



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 to high schools across the country. This program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life. Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, Poetry Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board and South Central Service Cooperative. Since 2005, Poetry Out Loud has grown to reach more than 3.8 million students and 60,000 teachers from 16,000 schools in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. All content is free to use by educators and there are no fees for student participation in the competition. More information can be found at www.mnscsc.org/poetry-out-loud or www.poetryoutloud.org.

This virtual workshop was compiled by participants, educators and competition judges to help educators and students learn more about the program and to improve poetry presentation skills. Items in the left column are taken from the competition scoring rubric as well as general program information. Click on the links in the right column to watch various videos from each topic.

<p>Introduction to Poetry Out Loud: These videos will provide educators and students with a general overview of Poetry Out Loud.</p>	<p><u>Introduction from a POL champion</u> – Isabella Callery</p> <p><u>POL from a student’s perspective</u> – Isabella Callery</p> <p><u>Minnesota State Competition compilation</u> – MN POL</p> <p><u>Get involved in POL!</u> – POL Foundation</p> <p><u>Why POL?</u> – POL Foundation</p> <p><u>Celebrating POL</u> – National Endowment for the Arts</p>
<p>Evidence of Understanding: Has the contestant selected a poem that is appropriate to his or her voice and vocal abilities, thus showing self-awareness and knowledge of the poem, its tone and content?</p>	<p><u>What to consider when selecting material for the competition</u> – Michael Albright</p> <p><u>Understanding and appreciating poetry: Form and content</u> – Michael Albright</p> <p><u>Evidence of understanding</u> – Jeannie Piekos</p> <p><u>How to choose your poem</u> – Jeannie Piekos</p> <p><u>How to choose a poem</u> – POL Foundation</p>

<p>Physical Presence: Think about such aspects as poise, deportment, posture, eye contact, comfort, balance, self-assurance, charm, grooming, and charisma – it includes walking up to and away from the microphone. A contestant who scores well in this category would be someone who would compel your focus and your attention.</p>	<p><u>Filling the space: How to prepare to perform in an auditorium</u> – Julie Walker</p> <p><u>Physical presence</u> – Diego Vazquez, Jr.</p> <p><u>Strategies for stage fright or performance anxiety</u> – Nadine Schmidt</p>
<p>Dramatic Appropriateness: A contestant who scores well in this category would be one who uses full-body movement and gestures in a very conservative manner, only when necessary, and only to enhance our understanding of the meaning of the poem. The same can be said of extremes of volume and pitch.</p>	<p><u>Body language and poetry performance</u> – Michael Albright</p> <p><u>Performance and dramatic appropriateness</u> – Michael Albright</p> <p><u>Embodying the text</u> – Mary Cutler</p>
<p>Voice & Articulation: A contestant who scores well in this category would speak slowly and distinctly, would pronounce all the necessary vowels and consonants in a natural, non-forced manner, and would use the voice in a colorful, almost “musical” manner, to help us better understand the meaning of the poem.</p>	<p><u>What is meant by voice and articulation</u> – Nadine Schmidt</p> <p><u>Vocal impact: Using the microphone effectively</u> – Gregory Wilkins</p> <p><u>Interpreting punctuation</u> – Mary Cutler</p>
<p>Overall Performance: Scores in this category should reflect the amount in which the recitation has “enlightened” you or caused you to better-understand or appreciate the poem.</p>	<p><u>Scoring for overall performance</u> – Diego Vazquez, Jr.</p>
<p>Accuracy: This is the only category in which contestants LOSE points rather than EARN them. Only the Accuracy Judge scores this category according to a predetermined scale. The use of a script is prohibited.</p>	<p><u>Memorizing poems without sounding rehearsed</u> – Nadine Schmidt</p>
<p>Poetry Out Loud in the Classroom: Hear from a veteran educator on how to use POL with students.</p>	<p><u>Managing POL at your school</u> – Laura Meyer (<u>PPT Slides</u>)</p> <p><u>Preparing POL students for competition</u> – Laura Meyer (<u>PPT Slides</u>)</p>
<p>General Tips and Real Student Recitations: General tips and presentation examples from real students.</p>	<p><u>Poetry Out Loud Tips</u> – POL Foundation</p> <p><u>POL Tips and Examples</u> – POL Foundation</p> <p><u>Minnesota state champion performance</u> – MN POL</p> <p><u>2020 state champions’ recitations</u> – POL Foundation</p>

About Our Presenters

Michael Albright is an assistant professor of English at Southwest Minnesota State University. He specializes in early modern/Renaissance drama and 20th-century American drama. Michael also supports SMSU's concurrent enrollment program.

Isabella Callery is the 2019 Minnesota and National Poetry Out Loud champion. She graduated from Arcadia High School in Northfield and is now at Beloit College in Wisconsin studying to become a social worker. Isabella runs her own native American beading shop alongside her studies. Through her experience at Poetry Out Loud, she was able to continue a love and appreciation for poetry. Isabella is excited to be a part of this video workshop and hopes that it will kindle that same love in other students across the U.S.

Mary Cutler's directing in the Twin Cities area includes productions with SOAR Arts' (St. Michael's), Theater in the Round, Buffalo Community Theatre, Lex-Ham Community Theatre in St. Paul and Phipps' Theatre in Hudson, Off-Broadway Musical Theatre, Theatre Unbound and the former Bloomington Civic. She teaches beginning acting classes, acting for musical theatre, scene study and audition classes for St. Paul and Minneapolis adult education programs.

Laura Meyer is a National Board Certified English teacher at Big Lake High School. She has taught for 22 years and coordinated and coached the Poetry Out Loud competition at BLHS for the last 12 years. Laura has witnessed Poetry Out Loud positively impact the lives of hundreds of students, and believes POL empowers and connects students through the universal language of poetry.

Jeannie Piekos is the author of "Buoyancy," a memoir which won Best Autobiography/Memoir from Midwest Independent Publishing Association in 2019. She is an award-winning poet, arts producer and activist. Jeannie has performed in venues all over the state. She was a producer on WriteOn! Radio and a curator for PWF, SASE, and May Day. Jeannie works as a media writer and video producer.

Nadine Schmidt is a theatre professor, producer and program coordinator at Southwest Minnesota State University, where she directs shows and teaches various acting and other theatre courses. She has acted with Bare Bodkins Theatre and SMSU theater. Nadine has a Master of Fine Arts in acting from the University of Arkansas, a certificate in Shakespeare performance from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Harvard.

Diego Vazquez, Jr. established The Women's Writing Program for incarcerated women in county jails in 2012. He is the editor of more than 30 anthologies of poems written by women in the jails and the author of "Growing Through the Ugly."

Julie Walker has been involved with performance nearly her entire life – from music at a young age to oral interpretation performances to professionally presenting for large groups of individuals in high school and college. She studied performance and identity and forensics while pursuing her Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts in communication studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Since 2014, Julie has taught public speaking and performance while coaching the Southwest Minnesota State University collegiate speech team.

Gregory Wilkins is an educator, artist, writer, social justice warrior, and world traveler who prefers to sing the talk and dance the walk. As a former child actor and now professional artist and university educator, he challenges the status quo and rises toward excellence. Having worked at colleges and universities across the United States, as well as volunteered with indigenous communities on more than one-third of Earth, Gregory brings his knowledge and openness to continue to learn from others different from himself. He has served on arts boards, non-profits, and is currently a member of the Minneapolis Institute of Art's Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program Artist Panel.