

Educational: Master of the Toast & Tell a Tall Tale

Jill Brookfield gave a speech to explain the rules around the November contest Master of the Toast and Tall Tales. These Club-level contests, will be held on Tuesday, 14 November

It's almost Club contest time, where members of Miranda Toastmasters compete for the honour of being awarded the Master of the Toast or the champion of the Tall Tales.

These two contests are club-level competitions and winners do not continue to Area or Division to compete against other Clubs. So, it's a great opportunity to hone your competition skills without the added pressure of going further.

Master of the Toast

The Toast is something we Toastmasters are very familiar with – after all, it is in our name.

In a nutshell, a toast is a ritual in which a drink is taken as an expression of honour or goodwill. And these traits should be evident in a contest Toast.

The Master of the Toast contest is unique to Miranda Toastmasters.

Master of the Toast judging criteria

The contest judges will follow strict criteria for how they judge the Toasts. There are four main elements they will judge.

Firstly, the **subject** of the Toast should be appropriate. Especially as the contest judges will be rating the appropriateness and worthiness of the subject of Toast and it's worth a whopping 40 per cent of the total possible points. Subject selection is the most important element of the Toast.

The **effectiveness** of the Toast is worth 15 points. Judges will be rating the Toast on the achievement of its purpose, the interest it creates and the reception it receives from the audience.

The **development** of the toast is worth another 15 points and this is whether the content of the Toast develops and whether it is

appropriately sympathetic, sensitive or motivational in relation to the subject.

And finally, the **summation** is worth another 15 points. The Toast should refrain from long-winded and wordy conclusions. It must be concise, encouraging and uplifting.

Timing: The length of the Toast for the contest is 2 to 3 minutes.

Contestants will be disqualified if the Toast is less than 1 minute 30 seconds or more than 3 minutes 30 seconds. So, it's critical to stay within time.

Tall Tales

The Toastmasters International contest rule book says that one of the primary goals of the Tall Tale Contest is *"to provide participants with the opportunity to create an original, highly improbable, humorous tale."*

A Tall Tale could be presented as a recollection of an event that happened to the contestant or a friend of a friend of a friend. The story may be littered with some true-life, ordinary, every-day details, but the story becomes more and more outlandish and outrageous. The audience may know it is fiction, but will play along and act as though they believe the story to be true.

Some important elements of the Tall Tales Contest to remember are:

- Contestants must create their own speech and it must be substantially original.
- The subject for the Tall Tales speech must be highly exaggerated, highly improbable and be funny.
- Props may be used.
- A maximum of twenty-five percent of the speech may be devoted to quoting,

paraphrasing, or referencing another person's content. And if others are quoted, then the referenced content must be identified during the speech.

Tall Tale judging criteria

Contestants shouldn't be so restricted by the judging criteria that it strangles creativity, but it's important to keep in mind what the contest judges will be judging.

Speech Development is worth 30 points and judges will ask themselves if the speech immediately engages the audience's attention and if it smoothly builds up to a climax and conclusion.

Delivery of the speech is worth 55 points and it's split into three areas:

- **Speech Techniques** - using exaggeration, irony, pun, humour and surprise twist.
- **Physical presentation** – The contestant's appearance should reinforce the story, through body language, gestures and expressions.
- **Voice** - using volume, rate and pitch to match the story and to emphasise parts of the Tall Tale.

Finally, **appropriateness of language** is worth 15 points - this relates to the choice of words, grammar and pronunciation. Are these elements in the speech appropriate to the audience and the Tale being told?

Timing: three to five minutes.

A contestant will be disqualified if the speech is less than two minutes 30 seconds or more than five minutes 30 seconds.

Now you know what makes a winning piece, you can get started creating a masterful Toast and ludicrous Tall Tale.