

FAQ

What are the prizes?

National Level: A total of \$50,000 in awards and school/organizational 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-9th places. The representing schools/organizations of each of the top nine finalists receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. There will be one honorable mention in each of the three national semifinals competitions. Those students will not advance to the finals, but will each receive a \$1,000 cash award and a \$500 school/organizational stipend.

State Level: Each winner at the state level will receive \$200. The state winner's school/organization will receive \$500 for poetry materials. One runner-up in each state will receive \$100; their school/organization will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials.

The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded for Poetry Out Loud.

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 information, please go to our [Rules](#) page.

Students may compete at either their high school or a local participating organization—they may not compete with both.

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

State arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa 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 more information on how to sign up your school or organization 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 or organization is not officially participating, 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 the 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 1,200 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 competitions 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. Poems may also be removed due to expiring copyright permissions. **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, interpretation, accuracy, and overall performance.