



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

**WORDS ON FIRE: A POETRY AND PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL
SPOKEN WORD COMPETITION
SCORING RUBRIC**

Spoken Word Poetry is a broad designation for poetry that is intended for performance and is rooted in oral traditions. Spoken word is characterized by rhyme, repetition, and word play, and can contain elements of rap, hip-hop, storytelling, theater, and jazz.

WRITTEN STRUCTURE (5 POINTS MAXIMUM)

1. The poem has a clear beginning, middle and end.
2. The poem is clear in subject matter and message.
3. The poem includes figurative language to convey the meaning or message (i.e. metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, allusion, etc.). Consideration will be given to quality of use instead of quantity.
4. The poem includes rhetorical devices to convey the meaning or message (i.e. end rhyme, internal rhyme, alliteration, repetition, anaphora, etc.). Consideration will be given to quality of use instead of quantity.
5. The poem does not use many clichés. Or if clichés are used, they are creatively and uniquely incorporated.

PERFORMANCE QUALITY (5 POINTS MAXIMUM)

1. The poem is fully memorized and delivered with no errors.
2. The poetry performance is loud enough for the audience to hear. The poet uses appropriate tempo and pronunciation.
3. The poetry performance conveys the appropriate emotion for the content.
4. The poet's body movements and gestures are intentional and increases the audiences' understanding of the poem.
5. The poet makes appropriate eye contact at least three times during the performance.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Poems must be the student's original work.
Poets may quote existing text but it may not be longer than 15 seconds. The original author must be cited in the poem.
2. Poems submitted for the written competition are not eligible for the spoken word competition.
3. Poems should be no more than 3 minutes in length when performed.
4. CAH values and supports the right of freedom of expression and does not censor work. Participants should adhere to their school's censorship regulations and consider that this is a family-friendly program.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. All styles of poetry will be considered.
2. No theatrical components (costumes, props, music, etc.) may be used during the performance.
3. Scoring will be done by judges and calculated at the end of each round.
4. Judges may assign up to 1/10th of a point.
5. Poems under 3 minutes will not be penalized but may not be long enough to fully capture the essence of the art form. Poems over 3 mins 10 secs will be penalized .5 points in 10 second increments.
6. Evidence of plagiarism will result in disqualification. Sampling of short lines and/or collected collaged lines (i.e cento) are permissible.