



ARIZONA INSPIRING STUDENTS POETRY OUT LOUD



WHAT IS POETRY OUT LOUD?

Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest



Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry—recitation and performance—inviting the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. Through Poetry Out Loud, students can master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

Poetry Out Loud is a poetry recitation contest for high school students that begins in classrooms across the country and culminates with the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington, D.C., where champions from all 50 states compete for a total of **\$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends**, including a **\$20,000 college scholarship** for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.



Arizona Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the Arizona Commission on the Arts. For more information about Poetry Out Loud, visit www.poetryoutloud.org or www.azarts.gov/pol.

Front Cover Photo Credits: 2015 Arizona State Champion Zaskia Villa, Nogales High School, Nogales. (Photo by Alonso Parra.) 2016 Arizona State Champion Hunter Hazelton, Betty Fairfax High School, Laveen. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2009 Arizona State Champion Erik Hollis, Tucson Magnet High School, Tucson. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2012 Arizona State Champion Joshua Furtado, Tucson Magnet High School, Tucson. 2013 Arizona State Champion Cassandra Valadez, Sunnyside High School, Tucson. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2011 Arizona State Champion Steffi McNerney, St. Gregory College Preparatory High School, Tucson. (Photo by James Kegley.) 2014 Arizona State Champion Matthew Kaplan, Tesseract School, Phoenix. (Photo by Jeff Smith.)

WHY POETRY OUT LOUD?

Poetry Out Loud is a fun and unique way to introduce students to poetry.

- Poetry Out Loud builds self-confidence and helps develop social and emotional maturity.
- The thrill of competition encourages students to do their best and support their peers.
- Poetry Out Loud creates lifelong lovers of poetry and creative writing.
- Poetry Out Loud offers an opportunity for all students to succeed regardless of personality or learning style.



2017 Arizona State Champion Kellen Vu, Arizona School for the Arts, Phoenix.

Poetry Out Loud is easy to implement.

- Poetry Out Loud is designed to fit into a teacher's busy schedule.
- The program does not require full class periods and can be easily folded into an existing curriculum.
- Poetry Out Loud lesson plans satisfy most of the Arizona English Language Arts standards.

Poetry Out Loud inspires learning.

- Students improve their analytical skills through reading and interpreting a variety of poems.
- Students learn about literary history and contemporary life.
- Students are often moved to write their own poems and share them with others.
- Poetry Out Loud promotes creativity and success in other disciplines.

I love doing Poetry Out Loud every year because I get to see students challenge themselves, face their fears, and ultimately succeed at something that had intimidated them.

—Michelle Salcido, Teacher, La Joya Community High School, Avondale

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Participating teachers receive all they need to conduct the program in the Teacher Toolkit, including:



- a comprehensive Teacher's Guide;
- Lesson Plans;
- access to an online Poetry Out Loud Anthology; and
- Promotional and Media Guides.

Materials are available online at www.poetryoutloud.org.

To bring Poetry Out Loud to your school:

- Visit www.azarts.gov/pol and Register Your School.
- Complete the online registration form and click "Submit."
- Once you've registered, invite other classrooms and teachers at your school to participate and plan to host a schoolwide competition.
- Receive your free Teacher Toolkit.
- Connect with your Poetry Out Loud regional partner organization. They can help you organize your school contest and provide one-on-one coaching for your school finalist.



2015 Arizona State Finalists. (Photo by Alonso Parra.)

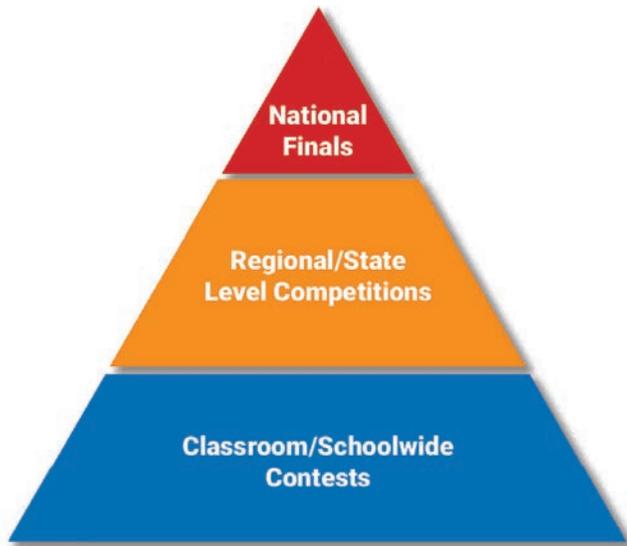
TIMELINE

01	APRIL - OCTOBER	Register Your School
02	AUGUST - SEPTEMBER	Teacher's Guide & Poetry Out Loud Anthology available online
03	OCTOBER 31	School Registration Deadline (You must register in order to participate.)
04	JANUARY	Classroom/Schoolwide Contests
05	FEBRUARY	Regional Competitions (Central, Northern, and Southern Arizona)
06	MARCH	Arizona State Competition
07	LATE APRIL/EARLY MAY	National Finals in Washington, DC

Participating in Poetry Out Loud ultimately helped me to understand the beauty and the importance of language. Whether a poem, an essay, an email, or daily speech, I think more people should examine their language and know the reasons for the words they use. Because of POL, I've been really in tune with intentional language use in all forms of communication.

—Carly Bates, 2012 Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Finalist

HOW DOES IT WORK?



Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure that begins 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.

State Awards: 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 a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry materials. One runner-up in each state will receive \$100; his or her school will receive \$200 for the purchase of poetry materials.

National Awards: 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.

Awards are offered for the official contests conducted by the state arts agencies, the Poetry Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The awards do not apply to unofficial contests. Awards will be 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.

Photo by James Kegley.



There's something about being in front of a crowd with a microphone at your lips that gives you this sense of power and a beautiful ability to reach out to others with something so personal to you: your voice.

—Zaskia Villa, 2015 Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Champion

SAMPLE CLASS SCHEDULE

While the three-week schedule outlined below is optimal, **Poetry Out Loud** is flexible enough to fit any teacher's schedule.



Week One

- Have students explore the anthologies and choose poems to memorize.
- Read and discuss some of the poems in class.
- Model effective and ineffective recitation practices for the students.



Week Two

- Have students practice their poems with different partners each day.

They should also work on their memorization and performance outside of school. Students should have their poems completely memorized by the end of the week.

- Hold practice contests.

Break up the class into groups. Have one student at a time perform for the rest of the group, who act as judges. Encourage discussion about how the student interpreted and presented the poem.

- Implement the lesson plans and writing exercises.

While reserving a portion of each class period for recitation practice, teachers may offer a more complete poetry unit by using the lesson plans provided at www.poetryoutloud.org.

- Hold the classroom recitation contests at the end of the week.

Bear in mind that it takes an average of 4 or 5 minutes to recite a poem and judge the recitation. Teachers should structure the contest in a way that best fits their schedules.



Week Three

- Hold the schoolwide recitation contest at the end of the week.

Winners of the classroom contests will prepare 2 or 3 poems for recitation and will compete in the schoolwide competition at the end of this week. Ideally, the schoolwide competition will take place at a campus assembly, thus enhancing the entire student body's exposure to poetry and giving the contestants a larger audience.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

POEMS PUT TO USE

Periods: 1, with an optional take-home project

NCTE standards: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12

Arizona ELA Standards: R.1, R.2, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, R.10 and L.3, L.4, L.5

INTRODUCTION

In track 2 of the Poetry Out Loud CD* (“The Power of Poetry”), poet Dana Gioia spells out 4 practical advantages to be found in studying and reciting poetry:

- Poetry offers mastery of language, and stocks the mind with images and ideas in unforgettable words and phrases.
- Poetry trains and develops our emotional intelligence.
- Poetry reminds us that language is holistic—that how something is said is part of what is being said, with the literal meaning of words only part of their whole meaning, which is also carried by tone of voice, inflection, rhythm.
- Poetry lets us see the world through other eyes, and equips us imaginatively and spiritually to face the joys and challenges of our lives.

Later, on track 17, poet Kay Ryan concurs. “Poetry is for desperate occasions,” she says. By memorizing a poem, you have it to pull out when you need it—not necessarily the whole poem, but the scrap of it that comes to mind in a difficult time.

Because students may not have scraps of poetry memorized already, and may never have called one to mind, it may be hard for them to believe Gioia and Ryan. This lesson will help them do so, by getting them to imagine situations in which a scrap or two of poetry—whether recited or simply thought of—can be put to use. Using fiction, letters, or political speech, students will write about poems being put to use and, in the process, imagine the practical advantages that having poems memorized can bring.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will have opportunities to:

- Listen to poems being recited, and to the commentaries of the performers.
- Find passages in poems which they find striking or memorable.
- Imagine situations in which those passages may be put to use, whether to console, encourage, taunt, flatter, or otherwise make an impact on a listener.
- Write short stories, letters, or speeches in which at least three passages could be quoted effectively to move another character or the listener/recipient.

* The audio CD may still be used, although it is no longer part of the packet. The CD contents can be found online at poetryoutloud.org/poems-and-performance/listen-to-poetry.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

To teach this lesson you will need:

- The Poetry Out Loud CD or access to the online Poetry Out Loud Audio Guide.
- A CD player or computer.
- The Poetry Out loud anthology in its print or online version.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1. Introduce students to the idea that poems can be useful to recite—the whole poem or just part of it—in a variety of real life situations. Brainstorm with them what some of those situations might be, for example:

- When faced with bad news or difficult times;
- At a wedding, funeral, or other life-cycle event;
- As a toast or grace before meals;
- In a romantic relationship or during a marriage proposal;
- During a speech or other effort to move an audience, whether it be voters, colleagues, teammates, or others you wish to lead.

To illustrate such moments, you might cite historical examples, such as Winston Churchill's recitation of the Claude McKay sonnet "If We Must Die..." to rally resistance to the Nazis during World War II. Or you might turn to fiction and movies. Many children's books and adult novels have scenes where a scrap of poetry is deployed to good effect.

In each book of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, poems are recited by characters; for example, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, there are poems prominently featured in the chapters "The Shadow of the Past," "The Old Forest," "Strider," "A Knife in the Dark," and elsewhere. In the film of *The Return of the King*, meanwhile, Theoden cries out a short poem to the Rohirrim as they ready their cavalry charge to break the siege of Gondor.

Other films featuring poetry include *Skyfall* (M quotes Tennyson to James Bond), *Bright Star* (about the life of John Keats), *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (W. H. Auden's "Funeral Blues"), *Il Postino* (various love poems by Pablo Neruda), *Slam* (poems by Saul Williams), *Sylvia* (Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath recite Chaucer and Shakespeare to one another), and *In Her Shoes* (Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art" and "I carry your heart with me" by e. e. cummings). The Academy of American Poets has a useful, annotated list of "Poetry in Film, Radio, and TV" at www.poets.org/page.php/prmID/195.



2015 Arizona State Champion Zaskia Villa, Nogales High School, with State Senators Andrea Dalessandro and Juan Mendez. (Photo by Alonso Parra)

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

2. Play tracks 7 and 17 of the CD to illuminate contexts in which poems—whole poems and scraps of them—were recited: by David mason to his girlfriends, and by Kay Ryan’s grandmother to her, as she grew up. Pose questions to your students about these uses of poetry, for example:
 - Why might Mason have wanted to recite Donne to his girlfriends?
 - Are there different lines or phrases from the poem that would have been better to recite in different contexts? (Some might work better as a “pick-up line,” perhaps, while others might be better for an apology or an excuse.)
 - Why might Kay Ryan’s grandmother have treasured those lines from Longfellow?
 - Why might she have wanted her granddaughter to hear them, growing up?
3. Now it’s time to get your students searching for their own striking lines and phrases. Send students to the Poetry Out Loud anthology in search of memorable passages. They should gather at least 3 passages from different poems. The meaning of the passage in its original context is less important than the power the student finds in it, and the student’s ability to imagine each passage being put to use in some situation.

If you wish, you can make this a “treasure hunt” assignment. Go back to the list of situations you brainstormed in step one of the assignment, situations such as:

- When faced with bad news or difficult times;
- At a wedding, funeral, or other life-cycle event;
- As a toast or grace before meals;
- In a romantic relationship or during a marriage proposal;
- During a speech or other effort to move an audience, whether it be voters, colleagues, team-mates, or others you wish to lead.

Give each student a situation, and ask him or her to find 3 appropriate lines or phrases; or, give the whole list to each student, and tell each to look for 1 line or phrase that could be of use in each context.

- If students are using the online anthology, you can keep them from being overwhelmed by telling them to look first at poems whose titles begin with a particular letter. Or, if you prefer, suggest they use the “Keyword Search” feature on the website.
- Try not to steer them to particular poems or poets, as one goal here is simply to encourage exploration, helping students discover poems, poets, and lines they might not otherwise have encountered.

To keep students from grabbing lines at random, tell them to justify the choice—either orally or in writing—by briefly imagining a moment when that line or phrase would come in handy. A few sentences will usually do.

4. To make this a full-fledged creative writing assignment, ask each student to bring his or her chosen lines and phrases home and write a short piece of prose—2 to 3 pages, or longer if you prefer—in which the lines or phrases are used. Make sure that students realize that people often quote scraps of poetry totally out of context; they don't need to know the whole poem, or keep the whole poem in mind. The prose they write can take several forms, for example:
- A story, in which 1 or more characters recite lines of poetry.
 - The recitation may be external or internal, as the line or phrase comes to a character's mind.
 - The lines or phrases need not and, in fact, should not be the only things that the characters say; rather, they should be used sparingly, and their effect on the main character or on others should some-how be shown.
 - A letter, in which the author quotes striking lines or phrases from poems in order to move or convince the recipient in some way.
 - A speech, in which the quotations are used to rally, exhort, encourage, or otherwise persuade listeners to act.

In every case, the context can be historical, as in a letter home by a soldier during the Civil War, or contemporary, set in the United States or anywhere in the world. The important goal of this lesson is for students to imagine situations where it can make a difference to know a poem—or even part of a poem—by heart.



2010 Arizona State Champion, Elizabeth Andronic, Centennial High School, Peoria (Photo by James Kegley.)

Throughout my three years of competing, I learned a great deal about poetry analysis and conveying that through a performance. I was able to practice and compete with poems by poets I've always loved, and develop an appreciation for newfound poets through the competition by reciting unfamiliar works.

—Hunter Hazelton, 2016 Arizona Poetry Out Loud State Champion



Printing of this program was generously donated by APS
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REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL TODAY AT **WWW.AZARTS.GOV/POL**

For more information about **Arizona Poetry Out Loud**, contact:

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