



Organizing Your School Competition

Before the Competition:

1. **Hold classroom contests:** If more than two classrooms are participating in Poetry Out Loud, determine which students will compete in the school contest.
2. **Determine your school's judges:** A panel of three to five judges is sufficient. A group of teachers may serve as judges, but you may invite community members, local poets, actors, politicians, artists, media representatives or members of the school board to participate.
3. **Select a prompter:** Identify a teacher or responsible student who can sit near the performers with copies of the poems to be recited, ready to prompt a student who may get stuck on a line or word. Be sure to show the performers where the prompter is seated before the contest begins. If a performer is stuck and looks to the prompter for assistance, the prompter may whisper the first few words of the next line to get the performer back on track.
4. **Select an accuracy judge:** Name a teacher or responsible student to serve as an accuracy judge. The accuracy judge will have printed copies of each poem to be recited and will mark missed or incorrect words made during the recitation. The panel of judges will determine the student's accuracy score based on input from the accuracy judge.
5. **Prepare a tally sheet:** Create a final tally sheet to be used to tally the judges' scores and determine your school winner.
6. **Make copies:** Judges will need an evaluation form for each contestant. Judges, prompter and accuracy judge will need a copy of each of the poems to be recited.
7. **Arrange for a space:** At the state contest, students will use a microphone to recite their poems. It is best for students to use a microphone for their school contest. If an auditorium is not available, a library or a choir room may be a good option.
8. **Publicize the event:** Send an email to a district or building-wide listserv, place a blurb in the PTA newsletter, encourage students to post signs in school hallways, or include information in morning announcements.



During the Competition:

This schedule assumes that ten students will compete, with a maximum recitation time of four minutes each, although the recitation of most poems will take less than four minutes.

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| 3:30 PM | Welcoming Remarks and Introduction to the Poetry Out Loud competition |
| 3:35 | Introduction of the judging panel, prompter and accuracy judge |
| 3:40 | Review of the rules and guidelines for judging the performers |
| 3:45 | Introduction of the participants in the order that they will perform |
| 3:50 - 4:30 | Recitation of poems
(plus time between each recitation for judges' comments and scoring) |
| 4:30 - 4:50 | Judges meet to determine accuracy of recitations, rescore any evaluation sheets, if needed, and discuss scores. The judges' scores are totaled to determine the school winner and the runner-up.

(Encourage guests to stay during this time period by providing snacks or entertainment, such as student ensembles or original poetry.) |
| 5:00 | The school winner and runner-up are announced |



CONTEST EVALUATION SHEET

This is the rubric that will be used at the state and national level. The best preparation for students is to be scored using this scale during the school contest, but you are welcome to adjust the scoring to best suit your educational goals.

Name of Performer _____

Title of Poem _____

	VERY WEAK	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
Physical Presence	1	2	3	4	5	6
Voice and Articulation	1	2	3	4	5	6
Appropriateness of Dramatization	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level of Difficulty	1	2	3	4	5	6
Evidence of Understanding	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall Performance	2	4	6	8	10	12

	SCORE	MAXIMUM
Total		42
Accuracy Additions		8
Final Score		50

* Accuracy Judge: If a student makes no mistakes and does not need help from the prompter, the accuracy addition should be the full 8 points.
If a student makes a few minor mistakes or transposes words, the accuracy addition should be 7 points.
If the student drops lines or stanzas, reverses the order of stanzas, or requires assistance from the prompter, add fewer points for accuracy, depending on the severity of the errors.