"Poetry demands that you stop, put everything down, and listen - and you listen to poetry with your soul."



-Joy Harjo, former U.S. poet laureate



What do teacher surveys say?

National Endowment for the Arts, 2015

82% agreed that Poetry Out Loud was easy to incorporate in their classrooms.

90% agreed that students' confidence increased after program participation.

82% agreed that students' analytical skills improved after participating in the program.

The Impact of Poetry Out Loud: Findings from a National Study

National Endowment for the Arts and Poetry Foundation with Social Policy Research Associates, 2020

How do students benefit?

- Students have more confidence in group discussions.
- Students are 1.5 times more likely to engage in community service.
- Students experience poetry in a new way.
- Students improve their academic performance.
- Students think about experiences different from their own.

How do schools benefit?

- School culture becomes more positive through providing more avenues to self-expression.
- Contests enhance school reputations and build community.
- Participation forges stronger connections between teachers and students.
- Teachers nurture their own creativity,

Sheila Walk, Coordinator

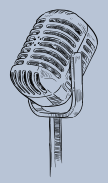
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Springfield Area Arts Council

420 South Sixth Street

Springfield, IL 62701



Poetry Out Loud





NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

arts.gov

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
presents
POETRY OUT LOUD

WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE!

Poetry Out Loud lifts poetry off the page, creating community and connection.

High school students across the country participate in this dynamic poetry recitation competition. It's designed to improve their public speaking skills, build their confidence, and teach them about literary history and contemporary life.

An inititative of the National Endowment for the Arts in parntership with state and territory arts agencies and managed by Mid Atlantic Arts, Poetry Out Loud provides free educational materials to teachers and organizers, including an online anthology of classic and contemporary poems.

Illinois ARTS Council

ARTS
SPRINGFIELD AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Poetry Out Loud

Competitions take place in fall and winter in classrooms throughout the central Illinois region. Each school's first- and second-place winner will compete at the regional contest on February 4, 2027, in Springfield.

The top twelve winners from Illinois's six regions will compete at the state contest on March 1, 2027, also in Springfield. The state champion and chaperone are awarded an expense-paid trip to the national finals in D.C. in April.

To join the program, please contact Sheila Walk at the Springfield Area Arts Council.

programs@springfieldartsco.org



Photography by William Richards

Last year in Illinois, over 2900 students and 120 teachers from 31 schools participated in Poetry Out Loud.

More information:
www.poetryoutloud.org

Audio-Video recording by UMedia of the 2026 Illinois State Contest:
https://youtu.be/dpYqBgRMmXw

Poetry Out Loud Curriculum -



-Satisfies most NCTE, Common Core, and ESSA standards

-Contains supplementary lesson plans and creative writing exercises

-Designed to take place over two or three weeks

-Can take place any time between fall and early winter

-Will not require full class periods

-Can be run as an extra-curricular activity

Please be part of our 22nd year!