



POETRY OUT LOUD 2015-2016 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Poetry Out Loud: National Poetry Recitation Contest?

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure. Participating teachers use the Poetry Out Loud toolkit to teach poetry recitation and run classroom competitions. Students select, memorize, and recite poems from an anthology of more than 900 classic and contemporary poems. Beginning at the classroom level, winners will advance to the school-wide competition, then to the state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC. Some 365,000 students from more than 2,300 high schools took part in the 2014–2015 Poetry Out Loud program.

Where will Poetry Out Loud take place?

State arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have enlisted high schools to participate in the official Poetry Out Loud program. For more information on state finals, visit poetryoutloud.org.

When will Poetry Out Loud take place?

Schools that are participating in the official competition will conduct their classroom and school-level programs and contests between September 2015 and February 2016. High school teachers who are interested in participating in Poetry Out Loud should know that the program may be incorporated with existing poetry units. State contests will be held by late March 2016, and the National Finals take place May 3-4, 2016 in Washington, DC.

Who created Poetry Out Loud?

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Poetry Foundation created Poetry Out Loud. At the state level, each state arts agency (SAA) has received an NEA grant of \$17,500 to assist with expenses of program coordination and the state final event.

Who can participate in the official Poetry Out Loud contest?

The official Poetry Out Loud contest is administered at the state level by state arts agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. State arts agencies will define the scope of participation on a state-by-state basis. All types of high schools are welcome to participate, including public, private, parochial, independent, charter, etc. The official contest will be limited to schools identified by the state Poetry Out Loud coordinator. If you would like to get involved, contact your state arts agency at www.poetryoutloud.org/state-contacts.

Are schools that are not part of the official contest welcome to participate in other ways?

All schools nationwide may visit poetryoutloud.org for free program materials. Using these online materials, they are welcome to conduct their own “unofficial” poetry recitation competitions and introduce their students to classic and contemporary poetry.



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Are program materials available?

Poetry Out Loud offers educators free standards-based curriculum materials, which include a poetry anthology with more than 900 classic and contemporary poems, a teacher's guide, lesson plans, and video and audio on the art of recitation. Schools are welcome to download these free resources at poetryoutloud.org.

Is there an award for state finalists?

Each state final competition will award \$1,000 in cash and school stipends. Each champion at the state level will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete for the national championship. The state champion's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The first runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library.

What is the structure of the National Finals?

On Tuesday, May 3, 2016, from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, all 53 champions compete in three regional semifinals (17-18 students each compete in Eastern, Central, and Western/Pacific regional rounds). The top three contestants from each semifinal will advance to the National Finals on Wednesday, May 4. At the Finals, all nine will compete in two rounds of recitation. The top three advance to recite a third poem, and the contestant with the highest scores from all three rounds will be named Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

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.

Are there awards at the National Finals?

Poetry Out Loud will award a total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends at the National Finals, including \$20,000 for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion, and \$10,000 and \$5,000 for the second- and third-place finalists. The fourth- to ninth-place finalists will each receive \$1,000. The schools of the top nine finalists will each receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry books. There will be one honorable mention in each of the three semifinals competitions. Those students will not advance to the finals, but will receive a \$1,000 cash award and \$500 school stipend.

How can I get more information?

Visit www.poetryoutloud.org for more information on this program. The website features educational resources for teachers and students, including standards-based educational materials, tips on hosting a school contest, and videos of outstanding performances.

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