

Spring 2026 Annual Poetry Contests for Middle and High School Students

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA), founded on February 5, 1931, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of poetry in the community and to secure a fuller recognition of the works of contemporary poets in the state of Arkansas. PRA is an affiliate member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS). NFSPS is also a non-profit organization focusing on "the importance of poetry with respect to national cultural heritage." www.poetsroundtableofarkansas.org

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

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STUDENT CONTEST

POETRY CONTESTS FOR ARKANSAS STUDENTS

GRADES 6 - 8 (JUNIOR DIVISION) • GRADES 9 - 12 (SENIOR DIVISION)

No entry fee • Any subject, free verse, 24 line limit (does not include space lines)

Rules:

1. **Deadline: March 7, 2026** (Postmark) • *Please do not submit entries before January 1, 2026*
2. **Awards for Senior Division:** First- **\$75**; Second- **\$50**; Third- **\$40**; Three Honorable Mentions- **\$10** each. • **Awards for Junior Division:** First- **\$50**; Second- **\$35**; Third **\$25**; Three Honorable Mentions- **\$10** each.
3. **Student may submit one poem only (two copies).** Poem is to be typed. There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations. **Times New Roman** is the suggested font. No font larger than 12-point should be used. Poem must be student's original work: published or unpublished; prized or un-prized. No poem will be returned. Be sure to keep a copy.
4. On one copy only, on top left side, 12 font, list Contest name (Senior Division or Junior Division), student's name, complete mailing address, telephone number, age, grade, teacher's name and e-mail address, and school. **On this same copy, student must certify his/her poem by writing:** *My poem has not been copied in whole or part from another author's work, including poems on the Internet.* **Sign your name.** Put no identification on the second copy.
5. Mail to John McPherson / 111 Jawanda Lane, Searcy, AR 72143
On the envelope, write PRA Student Contest.
6. Winners will be contacted early April and invited to attend the 2026 Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration. A list of winners will be posted on poetsroundtableofarkansas.org immediately after the conference in April.

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Manningham Trust Student Poetry Contest

2026 Annual Competition

Sponsored by National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division:

First Place - \$75, Second Place - \$50, Third Place - \$40, Fourth Place - \$35, Fifth Place - \$30, and five Honorable Mentions - \$10 each.

All winning poems will be published in the Manningham Trust Poetry Student Award Anthology. Winners will receive complimentary copies. The schools of each winning student will receive a complimentary copy for the school library.

No entry fee

- 1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division).** Competition is open to all qualified students. Poems may have been previously published and/or have won previous awards.
- 2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12.** Public, private, and homeschools are eligible for entry by individual submission. **Individual poets may only submit one poem.**
- 3.** All entries must be entered through **Submittable**, and the proper application form must be completed, indicating poet's contact information, school attended, & grade student is currently in. All students can open a Submittable account for no cost and there is no entry fee for the contest. Go to **www.nfsps.submittable.com** and check the appropriate grade level to submit.
<https://nfsps.submittable.com/submit>
- 4. Each poem must be neatly typed or computer-generated and have no more than 35 lines including space lines with no line having more than 60 characters including spaces and punctuation.** Student's one poem entered should appear on a single sheet. **There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations.** Times New Roman is the suggested font. No font larger than 12 point should be used. Larger fonts also make it impossible to confine the poem to one page, which is required.
- 5.** The poem submitted must not have ID information. There should be no indication of prior awards granted or publication information. Winners may be asked for that information to be provided at the time of publication.
- 6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality.** The statement will be included in the Submittable application "I certify that this poem is my original work and has not been copied in whole or part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet.

Signed: _____

- 7. Entries must be received on Submittable between September 15, 2025 and November 15th, 2025.** Notice of winners will be sent to each state's Manningham (Youth) chair. Awards (certificates, checks, anthologies) will also be mailed to the student. Each member state is responsible for celebrating their state's winners. The top winning poems will be read at the Annual NFSPS Convention held in June 2026.
Any questions can be directed to nfspssecretary@gmail.com.

Literary Standards. While we honor the First Amendment right of free speech, be aware that the winning poems will be published and distributed to school-age children. The use of inappropriate language could disqualify an entry. The decision of the judge is final.

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

NFSPS ANNUAL STUDENT CONTEST

Subject: *Any*. Form: *Any*, 32-line limit.

1st Prize: \$50, 2nd Prize: \$30, 3rd Prize: \$20, 7 Honorable Mentions: \$5 each. **No entry fee required.** *Open only to students in Grades 9 through 12. Include grade with name and summer mailing address or email address on second copy only.*

How to submit poems:

- a. Send **two** clear copies of the poem, typed, photocopied, or computer-generated, on 8-1/2" x 11" white paper (no onionskin or tissue) in black ink, **single-spaced**. If poem is over one page, staple together all pages of each copy. NFSPS requires Times Roman 12pt font.
- b. On **both** copies, name of contest in upper **left** corner. (Student Award)
- c. On **second copy only**, put name and address, phone number, and E-mail address of poet in upper **right** corner. If a poem is over one page, number pages also on upper right corner (both copies).

Only one entry per student but teachers may mail multiple entries for his or her class. Entries should be unfolded in a large envelope. Mail to the Contest Chair by First Class, Priority Mail or any form of delivery that does NOT require a signature upon receipt.

Mail Entries to:

2026 NFSPS Contest Chair / C/O Julie Cummings / 5858 Pintail Way / Frederick, CO 80504-9668

All entries received with postage due will be returned for proper postage.

NFSPS, Inc. will not assume mailing costs and will NOT be responsible for any entries lost or delayed in the mail. This is a national contest and will be judged by a national judge. Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 2026. They may not be postmarked before January 1, 2026.