken from a book, you do not need to have a copy with you. You should, however, have some substance to back your protest rather than "I think that sounds familiar".

When a protest is lodged, the chief judge will call all the judges together and the grounds for the protest will be discussed. The contestant MUST then be given the right to respond. After this, the judges will vote. This is another good reason for having a large number of judges. A majority decision is necessary for the contestant to be disqualified, otherwise the results are unaffected. In the event of a disqualification, each speaker placed lower than the disqualified speaker is advanced one place higher.

### **Some Thoughts for the Future**

In this section, I'm offering my opinion on things that I'd like to see changed relating to Toastmasters speech contests. These are simply my own thoughts and suggestions and carry no authority whatsoever. Some may be considered critical. If they provide food for thought for others, I am content.

#### **Judges' ballots**

I'd like to see the Judge's ballot changed so that all judges should rank all contestants. I believe that this would provide a better consensus of results and better discrimination between the lower ranked contestants. If the anonymous posting of judges' ballots were introduced, this would also provide more valid feedback for contestants.

#### **Publication of ballots**

I believe that speakers ought to receive greater feedback on their contest performance. On the other hand, I'm firmly against disclosure of individual judges' ballots because this may lead to friction between contestants and judges and even to intimidation. I believe that both purposes could be served were the ballots to be posted anonymously after the contest. Particularly in cases where there were a large number of judges, this would provide anonymity for the judges and allow speakers to establish how their presentation appealed to the diversity within their target audience. I believe that Judges' Guides should remain as worksheets, leaving judges free to decide how to cast their ballot in whatever method they feel is appropriate to them. I believe that Judges' Guides should remain absolutely confidential.

### **Feedback for contestants**

Beyond the anonymous publication of ballots, any contestant that wishes for greater feedback (or category-specific feedback) is already free, under the present rules, to ask any non-judge to complete a copy of the Judge's Guide. Feedback in this form is just as valid as from the judges and will probably exhibit the same diversity.

### **Numbers of judges**

I'd like to see the minimum number of judges increased. At least 15 judges at Division level and above and at least nine at Area and Club level. I understand that, at Club level in particular, this may present considerable problems, but if it were a necessity, I'm sure it could be done. I'm certain that such a change would reduce the numbers of those who are unhappy with the results produced by the present system.

### **The guiding documents**

I believe that the *Speech Contest Manual* and the *Speech Contest Rulebook* should be completely rewritten. Both documents show signs of piecemeal revisions over the years. In its present form the *Speech Contest Manual* (which TMI insists contains recommendations and not rules) contains words like 'must' and 'maximum', which are easily misunderstood to be rules. There are several instances in the *Speech Contest Rulebook* where rule changes in one part have rendered another part superfluous, yet the redundancy remains. There are also inconsistencies between the two documents.

### **Travel allowances**

Rule 9 of the International Speech Contests is blatantly discriminatory. TMI will pay the travel expenses of each North American District's contestant participating in the International Speech Contest at Regional and International Levels. For the North American contestants, this may represent two contests, which are separated by time and distance. (Our contestant first takes part in the Inter-District contest held at the same venue as the International Speech Contest final and two days prior to that contest). Our District's contestant receives nothing from TMI, not even a nominal sum (the travel costs are paid by District from District funds and not by TMI). We pay exactly the same dues as the North Americans and our District receives exactly the same funding from TMI as all other Districts. Why should our District have to bear this cost when it is borne by TMI for the North American Districts?

### **Conclusion**

I hope this guide will provide a combination of useful information, ideas and food for thought. The most important point to emphasise is that, rather than seeing diversity as a problem and trying to deny its existence or trying to hide it, we must accept it as a reality and include it in our judging process. We can manage it by ensuring that we have sufficient judges at all levels of our speech contests, that the judges that we select are representative of the demographics of the audiences concerned and also that they understand the judging process and the criteria against which the speeches or evaluations are to be assessed.

Does this affect the fortunes of our District winner in the International Speech Contest? Yes, but that speaker has to produce two new speeches anyway. These must be targeted to the audiences concerned. These audiences are different for each contest. In the case of the Inter-District Speech Contest, Americans comprise a significant proportion of the audience and the judges, but about 50% of the judges represent the Districts outside North America. In the International Speech Contest final (the World Championship) there will be a predominance of North Americans in both the audience and among the judges. It may at first seem unfair that our contestant must target a 'foreign' audience but, in the world of Toastmasters, there is considerable diversity even between the American Districts (not to mention Canada). All speakers, to be successful, must do the same work in analysing their target audiences when preparing their speeches.

...oooOOOooo...