

Poetry Out Loud

“More than ever we need poetry. Poetry has the power to heal and seal wounds. Poetry has power to speak in whispers that cross canyons of differences and touch hearts of the willing. Poetry does not have all the answers, but it turns us to the truth of our shared humanity.”

-Angela Jackson,
Illinois Poet Laureate
(2020-2024) and
special guest at
2025 state contest



- 82% of teachers surveyed agreed that Poetry Out Loud is easy to incorporate in the classroom.

- 90% of teachers surveyed agreed that students' confidence increased after program participation.

- 82% of teachers surveyed agreed that students' analytical skills improved after program participation.

- National Endowment for the Arts, 2015

Illinois
ARTS
Council

“When I imagine students from our school sitting up at night reading over poem after poem searching for the one that strikes a chord with them, I smile and am thankful we adopted this program. I recall the nervous sophomore girl stepping in front of the class and morphing into Carl Sandburg reciting ‘Chicago’ with a confidence I didn’t know she possessed. These are the benefits of the Poetry Out Loud program that have changed the way I teach poetry.”

- Craig Lawrence, Wheaton Warrenville South High School English teacher whose students, Mark Schmidt and Monica Labelle, were the 2008 and 2014 Poetry Out Loud Illinois State Champions

Springfield Area Arts Council

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Springfield Area Arts Council

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**
POETRY OUT LOUD

AMERICA
250



Jillian Garcia, 2025 regional contestant



Poetry Out Loud

Competitions take place in fall and winter in classrooms and schools. Two winners will represent their school at the central Illinois regional contest in mid-February.

The top fourteen winners from Illinois's seven regions will return to Springfield in early March. The state champion and chaperone are awarded an expense paid trip to the national finals in D.C.

To get your school involved, please contact Sheila Walk at the Springfield Area Arts Council.

programs@springfieldartsco.org

Last year in Illinois, more than 7,800 students and 200 teachers in 48 high schools participated in Poetry Out Loud. Please be part of our 21st year!

"Poetry is at the heart of us as people. It belongs everywhere and to everyone"
-Poetry Foundation



Charles Kaffer, 2025 Illinois state contestant

Photographer: William Richards

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

For more information:
www.poetryoutloud.org

Audio-Video recording (by UMedia) of the 2025 Illinois state contest:
<https://youtu.be/9RwF2MgTf14>

Poetry Out Loud Curriculum -

- Satisfies most NCTE, Common Core, and ESSA standards
- Contains supplementary lesson plans with creative writing exercises
- Designed to take place over two or three weeks
- Integrates with existing syllabi
- Can take place anytime between fall and early winter
- Will not require full class periods



Avery Arisman, 2025 regional contestant

