

Rotary District 7450

Roger Taylor Rotary Speech Contest: The 4-Way Test 2025-2026

Governing Principles and Rules – FOR STUDENTS

SUBJECT OF TALK

Any topic which a contestant feels is timely, interesting and important may be used for the contest speech as long as it is not profane or obscene. If a contestant or coach has any doubts at all about the speech topic, contact the Contest Committee at rsc7450@gmail.com. The decision of the Contest Committee is final.

The chosen topic must be specifically subjected to The Four-Way Test and must be affected throughout the body of the speech. Applying the Four-Way test is not to be reserved for concluding statements only.

THE ROTARY FOUR WAY TEST

Of the things we think, say, or do:

- 1. IS IT THE TRUTH?**
- 2. IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?**
- 3. WILL IT BUILD GOODWILL AND BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?**
- 4. WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED?**

GENERAL

Contestants must be currently in attendance at a public or private high school, charter school or home schooled (Grades 9-12) within Rotary District 7450. No student may be a contestant in more than one club Contest in any one year. Students must be available to compete via zoom at the Semi-Finals (April 25, 2026-with leeway since it's zoom) and the Finals (May 9 2026 in person – Phoenixville YMCA 1pm)

DISQUALIFICATION

Contestants will be disqualified if:

- they arrive after a contest has begun without making prior arrangements
- their speech is determined to be profane or obscene
- they use any props
 - Audience participation shall be considered a prop

If due to unforeseen circumstances, the contestant is going to be late and calls before the starting time, the Contest coordinator has the option in delaying the start of the contest up to fifteen minutes.

PRIZES

All Club prizes are at the discretion of the hosting Club. Semi-final prizes will depend on the funds available from registration fees. The winner of the Final round will win \$1000. Second place in the Final round is \$500, Third \$250

JUDGING

Judging will be based on the following:

CONTENT	points
Practical application of the 4-Way Test: 5 points for each point covered—all four points should be covered	0-20
Uses examples from peer group experience	0-8
Human interest appeal and color	0-8
Clarity and expressiveness of language and vocabulary	0-8
SUBTOTAL OF POINTS FOR CONTENT	0-44
ORGANIZATION	
Introduction: captures audience attention and establishes major theme of the speech	0-8
Development: ideas presented, supported and explained in clear logical order with smooth transitions	0-8
Conclusion: emphasizes major theme in the speech, leaving the audience with a clear, concise message or point of application	0-8
SUBTOTAL OF POINTS FOR ORGANIZATION	0-24
DELIVERY	
Clear enunciation of words; limited use of unnecessary expressions i.e. “uh, you know, OK”	0-8
Good vocal projection, voice expressiveness, tone, and pace	0-8
Good eye contact and rapport with the audience	0-8
Relaxed yet commanding use of posture and gestures	0-8
SUBTOTAL OF POINTS FOR DELIVERY	0-40
MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS	0-100

TIMING and Penalty Points

Each speech must no less than five (5) minutes and no more than seven (7) minutes in length. Penalty points will be deducted from the contestants score at the rate of two (2) points for each 15 seconds or fraction thereof that a contestant either runs over the seven-minute maximum or under the five-minute minimum. A speaker will be stopped by the official timekeeper if the speech exceeds 8 minutes, at which point 10 additional penalty points will be deducted.

SPEAKER'S NOTES

- Speakers may use whatever notes they feel necessary at the school/Rotary club level.
- One 3 x 5 card (both sides) will be allowed for notes at the Semi-Final contest although not using notes is encouraged.
- One 3 x 5 card (one side) will be allowed for notes at the District finals.

SPEAKING AIDS

If lecterns and microphones are available for the speaker use, they may choose to use them without penalty. If a microphone fails to operate properly during the speech the contestant will have the option of starting over, continuing on with the present microphone or no microphone, or starting over, using a hand-held microphone located at the podium, if available, all without penalty.

PUNCTUALITY

There will be a drawing before all contests to determine the speaking order. Any speaker who does not show up in time for the drawing for speaking position will be the first speaker if he/she shows up before the contest begins. If a contestant appears after the contest has begun, he/she will be disqualified unless prior arrangements with the chairperson of the contest have been made. If the contestant is going to be 15 minutes late, for a valid reason and calls the chairman before the starting time, the mid-level coordinator has the option in delaying the start of the contest up to fifteen minutes. A stay may not be invoked if its use penalizes another contestant.

SELECTION of Contestants to move to next round

Each Club in the district may send ONE or TWO students from each high school they are sponsoring to the semi-finals, UNLESS it is determined by a date early enough that there is not capacity to accommodate more than one student per high school at a semi-final. The number of Semi-Finals is determined by the expected number of club contests. There will be a minimum of two semi-finals and a maximum of four. First place only of each Semi-final contest with 3 or 4 contests will advance to the finals for a total of three or four final contestants. If there are less than three Semi-finals, then the top TWO of each contest will advance to the finals.

