

About us

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Foundation, and the state and jurisdictional arts agencies.

Since 2005, Poetry Out Loud has grown to reach more than 3.8 million students and 60,000 teachers from 16,000 schools in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. **If you are interested in participating in the official program, please contact your [state arts agency](#).**

Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure that starts at the classroom level. Winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to a regional and/or state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals. Awards and placements are determined solely by the judges' scores based on the Poetry Out Loud Evaluation Criteria.

Each winner at the state level receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip with an adult chaperone to Washington, DC to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school receives \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. The first runner-up in each state receives \$100, with \$200 for their school. At the national finals, a total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends is awarded annually. Visit the [FAQ](#) and [rules](#) sections for more details.

Poetry Out Loud provides free curriculum materials, including an online [poetry anthology](#), a comprehensive [teacher's guide](#), [videos](#) of student performances, [lesson plans](#), and promotional and media resources. Hard copies of materials are available for teachers participating in the official program but anyone can access the online materials at poetryoutloud.org.

After schools register with their state arts agency, materials are sent to participating high schools on a rolling basis beginning in August, and the program is run through early winter. (Poetry Out Loud does not require full class periods and can be completed in 2-3 weeks.) States hold their competitions by mid-March. Following the state finals, the national finals will be held in Washington, DC, April 27-29, 2020.

While teachers, students, and poetry lovers everywhere can use this website and its free materials to organize their own contests, the official contest is limited to the programs run by each state's [arts agency](#).



The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America.

The [Poetry Foundation](#), publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It has embarked on an ambitious plan



“I learned how to be more appreciative of my surroundings. Going out to compete and meet different people after the same goal, to share poetry, has been eye opening because it’s given me a chance to see different interpretations and meanings behind words. It’s also taught me the power and weight that words hold.”

Khadijah ceesay
2019 KS POL Champ

Rules & Eligibility

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Key Dates

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State Contacts

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Competition Winners

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