

FAQ

What are the prizes?

National Level: A total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be given at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, including a \$20,000 award for the National Champion, \$10,000 for 2nd place, \$5,000 for 3rd place, and \$1,000 for 4th-12th places. The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded and travel arrangements for Poetry Out Loud.

State Level: Each winner at the state level will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip (with an adult chaperone) to Washington, DC, to compete at the National Finals. The state winner's school will receive \$500 for poetry materials. One runner-up in each state will receive \$100; his or her school will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials.

Are there any participation restrictions?

No student may be excluded from participating in Poetry Out Loud on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. Schools may determine eligibility for classroom and school level Poetry Out Loud programming pursuant to local and state law. A National Champion is not eligible to compete in future years. For prize and travel requirements, please go to our [Rules](#) page.

How can I get my class or school involved in Poetry Out Loud?

State arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands recruit high schools to participate in the official Poetry Out Loud program. You must first contact your state's [Poetry Out Loud coordinator](#) to find out if your high school is eligible to participate. You will then work with the state coordinator to get the program up and running in your school. We provide all the necessary materials for Poetry Out Loud on this website. If your school is not in a participating region this year, please feel free to use the online materials to run your own, unofficial program.

How much class time does Poetry Out Loud take to run?

The official Poetry Out Loud program is implemented in schools in fall and early winter. The program does not require full class periods and can be completed in 2-3 weeks. There are, however, many opportunities to make Poetry Out Loud part of a larger poetry curriculum.

Can students choose poetry outside of the poems in the anthology?

No. This website includes an [online anthology](#) of more than 900 poems. The students must choose from that online anthology, or from the print Poetry Out Loud anthology. If a poem appears in the print anthology but cannot be found in the online anthology, it is still eligible for competition.

Why has a poem been removed from the online anthology?

Poems that are particularly popular or ones that have been used frequently in national competition are occasionally retired. This way, the Poetry Out Loud program can highlight new poems for students and their audiences. Judges also appreciate hearing new performances. **All poems appearing after September 1 in the online anthology and those in the print anthology are eligible for competition.**

What are the judging criteria?

All contestants are evaluated on these criteria: physical presence, voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, dramatic appropriateness, accuracy, and overall performance.