



Space City Slam Series FAQs

What should my poems be about?

Poems can be on any subject and in any style. Each poet must perform work that they have created.

Performers may incorporate, or imitate the tune, lyrics or phrases of other artists (known as 'sampling'). Plagiarism is not accepted, and if more than 50 percent of your work is sampled from another source you may face point deductions or disqualification at the host/scorekeepers discretion.

How many poems do I need?

Students will need at least two original poems to use in competition. It is recommended to have multiple options to choose from. There are two rounds in each slam, and you will be asked to perform twice using two different poems.

Am I required to memorize my work?

Memorization is not required, and you may bring hard copies of your poetry to perform from. Reading from devices is not recommended, but allowed. If you feel that memorization will improve the quality of your performance, then you may choose to have all of your pieces memorized.

Are props allowed?

No props are allowed. Poets are allowed to use their environment (microphone, stands, stage, table, can be used as a part of your performance). Both intentional and unintentional (i.e. use of shirt, jewelry or glasses on the poet's person etc.) use of props brought in by the poet will result in a 2 point penalty.

No musical instruments or pre-recorded music is allowed. You may use music created with your own body. Additionally, costumes are not recommended as they may be counted as unintentional props.

What is the time limit for each poem?

Poets will have 3 minutes to perform each poem. Performances will be timed by a timekeeper. Time will start once the performance begins, allowing for a few full seconds for the poet to adjust their mic, and prepare for their piece. After three minutes, there is a 10-second grace period (up to and including 3:10.00). Starting at 3:10.01, a penalty of .5 will be deducted for each ten second period the poet goes over.

How do you choose a winner?

All slams are judged by a panel of 5 individuals chosen from the community. Each competitor will receive scores from all judges for each poem they perform. The highest and lowest scores for your poem will be dropped, and the cumulative score from both rounds will be calculated to determine the winner. The top three performers from each preliminary slam will advance to semi-finals. The top ten performers from semi-finals will advance to the Grand Slam in April.

How many students will I be competing against?

There will typically be 12-15 students at any given slam. Semi-finals will have 20 student performers, and the Grand Slam will have 10. Competitors that do not advance at their initial preliminary slam can attend any following preliminaries and compete again to advance to semi-finals.

What do I win?

Placing in the top three at any preliminary allows you to advance to semi-finals and then hopefully, the Grand Slam. The top six poets at the Grand Slam will make up the new Meta-Four Houston youth slam team.

The new Meta-Four slam team will go on to represent Houston at the 2019 Brave New Voices International Poetry Slam Festival in Las Vegas. This opportunity transforms lives, builds community, and takes the voices of youth to powerful heights. Check out our past Meta-Four team at [TEDxHouston](#), [TEDxYouth](#), and on our [YouTube channel](#).

All members of Meta-Four Houston are committed to their craft, and may spend between 8-10 hours weekly on writing and practicing for the Brave New Voices Festival. Once the new team is chosen, they will begin meeting regularly with the Meta-Four coaches in the spring, to prepare for the BNV competition in July. Flights, accommodations and meals will be provided for each Meta-Four Houston team member at the event in Chicago. The six person team will be accompanied by at least 2 adult chaperones including their coach or other Writers in the Schools staff members.

What is Brave New Voices?

Hosted by Youth Speaks, [Brave New Voices](#) is an annual International Youth Poetry Slam Festival that brings together leading poets from around the world for workshops, slams, showcases, and civic participation. This year, 500 young poets will bring the noise to Las Vegas in July 2019.

At the intersection of dynamic artistic presentation and engaged civic participation, Brave New Voices presents platforms for young people to share their stories and speak their hopes and dreams about the contemporary realities of their everyday lives.