How To: Administer a Poetry Out Loud Virtual Competition

Poetry Out Loud (POL) competitions may be held virtually or in-person. 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. All contests, whether in-person or virtual, 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 contact your state coordinator.

- 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.

Accessibility:

- Please refer to the National Endowment for the Arts' guide [Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities](#).
- Review [POL Accessibility Checklist – Venue & Event Promotion](#) for planning recommendations for captioning and sign language interpreter vendors, alternate formats of materials, and communication of access accommodations. Reach out to participating schools for the Deaf and Blind prior to event planning to inquire about preferences.
- Check the compatibility of your virtual platform for screen-reading software and captioning capabilities (do not rely on auto-generated captions and plan to work with a third-party). Avoid using only the chat feature for essential information that will not be said aloud. Reach out to accessibility@arts.gov for guidance.
- Set communication rules at the start, speak slowly, and introduce yourself before speaking, which is also helpful for captioners and interpreters.
- Research audio description vendors for live streamed competitions, in particular for participating schools for the Blind.
- If an access accommodation is requested by a judge or a teacher who will be in a breakout room, make sure the captioner or interpreter is directly assigned to the requester.

Additional resources and tips:

- For video submission contests, we recommend considering having student competitors attest that their recitations were indeed recited from memory and their videos were not edited or altered (this includes not adding graphics, titles, music, etc.). Organizers may want to include this as a part of their competition registration process for students.
  - Here is sample language: "I certify that my Poetry Out Loud recitation(s) were performed from memory and the video(s) I submitted were not edited or altered in any way. All recitations follow the Poetry Out Loud competition criteria and are true to the best of my knowledge."
- For guidance on how students should film recitations, please refer to the "How To: Film a Recitation for a Virtual Poetry Out Loud Competition" document on the ["Organize a Competition"](#) page on poetryoutloud.org.
- For additional contest resources including a digital contest evaluation sheet, sample tally sheet, and more, go to the ["Organize a Competition"](#) page on poetryoutloud.org.