



Alameda County 2026-2027 POETRY OUT LOUD

All Alameda County High Schools are Invited to Participate!

Poetry Out Loud (POL) 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. This program encourages students to read, recite and share their voice. Students practice public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about literary creative expression. Poetry Out Loud provides free, online curriculum resources including a teacher's guide, lesson plans, poetry archive, and student performance videos. All Alameda County high schools with youth in grades 9-12 are invited to participate. Visit www.poetryoutloud.org to watch an informative video "Bring Poetry into the Classroom with Poetry Out Loud!"

Competition Format: Structured like a spelling bee, school winners advance to the County competition in February, then the State competition in February, and ultimately National Finals in April.

2026/2027 Competition Overview: The program focuses on students choosing, memorizing, and reciting at least one memorized poem for a school competition. Highly flexible, teachers or school staff can conduct the program in the classroom during the school day, as extra credit, or during an after-school program. The program length can be as short as 2 weeks. Schools must conduct their recitation competition and register their student winner for the County Competition by Jan. 8, 2027. For the County Competition on Wed, Jan. 27, 2027, each student representative will recite two memorized poems. All poems for all competitions must be memorized and on www.poetryoutloud.org.

County Competition Prizes: 1st Place Prize \$200; 2nd Place Prize \$100; all other participants \$50. \$100 will be awarded to 1st Place County Winner's school that facilitated the student winner's participation.

Timeline with Important School Deadlines:

- **Thur, Oct. 1, 2026 - School Deadline to Confirm Participation:** A school teacher or staff person must email the Alameda County Poetry Out Loud Coordinator Violet Harlo at violet.harlo@acgov.org with contact information for the teacher/staff who will be the Poetry Out Loud Coordinator and the date of school Poetry Out Loud competition.
- **October 2026 - January 2027 – Schools conduct their Poetry Out Loud program:** Using the online [Poetry Out Loud](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) resources and poems, schools conduct the program and a poetry recitation competition to select their representative for the County competition. All competition poems must be memorized and on www.poetryoutloud.org.
- **Friday, Jan. 8, 2027 – School Deadline to Register Student Representative for County Competition:** School coordinator/teacher must email the Alameda County Poetry Out Loud Coordinator Violet Harlo at violet.harlo@acgov.org with: 1) Contact information for the student representative and student's parent/guardian and 2) Student's two poems (title and poet) in the order they will be performed at the County Competition. All competition poems must be memorized and on www.poetryoutloud.org
- **Wed, Jan. 27, 2027, 4:00-6:00 pm: In-Person County Competition:** County Level Competition hosted by Alameda County Arts Commission. All poems must be memorized and on www.poetryoutloud.org.
- **Sun, February 28 – Mon, March 1, 2027 – California State Competition:** Alameda County student representative participates in the California State Finals competition in Sacramento. The student will recite three memorized poems that are on www.poetryoutloud.org.
- **April 26-28, 2027 – National Finals Competition:** The California State student champion participates in National Finals competition in Washington, DC.

Alameda County Poetry Out Loud Coordinator: Contact Violet Harlo at violet.harlo@acgov.org or 510-891-5716.

WHAT IS POETRY OUT LOUD?

Poetry Out Loud is an opportunity for high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization and recitation performance. Since 2005, Poetry Out Loud has reached more than 4.1 million students and 68,000 teachers from 17,000 schools throughout the nation. California's Poetry Out Loud is the largest in the country involving over 50 counties, 200 schools, and 10,000 students annually.

WHO CAN ENTER THE POETRY OUT LOUD COMPETITION?

Poetry Out Loud competition is open to schools that serve high school students in 9-12 grades. School sites may include public, private, charter, parochial, independent, alternative, continuation, court schools. A Poetry Out Loud school coordinator may be a teacher, librarian, or staff member.

HOW DOES POETRY OUT LOUD WORK?

Poetry Out Loud is a tiered competition structure like a spelling bee. School coordinators use the Poetry Out Loud resource materials to teach poetry recitation and run a competition to select the school's student representative to enter the County competition. The County winner competes in the state competition, and the state winner competes in the national finals.

HOW DOES POETRY OUT LOUD SUPPORT THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

Poetry Out Loud activities support [many Common Core Standards and NCTE Standards](#). Common Core examples include Anchor Standards for Reading (RL.9-10, RL.11-12) and Anchor Standards for Language (L.9-10, L.11-12).

POETRY RESOURCES

All resources are online at the [National Poetry Out Loud website](#) at www.poetryoutloud.org including:

- **Find Poems:** [Online search tools](#) for students to browse and discover poems that are meaningful to them.
- **Competing Resources for students:**
 - [What It's Like to Compete](#) videos about the Poetry Out Loud program.
 - [Watch Recitation Videos](#) featuring past state and national champions.
 - [Tips on Reciting](#) with Evaluation Criteria information.
- **Teachers & Organizers Resources:**
 - [Teacher's Guide](#) with information about program structure, sample schedule, competition, and judging.
 - [Lesson plans](#) and teaching resources to support Poetry Out Loud programming.
 - [Organize a Competition](#) and [Judging a Competition](#) sections with information and resources.
 - Poetry Out Loud [Logos and Graphics](#) and [NCTE and Common Core Standards information](#) sections.

DO WE NEED TO SIGN UP?

Yes, Alameda County High Schools teachers and staff who are interested in their schools participating must submit Poetry Out Loud participation information by Oct. 1, 2026. Email the Alameda County Poetry Out Loud Coordinator Violet Harlo at violet.harlo@acgov.org with the contact information for the teacher/staff who will be the Poetry Out Loud Coordinator and date of the school Poetry Out Loud competition.

HOW IS POETRY OUT LOUD FUNDED?

Poetry Out Loud is funded by The National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, the California Arts Council, and the Alameda County Arts Commission.

Questions? Contact Poetry Out Loud Coordinator Violet Harlo at violet.harlo@acgov.org or 510-891-5716.



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