

Official Mic Check Poetry Slam Rules & Structure

All poems in the competition will have a 3 minute time limit. The grace period is 10 seconds.

The slam will consist of three (3) rounds by the first twelve (12) poets to sign up, with the possibility of 15 (up to the organizers discretion).

Scores are cumulative for the last two (2) rounds only; the second round will begin with a clean slate. The highest cumulative scoring poets wins.

Order in the first round will be by random draw. Order in the second and third round will be determined based on the cumulative scores of the poets, from high score to low score.

After the first round, the highest eight (8) scoring poets progress to the second round. After the second round the top four (4) scoring poets advance to the final round.

Ties

All ties in the competition will be broken if they impact the order of the following round. Ties will be broken by bringing back in the highest and lowest scores of the poets and rounds in question.

If there is still a tie, we will drop only the lowest score of the poets and rounds in question. If there is still a tie, we will bring back the lowest score and instead drop the highest score of the poets and rounds in question.

If there is still a tie and the tie determines the order of the next round, the poet who went first will go second.

If there is still a tie and the tie determines next round poets, both poets will move onto the next round.

If there is still a tie and the tie determines final placement, the poets can decide to be co-champions or compete in one final tie-breaking round.

Rules

First and foremost, we believe that every person has the right to equitable access and inclusion in any event we host or oversee. Therefore, every individual will be treated with the respect due to them, and every effort will be made to ensure that access and representation are guaranteed to all without bias.

That said, the fundamental rules of slam have been the same for over a quarter of a century, and they break down to four simple guidelines:

All poems must be the poet's original work. You may sample another poem or song in your writing or include an epigraph with credit to the original author. No more than 20 seconds of your poem may consist of this sampling and again, it should be credited.

There are no props allowed.

There is no musical accompaniment allowed.

There are no costumes allowed.

All poems throughout all the rounds of the competition will be three (3) minutes with a ten (10) second grace period. Poems longer than 3:10 will be penalized 0.5 points for every ten (10) seconds or part of ten (10) seconds over the time limit.

Prelim Time Penalties

3:10 and under, no penalty

3:11 – 3:20, -0.5 points

3:21 – 3:30, -1.0 points

3:31 – 3:40, -1.5 points

And so on (-0.5 points per 10 seconds)