

# Sample email from Contest Chair to all Contestants – Online edition

Version 1.00, January 2021

This example e-mail template gives details to Contestants of the briefing and what will be covered at the briefing. Ideally you would send this email to the judges about one week before the contest.

We've included everything in this email that we could think of. This way, this email also serves as a bit of a checklist for you. You can send a very short email instead of a very detailed one, simply leave out what you think is not needed.

The most important points are that they send you the signed eligibility form in good time, that they've paid their dues and that they know when to turn up for the Contestant briefings.

Enjoy the contest!  
Anja Sims

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Subject:  
[Club Name] [Contest name] - Contestant info

TO: all Contestants  
CC: Timekeepers, Chief Judge, perhaps VPE, President

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Dear [club name] Contestants,

It's wonderful that you signed up to compete on *[weekday of the contest, perhaps date, etc]*!

I am thrilled to be your Contest Chair for the [contest type].

Please can I ask you to do the following in preparation for the contest:

1. Please be so kind as to **complete and sign** the [Speaker's Certification of Eligibility and Originality form \(link\)](#) and **return it to me by** *[reasonable deadline, ideally a couple of days before the contest]*.

You can print the form and sign it or provide an electronic signature. Here a quick pointer on electronic signatures:

- on the Mac: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/preview/prvw35725/mac>.
- for a PC another software product is needed, such as Adobe Acrobat.

2. Please **ensure that you have paid your dues** to *[club name]*. You need to be a paid-up member in order to be eligible to compete at the club.

3. Please **send me your speech title** at least one day before the contest.
4. You may wish to **have a look at** the contest ballot [*link to the contest ballot, or attach to e-mail*] if you are not yet familiar with it. It contains the criteria by which judges mark contest speeches.
5. Would you also send me an email with **a bit of information that I can use for a brief interview** after the actual contest? Below are the questions - you could copy them across into an email and respond inline. You don't need to answer all questions, answer as many as you wish.

*[the contest chair can include any questions they wish here, the ones below are just suggestions from Toastmasters]*

1. Interests/hobbies:
2. What inspires you most?
3. What is your favorite quote?
4. Notable accomplishments/awards (inside and outside of Toastmasters)

6. Please arrive at **[arrival time]** on **[contest date or a date prior if you wish to hold Contestant briefings on a different day]** for the **Contestant briefing**.

We will be going through the pertinent Toastmasters contest rules in the briefing and through a number of additional points specific to online contests.

Here a quick heads-up on points we'll cover in the briefing:

- Drawing of the speaking order
- Update Zoom Display Names - Speaker number - Firstname Lastname
- Timings and Timing Signals (the Timekeeper and backup timekeeper will be at the briefing to demonstrate their time signaling)
- Agreed stage area - you all please need to agree on the same speaking area, e.g. a box no greater than 2x3 m in front of the camera.
- Contestant camera, light, tech set-up - in case there are any questions.
- *[For Table topics and Evaluation contests only: arrangements for the breakout room where you will wait your turn]*
- Introducing each speaker: we'll have a brief interaction to make sure that you can be seen and heard, then I'll introduce you. The format will be exactly the same for all of you.
- Chief Judge: *[add Chief Judge name]*
- Alternative communication in case of technology failure & protests
- Dealing with Technical Issues
- Protests
- After the last speaker - Contestant interviews

7. **Tech tips:** if you have a backup device, have it fully charged and ready for the contest, with the Zoom link to the contest meeting ready to click. Should your main device pack in you have the backup device ready and can dial in from that very quickly. For more tech tips check out the contest chair briefing guide linked under point 9 below.

8. I'll set up a WhatsApp group with all of us and **[name]**, our Chief Judge. This will be our channel of communication before and during the contest, should the need arise. We'd only expect to use it during the event if there is a protest or serious technical issue.

9. Here is a link to the Toastmasters District 91 (our District) website contest area <https://d91toastmasters.org.uk/members/about-us/contests-conferences/contests/>, for completeness. You DO NOT HAVE TO read all the documents. I've only included them here for those who wish to familiarise themselves with all available material, perhaps to prepare for chairing a content themselves in future - which we'd love to see you do! I'll be using the **Contest Chair Briefing Guide: Contestants** in the briefing and the **Contest Script Notes** in the contest.

That's all I've got for you for now.

Please feel free to drop me a note if you have any questions.

Best wishes and best of luck for the contest  
[Contest Chair name]  
[Contest Chair phone number]