

**FOUR WAY TEST  
SPEECH CONTEST  
Club Manual  
DISTRICT 7430  
2025 - 2026**



**ABSTRACT**

Everything you need to know to initiate and conduct a successful Four Way Test Speech Contest for your club.

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## **Important Dates and Timeline for Participating Clubs**

### **September through December**

- Appoint a club member to chair the contest
- Schedule Club Contest to occur between October 1, 2025 and March 5, 2026
- Determine prizes for club contestants [note: Regional prizes, 1st \$350, 2nd \$250, 3rd \$125]
- Discuss the contest with appropriate coordinating teacher or administrator (school facilitator) at each school in your area
- Supply posters and brochures to the school contact person
- Be prepared to make a presentation to the school and students about the contest; ask the regional or district coordinator to accompany you
- Make sure the appropriate faculty member or administrator has a copy of the Contest Rules, Student Entry Forms, Brochure and any other promotion materials necessary.

### **October through early March**

- Complete and mail Club Entry form and \$225 club entry fee two weeks before your Club level contest if holding in the fall of 2025 or no later than January 31, 2026 if the Club level contest is held in the Spring.
- Confirm with the schools the number of student participants (no more than 6 for a club contest is recommended).
- Prepare club certificates, plaques, trophies, etc., at club option, for students publish club contest date in club bulletin and encourage high attendance Identify 3 judges, a teller and a timekeeper.
- Arrange publicity
- Confirm student and parental attendance either with the school facilitator or directly with the student.
- Make sure the student and family understand that the winner of the club contest must be available to participate in the regional and final competitions. If the winner of the club contest is unavailable to attend, the first runner-up will take their place in the Regional contest.

### **One week before the contest**

- Confirm that awards and prize money will be present at the contest
- Confirm that the judges, teller, and timekeeper will be present and understand their instructions and have received their score sheets for review
- Confirm social media coverage.

### **The Day of the Contest**

- Arrange seating for contestants and guests.
- Greet the contestants, their families and guests.
- Have prepared a method of randomly determining order of speakers, e.g., drawing cards or numbered slips from a hat.

**Immediately after the contest, forward the signed "Student Entry Form, Biography & Release" of your winner to your Regional Coordinator & Committee Chair.**

**The Regional Speech Contests will be held Saturday morning at 10AM on March 7, 2026 at a venue arranged by each Regional Coordinator.**

**The winner of each Regional Contest will compete at the District Finals after the Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) at DeSales University on March 28, 2026 from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm**

## **Regions and Coordinators**

**District 7430 Committee Chair: Shushma Patel, 215-872-6875 or [shushmapatel.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:shushmapatel.rotary@gmail.com)**

**North Coordinator, Anthony Moyer, [anmoyer1229@gmail.com](mailto:anmoyer1229@gmail.com)**

Allentown	Emmaus
Allentown West	Lehigh Valley Passport
Bethlehem	Nazareth
Bethlehem Morning Star	Slatington
Easton	Whitehall Area

**South Coordinator, Nicole Matz, [Nicole.matz1@gmail.com](mailto:Nicole.matz1@gmail.com)**

Blue Bell	Pottstown
Boyertown	Quakertown
Collegeville	Souderton-Telford
Harleysville	Spring-Ford
Norristown	Upper Perkiomen
Perkasie	

**East Coordinator, Shushma Patel, [shushmapatel.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:shushmapatel.rotary@gmail.com)**

Ambler	River Towns
Central Bucks	Springfield
Doylestown	Warminster
Hatboro	Warrington
Horsham	Willow Grove
Newtown	Yardley
North Penn	

**West Coordinator, Deb Brubaker, [debbrurotary@gmail.com](mailto:debbrurotary@gmail.com)**

Berks Rotaract	Muhlenberg
Birdsboro	Reading
Fleetwood	Spring Township Centennial
Hamburg	West Reading-Wyomissing
Kutztown	



**Club Entry Form**  
**Four Way Test Speech Contest**

Rotary Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Contest Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Contest Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit this form AND an entrance fee of \$225 two weeks before your Club level contest (if holding in Fall 2025) or no later than January 31, 2026 (if the Club level contest is held in the Spring 2026).**

**\$225 check payable to: Rotary District 7430; Memo: Four Way Test Speech Contest**

This fee covers the costs of the prizes awarded to the students at the regional and district levels. Note: that the Entry Form will not be processed without payment.

**Mail form and check to:**

**Shushma Patel  
C/O FWTSC  
659 Kyle Road  
York, PA 17404**

## Contest Rules

**Topic:** Each contestant shall choose the topic of his/her speech. The purpose of the speech is to address an ethical problem using the principles of the Four Way Test. The problem to be addressed should be something from the speaker's personal experience or general knowledge. There are no restrictions regarding the choice of topic as long as it is not blatantly offensive. If a contestant or coach is in doubt about the appropriateness of a topic, he or she should check with the District Contest chair. The decision of the Contest Chair will be final.

In the speech, the topic must be specifically related to the Four Way Test. This must be addressed during the body of the speech and not reserved for concluding statements only. Each of the four parts of the Four Way Test should be addressed during the speech. They should be specifically stated, as the intent of the speech is to use the Four Way Test to guide one's decision-making about an issue.

These are to be speeches and not dramatic presentations. Although enthusiasm, good eye contact, and movement are encouraged, the student should not go to extremes. Topics should be interesting and relevant to the speaker's interests or experience.

Students can only participate in one Rotary Club contest. Students who advance to the Regional and District contests may present the same speech given at the preceding level or create modified or new presentations. **All speeches must be the original work of the speaker.**

**Length:** Speeches must be between 5 - 7 minutes in length. Penalty points will be applied for time infractions at the rate of 2 points for every fifteen seconds or fraction thereof for a speech that violates these time limits. The Timekeeper will signal the 5 minute mark to the contestant.

**Props:** No props are to be used. Audience participation is considered a prop, and 2 penalty points per infraction will be assessed for the use of props or encouragement of audience participation.

**Speaker Aids:** At club contests, a lectern and microphone may be provided at the discretion of the club. At the Regional and the District Finals contest, a lectern and microphone will be provided and may be used at the discretion of the speaker.

**Speaker Notes:** Contestants may speak from notes at the Club level competition. At the Regional competition, only a single 3x5 card may be used. At the District final competition, notes will not be allowed. **Infractions will result in disqualification!** This rule should be reviewed with the contestants prior to the competition.

## Prizes

	<u>1<sup>st</sup></u> <u>Place</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u> <u>Place</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup></u> <u>Place</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>Club</u> <u>level</u>	Determined	By	The	Club	
<u>Regional</u> <u>level</u>	\$300	\$200	\$100	N/A	N/A
<u>District</u> <u>level</u>	\$1000	\$500	\$350	\$250 Honorable Mention	N/A

## **Contest Personnel**

### **School Facilitator**

A School Facilitator is either a school faculty member or administrator who is the liaison with the Club Contest Chair. The School Facilitator takes an active role in recruiting students and preparing them for the contest by reviewing the rules and dates of the contest with the students. If needed, the School Facilitator would oversee an in-school run-off contest to reduce the number of Club contestants to six.

### **Students/Contestants**

Contestants must be in grade 9-12 at a public, private, charter or parochial school or is home-schooled in the Club's geographic area. Students can only participate in one Rotary Club level contest.

### **Judges**

The Judges should possess relevant qualifications that would allow them to assess student speakers. Examples of judges include educators, lawyers, and other professionals or business people who are used to and feel comfortable with public speaking.

### **Timekeeper**

The Timekeeper is typically a Club member who feels comfortable operating an electronic stopwatch such as those typically found today on a smart phone. The Timekeeper will be positioned front and center during the contest and will use a hand signal to indicate the 5-minute mark to the speaker.

### **Teller**

The Teller is responsible for collecting the Judges' scoring sheets along with the Timekeeper record. The Teller will then tabulate and calculate the overall scores and determine the finish order of the contestants.

## **Contest Rationale**

District 7430 advocates for the Four Way Test Speech contest for the following:

- Promote critical thinking and ethical decision making among high school students Provide a forum for high school students to showcase issues that they care about Allow high school students to practice their public speaking skills
- Encourage scholarship and academic research
- Gain exposure for Rotary and the local club among the youth and school personnel
- Afford an opportunity to invite prominent community and business leaders to participate in a club project and increase their awareness of Rotary, the club, and what we do
- Increase Rotary awareness in the community by hosting the parents of the student speakers
- Give the club an opportunity to promote a worthwhile project and itself in the local newspaper and other media outlets
- Encourage interaction of the Rotary Club with the sponsored Interact Club
- Engage Club members to participate as judges, timekeeper, teller or chair of the project
- Partner with a local business, such as a law firm, bank or accounting firm that may wish to sponsor a project that promotes ethical decision making
- Meet a requirement for a Youth Program District Governor Award

## **Communicating with the School**

A positive initial contact with either the school principal or designee is critical to the success of the speech contest in the school. Use the following script, especially if this is the first year of school contact or participation, which has been prepared with the advice of a “school insider” to present the speech contest in terms relevant to an educator.

### **Some points to consider during the conversation with school officials:**

- Does the school offer a public speaking class?
- Would this contest fit as a special program within the school’s Gifted Program?
- Could this be part of a Career Education program as it is related to goal setting, critical thinking, and decision making?
- Could participation and winning in this contest be a positive point in a student’s resume?
- Does this contest have a place in English, psychology, sociology, drama or speech classes?
- Could this be an opportunity for someone who typically does not volunteer, but would be an excellent presenter when asked to participate?

### **Suggested Script for school discussion;**

(The objective is to schedule a time to meet and start building a person-to-person relationship, not to explain the entire program on the phone).

“Good morning/afternoon Mr./Ms. (Principal or designee), My name is.....and I am a member of the Rotary Club of.....

During the last several years Rotary Clubs in our District which covers the Lehigh Valley, Berks County, Montgomery County and Bucks County, have been partnering with dozens of schools to offer a program which challenges students to develop their critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills.

This program is getting great reviews from teachers, students and parents and has turned out to be a good way to strengthen the ties between the school and the local business community. Is there a good time this week or next that we could meet to find out where this program might best fit in your school? I will have more detailed information with me and will also be able to answer your questions.”

***“Can you tell me a little more about it?”***

“Absolutely. The program engages students in grades 9 thru 12. Students are challenged to identify a subject or issue that they are passionate about and to adopt a point of view of which they seek to persuade others. In doing so they are required to answer the following questions:

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?

Students develop an essay and are given the opportunity to deliver it in a 5-7 minute speech in a local Speech Contest. The Contests involve cash awards and recognition as well as the ability to advance to Regional Contests to compete with students from other school districts. Is there a convenient time that we could meet to see where this might best fit in your school?”

**Suggested responses to possible objections:**

***“We already have a speech competition that students can participate in.”***

That’s great! We are finding that schools that already offer public speaking courses or competitions are the biggest supporters of our program and use it to reach an additional target audience among their students. Some examples of this are Career Education and Work Standards, Resume building and College exploration, Theatre and acting, as an add-on to the Gifted program and as part of Psychology or Sociology and English classes to nurture communication and presentation skills. This contest can also supplement the existing programs as it is part of Rotary International. Students can add their participation to their academic resume.

***“I am not sure where this would fit in our school. I will have to get back to you.”***

Sure. If I may – could I give you some examples of how other schools use this program? We are finding that schools that already offer public speaking courses or competitions are the biggest supporters of our program and use it to reach an additional target audience among their students. Some examples of this are Career Education and Work Standards, Resume building and College exploration, Theatre and acting, as an add-on to the Gifted program and as part of Psychology or Sociology and English classes to nurture communication and presentation skills. Can we schedule time to revisit?

***“The class curriculums have already been finalized”.***

I understand and that’s why some schools initially offer this program to students as a completely voluntary opportunity outside of normal school hours. The school’s involvement can be limited to helping us get the word out with some posters and brochures. Even so the schools may benefit from the publicity surrounding the contests.

## School Visit / Sample Lesson Plan

The purpose of a school visit is to engage students and the cooperating teacher in discussion so they have a clear understanding of the Four Way Test Program.

Introduce yourself to the class as a member of your Rotary Club, which is part of District 7430.

Ask if anyone knows anything about Rotary. You will usually get blank stares, rolled eyes, laughter, or possibly an answer. Ask if they ever noticed the Rotary emblem on one of the street signs. Show them your pin.

Ask them if they have any idea why you are addressing them and what's in it for them. Ask them if any of them plan to either seek employment or go on to college after graduating. Explain that there is value in both ethics and public speaking. Explain that on a college application, or a resume, participation in the Four Way Test Speech Contest is noticeable and can open doors for them.

Ask to have them let you back up just a minute and explain about Rotary in general and your club in particular, and how they can benefit. Explain that Rotary is an international organization with over 1.2 million members in over 168 countries. Rotary has five avenues of service: Club, Vocational, Community, International, and Youth. The Speech Contest falls under Youth Service; it is designed to offer a competitive speech contest that encourages ethical thinking and enhances self-confidence through public speaking. Explain that your Club is one of 43 in District 7430, which consists of the Lehigh Valley, all of Berks County and Bucks County and most of Montgomery County. Say that this is a real competition.

Mention Youth Exchange and RYLA (Camp Neidig and STEM YEA) programs.

Ask if anyone in the room could use over \$1,000 in prize money. (This should get their attention). Describe the speech contest; what it is and how it works.

Explain that it is a 5-7 minute ethics based speech, that uses the Rotary Four Way Test of the things we think, say, or do, to help solve an ethical or moral issue from their own experience.

Tell them what the Four Way Test is.

Ask if anyone can think of a situation where they have to make a decision about how to behave or what to say or discuss. If they can't, give them a little help with an example, such as smoking.

Make this part fun by asking challenging questions. If they come up with an idea or statement, drill down by asking them questions that make them think and expand their views.

How can they structure a speech around this topic? Try these examples and do it by asking questions that stimulate thought. (Questions that begin with How does ... :)

*My friends and I want to smoke but my parents don't want me to. Or some kids don't want to be friends with me because I smoke, but they should accept me for who I am and not for just one thing that I do.*

Build a discussion around this: Is the issue about smoking, health, peer pressure, rebellion, or enjoyment, etc. What is the truth about smoking and health, finances, peer pressure, independence, relationships? Is smoking fair to the smoker and others, etc? How does it build goodwill and better friendships? How and why will it be beneficial and to whom? Use the discussion to help them move to a conclusion. Maybe their conclusion will be affirmed, or maybe it will change their mind if THEY decide that THEY don't want to smoke.

Maybe someone has a friend that has done something that is illegal or immoral. How do you deal with this issue and how does it affect your friendship?

Best picks for subject matter are something the students bring up. Be creative about how to structure a speech around topics. Point out that good speeches often have the simple, obvious answer vs. deeper and more complex issues.

The idea is to have them understand that they can come up with the idea for the speech and that they can make it compelling. Most important is that they have gone through a process for how to make a better decision.

If available, show the students video examples of speeches. If no videos are available, suggest that the students go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search on "Four Way Test Speech Contest". They'll find many speeches given by students from all over the country.

Let the cooperating teacher and the students know that you are available to help them with any questions.

## Sample Club Contest Agenda

1. Once contestants have arrived, have them draw a number from a box to determine their speaking order.
2. The Master of Ceremonies of the contest may make the following announcements at the beginning, but you may wish to make them between the speeches, when the judges will need a moment or two to finish marking their score sheets:

- The topic of each contestant's speech has been chosen by each contestant. The purpose of the speech is to address an ethical problem using the principles of Rotary's Four Way Test:

Of the things we think, say or do:

First: Is it the truth?

Second: Is it fair to all concerned?

Third: Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Fourth: Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

- Speeches must be at least 5 minutes but no more than 7 minutes in length. Penalty points are assessed if a speech is too long or too short.
  - Our winner today will advance to the Regional Speech Contest on March 7, 2025. Runners-up at the Regional contest will receive \$250 and \$125 cash awards, respectively and the Regional contest winner will receive a \$350 cash award and advance to the District Finals. Winners of the five Regional Contests will advance to the District Finals at the Rotary Leadership Institute at DeSales University on March 28, 2026. Runners-up at the District contest will receive \$500, \$350 or \$250 cash awards and the contest winner will receive a \$1,200 cash award.
  - Ask for silence for all speakers.
  - No one should enter or exit during a speech. Food servers should refrain from serving or bussing during a speech.
3. The MC should explain that speakers will be introduced by NUMBER ONLY; no mention of names or school affiliation (if more than one school is represented) until all contestants have given their speeches. Also explain that polite applause at the conclusion of each speech is

permissible, but responses beyond this are discouraged so that judges are not unduly influenced by the audience. The MC can make some remarks between speakers to allow the judges an opportunity to tabulate their scores. Judges are not to be identified before the contest. In the Regional and District competitions, only the speaking contestant will be in the presentation room. In order not to hear their competitors, other contestants will be in a nearby ready room with a Rotarian to converse with them. A contestant may stay in the room after his or her presentation.

4. After the last contestant has spoken, invite the judges, teller and timekeeper to leave the room to tally the points and rank the speakers.

## Judges' Instructions

### General

Judges and the teller will seat themselves apart from each other and not communicate about their evaluations of speakers until after the final awards have been made.

Each speaker will be awarded points in the three categories listed below. Record points immediately after each speech. The Contest Chair will ask the judges if they are ready before calling the next speaker.

Columns should be added and rankings computed after all speeches have been given and the judges have left the room.

### Judging Criteria

Judging will be based on a 100-point system, broken down into three categories as follows:

- a. Content—44 points
- b. Organization—24 points
- c. Delivery—32 points

### Judging Procedures

Judges will total points for each speaker on their individual scoring sheets, subtract penalty points (if any) and enter net points. Each judge then ranks the speakers 1 through "n", by the net points, with the highest score being ranked "1", the next highest, "2", and so on. The teller will tabulate the judges' scoring sheets.

The winner of the contest will be decided by **cumulative rank order** (i.e. the sum of the ranks from all of the judges). Each contestant's rankings will be totaled and **the speaker with the lowest total ranking earned will be declared the winner.**

If a tie exists after all judges votes have been tabulated, the first tiebreaker is total net points. The contestant with the highest total of net points on the judge's scoring sheets will be declared the winner and so on. If a tie still exists, the second and final tiebreaker will be **a vote of the judges**. The contestant receiving a majority vote of the (three) judges will be declared the winner and the judges' decision will be final.

Items to be judged	Point Value	Points Earned	Comments
<b>A. Content:</b>			
Application of Four Way Test throughout. 5 points for each point covered (all points should be covered): 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?	20		
Use examples from peer group experience	8		
Relevant speech	8		
Language clear, vivid & persuasive	8		
<b>CONTENT SUBTOTAL</b>	44		
<b>B. Organization</b>			
Introduction gained attention & establishes theme of the speech	8		
Points in body developed in clear, orderly & logical manner with smooth transitions	8		
Conclusion briefly summarized the theme of the speech & audience left with clear, concise message or point of application.	8		
<b>ORGANIZATION SUBTOTAL</b>	24		
<b>C. Delivery</b>			
Effective use of language, limited use of "uh, you know, ok or like"	8		
Good vocal projection, voice expressiveness, tone and pace.	8		
Good eye contact and rapport with the audience	8		
Appears confident and comfortable	8		
<b>DELIVERY SUBTOTAL</b>	32		
<b>MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS</b>	100		
Less penalty points from timekeeper (if applicable)			
Less Penalty points for use of props (if applicable, 1 – 2 points per infraction)			
<b>NET POINTS</b>			

Judge Number (circle one): 1 2 3

## Timekeeper's Sheet

### General

1. Speeches must be at least 5 and not more than 7 minutes in length.
2. Using the digital stopwatch function of a smart phone, record the time of the speech to the second for each speaker on the Timekeeper's Record. Timing begins when the speech actually begins, and stops when the speaker finishes his/her speech.
3. Compute penalty points, if any, at the rate of two points for every 15 seconds, or fraction thereof, that a contestant speaks under 5 minutes or over 7 minutes.
4. When all the contestants have spoken, the Timekeeper retires with the judges only long enough to advise them of any penalties and present the Timekeeper's Record.

### Timekeeper's Record

Speakers in order of appearance

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Time (Minutes: Seconds)						
<b>PENALTY POINTS</b> (Two points for each 15 seconds or fraction thereof, under the 5 minute minimum or over the 7 minute maximum)						

Timekeeper

\_\_\_\_\_

## Teller's Tally Sheet

Speakers in order of appearance:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>NET POINTS</b>						
Judge #1						
Judge #2						
Judge #3						
<b>TOTAL NET POINTS</b>						
<b>RANKING</b>						
Judge 1						
Judge 2						
Judge 3						
<b>Cumulative Rank</b>						

The Speaker with the lowest Cumulative Rank number will be the winner, next lowest will be runner up and so forth.

In the case of a tie, the net total points will break the tie, with the higher amount of total net points prevailing.

Teller \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Entry Form, Biography & Release**

**Rotary District 7430 Four Way Test Speech Contest**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Goals, Hobbies, Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I declare that the research and content of my speech are mine and mine alone. I am only participating in 1 Rotary Club contest and understand that my sponsoring Rotary Club and/or Rotary District 7430 may video record my speech presentation in whole or in part and use it to promote future contests within Rotary.**

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS COMPLETED FORM TO THE SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBER/ADMINISTRATOR SERVING AS THE LIAISON FOR THE SPEECH CONTEST.**

**SCHOOL LIAISON: PLEASE SUBMIT THESE FORMS TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOUR WAY TEST SPEECH CONTEST OF YOUR LOCAL ROTARY CLUB.**

# WIN \$1,000

And earn a strong credential for your college/employment application

## What is your ethical dilemma?

In a 5-to-7-minute speech, could you persuade others of your conclusion while affirmatively answering these questions?

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?

**Freshman through seniors are eligible for cash prizes!**

The Clubs of Rotary District 7430 (Southeastern PA) are holding speech contests at the local Club level through March 5, 2026. The winners will compete in regional level contests on March 7, 2026. The District Final will take place on March 28, 2026. Prizes of \$1,000 (1st) \$500 (2nd), \$350 (3rd) and \$250 (4th) will be awarded at the final while local and regional contests also pay cash prizes. Contact \_\_\_\_\_ for details

