



2026 Rules, Regulations & FAQs

This contest is designed for professional-level storytellers. To ensure the contest's integrity, the following designations/individuals are **not eligible** to compete in this Last Story Standing™ contest.

- **Council of Peers Award for Excellence (CPAE) Recipients.**
- **Million Dollar Speakers Club (MDSG) members.**
- **Last Story Standing™ National Champions.**
- **Chapter Executives and/or Contest Planning/Committee Members.**
- **NSA National Board of Directors.**
- NSA Chapter membership *is required* to participate.
- A *Chapter Finalist Fee* paid to each contestant's respective Chapter is required to advance to the Chapter Final contests. Fund allocation is subject to Chapter Leaders' discretion and should not exceed \$250.
- A one-time \$500 *Regional Entry Fee* paid to NSA National is required to participate at the Regional and National levels. This fee covers event-related expenses (virtual and live) for Regional and National-Level Contests.
- If a Contestant is disqualified for any reason, a reimbursement will not be issued.
- The National Champion is not eligible to compete in the contest in subsequent years - You can only WIN once.
- All Due Dates and Deadlines, Chapter, Regional and National, are non-negotiable and firm. No exception. Failure to comply with may result in disqualification.
- A contestant can only compete once per year (one Chapter event only – not multiple Chapter contests). This rule is applicable for anyone who is a member of multiple Chapters.
- Final scores and Champion selections made by the selected Judging Panel at all levels, including the final vote at the National contest, are conclusive and indisputable. Regional and National scores will not be revealed following the contests.
- A contestant cannot change their primary storyline. The story used at Chapter-Entry Level must be used at Regional and National Level. The general story can be enhanced based on feedback/coaching received during Mentor Sessions, but the story at large must remain the same.

Story Rules – You must read prior to participating, mentoring & judging!

Story Time Limit: 5 Minutes – The first word to the last is the timed window.

- This does *not* include their introduction. Introductions should not exceed 30 sec.
- Contestants cannot ask for time to restart and/or start over.
- Stories that exceed 5 minutes will be disqualified.
- The contestant must tell ONE story with a beginning, middle, and end.
- The story should have ONE theme and ONE outcome.
- It should provide a purpose for telling the story with a call to action.
- This should not be a TED-style talk - it must be ONE STORY.

- The contestant must use their voice only- *no Instruments, no props, no costumes, physical examples, or additional elements are allowed.* These will be considered distractions and negatively impact the score.
- The contestant can use their voice in any way, but the story cannot be a SONG *in its entirety.*

Code of Conduct.

Contestants must adhere to [NSA's Code of Ethics & Professional Behavior](#) throughout the entire LSS contest, including but not limited to: the story topic, language, delivery, and behavior during all forms of participation or representation at any level (Chapter, Regional, National) and on any platform (social media, virtual, interviews, in-person events or other media). Any violation of these policies may result in disqualification from the contest at any level. Participation in the Last Story Standing™ contest at any level confirms agreement and compliance with these policies.

IP Agreement.

By participating in the LSS Contest, each contestant grants and releases to NSA, its successors, assigns, and licensees the right to photograph and record a contestant's story submission at any level (Chapter, Regional and National), including likeness, voice, and verbal statements, on film, videotape, and audiotape (collectively, the "Recording"). Each contestant also grants NSA the right to edit, distribute and/or highlight the Recording in the NSA Digital Vault, alone or as part of a compilation, at its discretion without additional approval. This Agreement does not constitute an affirmative obligation on the part of NSA to distribute the Recording. NSA and its agents are permitted the right to use the Recording, name, likeness, voice, and biographical information and any other information about contestant in connection with the advertising, promotion and public relation efforts relating to the specific presentation dated herein, in all media, now known or hereafter created without any compensation.

FAQs.

Regional Finalists: Entry Process & Submission.

- Instructions will be provided to the Regional Finalist upon confirmed entry to the Regional Contest. *That is, a Chapter Champion who submits their Regional Entry Fee (\$500) and Video to NSA National by the predetermined due date will then become a "Regional Finalist" and will then be provided instructions for the next steps.*
Note: Regional video submissions and entry fees must be received by the predetermined due date, or the contestant will be subject to disqualification. (See *LSS Timeline* for exact dates. Regional Entries can be submitted to LSSAdmin@nsaspeaker.org

Mentor Assignments.

- Mentors are assigned by the LSS Admin Team on a first-come/first-serve basis. *The sooner a Regional Entry is complete (this includes payment of Fee), the sooner the assignment.*
- Special requests for assignments to specific Mentors are not permitted.
- Reassignment" to a different Mentor will only be permitted if a significant and ethical reason exists and is at the discretion of the LSS Admin Team.

Can we use a timing device for the speaker to stay on time?

Yes.

How much time over the five minutes limit disqualifies a contestant? Zero. From the contestant's FIRST WORD to LAST WORD – the time allotted is 5 minutes. (Introductions, VOGs/Standing Ovarions, etc. do not count toward the time allotment and do not disqualify).

NOTE: Contestants need to be notified they cannot ask for time to restart and/or to start over.

What is the date for videos to be submitted for the regional levels?

The Regional Contest process will begin April 1st each year.

Regional Contestants must submit their entries/pay the fee no later than April 11th, 5:00pm CST.

Note that regional entries are allowed as soon as identified by their respective Chapters. *For example*, if a Chapter determines their Champion on March 10th, they can submit their Regional Entry then, but no later than April 11th.

Who pays the \$250 Chapter Fee and the \$500 Regional Entry Fee, the member, or the chapter?

A Chapter Finalist should pay a Chapter Finalist Fee *no greater than* \$250 to the Chapter.

The purpose of this fee is to cover all costs related to the chapter's contest, including trophies and awards. It is also intended to help subsidize the *Regional Entry Fee*.

The *Regional Entry Fee* can be paid by any person or entity. Thus, the suggestion for Chapters to allocate some of the "Chapter Finalist Fee" funds toward their Champion's *Regional Entry Fee*. However, NSA National will not mitigate or manage who pays the Fee.

Fundraising any expenses related to a Chapter's Last Story Standing™ contest and/or Regional Contestant's entry fee is permitted and is the responsibility of the Chapter.

In the case of a tie between two contestants, how is the tie broken? Can we have a tie-breaking judge?

In the event of a tie, the Judges will deliberate *in private* to determine which contestant advances to 1st place and which contestant remains in 2nd place. (That is why there should be 3 judges. If the scores end up the same, a 2 to 1 vote will break the tie.