



A partnership of
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Poetry Foundation

NOTE: The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will take place virtually in Spring 2021. We will provide more information regarding dates and the structure of the event as soon as possible.

Poetry Out Loud Virtual Competitions

Due to the Coronavirus, COVID-19 Pandemic, and current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), we strongly encourage teachers and organizers at all contest levels to hold virtual competitions for the 2020-2021 Poetry Out Loud (POL) season. We make this suggestion for the safety and well-being of students, parents, teachers, and everyone involved with POL. For any organizer who declines to hold a virtual competition, and elects to hold an in-person contest, please follow any federal, state, and local guidelines in regard to slowing the spread of COVID-19. This may include wearing masks, enforcing social distancing measures, hand sanitizing, and ensuring participants and guardians are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 prior to attending, and while participating in, a POL event.

How to run a virtual POL competition

There are several avenues POL teachers and organizers may choose to administer their virtual POL competitions. This document provides multiple options on how to hold a virtual contest as well as filming requirements and tips for competitors. All virtual contests must abide by the evaluation criteria and rules specified in the Teacher's Guide. If you have any questions or concerns regarding administering your POL virtual contest, please know that we are here to help. Please contact your [state coordinator](#) and/or poetryoutloud@arts.gov for additional guidance.

- Video submission contest: Each student records and saves each recitation as a separate video file. Students send video(s) via email or a file sharing platform (i.e. Dropbox, We Transfer, etc.) to the POL organizer. The organizer reviews submissions to ensure the videos meet film requirements and then forwards to the judges for their review. Contest judges and the accuracy judge must provide scores for each criterion and review independently—the same as live competitions. Organizers set a deadline for judges to submit scores and then tally the scores. For video submission contests, videos must not be edited, but students may record their recitations more than once and send their best recording for each recitation.
- Recording one-on-one on video platform: The organizer meets with each student competitor individually over a video platform (i.e. Zoom, Skype, etc.) with the accuracy judge and prompter. The student recites their poem(s) live for the organizer while each recitation is being recorded. Recordings of recitations are sent to contest judges to review and provide scores. Judges must provide scores for each criterion and review independently.
- Live contest on video platform: The organizer holds a live POL contest over a video platform (i.e. Zoom, Skype, etc.). The contest follows as an in-person contest would. Judges submit scores for each criterion to contest organizer to be tallied; winners and runners-up announced at the end of show.