



October 2023

*A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.*
by Maya Angelou

Dear Florida Partners,

I have some additional information to share this month. I appreciate the teachers and organizers who came to the Town Hall earlier this month. Please feel free to forward to your friends and colleagues who might be interested in POL or virtually introduce me to them.

Please email me any time if you have questions at sbennet3@usf.edu or stp-poetryoutloud@usf.edu. I am here to support you and your students.

Best,
Susan Bennett
Poetry Out Loud Florida Coordinator

Teen Workshop in St. Petersburg, Florida

Any of you who are in the St. Petersburg area or if you want to take a road trip, **St. Pete Reads! Lit Fest will be held Saturday, November 4th at The Woodson African American Museum of Florida!** St. Pete Reads! Lit Fest 2023 is a celebration of literacy presented in collaboration with The Woodson African American Museum of Florida, The St. Petersburg Library System and Florida Humanities.

New this year, workshops just for Teens! Workshop sign up link here: <https://bit.ly/LitFestWorkshopSignUp>

Free parking, Free books, Free lunch, Free literacy-based entertainment. The Al Downing Tampa Bay Jazz Association leading a storytime! It's going to be a good time. For more info: www.culturedbooks.org/litfest

Congratulations to U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón

Limon was recently named a [2023 MacArthur Fellow](#)! In Ada's words, here is what poetry means to her: "For me, poetry is the language of mystery, it exists in the liminal spaces, the between worlds of waking and sleep, the places where extreme clarity turns into a surreal and unarguable truth. I feel my most free when I am making poems, when I am not searching toward an end goal but instead when I'm unraveling the strangeness of my own human experience, when I am listening to the inner and outer worlds." To read a few of Ada's poems, [visit her page on poetryoutloud.org](#).

Free Mobile App

There is a free POL app for teachers, schools, students, and partners. With this app, students can easily find, save, and practice poems for the competition on their phones or tablets.

Available for download:

- [App Store \(iOS\)](#)
- [Google Play Store \(Android\)](#)

Important Dates

January 19, 2024

Deadline to Register School's or Organization's Participation. You can register [here](#) if you haven't already.

February 5, 2024

Deadline to Register State Finalist

March 2, 2024

Florida State Competition at University of South Florida St. Petersburg Campus

March 21, 2024

Deadline for state champs and chaperones to register for National Finals

Ideas for Students to Practice and to Motivate Them

Host a poetry slam

Take students to an open mic at a local coffee house

Host own poetry open mic event

Have students practice at a local community organization (for example, senior citizens)

Inspire students with music lyrics first

Help students create their own poetry using some of the poems as a model

23-24 Updated Poetry Anthology

Here is the updated [POL Anthology PDF](#) with all the eligible poems for the 2023-24 school year. Please make sure to double-check the [online anthology](#) and the [print anthology poems](#) to confirm eligibility.

23-24 POL Guide for Teachers & Organizers



Here is your [digital 2023-24 Guide for Teachers and Organizers](#). In this guide, you can find more about the contest, evaluation and criteria, tips for contestants, rules, a sample schedule, and standards.

23-24 POL Judge's Guide

Here you can access the [2023-24 POL Judge's Guide](#). Read this guide to understand what the judges will look for in your students' recitations.

Here are the changes made this year (these are also reflected in the teacher's guide):

- Clarification that mispronunciations **are not** accuracy errors.
- Name change of the criterion "Dramatic Appropriateness" to "Interpretation." This category remains the same in its description; however, we made the name change to this criterion based on feedback from the POL community and also to align ourselves with our international recitation contest counterparts who also name this category "Interpretation." We also feel this change more accurately describes the criterion and what the judges should be considering.