Good judges are…
- Fair
- Accurate
- Unbiased
- Trustworthy
- Knowledgeable
- Good Listeners

Judge’s ‘Code of Ethics’
- Avoid bias in selecting winners
- Ignore the time
- Keep judging details confidential

A judge’s responsibility is…
- To pick a WINNER! Not evaluate.

Key differences observed
Most winning speeches include:
- Emotional tension
- Innovative topic
- Social relevance or value

Judges have an obligation to…
- The contestants
- Toastmasters International
- The audience
- Ourselves

Disqualifications are due to:
- Eligibility
- Originality
- Timing
All decisions of the judges are final!

Protests
Only a contestant or judge may protest on the basis of originality.
Protests must be communicated to the Chief Judge or Contest Chair before a winner is announced.

Judging perceptions
Judges must be fair and unbiased and they must *appear* to be fair and unbiased. If you are the spouse of a contestant or winner of a neighboring Area’s or Division’s contest, do not accept a judging request. This does not inspire much confidence in the judges’ fairness.
Areas of Confusion when Judging

Originality
Speakers must prepare their own five-to-seven minute speeches, which must be substantially original and certified as such in writing. Any quote material must be identified as such during the speech presentation. Speakers may not use the works of others as their entire speech or as the bulk of their speech, with or without identification of the source. Judges at any level may disqualify, with a majority vote, any contestant whose speech is not considered original.

Determining a speech’s originality can be difficult. We all draw upon the ideas of others whenever we research and compose a speech, and we use them to contribute to the point we’re making.

There are several things to consider when determining whether a speech is substantially original. Some examples that would not be considered substantially original are:

- A speech in which most of the speech is devoted to quoting another person or published work, even though the quote is properly attributed to the source.
- A speech that has been taken entirely from another source which may or may not have been credited.
- A speech in which part of the material is taken from another source that is not credited. (Any quoted material must be so identified during the speech presentation, as specified in the rules.)

Many jokes, stories, and anecdotes have been around for a long time. They appear in many places and have been told many times by many people. Such jokes, stories and anecdotes are considered to be in the public domain, and their sources cannot be cited.

Humor
There is widespread misconception in our organization that entries for the International Speech Contest should be serious in tone. But humor can be just as appropriate as dramatic quotations or examples in making a point, providing the humor is tied to the speaker’s message. No contestant should be marked down by judges simply because humor is used. To the contrary, humor can be a very important part of any speech.

Props
You’ll note that the rules say nothing about props or audiovisual aids. That’s because they are not restricted in any way other than the bounds of good taste. A contestant may use any prop or visual aid - provided it is not used before the beginning of the speech.
Areas of Confusion when Judging (cont’d)

Protests
Only judges and contestants may protest any aspect of a speech. Any protest must be lodged with the chief judge and/or the contest chairman before the winner and alternates are announced. Protests are serious matters and should be handled promptly, efficiently and fairly. The contestant whose speech is being questioned should be given the opportunity to respond to the accusations.

As mentioned in the “Originality” section above, determining originality can be difficult. For example, the contestant filing a protest may not be able to cite the exact source from which he or she believes another contestant took material. Contestants themselves may admit to “borrowing” material - or they may not. And sometimes stories and jokes have been around so long that no one knows their source. Judges should consider all of these factors when determining speech originality. Before a contestant can be disqualified on the basis of originality, the contestant must be given the opportunity to respond to the judges. A majority of the judges must concur in the decision to disqualify.

Note: “Areas of Confusion when Judging” information was extracted from the training manual “Conducting Quality Speech Contests: Area & Division Governors”.