



SPEECH CONTESTS

2026-27

EXECUTIVE SPEECH HANDBOOK

Updated August 28, 2026

For District Governor, Assistant District Governors, Youth Services Directors, Club Presidents, Moderators, and Speech Chairpersons



SPEECH THEME:
“Create Lasting Impact”

DISTRICT GOVERNOR

Dave Vedine



Welcome to Rotary District 5180! I am excited as we look to a new Rotary year and work together to "Create Lasting Impact."

Building on last year's theme of "Unite for Good," our 35 Rotary clubs will continue their outstanding work of serving both their local and global communities.

Our clubs work each day, bringing together members of their communities to support a wide range of service projects that make their communities better places to live, work, and play. From supporting food banks, improving local parks, providing elementary age reading programs, helping fund a youth center, funding scholarships, and much more, District 5180 Rotarians step up wherever they're needed most.

If you are looking for a place to give back, grow as a leader, or build lifelong friendships, join us in this new Rotary year and help create lasting impact for years to come.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola



It surprises you when a stranger across the table becomes a lifelong friend. It surprises you when a small project in one neighborhood ripples outward in ways you never imagined. And it may surprise you when you realize that the person Rotary has changed most ... is you.

That is why this year, we are called to harness the change within ourselves, to look to the future, and to *Create Lasting Impact*.

Now, I want to be clear about what those words mean. Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures. We must think of the long-term impact of every project. How can a new water system contribute to the long-term health of a community? Can residents help other communities build their own? How can a new classroom be part of a wider strategy to improve education in the area? That is the sort of thinking we need.

ASSISTANT GOVERNORS

AREA 1 Todd Koolakian (Sacramento) todd.koolakian@kidshome.org (916) 290-8201	AREA 2 Roland Wright (Foothill Highlands) rwright@hallsten.com (916) 417-1426
AREA 3 Tao Elson (Oroville) taoelson@gmail.com 530 624-4641	AREA 4 Gregory Kevin (Lincoln Rotary) greg.kevin.rotary@gmail.com (408) 439-5771
AREA 5 Brenda Glen (Granite Bay) bkglen59@gmail.com (916) 276-5013	AREA 6 Mary Jo Edmondson (Roseville) edmondsonmaryjo@gmail.com m 916-284-9107
AREA 7 Tim Hayes (American River Rotary) hayestim@me.com (916) 955-2840	AREA 8 Lisa Bailey (Laguna Sunrise) lisabailey5180@gmail.com (916) 670-5079

DISTRICT 5180 SPEECH CHAIRPERSON

Bill Highland (Yuba City)
highland.bill@gmail.com
Cell or Text 530 933-9040

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CRITICAL DATES

A concern I have is deadline dates. Please know competition completion dates are critical to the planning of each level of competition. I will try to be as flexible as possible with deadlines. Bill Highland

IMPORTANT NEW POLICIES: SPEECH CONTESTS

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY, 28, 2027: Deadline to COMPLETE all Club Contests. •

**SATURDAY, March 18, 2027: Deadline to COMPLETE all Area Semi Final Contests.
Note: Most schools start Spring Break The Weekend of Saturday, March 20.**

**TUESDAY, April 6th, 2027, FINAL SPEECH CONTEST at the Citrus Heights
Community Center, 6300 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA, Time TBD.**

REGIONAL SEMI-FINAL SPEECH CONTESTS

There will be four semifinal speech contests scheduled between the completion of the Club Speech Contests starting on **MONDAY March 1, 2027** with a deadline of **THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2027. Note: Area Semi-Final Speech Contests can be scheduled at regular Rotary Club meeting facilities for Semi-Final Speech Contests as long as the Rotary Club is not holding a Club Meeting at that time in their regular meeting room.**

Each regional Rotary District 5180 Area Semi-Final Contest will be organized and conducted by a Rotary District Assistant Governor in the following AREAS:

- North Sacramento - -----AREA 3
- South Sacramento - ----AREAS 1 & 8
- Central Sacramento - AREAS 2, 4, & 7
- Middle Sacramento - ---AREAS 5 & 6

2026 - 27 SPEECH CONTEST RULES

GENERAL RULES:

1. Contestants must be high school students in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.
2. Students being homeschooled or in a program recognized by their school district or the State of California are allowed to enter the speech contest.
3. A student may compete in only ONE Rotary District 5180 Club Speech Contest per year.
4. Any prior year's winner at any level may compete again at the club level, as long as they are otherwise eligible, and may advance to the next level if they win.
5. All contestants must **ARRIVE** or **LOG IN** at their designated contest locations **NO LATER THAN TEN MINUTES PRIOR** to the start of the contest. Late arrivals may be **DISQUALIFIED** depending on a reason at the discretion of the Speech Chairperson.
6. Student contestants advancing to the Semi-Final Speech Contest level may only compete in the Area Semi-Final Speech Contest of his or her sponsoring Rotary Club.
7. The theme for every contest level is **"Create Lasting Impact."**
8. The same speech must be used for all levels of competition.
9. No pictures or video recording are permitted during any speaker's presentation.
10. Under penalty of possible disqualification, contestants **may not mention their name, school or sponsoring Rotary Club** prior to or during their speeches.
11. **No displays, props or prompting are allowed.** Clothing containing logos may be considered props.
12. Protests or concerns about the conduct of the contest at any level must be made to the moderator of the contest **prior to the announcement of the winners.**
13. All contestants must agree to speak at the Semi-Final and Final Speech contests should they advance that far.
14. In the event that a Club or Semi-Final winner becomes unable to compete at the next level, the runner-up in the original contest will be offered a chance to compete.
15. Enthusiastic, dignified, and polite audience applause is encouraged immediately following each contestant's presentation.
16. The speech must be **at least 5 minutes, but not more than 8 minutes in length.** A Timer Alert will be given to each contestant of Green at 5 minutes, Yellow at 7 minutes, and Red at 7 minutes and 30 seconds. Contestants with speeches ending before 5 minutes or after 8 minutes may be disqualified per recommendation of the Timekeeper and Speech Contest Chairperson, but cannot place above fourth place.

PREPARATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make copies of a “Speech Recruitment Packet” consisting of “Speech Contest Student Recruitment Flier” (pg. 25), “Student Application Form,” (pg. 26), and “Speech Contest Rules,” (pg. 6) for distribution at schools. These information sheets really help key school staff members to recruit, encourage, and inform students. (You may want to staple into three page packets for school staff as a recruiting handout.)
- Be aware that many high schools and Interact Clubs now use “Google Classroom” to distribute information to students, making large scale copying of documents unnecessary.
- Ask school personnel early, such as principals, teachers, and school secretaries (to learn specific names, if not already known) of staff members who would have a personal and/or professional interest in promoting the Rotary Speech Contest with students.
- Interact Club Members should be highly encouraged to compete.
- Judges at various levels:
"Rotarians may judge Club and District Area Semi-Final Speech Contests, but are not authorized to judge the Final Speech Contest. The only restriction is that a Rotarian may not judge a Semi-Final Speech Contest with contestants applying from his or her own Club or Area."
- Judges may be recruited through local Toastmasters Clubs who have formed a “partnership” with Rotary District 5180 and can be contacted through: <https://www.toastmasters.org/find-a-club>. Another outstanding source of qualified judges are Community College Speech Programs. I currently promote a partnership program with the Yuba Community College Speech Program for student volunteers for Yuba City Rotary Club Speech Contests.
- Microphones are not required at the Club Speech Contest level, but are required for the Area Semi-Final and Final Speech Contest levels. Please note that soft spoken students are often very difficult to hear in even a small audience without a microphone.
- Rotarians may be used as **Timekeepers** at all levels even if students from their own Area or Club are competing.

CONFIDENTIAL SPEECH CONTEST CHECK IN SHEET

(When completed, forward to Speech Chairperson)

CONTESTANT NAME (Print Full Name)	LETTER From Folded Paper Circle Letter	AWARD LEVEL 1st - 3rd All others are 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th
	A B C D E F G H I J K L	1st 2nd 3rd 4th

CUT OUT BELOW LETTERS, FOLD, and LET STUDENTS DRAW LETTER for
PRESENTATION PLACE

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L

CLUB LEVEL CONTEST RULES

1. All 2026 Speech Contest Rules apply at this level.
2. Awards: Amounts are paid by the individual clubs and must be consistent at all club contests.
 - 1st Place: \$200 and Certificate
 - 2nd Place: \$100 and Certificate
 - 3rd Place: \$50 and Certificate
 - 4th Place: Club Discretion on Cash Award and Certificate
3. Should a situation occur where the contest judges determine a speech to be inadequate, the host club is not obligated to give awards.
4. **ALL CLUB CONTESTS MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO February 28, 2027.**

CONDUCTING THE CLUB LEVEL SPEECH CONTEST

The moderator may want to greet and welcome in person the contestants, teachers, and parents as they enter the contest facilities..

The moderator should **NOT** introduce students, parents, teachers, or coaches before the contest begins.

The moderator needs to introduce the Judges and Timekeeper(s) either before the contest begins or after the contest presentations are complete, but before the awards ceremony.

When competing in person, contestants should be all sitting in the same row of chairs or at the same table.

Contestants are allowed to watch fellow contestants deliver their speeches.

If possible, parents and teachers are to be seated separate from the contents.

Contestants are allowed to watch fellow contestants deliver their speeches.

When all speech contestants have arrived, have each one pick a folded slip of paper with a letter of the alphabet for each student to determine place in presentations or some other suitable procedure. This set of letters from A to the total number of contestants will be the order in which the contestants will deliver their speeches. See “Speech Check In Sheet” page 8.

Several minutes of open time following each contestant and, in particular, after the final presentation should be allocated for judges to complete forms and timekeepers to complete time records. These periods of time can be used for announcements, fines, Rotary business, highlighting Club or District activities, etc.

A brief introduction of the judges/timekeeper(s) and their qualifications, either just before the first speaker or immediately after the last speaker, will reassure the spectators that qualified judges have been selected.

MODERATOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO START THE CONTEST

1. After welcoming guests/speech officials/contestants and making some introductory remarks the Moderator may want to introduce the Judges and Timekeeper(s) followed by announcements of the following pertinent rules to refresh the contestants' memories as well as provide guidance to the audience as copied below:

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT START OF CONTEST

1. **Welcome the contestants (not by name)**
 2. **IMPORTANT: Be sure to inform the audience to silence or turn off cell telephones**
 3. **Please remain seated during each contestant's speech.**
 4. The topic for every contest level is **"Create Lasting Impact."**
 5. The speech must be **at least 5 minutes, but not more than 8 minutes in length**. A Timer Alert will be given to each contestant of Green at 5 minutes, Yellow at 7 minutes, and Red at 7 minutes and 30 seconds.
 6. Under penalty of possible disqualification, **contestants may not mention their name, school or sponsoring Rotary Club** prior to or during their speech.
 7. **No displays, props or prompting** are allowed. Clothing containing logos may be considered props.
 8. **No pictures or video recording** are permitted during any speaker's presentation.
 9. **Protests or concerns about the conduct of the contest** at any level must be made to the moderator of the contest **prior to the announcement of the winners**.
 10. **Enthusiastic, dignified, and polite audience applause is encouraged immediately following each contestant's presentation.**
2. The Moderator should ask the Judges and Timekeeper(s) if they are ready. When they all signal "yes," call contestant "A" to the podium.
 3. When contestants are speaking, the Sergeants-at-Arms should ensure that no one enters or leaves the room.

4. After the contestant speaks, turn the podium over to the President or President's Representative for between speech break presentations. Note: I have recently not scheduled any between speech presentations. It seems that the audience appears to enjoy a break as well as a chance to head for the bathroom.
5. When the Judges and Timekeeper(s) are ready for the next speaker, continue the contest by calling the next contestant in alphabetic order.
6. The judges should retain their confidential score sheets out of the view of guests or fellow judges.
7. Repeat steps 2, 4, and 5 until all contestants have presented their speeches..
8. At this time, the Judges and Timekeeper(s) should complete their respective confidential score sheets, fill out their "Confidential Judge's Ballot" page 20, and turn the "Confidential Judge's Ballot" over to the Head Judge. Confidential score sheets are not to leave the Judge's possession and should be taken home and destroyed.
9. Ask the contestants to introduce themselves in alphabetic or speech presentation order and tell the audience their year in school, plans for their future, and the name of their high school. You might also ask each student to introduce his or her teachers, parents and guests who are in the audience.
10. When the Head Judge has reached final contestant award level calculations, the Speech Chairperson should be alerted by the Head Judge by forwarding the "Confidential Final Speech Contestant Awards Form" from pg. 24.
11. The Speech Chairperson will then fill in the Contestant Names and forward the "Confidential Final Speech Contestant Awards Form" (pg. 24) to the Treasurer for completion of Award Checks. Once completed, the Speech Chairperson/Moderator will make the awards using the "Confidential Final Speech Contestant Awards Form."
12. **NOTE: All contestants who do not place First, Second, or Third are deemed to have placed Fourth.**
13. If your club gives certificates, give (or mail) each place winner a certificate and check (if appropriate) as requested from the individual Rotary Club Treasurer.
14. The District Speech Chairperson, Bill Highland, will bring pre-printed award certificates and request checks from the District 5180 Treasurer for Semi-Final and Final Contestants.
15. Be sure to send thank you letters or emails to the Judges, Timekeeper(s), and Sergeants-at-arms.
16. **IMPORTANT: Be sure that you obtain the winner and runner-up's names, email addresses and telephone numbers. Email this information to your Area Assistant Governor and the District Speech Contest Chairperson: Bill Highland Email: highland.bill@gmail.com**

CLUB CONTEST CONTACT LIST

(This form is intended for the personal use of Club Speech Chairpersons)

CONTACTS	Name	Phone	Email
Newspaper			
Area Contest			
Teacher (Staff)			
Contestant:			
Contestant:			
Contestant:			
Contestant:			
Contestant			
Head Judge			
Judge (A)			
Judge (B)			
Judge (C)			
Timekeeper			
Sergeants-at-Arms			
Sergeants-at-Arms			
Other			
Other			
District 5180 Speech Chair	Bill Highland	530 933-9040 Cell or Text	highland.bill@gmail. com

AREA SEMI-FINAL CONTEST

- Each Regional Semifinal Speech Contest will be organized and conducted by an Assistant Governor appointed by District Governor Dave Vedine.
- An Assistant Governor will arrange Area Semi-Final Contest DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS and will moderate the Area Semifinal Speech Contests. An Assistant Governor is also responsible for arranging a (1) Moderator, (1) Head Judge, (2) Regular Judges, (1) (Optional) Tiebreaker Judge, (1) Timekeeper and (?) Sergeants-at-Arms for the Area Semi-final Speech Contests. There should be a Sergeants-at-Arms at each entryway to the contest facilities.
- **The Assistant Governors assigned to organize Area Semi-Final Speech Contests are responsible for informing their Rotary Club Speech Chairpersons within their Areas as well as District Speech Contest Chairperson, Bill Highland, of a date, time, and location for their Semi-Final Speech Contests.**

REMINDER: Keep in mind that Club Speech Chairpersons need to be able to notify their 1st Place and 2nd Place Backup winners of DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION for Area Semi-Final Contests when awards are presented during or immediately following their Club Contest Awards Ceremonies.

- "Rotarians may judge Club and District Area Semi-Final Speech Contests, but are not authorized to judge the Final Speech Contest. The only restriction is that a Rotarian may not judge an Area Semi-Final Speech Contest with contestants applying from his or her own Area."
- Be aware that you can use a regular Rotary Club meeting facility for an Area Semi-Final Speech Contest location as long as it is not scheduled at the same time for a regular Rotary meeting.
- Assistant Governors MAY arrange for soft drinks and snacks for participants and guests. The expense for this should be shared by the participating clubs.
- The actual mechanics of conducting the Area Semi-Final Contests are identical to those of running the Club Speech Contests as outlined on pages 6 - 11.

CONDUCTING THE AREA SEMI-FINAL SPEECH CONTEST

- The First Place winners in each Rotary District 5180 Club Speech Contest will compete in their respective regional Area Semi-Final Speech Contest for the right to advance to the Rotary District Final Speech Contest.
- All Club Speech Contest Rules apply to Area Semi-Final Speech Contests.
- Semi-Final Speech Contestants may use written notes on **One 3x5 Card**.
- Contestants are required to use a microphone at this level.
- Awards: Area Semi-Final awards are paid by the District and checks and certificates will be arranged by the District Speech Chairperson, Bill Highland.
 - 1st Place: \$250 and Certificate
 - 2nd Place \$100 and Certificate
 - 3rd Place \$50 and Certificate
 - 4th Place Certificate
- The District Speech Contest Chairperson will attend all Area Semi-Final Speech Contests and will provide the award checks and certificates to all contestants.
- Student contestants advancing to the Area Semi-Final Speech Contest level may only compete in the Area Semi-Final Speech Contest of his or her sponsoring Rotary Club.

FINAL SPEECH CONTEST

- The winners of the four Area Semi-final Speech Contests will compete in the District Final Speech Contest - on **Tuesday, April 6th, 2027, at the Citrus Heights Community Center, 6300 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA, Time TBD.**
- All of the 2026-27 Speech Contest Rules apply to this level.
- Written notes are **NOT** allowed.
- Contestants are **REQUIRED** to use a **MICROPHONE** at this level.
- The judges at this level may **NOT** be District 5180 Rotarians. The District Speech Contest Chairperson will recruit the judges.
- Awards: These awards are paid by the District.
 - 1st Place: \$2,000 and Certificate
 - 2nd Place \$1,000 and Certificate
 - 3rd Place \$500 and Certificate
 - 4th Place \$250 and Certificate

District Final Speech Competition Operational Information

- **The District 5180 Final Speech Contest will be organized in the same manner as the Area Semi-Final Speech Contests. Award Ceremonies will be conducted as soon as possible after the final presenter.**
- The four Semifinal Speech Contest First Place winners are expected to participate in the District Final Speech Contest, which will be held at the **Citrus Heights Community Center. Transportation can hopefully be provided, if necessary, by the Sponsoring Rotary Club. Please contact Bill Highland if contestant transportation is a problem.** The contestants **must arrive 10 minutes before the start** of the contest.
- The District Speech Contest Chairperson will arrange for (1) Head Judge, (2 or more) Regular Judges, 1 Timekeeper and (?) Sergeants-at-arms, and will moderate the District Speech Final Contest.

TIMELINES FOR THE CLUB AND SEMI-FINAL SPEECH CONTESTS

October/November/December (fall semester)

- Review the dates, prizes, and rules in this handbook.
- Schedule Club Speech Contest to be completed prior to **February 28, 2027**. ● Make personal contact with interested speech/drama/debate teachers, Interact Club Advisors and students at each school in your club area. If all you do is hand out fliers, your responses will likely be few and far between.
- Provide interested school staff contacts with “STUDENT RECRUITMENT PACKETS” consisting of “Student Recruitment Fliers” (pg. 25), and Speech Contest Student Entry Form (pg. 26), “Speech Rules” (pg. 6) Copy the indicated pages from this handbook.
- Ask the principal, teachers, interested staff to post fliers and/or make available recommended three page Student Recruitment Packets.

January - As soon as possible after Winter Break

- Publicize Speech Contest dates in the Club Bulletin, Website, high school newspaper, and local community newspaper.
- Make a goal to recruit four or more competitors from high schools in your area.
- Make personal contact with contestants, if possible, to provide motivation and ensure all questions or concerns of the students are answered.
- Be sure to provide contestants with your own contact information.
- Purchase certificate paper from a local stationary store to allow for personalized recognition, after clearing the expense with your club president.
- If possible, communicate through email or meet with contestants and provide them with recommendations for good speech making techniques such as speaking directly to the audience, not reading speeches, etc. that can be easily obtained through a simple Google search. Very few high schools currently have speech classes and students appreciate the encouragement and support.

Before the Club and Area Semi-Final Speech Contests

- Arrange for 3 or more Judges (1 Head Judge, 2 regular Judges, Optional: 1 Tiebreaker Judge). ● Arrange for 1 Timekeeper (you may want two timekeepers to enable backup) Note: The Timekeeper(s) can be a Rotarian. Send Judges the “Judges’ Packet” consisting of Pages 18 - 24 and Page 6.
- Send out newspaper and public relations news releases.
- Confirm participants and number of parents/guests (particularly if held during breakfast or luncheon Rotary meetings) to allow notification to your caterers for extra food arrangements.
- Get award checks arranged with your Club Treasurer. Area Semi-Final and Final awards checks are arranged through the District Speech Chairperson.
- Have a system devised for completion of certificates or whether they will be customized with printed name and mailed. One solution is to make out four certificates for 1st through 4th places for each contestant and then separate out the correct certificate for the contestant before the awards ceremony.
- Rather than using a timer for timekeeping, try out the free Apple app “Bell for Speech.” It has a program mode that allows the full screen to turn green at 5 minutes, yellow at 7:00 minutes, and red at 7:30 minutes. I have this app on my cell and iPad and everyone I have loaned it to says they would never ever go back to a regular timer.

Day of the Club Speech Contest

- Have certificate completion arranged.
- Arrange for seating for contestants to be together and separate from parents/guests/coaches, etc.
- Arrange table(s) for judges.
- Arrange a table for the timekeeper(s) and ensure calculators/stopwatches/cell telephones are available and operating correctly. Give Timekeeper orientation to the “Bells for Speech” App if available.
- **Be sure to have colored file folders or construction paper for (Green, Yellow, Red) Timer Alerts.**

Day after the Club Speech Contests and Area Semi-Final Contests

- Notify District Speech Contest Chairperson Bill Highland at highland.bill@gmail.com of your **first and second place winners. CRITICAL:** Include ALL contact information (**student name, email address, home address, and telephone number(s)**). Copying the contestant's original club speech application works best.
- Send thank-you letters to your Speech Officials.
- Send a congratulatory letter or email to the winner (as well as notifying second place winners, they will be in backup status for Semi-Final Contests) with information about the Regional Semi-final Speech Contest or Final Contest. (pgs. 14-15)

Later

- Be sure to provide support for your Club Speech Contest winner by ensuring they have transportation to the Area Semi-Final Speech Contest and, if at all possible, show your support by attending yourself.
- Provide continued support (transportation, etc.) to the District Final Speech Contest on **TUESDAY, April 6, 2027, scheduled at the Citrus Heights Community Center, 6300 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA, Time TBD** if your contestant wins the Area Semi-Final Speech Contest.
- Please keep in mind that you must follow Rotary Youth Protection Guidelines when interacting with youth competitors. For information on these guidelines, review specific information at <https://www.rotary5180.org/sitepage/youth-protection> or contact your Club Youth Protection Officer.

INFORMATION FOR JUDGES

Rotary District 5180 is pleased that you have accepted the responsibility of acting as a judge in our annual Speech Contest. To ensure continuity in the judging process of the contests at the club, regional, and district levels of competition, please read carefully the judging procedure outlined below.

These procedures are based upon judges' suggestions from numerous previous Rotary Speech Contests.

JUDGING REFERENCE CRITERIA

Delivery:

Enunciation and pronunciation are basic to any good speech and must be fully considered. Overall expressiveness and sincerity of tone add to the delivery. Animation, humor, holding interest, and power of persuasion are attributes of a winning speaker.

Originality:

The manner in which the content is developed will in large measure be determined through its originality. Of major concern will be an approach that is individualistic, imaginative, and has human interest.

Content:

The content should relate specifically to the subject. Students should be positive in their approach and ideas used to develop the theme or topic should be presented logically, clearly, and concisely from opening to conclusion.

JUDGING PROCEDURE

Identical score sheets will be used at all three levels of competition. Each judge weighs each speech using "Rank Order Scoring" of "FIRST," "SECOND," and "THIRD" to indicate the level of speech award recommendations, based upon the overall score sheet Judging Criteria.

In the case of a **Tie Score**, **NEW OPTIONAL ALTERNATIVES:**

#1. The entire judging team goes into a hallway or separate room and decides upon tie scores as a group.

#2. The Head Judge makes the decision.

#3. A Tiebreaker Judge is recruited. Note: The drawback for using a "Tiebreaker Judge" is that a person may sit through the entire competition and end up with nothing to do if there are no ties.

The losing competitor is given the next lower award. For example: In a tie for first place, the losing competitor will automatically be awarded second place, etc. down the line.

Judges should not confer (except when authorized by the Head Judge) during or after a speech and are asked to rank order their scores with names of 1st, 2nd, 3rd Places indicated on "Confidential Judge's Ballots" (pg. 20) reported by each presentation letter of the contestant, such as "Contestant C" PLACEMENT "1st" Place. **All contestants not in the first three places are considered to tie for Fourth Place and do not need to be reported.**

All original "Judge's Score Sheets" are considered strictly confidential and should not be shared with ANYONE. The judge should take all of his or her original score sheets home and destroy them with a paper shredder or whatever to ensure complete confidentiality.



JUDGE'S CONFIDENTIAL SCORE SHEET

Rotary District 5180 Speech Theme:

“Create Lasting Impact”

Contestant Letter # _____

**CIRCLE RANK ORDER: FIRST, SECOND, THIRD,
OTHERS ARE AUTOMATICALLY IN FOURTH PLACES**

SUGGESTED CRITERIA

Delivery

Enunciation and Pronunciation
Expressiveness and Poise
Sense of Humor
Sincerity and Tone

Originality

Uniqueness
Engagement of Interest
Imaginative

Content

Relevance to Subject
Logical Development
Clarity of Ideas

Note: Numerical scores have been deleted to reduce distraction for judges.

Judge's notes are confidential and should be personally retained by the Judge at completion of the Speech Contest. Judges should feel free to write confidential notes or comments on the scoresheets to help in making “Rank Order Score” judgements.

Judges are to rank order and report only 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place contestants on the Confidential Judge's Ballot (pg. 20) and turn it into the Head Judge.



SPEECH CONTEST

**Rotary District 5180 Speech Theme:
“Create Lasting Impact”**

CONFIDENTIAL JUDGE’S BALLOT

(To Be Turned In To Head Judge)

Judge’s Name (Confidential) _____

CONTESTANT LETTER	PLACEMENT 1ST, 2ND, 3RD
	1st
	2nd
	3rd

Rotary District 5180 Speech Contest

TIMEKEEPER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND RECORD SHEET

On the sheet below, record the minutes and seconds of each speech. Begin the timing of the speech after the contestant has addressed the audience or stated the title of his or her speech. If the contestant begins his or her speech without addressing the audience or stating the title, begin timing immediately.

SPECIAL NOTE: Apple makes a great free application called "Bell for Speech" which can be programmed for the screen on an iPhone or iPad to automatically light up green, yellow, or red at the appropriate times. It is a huge enhancement for your Speech Contest Timekeeper.

NOTE: Remember Timer Alerts at 5:00 GREEN, 7:00 YELLOW, 7:30 RED

Check "Yes" below if the contestant's speech is **less than five minutes or over eight minutes in length**. A "Yes" time indication results in the contestant possibly being disqualified from the Speech Contest based upon recommendation from Timekeeper and Speech Moderator, although the contestant cannot place higher than Fourth Place if not fully disqualified..

A. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
B. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
C. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
D. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
E. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
F. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
G. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
H. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
I. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
J. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
K. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____
L. Minutes: _____	Seconds: _____	Yes _____	No _____

Timekeeper's Name (Print): _____

HEAD JUDGE INSTRUCTIONS

- All Judges are to permanently retain their original score sheets, which are considered to be confidential. It is recommended that Judges take his or her score sheets home and destroy them.
- The Judges are to report only 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place positions to the Head Judge See “Confidential Judge’s Ballot” on pg. 20.
- After all contestants have spoken, the Head Judge obtains the Timekeepers’ Score Sheets and checks if any contestants have either ended his or her speech before 5 minutes or after 8 minutes.
- In case of a tie for any place, the Judges, Head Judge, or Tiebreaker Judge will make the final award decision and place the tie loser in the next lower award level.
- Any other tied contestants will be ranked in order immediately below the winning tie breaking contestant.
- Notify the Club Treasurer or Speech Chairperson on the “Final Speech Contestant Awards” form pg. 24 to make them immediately aware of outcomes, so announcements, checks, certificates, etc. can be written for presentation.

HEAD JUDGES CONFIDENTIAL TALLY SHEET

CONTESTANTS

JUDGES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
TOTALS															

- From each Judge's ballot, enter Points on this tally sheet:
 - 3 Points for First Place
 - 2 Points for Second Place
 - 1 Point for Third Place
- Scores are from highest to lowest for awards.



**CONFIDENTIAL FINAL SPEECH
CONTESTANT AWARDS**

TO BE FORWARDED TO TREASURER FOR CHECKS THEN TO
SPEECH CONTEST MODERATOR
COMPETITORS NAMES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE "CONFIDENTIAL SPEECH CONTEST CHECK IN
SHEET"

AWARD	CONTESTANT LETTER TO BE RECORDED BY THE HEAD JUDGE	CONTESTANT NAMES RECORDED BY SPEECH CONTEST CHAIRPERSON FROM CHECK-IN SHEET
FIRST PLACE		
SECOND PLACE		
THIRD PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		
FOURTH PLACE		

Head Judge's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

2026-27 ROTARY SPEECH THEME “Create Lasting Impact”

The speech must be between 5 and 8 minutes.

Notes **are** allowed at the club level, **one 3 x 5 note card** is allowed at the Semi-Final level, but **no notes** are allowed at the Finals level. **CLUB SPEECH**

CONTESTS: Will be scheduled from January - February, 2027 **Club Level**

Prizes: 1st-\$200 2nd-\$100 3rd-\$50 4th-Club Discretion

REGIONAL SEMI-FINAL SPEECH CONTESTS: First Place Club Contest

Winners will participate in one of four regional semi-final competitions

between March 1st - March 18th, 2027

Note: Easter Week is March 19th - 28th for most schools.

Semi-final Prizes: 1st- \$250 2nd-\$100 3rd-\$50

The four First Place Semi-final winners will compete in the

FINAL SPEECH CONTEST: SATURDAY, April 6th, 2027,

Time and Specific Location TBD and

will be scheduled at the Rotary Citrus Heights Community Center, 6300

Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA., Time TBD

Final Speech Contest Prizes: 1st- \$2,000 2nd-\$1,000 3rd-\$500 4th-\$250

ROTARY CLUB OF: _____

DATE, TIME, & LOCATION OF CONTEST: _____

ROTARY CLUB CONTACT NAME & EMAIL: _____

For further information, contact the above local Rotary Club Contact or send email with your name and town of residence to Rotary District 5180 Speech

Chairperson Bill Highland: highland.bill@gmail.com (530) 933-9040 25

Rotary SPEECH CONTEST

District 5180

SPEECH CONTEST STUDENT ENTRY FORM

I hereby apply to enter the Rotary District 5180 Speech Contest. I will compete on ____/____/____ at the Club Speech Contest of the Rotary Club of _____.
I agree to abide by the rules of the Rotary District 5180 Speech Contest and to create an original speech for delivery. I will enter **ONLY ONE** Rotary Speech Contest during the 2026-27 school year. I will not share my speech with any other contestant in the District.

Please fill out completely and legibly (School email addresses should be avoided and are often blocked from receiving Speech Information.)

Student Name (printed): _____ Grade: _____

Student Email Address: _____

Student Phone: Home: () _____ Cell: () _____

Student Home Address: _____
City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parents Names (optional): _____

School: _____

Name of Teacher or Coach (if applicable): _____

Student Signature: _____

To enter this Rotary 2026-27 Speech Contest, return this form to:

_____ **not later than**

_____/_____/_____

OR Send to Bill Highland District 5180 Speech Chairperson at highland.bill@gmail.com (530) 933-9040

SAMPLE CONGRATULATORY LETTER TO CLUB CONTEST WINNER

(Use Club Letterhead)

Date

Name & Address of Club Contest Winner

Dear _____,

Congratulations on winning the Rotary Club of _____ Speech Contest!
As you have been informed, the Regional Semifinal Contest will be held on (Date) (Time) at
(Location). The directions to the contest are attached to this letter.

The contest will start promptly at _____. The contest rules require that **ALL** contestants
must arrive no later than 10 minutes prior to the start of the contest.

Again, congratulations on winning at the Club Level Speech Contest. We look forward to seeing
you at the Rotary Area Semi-Final Competition. .

Sincerely,

Speech Contest Chairperson

Rotary Club of _____