

Brave New Voices Poetry Slam

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Although we de-stress the competition, these are the rules of our slam. Please abide by them to avoid disqualification so we can focus on the poems and the fun, expansive nature of the festival as a whole.

- There must be a minimum of four people on each team, a maximum of six. No alternates. All 6 can be on the team. Teams can bring other youth (entourage), who can be incorporated into all aspects of the festival except the slam itself (additional youth can be sacrificial poets).
- No more than 4 poets on the stage or on mic at any time (during the slam). By “on the stage”, we mean as a part – any part – of the poem including from the stage, backstage, or the audience.
- Team members must be between 13 – 19 years old (cannot turn 20 before July 19, 2017)
- Each team must have a minimum of one adult chaperone (over the age of 21) for every 4 youth competing or non competing. *(If you bring any more than 4 youth you need an extra chaperone)*
- Teams must prepare at least one individual poem per member.
- All of the work used in the Slam must be original writing by the individuals performing. Teams that plagiarize will be disqualified. Plagiarism, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is to steal and pass off (the ideas and words of another) as one’s own; use (another’s production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft; present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.
- During the **Quarter-Final bouts and Semi’s**, we will not announce the scores out loud to the audience. Instead, coaches will receive a text at the end of each round with the scores after they have been calculated.
- All teams are required to have at least two Group pieces, constructed and performed as duets, trios, and quartets. Each performing member of a group piece must have participated in the writing of the group piece.
- Teams must perform at least one group piece during each bout.

- The Slam is about the poet(s) and the mic(s). Props may not be used in the Slam. Props are defined as any non-body piece of equipment and **do not include** the mics, the mic chord, the wall, the stage, or any other item that is a part of the stage. Musical accompaniment (excluding mouth / body percussion) may not be used in the Slam.
- During the 1st, 2nd, & 4th rounds of each bout, each individual and group piece must be under three minutes, 30 seconds in length. We will have a 10 second grace period after which significant time penalties will incur.
- **Lightning Round:** During the 3rd round of **quarterfinals** and **semifinals** (not finals), each individual and group poem must be under 1 minute and 30 seconds. There will be a 10 second grace period after which scores will be penalized .5 for every 10 seconds beyond the allotted time.
- If individuals or teams go over the time limits, their scores will be penalized .5 for each 10 seconds beyond the regulated time for that round. During the 1st, 2nd, and 4th rounds, we will penalize starting at 3 minutes 40 seconds (eg. Up to 3:39 – no penalty; 3:40 to 3:49 - .5 point penalty; 3:50 – 3:59 – 1 point penalty, etc.). During the 3rd round, we will penalize starting at 1 minute 40 seconds (i.e.: 0:00 to 1:39 seconds – no penalty, 1:40 to 1:49 – .5 point penalty, 1:50 to 1:59 – 1 point penalty, etc.) The official clock is managed by the host and verified by the bout manager.
- There are two audience engagements that start the time: first utterance and performance gesture. First utterance includes the first word or sound of the poem that engages the audience or bout officials. First utterance does not include: (i) speaking or making noise into a microphone in a manner intended to check the microphone; or (ii) bodily functions such as coughing, sneezing, throat clearing, etc. Performance gesture includes "performative" body movement and physical reaction/recognition towards any audience member by the performer(s). Performance gesture does not include: adjusting the microphone, arranging clothing, rubbing of the face, or any other action done in preparation for the performance. For a group piece, a performance gesture does not include: (i) a preparation to nod to fellow teammates on stage; or (ii) a tap on the thigh to establish pace/start the poem. With these guidelines in mind, the beginning and end of a poem's time is ultimately at the discretion of the timekeeping officials. If poets have concerns regarding time, they should seek out both the bout manager and timekeeper to clarify before the bout begins.
- There is no censorship whatsoever. However, we strongly discourage hate speech of any kind. We strive to create a safe and inclusive environment that challenges teams to speak with intention -- to share stories without degrading, mocking, or threatening groups of people. In regard to excessive profanity, violence, and sexually explicit content, we recommend teams consider how their work can impact this particular space

and audience.

REPEAT RULE

- Teams as a whole can repeat a maximum of 2 poems throughout the Slam, except for the teams who make Finals. Finalists will be allowed to perform their best pieces regardless of how many times they have performed them in the earlier rounds of the Poetry Slam. Bring your best pieces to the Finals.
- Choose wisely. We do this to encourage young folks to push your creativity and write / perform new work.
- To clarify, this is two poems that can be performed twice by the entire team, not by each individual member. Because there are two Quarter-Final bouts (8 poems per team), The Semi – Finals (4 poems), and the Finals (4 poems), each team should prepare a minimum of 10 poems for the Slam itself. There are many opportunities for open mics and other readings as well.

Quarter-final and Semi-final Bouts

- Each team will participate in TWO Quarter-Final bouts and 20 teams will participate in the Semi Finals. 4 teams move on to the Grand Slam Finals.
- Bouts are 4 rounds each and will have a scorekeeper / timekeeper, bout manager, host and emcee.
- The Slam will be judged by a mixed panel of poets, adults and young people who are in no way affiliated with the teams who participate in the Slam but may be affiliated with the organizations from which they come. Many judges will be pre-selected and some will come from the audience. We rely heavily on the host team and organization to identify the volunteers, and we also count on our Festival partners to provide judges.
- Team bouts will be drawn randomly. Quarter Final and Semi Final bouts will consist of four to five participating teams. Finals will consist of four participating teams.
- Bout order is drawn before the start of the bout. Teams draw either an A, B, C, D, or E. bout order goes as follows:

Round 1 – Team A, Team B, Team C, Team D, Team E

Round 2 - Team B, Team C, Team D, Team E, Team A

Round 3 - Team C, Team D, Team E, Team A, Team B

Round 4 - Team D, Team E, Team A, Team B, Team C

- Every member of the team must be physically present and checked in with the Slam organizers at least 25 minutes before their bout begins.
- After each bout, each team will earn a place ranking of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in order of high to low score. At the conclusion of the Quarter-Finals, we will add each team's rankings for a cumulative rank score (e.g. if a team places 1st in their bout, and 2nd in their second bout, their cumulative rank score is 3).
- In the event of a tie in a Quarter Final bout, tying teams will receive the lowest rank score possible. The rank score for the other teams within the bout will not be affected. (For example, if teams A and B tie for first, both teams receive a rank score of 1, while teams C and D still receive rank scores of 3 and 4.)
- The 20 teams with the lowest cumulative rank score will advance to the Semi Finals.
- In the event that there is a tie in cumulative rank score, tie breakers will be determined according to the point differential system. The point differential system measures how close a team came to winning their bout (i.e. it is just as important to score high in your bout, as it is to win or place high in your bout.). If two teams are tied with a "4" ranking, for instance (one team finished in second in both prelims, the other finished in first and third place in their bouts), then the tie would be broken by tabulating how far from victory they were: Team A finished in second place in both bouts. They lost bout one by -.6 points and bout two by -1.9 points. Their total point differential is a -2.5. Team B finished in first place in bout one, and third in bout two. Their differential for bout one is ZERO, their differential for bout three is -2.2 points. Team B's total point differential is a -2.2. In this scenario Team B would advance. It rewards teams for winning one or the other bout, and also keeps consistency between bouts by asking teams to compete against their own judges, and no others.
- Winners of each of the Semi-Final Bouts will advance to the Grand Slam Finals. In the event of a tie in the Semi's, there will be a one poem slam off between the tying teams. The judges will be asked to score the poems from 0-10, same as the rest of the slam, and time penalties will be calculated the same as any other poem in the slam. The team with the highest scoring poem in the slam off will advance to Grand Slam Finals. In the event of a second tie, judges will be asked to submit the team name (Team A or Team B) of the poet they liked the best. The team with the most votes from the judges advances to Grand Slam Finals.
- In the event a team wants to lodge a protest against another team for an infraction of any of the rules, it is the responsibility of the protesting team to contact the host BEFORE the conclusion of the bout. Depending on the severity of the violation, a follow-up or protest meeting will be held to determine feasible next steps. When protesting, please ensure the violation is clear, and be prepared to refer to the BNV

Rules document. Also, remember that we work to value our community over the competitive nature of poetry slam. Therefore, we appreciate anyone who calls attention to rule violations, and also want to emphasize that “it’s not the points that count.

- No recording equipment is allowed during the bouts except by Youth Speaks and others authorized to film. Film or audio recordings **cannot be used as evidence** in any protest or grievance with regard to the Poetry Slam.

TRIGGER/CONTENT WARNINGS

- There will be a collective content/trigger warning issued by the MC at the top of the bout.
- Poets are allowed to deliver a TW themselves, but time will start at first utterance or audience engagement as specified earlier in the rules.
- If teams would like a specified TW before a particular poem, but would like it to happen outside of the poems clocked time, they will have the option of having the MC issue a more specific trigger warning directly before any poem. On checking into each bout, teams will receive 4 TW slips. Teams wishing for a TW will have the option of filling out the slip with team name, draw (ABCDE), round, and content warning. Teams can deliver the slip to the MC at any point during the show up until the designated poem is on deck. The MC will read the TW for the upcoming poem, then invite the poet up to the stage and ask for applause from the audience.
- The TW will be as follows : “For the next poem from team (team listed on card) there is a trigger warning for (list content written on the card). If you would like to step out of the room now or at any point throughout the poem to take care of yourself, feel free to do so. ”

SOME NOTES

- We encourage you to become intimately familiar with the poems you will compete with. Memorization is not required (music stands will be available at venues) but you do want to really bust your piece. Rehearse! Know your poems.
- Judges will be given criteria for judging on both writing and performance quality, and will serve more as encouragers of young writers than judges. This will be as standardized as possible, but like each of us, judges come with their own biases for and against certain topics and styles, Remember, the standard is yourself. Be your own best “judge”
- Judges will be seated together at a table in front of the stage. Their scores will be passed down to the event host, who will read them off from low to high. We do this because we want to allow the judges some anonymity, and to not have poets get angry or too happy with any one judge. We will have a panel of writers, poets, educators and

activists as judges throughout the week.

- Take responsibility for your words. Be Smart.
- Be respectful of yourself, the youth writing community and the group, city and community you represent.
- Have fun in this process. If you don't get high scores, so what? It says nothing about your abilities and potential as a writer, thinker and cultural leader.