

**POETRY
OUT LOUD**

20 YEARS



What is Poetry Out Loud?

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students across the country.



WATCH: Poetry Out Loud Mini-Doc



Why Was Poetry Out Loud Created?

- To introduce students to classic and contemporary poetry
- To encourage students to learn about literary history and contemporary life
- To help students master public speaking skills and build self-confidence



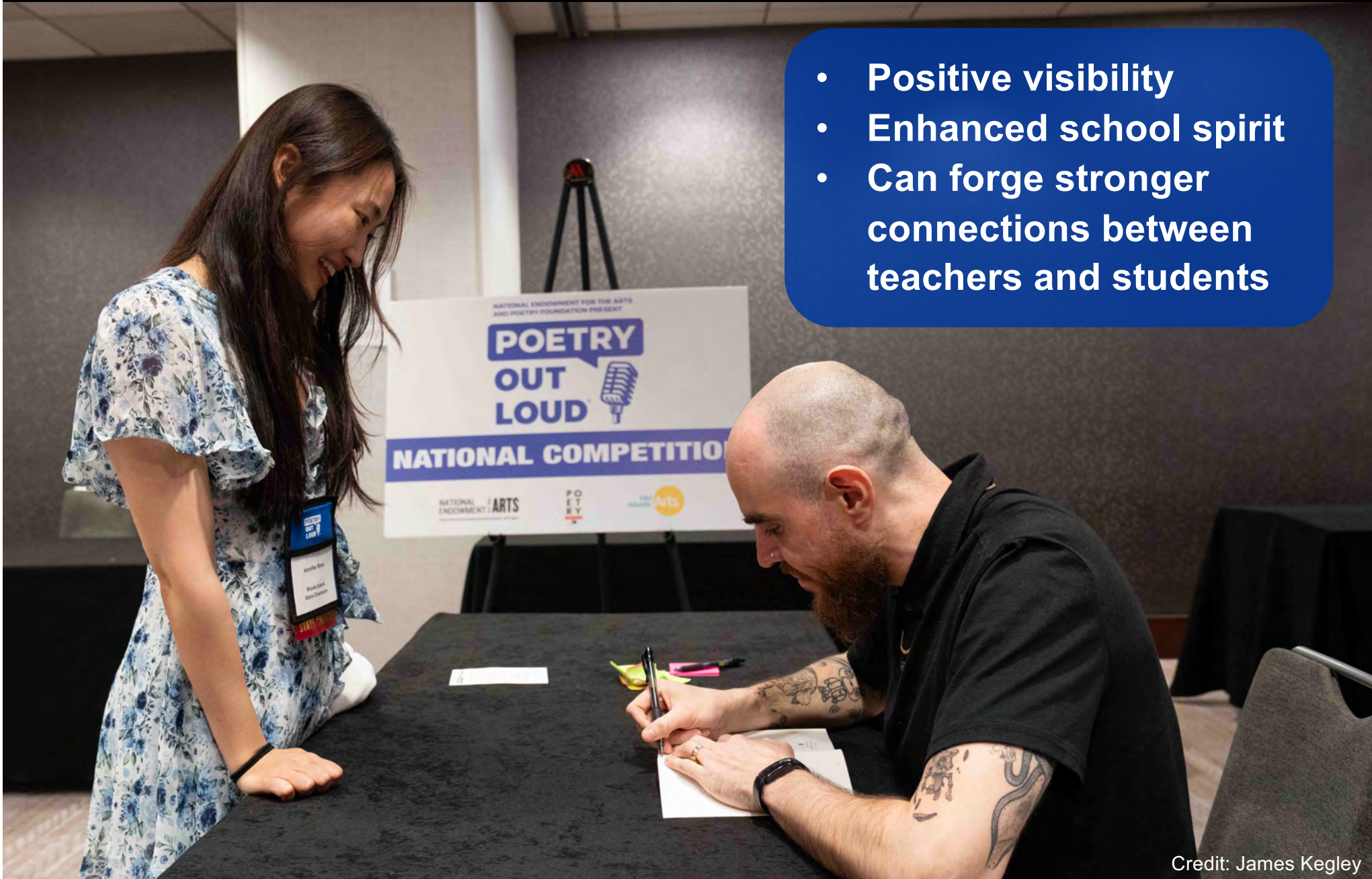
What Are The Educational Benefits For Students?

- Improved public speaking skills
- Increased self-confidence and social awareness
- Higher academic performance
- Increased poetry appreciation and engagement



What Are The Benefits For Schools?

- Positive visibility
- Enhanced school spirit
- Can forge stronger connections between teachers and students



ADVERTISEMENT

Pascagoula High School student named 2024 Poetry Out Loud state champion

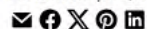
The national champion will receive a \$20,000 cash prize.



Malisha Taylor is a sophomore at Pascagoula High School, who entered the Poetry Out Loud competition this year with something to prove.

By [Destiny Polster](#)

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Media Coverage

- Local, regional, and national media sources
- Success stories and tales of advancing students
- News stories have reached millions since the first Poetry Out Loud contest in 2005
- POL PR Toolkit has sample press releases, social media tips, and talking points

Poetry Out Loud Structure

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT

Local
contests



Regional
contests



State
contest



National
contest



Credit: James Kegley

Prizes at State and National Finals

State Finals

- **\$200** for POL State Champion
- **\$100** for POL State Runner-Up
- **\$500** stipend for /organization for state champion school; **\$200** stipend for poetry materials for runner-up

National Finals

- **\$20,000** for POL National Champion
- **\$10,000** and **\$5,000** for the second and third place national finalists
- **\$1,000** each for the other six national finalists and for three honorable mention recipients
- **\$500** stipend for schools/organizations of top nine finalists and three honorable mention recipients to purchase poetry materials

What Do Teachers Get?



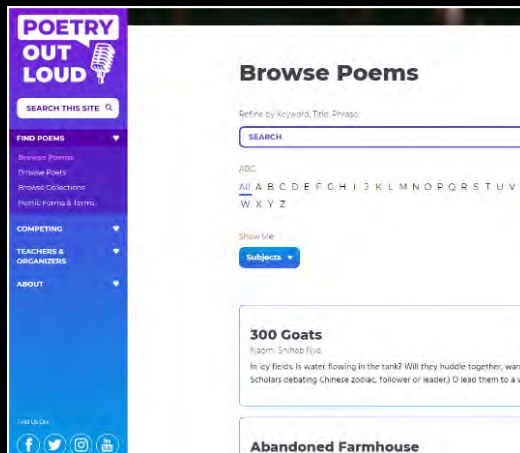
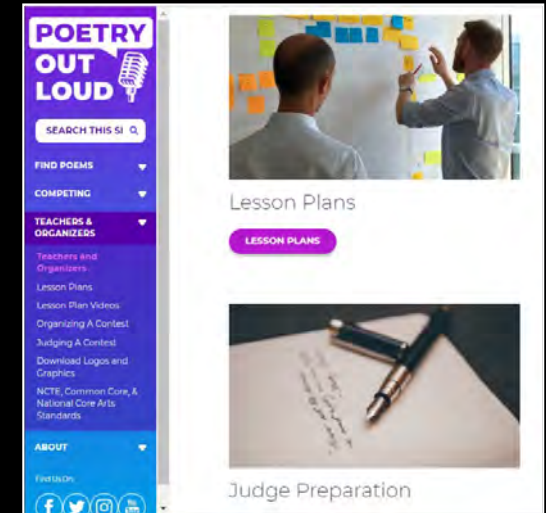
- Teacher's guide, classroom posters
- Guidance on how to run a POL contest—whether in-person or virtually
- Website with resources for teachers and students
- Online anthology with 1,100+ poems
- Video examples of student performances

Poetry Out Loud Curriculum

- Satisfies NCTE, Common Core, and National Core Arts Standards
- Lesson plans tailored to program and with creative writing exercises
- Can take place over 2-3 weeks
- Can take place anytime between fall and early winter
- Will not require full class periods

Website Tools for Teachers & Students

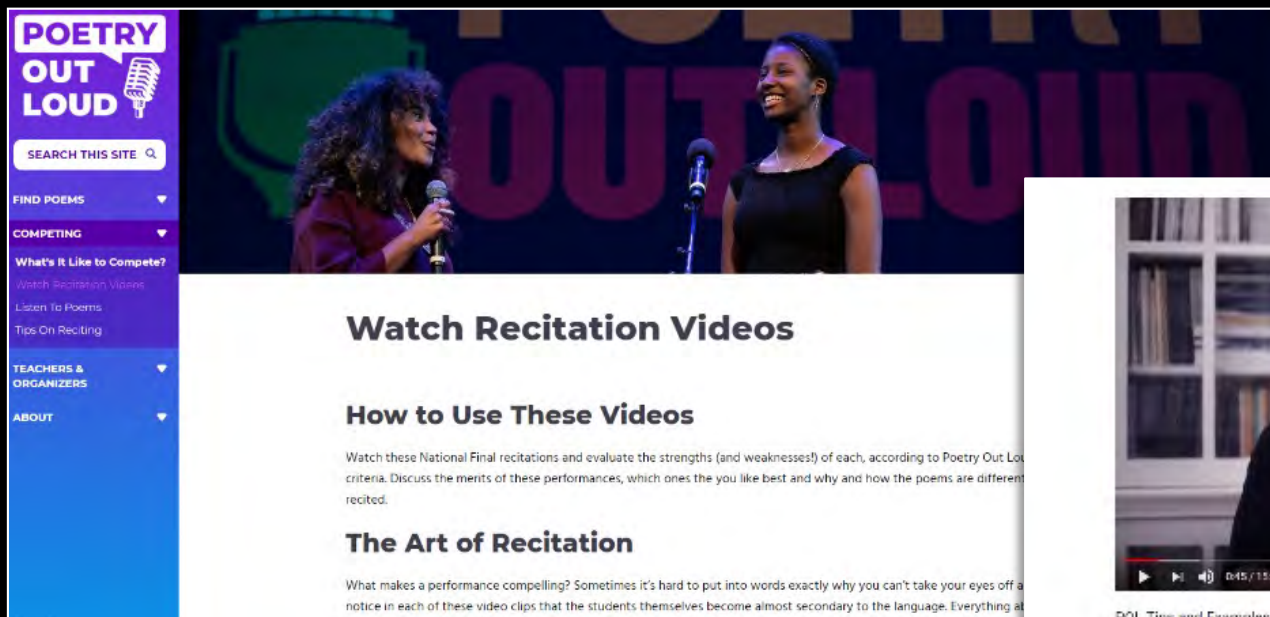
- PoetryOutLoud.org
- Poetry anthology
- Teacher's guide
- Audio and video clips
- Lesson plans
- Judge's guide
- Tips on hosting a contest



- Search tools: browse by poet, poem, subject, or thematic collections
- Daily “featured poet” section with biographies and poems
- Free mobile app for iOS and Android

Video for Teachers & Students

- Learning Recitation Videos at poetryoutloud.org help students learn criteria for successful recitation techniques
- The [Poetry Out Loud YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8) also features tips and examples of good and not-so-good recitation techniques



The screenshot shows the Poetry Out Loud website. On the left is a purple navigation sidebar with the following sections: 'POETRY OUT LOUD' with a microphone icon, a search bar labeled 'SEARCH THIS SITE', 'FIND POEMS', 'COMPETING' with a sub-section 'What's It Like to Compete?' containing links for 'Watch Recitation Videos', 'Listen To Poems', and 'Tips On Reciting', 'TEACHERS & ORGANIZERS', and 'ABOUT'. The main content area features a video player showing two women on stage. Below the video, the text reads: 'Watch Recitation Videos', 'How to Use These Videos', and 'The Art of Recitation'. The 'How to Use These Videos' section contains the text: 'Watch these National Final recitations and evaluate the strengths (and weaknesses!) of each, according to Poetry Out Loud criteria. Discuss the merits of these performances, which ones the you like best and why and how the poems are different recited.'



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player. The video title is 'POL Tips and Examples: Full Video'. The video shows a woman reciting poetry with the text 'Be present' overlaid on the screen. The video player interface includes a progress bar at 0:45 / 15:16, a play button, and a volume icon. Below the video, the channel name is 'poetryoutloudvideos' with a profile picture and the text 'This channel on Oct 8, 2017'. The video has 3,710 views and 79 likes. A red 'SUBSCRIBE 2.4K' button is visible. The video description at the bottom reads: 'Actor and poet LaOrisha Brown demonstrates good and not so good poetry recitation techniques'.

State Arts Agencies' Role

- Define scope of state program
- Recruit schools/ organizations to participate in official state contest
- Coordinate state program and state finals event
- Partner with local arts organizations to administer program as needed

Accessibility

- Resources on poetryoutloud.org
- ASL materials
- Braille anthology available
- For accessibility questions, please reach out to your state coordinator or accessibility@arts.gov



Accessibility

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation are committed to the inclusivity of Poetry Out Loud. Accessibility is considered at all levels, from the development of program materials to the planning of competitions.

Poetry Out Loud must not exclude or limit student participation based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability in compliance with Federal law and regulations, in terms of both facilities and programs. For more information, please contact the NEA and see the [NEA website](#).

Accessibility Awareness

Teachers are encouraged to involve all students in their classroom Poetry Out Loud activities. Teachers who want more information about making Poetry Out Loud accessible to students with disabilities should contact their state Poetry Out Loud coordinator. Each state arts agency also has an accessibility coordinator who may be helpful. They can be a great resource and can also point you in the direction of other experts in the field, as needed. A list of SAA accessibility coordinators can be found [here](#).

Additionally, please ensure you are using proper terminology for writing and speaking about students with a disability. A [language guide](#) for discussing disability is available; read through it and share it with others working on the program.

Other useful resources include:

[Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook](#); (esp. chapters 7 and 9) provides specific guidance on how to make cultural events accessible.

VSA staff at state and national offices work with arts and accessibility issues every day. They can provide guidance on how to make your POL program more inclusive; they also serve as program partners in some states.

Service organizations (for example, the Muscular Dystrophy Association or United Cerebral Palsy) can help you better understand a particular disability.

Your State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency might also be helpful in providing insight about appropriate accommodations if a student or their advocate is unclear about what is needed.

Making Your Poetry Out Loud Program Accessible

To ensure that a student's needs are considered for Poetry Out Loud, we recommend the following process at all levels of competition:

•**Engage in an interactive process.** Don't assume that you know what a student may or may not need in terms of accessibility—instead, start a conversation with the student and/or his or her advocate. Their input will ensure that everyone is comfortable with the process and its outcome.

•**Level the playing field.** Use the information you gleaned from the interactive process to make accommodations that will enable each student to deliver their best performance. Provide accommodations that seem appropriate and reasonable. Accommodations might include a microphone for a student whose voice may be unclear or quiet, or the opportunity to sit during the recitation for a student who cannot comfortably stand for a length of time.

Student Testimonials

“I have enjoyed the privilege that a poet is entrusting me with their poem and allowing me to interpret it and tell it to the world.”

– *Mona Koko, 2024 Alaska State Champion*



“Once I dove in and really started to understand the meaning of the poems, it was surprising how ‘alike’ we are throughout the ages. Love, war, nature, society...the poems may be in different times and places, but the emotions remain the same.”

– *Tucker Dowler, 2024 Arkansas State Champion*

Teacher Testimonials

“When students feel confident that they have the ability to understand something and to express [themselves], it makes it easier for them to interact in classroom discussion and they make better editors of each other’s work and they just feel braver and more courageous about interacting.”

“I think [our students] are going to have an ethic of valuing poetry when they go out into the world or valuing the arts in general. They’re now more likely to go to an artistic performance in the community. I really believe that we are preparing them for a lifetime of arts, not just in a career, but as human beings.”



Credit: James Kegley

Get Involved!

Contact your SAA rep listed on the website under “State Contacts”

Credits & Acknowledgments

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the State and Jurisdictional Arts Agencies of the United States.

All photos and screenshots taken by James Kegley & 5:00 Films.

