

Urban Word NYC's 19th Annual Teen Poetry Slam FAQ's

Welcome to the Urban Word NYC's 19th Annual Teen Poetry Slam's FAQ's. Our Slam programs are among the most rigorous and competitive in the country, and we've ranked among the top 5 teams in the nation for each of the past 11 years. If there is anything left unanswered here please contact Slam Director Shannon Matesky at shannon@urbanwordnyc.org. For group sales and ticket rates please email tickets@urbanwordnyc.org.

What is a Poetry Slam?

A poetry slam is a performance poetry competition.

In 1984, construction worker and poet Marc Smith started a poetry reading at a Chicago jazz club, the Get Me High lounge, looking for a way to breathe life into the open mike format. The series, and its emphasis on performance, laid the groundwork for the brand of poetry that would eventually be exhibited in slam.

In 1986, Smith approached Dave Jemilo, the owner of the Green Mill (a Chicago jazz club and former haunt of Al Capone), with a plan to host a weekly poetry competition on Sunday nights. The Green Mill evolved into a Mecca for performance poets, and the Uptown Poetry Slam continues to run every Sunday night.

When does it start?

Slam season begins March 14th with Preliminary Slams and ends April 22nd. See our website urbanwordnyc.org for full schedule and location details.

How old must you be to participate?

We open our registration and slam to youth ages 13-19. If you are already 19 years old, your birthday MUST be after 7/1/1998. We ask that you do not turn age 20 before the national competition, Brave New Voices International Teen Poetry Slam in July.

How do I register?

Registration is now open on our NYC Teen Poetry Slam web page at urbanwordnyc.org. You also may show up the day of competition although pre-registration is preferred.

What do I need to prepare?

For the entire competition there is a max of 4 poems to prepare. The Preliminary and Semi Final round is one poem each, each 3 minutes max. The Finals round is one 3 minute poem and one 1 minute poem. The work MUST be original work. The top 5

poets are chosen to represent New York in the national competition, Brave New Voices International Teen Poetry Slam in July.

How many poets advance?

10-15 poets advance from each Preliminary Slam. 5-6 poets advance from each Semi Final Slam and the top 5 poets will advance to represent NYC at Nationals.

How much does it cost to compete?

It is FREE to register and compete.

How much does it cost to attend?

For general public to attend events the cost is \$5 for Teens, \$7 for Adults for Preliminary and Semi Final Bouts. Any slam at a Public Library is FREE for all. Finals at the historic Apollo Theater are \$12 for Teens and \$18 for Adults. Tickets for Finals are on sale now. Purchase tickets online via Ticketmaster or in person at the Apollo Theater Box Office (M, T, Th, Fri 10AM – 6PM; Wed 10AM – 8PM; Sat 12PM – 6PM). You may also call the Apollo Theater Box Office at 212-531-5305. There are reduced rates for groups of 10 or more, so please contact tickets@urbanwordnyc.org or call us at (212) 352-3495 for more information.

What happens after I register?

Wait for your confirmation of date, time and location via email from the Slam Director for next steps. Prepare for the slam!

What happens if I win?

The top 5 poets will advance to represent New York in the national competition, Brave New Voices International Teen Poetry Slam in July. They will be scheduled to rehearse regularly in preparation for nationals. Their commitment will be a minimum meeting of one session per week.