

JAYU POETRY SLAM RULES AND GUIDELINES

GENERAL FLOW OF THE SHOW

All 10 competing poets will read in the 1st round; the 5 poets with the highest scores move on to the second and final round. **The poet with the highest score accumulated** at the end of the night will be crowned the 2025 JAYU Festival of the Arts Slam Champion and be invited to be the featured poet at our next slam (pending availability).

In the event of a tie between the top 2 poets, they read 1 more poem in a sudden-death match, or they can agree to share the title. In a sudden-death match, judges indicate which poet they prefer by choosing one poet or the other (no scores), and the champion is crowned.

VENUE, DATE & TIME

Slam will take place at Urbanspace Gallery located at 401 Richmond Street West, Toronto M8V 3A8 on the main floor.

All poets will be expected to arrive at 6:30 PM for soundcheck and bout draw.

PRIZES

1st Place Grand Prize of \$350 Canadian funds will be made payable to one winning poet (via e-transfer). This poet will also have the opportunity to be the featured poet at JAYU's next poetry slam.

All other competing poets will receive \$75, regardless of their ranking in the slam

POET'S RESPONSIBILITIES & PERMISSIONS

Every competing poet must arrive at the venue for:

- 1) Sound Check at 6:30 pm EST on the night of the event.
- 2) Bout Draw at 6:45 pm on the night of the event.

Any competitor absent from the Bout Draw (without legitimate communication between Hosts) will be disqualified and an alternate registered competitor will be pulled from the waiting list to compete.

POEMS IN COMPETITION

Poets must have a variety of poems to compete with - there will be 2 rounds; however, if there is a tie between 1st and 2nd place, a 3rd round will occur to determine the winning poet. Poets cannot repeat any poem they have performed in any preceding round.

MEDIA CONSENT

By registering to compete, you consent to having photos taken at the venue and shared on JAYU's social media and promotional materials for future use.

If you do not consent to recording or photo documentation, please notify the Event Hosts, and we will ensure that none of the recording or screen grabs will include you.

HOST CONTACT INFORMATION

Des McKenzie (desiree@jayu.ca)
647-202-5629

ELIGIBILITY

Competitors must be Canada-based and able to accept funds in CAD.

POETRY CONTENT

All poems must be original material. Cited or referenced works sampled by other artists must be clarified either in performance (keep in mind the time limit) or shared with Hosts prior to show opening so that an announcement can be made.

Poems that use another artist's work as a sample within their poem, cannot be more than 25% of the poet's core content.

Poems do not have to be memorized and can be read from a book, phone, or any other device so long as it is not distracting or used as a prop.

TEAM PIECES

No team pieces here! This is an individual slam.

HATE SPEECH & PROPS

We will not tolerate hate speech of any kind. The Hosts have a right to cut off any poet who partakes in hate speech or oppressive narratives. Hate speech will result in immediate disqualification and dismissal from the Zoom room.

PROPS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, COSTUMES, and NUDITY

1. No props. **Prop**: an object or article of clothing introduced into a performance with the effect of enhancing, illustrating, underscoring, or otherwise augmenting the words of the poem.
2. No musical accompaniment (excluding mouth/hands/body percussion).
3. No costumes. **Costume**: A costume is any piece of clothing or accessory that is worn to enhance the performance.
4. No nudity.

Any use of props, musical instruments, costumes, or nudity will warrant a 2 point deduction.

TIME & SCORING

During each bout, each poem must be under 3 minutes, 10 seconds in length.

To reiterate, the time limit per poem is 3 minutes and 10 seconds.

Starting at 3:10.01, a penalty is automatically deducted from each poet's overall score according to the following schedule:

- i. 3:10 and under = no penalty
- ii. 3:10.01–2:00 = -0.5
- iii. 2:00.01–2:10 = -1.0
- iv. 2:20.01–2:30 = -1.5
- v. 2:30.01–2:40 = -2.0
- vi. and so on [-0.5 point deduction for every 10 seconds over 2:40]

Two audience engagements start the time: first utterance and performance gesture.

1. First utterance includes the first word or sound of the poem that engages the audience or bout officials.
2. Performance gesture includes "performative" body movement and physical reaction/recognition towards any audience member by the performer(s).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land Acknowledgements made by Indigenous, Inuit, and First Nations poets are allowed without penalty or time restriction.

If you will be doing a land acknowledgment before your poem, please notify the Hosts and Bout Manager during soundcheck so they know when to start the timer.

CONTENT WARNINGS

Please let hosts know prior to the show if you would like an announcement on content warnings to be made before introducing you to the stage.

Content warnings may include: *police brutality, sexual violence, eating disorders, suicidality, mental health, racial violence, anti-blackness, and anti-black violence, anti-indigenous sentiments, violence, or ness, homophobia, transphobia, fatphobia, and more.*

Please note, it is not mandatory to give a content warning. We will give a general one at the beginning of the slam, encouraging the audience to do what they need to take care of themselves.

Hosts will deliver content warnings as follows: *"For the next poem there is a content warning for _____."*

CALIBRATION POETS

At the beginning of the first and second bouts, calibration poets will perform. This will give the judges a chance to practice submitting their scores and set a standard for the event judging. The calibration poets' scores do not count in the competition.

JUDGES

All efforts shall be made to select judges who will be fair. The Bout Manager will choose (5) judges from the participating audience prior to show opening and will attempt to select a balanced and diverse judging panel of mixed and intersecting identities. Anyone who is affiliated with or has any personal connection with any of the competing poets or teams will not be selected.

A judge cannot be challenged over a score.

At the end of each poem, judges will text their scores to the Bout Manager 0-10 up to one decimal point (ie, 7.5, 7.9, 8.1, etc) with 10 being the “perfect” score. The highest and the lowest score from each poem will be dropped, and the three remaining scores will produce an average score out of 30. (The highest score a poet can receive in any round is 30 points)

For instance, Poet A receives 5 scores:

8.5

8

8.7

9.5

9.5

The 8 and the 9.5 will be excluded from the tally, where $8.5 + 8.7 + 9.5$ will be added.
Total Score for Poet A = 26.7

Bout scores will be announced for each poet after the poet on deck has performed and the Hosts have come back to the screen to ask judges to share their scores.

WIN BY ACCUMULATION

The poet that has accumulated the most points over the course of the competition will be crowned champion and awarded the 1st place grand prize.

TIES

Ties between the first and second place in the Final Bout will result in a fourth round where both poets must take turns performing another poem with the 3-minute and

10-second time limit. Judges will then text their chosen winner (with no indecisions) to the Bout Manager.

ACCESSIBILITY

If guests indicate they require ASL interpretation ahead of the show, an interpreter will be at the event. Please inform Hosts/Bout Manager if any other accommodations can be made for you.

PRIZES

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