



## About Poetry Out Loud

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation have partnered with U.S. state arts agencies to support Poetry Out Loud, a contest that encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

After successful pilot programs in Washington, DC, and Chicago, Poetry Out Loud was launched in high schools nationwide in the spring of 2006 and has grown to involve millions of students across the country.

### Contest Structure and Awards

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](#).

Each winner at the state level receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip with an adult chaperone to Washington to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The first runner-up in each state receives \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. A total of \$50,000 in awards and school stipends is awarded annually at the National Finals.

Awards are made in the form of lump sum cash payouts, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families.

### Program Materials and Schedule

Poetry Out Loud curriculum materials include the online [poetry anthology](#), a comprehensive [teacher's guide](#), [videos](#) of student performances, [lesson plans](#), and promotional and media guides. Hard copies of materials are free for teachers participating in the official program.

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](#). If you are interested in participating in the official program, please contact your state arts agency.

Materials are sent to high schools 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, May 2-4, 2016.