

POETRY OUT LOUD SCORING RUBRIC*

The scoring rubric provides a concise, consistent measure for evaluating recitations. It is intended as a companion to the full evaluation criteria and tips, not a replacement for them.

Please review the evaluation criteria in full before the competition.

	Needs Improvement	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	Outstanding
Physical Presence	Physical choices distract; stiff, agitated, repetitive, visibly uncomfortable, or little audience connection.	Uncertain or timid; posture, focus, movement, or expressions may seem nervous or forced.	Adequate but inconsistent; at times comfortable and connected, at times unsure or distracting.	Comfortable; physical choices generally support the poem and audience connection.	Composed and purposeful; physical choices support the poem and engage the audience.	Compelling presence; physical choices are fully integrated and deepen engagement.
Voice and Articulation	Hard to hear or understand; rushed, dragged, or singsong delivery; several pronunciation errors.	Uneven or distracting vocal choices; inconsistent projection, pace, tone, pauses, or articulation.	Mostly clear; pace, tone, and pauses are adequate, with limited variation or occasional distractions.	Clear, well-paced, and easy to follow; pronunciation and emphasis support language and meaning.	Very clear and expressive; effective vocal variety, emphasis, tone, energy, and pauses.	Skillful delivery; articulation, pacing, pauses, and variety are precise, natural, and responsive to poem.
Interpretation	Delivery overshadows or distorts poem through over-emoting, singing, or affected accent.	Interpretive choices feel generic or imposed and pull focus from language.	Interpretive choices neither overwhelm nor strongly enhance the poem.	Tone, emotion, pacing, emphasis, and style are intentional and generally grounded in the poem.	Authentic and nuanced; choices reveal tonal and emotional shifts with appropriate restraint.	Deeply internalized; choices feel essential, authentic, and responsive to the poem.
Evidence of Understanding	Meaning is obscured by misplaced emphasis, rushed phrasing, or distorting choices.	Meaning is partial; key words, images, references, or shifts are missed or unclear.	Communicates basic meaning, with limited attention to the poem's nuance, language, or structure.	Conveys meaning accurately; emphasis, phrasing, and pacing clarify important ideas.	Thoughtful, nuanced understanding of meaning, language, imagery, tone, and progression.	Clarifies the poem skillfully; major choices show accurate, subtle, sophisticated understanding.
Overall Performance (consider poem complexity)	Ineffective or inappropriate as a complete recitation; choices work against the poem.	Inadequate or lackluster; lacks cohesion, polish, and/or meaningful audience impact.	Sufficient complete performance, but limited in cohesion, intention, polish, or impression.	Enjoyable and effective; combined choices work together to deliver the poem.	Polished, intentional, and engaging; combined choices illuminate the poem.	Unified, compelling, and memorable; the whole equals more than the sum of the parts.

*Note that all elements need not be present. Semicolons often represent "or."

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