

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

POETRY OUT LOUD 



Role of Prompter in Poetry Out Loud Competitions

If a student momentarily loses their place in the recitation or forgets the beginning of a line, he or she may rely on the designated prompter for help.

As a prompter, you should sit in the front row of the audience, close enough so the student can clearly see and hear you. (The competition organizer will likely have pre-selected your location.) Students will be shown where the prompter will be sitting before the competition so they know where to look should they forget a line. It is best if prompters are in place during the sound check so the students are confident they know where to look for assistance.

As each student recites, follow along with the text of the poem. (You will receive a notebook with the poems printed out in large font or a tablet with poems loaded.) If a student reaches a point in their recitation where they are stuck for a line, they are instructed to pause and look directly at the prompter. At that point, you will give them the first few words of the next line. If they are still stuck, then you may give them a few more words. The prompter should not give the student the next words until the student looks directly at or points to the prompter for help.

Sometimes a student forgets a line, but just moves ahead to different part of the poem. If this happens, just keep following the text and do nothing. The accuracy judge will make a note of the missed lines.

A prompter may double as accuracy judge at lower levels of competition, but it is not recommended.