FOUR-WAY TEST SPEECH CONTEST

Rotary District 6600

Saturday, April 3, 2027

Event starts promptly at 9:30 a.m.

St. Marys Memorial High School
2250 State Route 66 North
St. Marys, OH 45885

IS IT THE TRUTH?

IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?

WILL IT BUILD GOOD WILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED?

Please direct all questions to the District 6600 Speech Contest Chair:

Liz Schultz
(440) 935-3072 · director@oberlinheritage.org

SPEECH CONTEST TIMELINE

Fall 2026	Organize your local contest and contact area schools.
3/13/2027	Deadline for Club Speech Chairs to inform the District Contest Chair of your club's contest date.
3/27/2027	Deadline to complete all club contests. Submit the District 6600 Contest Registration Form for the club winner to the District Contest Chair.
4/3/2027	District 6600 Speech Contest at St. Marys Memorial High School 2250 State Route 66 North, St. Marys, OH 45885

District 6600 Competition prize money:

First Place - $1,000

Second Place - $500

Third Place - $250

ROTARY FOUR-WAY TEST SPEECH CONTEST RULES

- Contestants must be high school students in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12.
- Students being schooled at home in a program recognized by their school district or the State of Ohio may enter.
- A student may compete in only one Rotary District 6600 club contest.
- Any prior year's winner at any level may compete again at the club and district level, if they are otherwise eligible, so long as they enter with a new speech.
- Material must be original in content and creation, with no use of AI for speech generation or sourcing, and center around applying the Rotary Four-Way Test to an important issue in our everyday lives and/or relationships. The test asks the following four questions:

  IS IT THE TRUTH?

  IS IT FAIR TO ALL CONCERNED?

  WILL IT BUILD GOOD WILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

  WILL IT BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL CONCERNED?

- The speech must be at least 5 minutes, but not more than 7 minutes, in length with a 15 second leeway. Points will be deducted for going over or under. Contestants should prepare a speech with facts, statistics, stories, examples and quotations. The speech should be memorized. Notes may be used but reading directly from them is discouraged. No displays, props or prompting are allowed. A podium will be available at the district level but not using one generally results in higher scores.
- If a club winner becomes unable to compete at the next level, the runner-up can be offered a chance to compete in the District Contest.
- The District 6600 Competition prize money is:

  First Place - $1,000 Second Place - $500 Third Place - $250

  All other contestants will be considered Fourth Place winners and be given a participation certificate.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLUB SPEECH CHAIRS

- Confer with previous Club Speech Chairs for valuable suggestions and materials.
- Set the date for the contest and the amount of prize money to be awarded.
- High School aged kids appreciate money. Prize money should be in the form of a check or cash.
- Contact schools early and stay in touch periodically throughout the school year. Send copies of the school materials file to the appropriate teacher(s).
- Don't forget to encourage juniors and below to enter the club contest. They are less likely to be overwhelmed in the spring semester as the contest approaches.
- If applicable, participation of Interact Clubs is suggested and encouraged.
- Microphones are not required at the club contest, as they will not be used at the District contest.
- Contestants may use a podium, if available. One will be available at the District contest. ***Please let the contestants know that not using a podium generally results in a higher score.***
- If multiple clubs solicit contestants from the same high school, any given student may enter only one club contest.
- Contests held as part of a club meeting will generally result in better attendance by club members. Make sure to schedule a date for your contest with your Program Chair.
- Arrange in advance for three judges, two tellers and a timekeeper. Deliver a copy of the Score sheet to judges before the day of the contest for their familiarization. Representatives from the participating schools ***should not*** be judges.
- Arrange for newspaper/media coverage, if possible, but minimize any photographing or video activity that might disrupt the students or impact one student more than another.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLUB SPEECH CHAIRS (cont.)

- Confirm the number of participants and parents attending. Make food arrangements (at your club meeting, if applicable) for the contestants and parents.

- Arrange with the Club Treasurer to have checks for winners (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). If your club plans to use plaques or trophies in addition to monetary awards, order them in advance.

- Complete and return the Registration Form, no later than the March 27, 2027 deadline, to the District Speech Contest Chair. Each club winner is eligible and encouraged to compete at the District Competition. Note that if the Contest Chair is not notified of your club's winner in advance, the student may not receive key details about the contest or a certificate.

CONDUCTING THE CLUB LEVEL CONTEST

- Greet the contestants and their teachers and parents if they are attending the event.

- When all speech contestants have arrived, have each contestant pick a number from 1 to the total number of contestants to determine the order in which the contestants will deliver their speeches. Instruct contestants that they should not reveal their name or school until after the competition. **It may save you time and stress to have all participants complete a district registration form at this time so that you immediately have student contact information.**

- Seat the contestants in the same row of chairs or at the same table. Contestants may observe the other contestants deliver their speeches.

- Introduce students to each other but not to other Rotarians or guests yet.

- Seat teachers and parents separate from the contestants.

- Do not publicly introduce students, parents, teachers, or coaches before the contest begins. Explain to the audience that you are doing this to maintain fair judging and that introductions will be made after the competition.

- Welcome the contestants, but not by name, and thank them for their hard work.

- Briefly introducing the judges and sharing their qualifications before the first speaker will reassure the spectators that qualified judges have been selected.

- Read pertinent rules to refresh the contestants' memory and to inform the audience.

CONDUCTING THE CLUB LEVEL CONTEST (cont.)

- Request the audience to remain seated during each contestant's speech and to hold all applause until after the last contestant finishes their speech.
- Ask the judges, timekeeper, and tellers if they are ready. When they are all ready, call the first contestant to the podium by number.
- When the judges, timekeeper, and tellers are ready for the next speaker, continue the contest by calling the next contestant in numeric order.
- If your club contest occurs as part of your regular meeting, be prepared for several minutes of open time following each speaker as the judges complete their forms, and a longer period of time after the final speaker for the tellers to verify all the calculations and determine the winners. These periods can be used for announcements, fines, Rotary minutes, and the like.
- Judges should retain their score sheets until all speeches have been completed, as the range of skill might become more apparent as the contest goes on and edits can be made. Using pencil is recommended.
- After the last contestant has finished speaking, ask for applause.
- At this time, the judges and timekeepers should finalize their respective sheets and turn them in to the tellers.
- Ask the contestants to introduce themselves in numeric order and to tell the audience their year, high school, and perhaps future plans. Ask each student to introduce their teachers, parents or guests.
- When the tellers have reached a decision, obtain the results from them.
- Announce the fourth-place winners first. All contestants who do not place first, second, or third are deemed to have placed fourth.
- If your club gives participation certificates, give each one a fourth-place certificate.
- Announce the third, second and first place winner in that order and present the applicable award.
- Thank the judges, timekeeper, and tellers.

DISTRICT 6600 SPEECH CONTEST REGISTRATION FORM

(Return no later than March 27, 2027)

PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY

Contestant's Name: _____

Student's High School: _____

Student's Full Address: _____

Student's Telephone: _____

Student's Email: _____

Sponsoring Rotary Club: _____

Rotary Club Contact: _____

Teacher/Coach: _____

By signing below, I indicate my willingness to have my speech reproduced in any form and to have my name, school, and picture used in media releases unless I communicate concerns to the coordinator.

_____ _____

Contestant's Signature Date

Return to District 6600 Speech Contest Contact Liz Schultz via email (scan or clear photograph) or via photo texted to cell (440-935-3072), or via mail:

Mail: Oberlin Heritage Center
PO Box 0455
Oberlin, OH 44074

Email: director@oberlinheritage.org

The Rotary District 6600 Four-Way Test Speech Contest will be held Saturday, April 3, 2027 at St. Marys Memorial High School, 2250 State Route 66 North, St. Marys, OH 45885. The event starts promptly at 9:30am.

STUDENTS: Please email Liz Schultz at director@oberlinheritage.org no later than March 27, 2027 indicating whether or not you will be attending the district contest and, if so, how many guests you will be bringing.

INFORMATION FOR JUDGES

Rotary District 6600 is pleased that you have accepted the responsibility of acting as a judge in its annual Speech Contest. To ensure continuity in the judging process at the club and district levels of competition, please read carefully the judging procedure outlined below. Please note carefully the weighted point value assigned to the three sets of judging criteria and become familiar with the score sheet prior to the contest.

JUDGING 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 4-Way Test. 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 levels of competition. Each judge weighs each speech in the range of 1 to 100 points within the three sets of criteria listed below.

Delivery	1 to 30 points
Originality	1 to 30 points
Content	1 to 40 points

In the case of a Tie Score, the contestant with the highest scores for Expressiveness & Poise, Imaginative, and Clarity of Ideas will be declared the winner.

The decision of the judges is final.

Please Note: Judges must not confer during or after a speech. Judges should use pencils and can update scores after seeing multiple contestants and the range of skills presented. After all score sheets have been given to the tellers, then the judges may confer. Under no circumstances should anyone but the three winners be announced. All contestants not in the first three places are considered to tie for fourth place.

JUDGES' SCORE SHEET

Contestant Number _____ Judge's Name _____

Delivery (Maximum Score 30)

- Enunciation and Pronunciation (1-10) _____
- Body Language, Posture, & Eye Contact (1-10) _____
- Expressiveness and Poise* (1-10) _____

Originality (Maximum Score 30)

- Uniqueness (1-10) _____
- Engagement of Interest (1-10) _____
- Imaginative* (1-10) _____

Content (Maximum Score 40)

- Incorporation of the 4-Way Test (1-20) _____
- Logical Development (1-10) _____
- Clarity of Ideas* (1-10) _____

*Criteria to be used as tie-breakers

TOTAL _____

Advice Letter from an Experienced Judge

One of the more difficult issues is managing to score all the speakers on the same scale. The person who speaks first tends to be at a disadvantage, in part because the judges have no reference quality or score to judge him or her against, and there's a natural tendency to be more impressed by a good speaker who goes near the end.

The judges aren't allowed to confer once the speaking contest begins, but it's helpful before things start to agree on a starting score you would give a speaker who is mediocre. Is it 4 or 5 or 6 or 7, for instance. You each decide on your own what is "mediocre," but it puts your scoring all on the same level. That matters because the winner is chosen by point total, and if someone thinks very good merits an 8, and someone else thinks it's a 9, the person giving the 9's will have more influence.

On the same point, it's often more fair if you all agree to start on the medium lower end. That way if someone is very, very good, there's room to go up, and if the first person turns out to be the best, there's room to go down. Often, it's suggested that judges think about giving a solid first speaker a 7, but we've found that shouldn't be the rule. If the first speaker turns out to be the worst, there isn't a lot of room after that, and distinctions between the other speakers get muted because they're all playing in the 8's and 9's and 10's. Having said all that, you do need to go by feel, too. It's just that someone who opens with 9's or 2's doesn't leave a lot of room for the others, and that's also why it helps if you all are working in the same range.

Another issue that often comes up is the one of substance vs style. The scoring sheet is weighted a bit toward style. A speaker with a very good presence and style has an advantage over someone with a very substantive speech who may not present quite as well. This is completely a judgment call for each judge, but you do have option to make the substance matter just as much by downplaying the presentation scores, as long as you're fair about it. However, if you think the value of presentation outweighs the substance, that's your call, too.

And on that point, we've noticed over the years the speakers tend to start strong and finish strong, but the whole speech is what matters. So it's helpful to ask yourself how complete and consistent the speech was.

Finally, there's actually a lot of pressure on the judges, so don't forget to take the time to appreciate the experience and these kids. At this level, they are all something special, and it makes judging them a privilege. Have fun and good luck.

Rick Kushman
Columnist, The Sacramento Bee

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 their speech. If the contestant begins without addressing the audience or stating the title, begin timing immediately.

Check "YES" below if the contestant's speech is less than 5 minutes or over 7 minutes, allowing for a 15 second leeway with no penalty. There is a 2-point penalty for each minute or fraction thereof when the speech length is less than 5 minutes or more than 7 minutes (0-15 seconds off = no penalty; 15-30 seconds = 1 point penalty, 30-45 seconds = 1.5 point penalty, 45-60 seconds = 2 point penalty). Calculate and write in the "Amount of Penalty".

Give this sheet to the Teller after the final contestant has completed their speech.

Contestant	Time of Speech	Penalty?	Amount of Penalty
1	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
2	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
3	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
4	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
5	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
6	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
7	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
8	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
9	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
10	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
11	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____
12	Minutes:_____Seconds: _____	❑ Yes	_____

Timekeeper's Name _____

TELLERS' INSTRUCTIONS

1. There shall be at least two tellers.

2. After the final contestant has spoken, collect the Judge's Score Sheets and Timekeeper's Records and recheck the math.

3. Tellers are to deduct any time penalties and designate the First, Second and Third place scores.

4. The contestant who has the most points will be declared the winner. The contestant with the next highest total of points will have earned second place, and the contestant with the next highest point score will be the third-place finisher.

5. In case of a tie for first place, the contestant having the highest score for Expressiveness & Poise, Imaginative, and Clarity of Ideas will be declared the winner. The same rules will apply in the event of a tie for second or third place.

6. All contestants that did not place First, Second or Third are considered Fourth Place Winners.