



## Young Voices Rise- Youth Poetry Festival

The poetry slam is a competition invented in the 1980s by a Chicago construction worker named Marc Smith ["So what!"] in which performed poetry is judged by random members of the audience. The poetry slam was a way of taking poetry away from the "Ivory Tower" of academia and give it back to the people. However, even though the slam is a competition, which brings communities together, the point in the poetry not the score.

In partnership with [Mesa Arts Center](#), Phonetic Spit produces The Young Voices Rise Youth Poetry Festival to bring together students from all across the Phoenix Metro and surrounding areas for a two-day celebration of youth voices. We believe in the radical notion that young people, when give the proper platforms and tools, can SPEAK into existences the changes this world so drastically needs.

## Official Rules

### Participants Requirement:

- Team:
  - Students must be between the ages of 13 & 18, and enrolled in a local (Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe, Peoria, Scottsdale Etc) School.
  - Teams must be made up of at least 3 students.
  - In team bouts, the first 3 rounds can be either individual poems or group pieces. The last round (4th) must be a group piece. **Group Pieces are when two or more students are performing an original poem together.**
  - Teams must pre-register for the competition. No walk ups allowed.

- Team members can not perform in Individual competition. Individual competition is designated for Students where Phonetic Spit programming isn't available or where there isn't enough students (**3**) to make a team.
- **Individual:**
  - Students must be between the ages of 13 & 18, and enrolled in either a middle school or high school in a local (Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe, Peoria, Etc) School.
  - Poet must compete with a minimum of two original poems (see timekeeping rules below).
  - Students must pre-register for the competition. No walk ups allowed.

## **BOUT Rules:**

### **Timekeeping-**

- Each poem must be under 3 1/2 minutes in length. Scores will be penalized for going over the time limit. Penalties will begin at 3:40, with a .5 point deduction for every ten seconds over time. (i.e. a 4:00 poem will receive a 1-point deduction, assuming no other deductions apply).
- Poets will be asked to leave the stage if they reach 5:00.
- Timing will begin at first utterance after the poet introduction is delivered

### **Plagiarism-**

- Participants must perform pieces of **their own** original writing. Participants who plagiarize will be disqualified. Clearly quoting/sampling other works and utilizing literary allusions are not considered plagiarism. Determining prop, costume and music infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers.

### **Props, Costumes, & Music-**

- Props, costumes, and/or musical accompaniment may not be used in the slam. (i.e. performing a piece involving a hoodie and wearing a hoodie is allowed. Using a hoodie you're wearing as a prop to emphasize your words is not. Dressing as a team in a way that illustrates the content of your piece is also grounds for deduction). Determining prop, costume and music infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers.

### **Safe Space Rules**

- Poets must abide by Phonetic Spit's safe space rules: No racist, sexist, homophobic, gender-biased, ableist, or otherwise derogatory speech that is degrading to any specific group of people. Failure to heed this can result in point deduction or disqualification as determined by the bout manager.
- Discriminatory language is prohibited. Violations will result in a .5 penalty for every infraction. Determining content infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers. **Bout manager may determine a Poet to be disqualified with excess violations of these rules.**
- Profanity is not prohibited, however, students are encouraged to use discretion in their choice of diction.

### **Protesting Rule Infractions-**

- All protests of possible rule infractions must be lodged with the bout manager prior to

signing the score sheet at the end of each bout. The bout manager will review the complaint with the rest of the tournament staff before making a decision regarding potential consequences. The decision will be presented to the affected individuals in person by Bout Manager.

## Judging

### **Judging-**

- A panel of artists, educators, community members and audience members will judge each bout. Judges should in no way be affiliated with the poets who participate in YVR Festival.
- Challenges to the appointment of judges must be brought to the bout manager *before* the first poet takes the stage.

### **Scoring-**

- YVR is rooted in the craft of poetry. Although we encourage poets to hone their performances skills, writing and language are valued over any performance elements.
- We encourage POETS to memorize their poems, though it is not required.

### **Scoring Rubrics-**

Students participating in the Phonetic Spit programming come from all across the city and range in ages from 13 to 18. For some of the students this will be the first time they are sharing their poems on a mic, in front of an audience. For others they may have traveled to other cities and competed in national youth poetry festivals. The foundation of our programming is to create a safe space for them to find, develop, and publicly present their voice. That being said all that we ask of you as a judge is that you find a balance in your scoring between how the students present themselves through performance and the content of their writing. Lastly, we ask that you remain consistent throughout the bout. You will be given a chance to calibrate your score with a sacrificial poet (who is not a part of the competition) before the bout officially starts. The calibration score is your baseline for all other performances. Each bout will have a designated manager that will address all judges before to go over any concerns you may have. The slam would not exist if it weren't for the judges, so thank you for your service.

### **Score Sheet-**

- After each poet judges will be given one minute to write their scores down on the score sheet (example below).
- Scores are on scale between 1- 10. We encourage judges to score using decimal points to avoid ties. (example: 7.4, 8.9, 9.4)
- Once scores have been record, judges will hand them to the bout score keeper.
- Scorekeeper will calculate the totals.



## Phonetic Spit Slam Score Sheets

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Poet	Round 1	Round 2	Total
Sacrificial Poet			
Jennifer	7.6	8.9	
Tomas	8.6	5.5	
Myrlin	6.7	9.4	