

The Poetry Society of Virginia

2026 Student Contest

DEADLINE: JANUARY 19, 2026

Categories S-1 through S-5 and The Jenkins Prize are open to any student locally or internationally.

- **S-1 Grades 3-4**
Any form. Any subject. 35 line limit
Awards: \$25, \$15, \$10
- **S-2 Grades 5-6**
Any form. Any subject. 35 line limit
Awards \$25, \$15, \$10
- **S-3 Grades 7-8**
Any form. Any subject. 35 line limit
Awards \$25, \$15, \$10
- **S-4 Grades 9-10**
Any form. Any subject. 40 line limit
Awards \$25, \$15, \$10
- **S-5 Grades 11-12**
Any form. Any subject. 40 line limit
Awards \$25, \$15, \$10
- **The Jenkins Prize**
Sponsored by Amber, Alyssa, & Annika Jenkins For
9th and 10th grades
Any form. Any subject. 40 line limit.
Awards: \$25, \$15, \$10

Additional Opportunities for Virginia Students

- **The Poetry Society Prize**
Sponsored by a Poetry Society of VA member Exclusively for Virginia students in Grades 6-8
Any form.
Subject: Sports
or other challenge you faced. 35 line limit.
Awards: \$25, \$15, \$10
- **The Virginia Student Prize**
Sponsored by a Poetry Society of VA Member Exclusively for Virginia students in Grades 9-12
Any form. Any subject. 40 line limit.
Awards: \$50, \$30, \$20
- **Spoken Word Prize**
Exclusively for Virginia students. 3 min. maximum (.3gp or MP4)
Submit text of poem or recording by contest deadline, January 19th. Judging will take place at a Spoken Word Zoom Contest in February. Those who submit will be contacted by email with date of Zoom contest and Zoom details. You are encouraged to perform live on Zoom, but you may play your recording.
First prize only: \$25.



Contest Rules

- All PSV Student Contest categories are free to enter, but classroom or student memberships are encouraged.
- All entries must be original and unpublished. Author retains copyright.
- Submit only one poem per student in each eligible category.
- No poem may be entered more than once.
- Poems that have previously won an award in The Poetry Society of Virginia contest are not eligible for entry.
- Poems submitted to the PSV Student Contest cannot be submitted to the PSV Adult Contest.
- Poems must be predominantly in English; a few foreign words are acceptable.
- All poems are presented anonymously to the judges.

Submission Guidelines

- We accept electronic submissions only. Submit all poetry through Submittable.
- If you don't have a Submittable Account, instructions for creating an account are available here: <https://submittable.help/en/articles/7940128-getting-started-as-a-new-submitter>
- In Submittable, search for Poetry Society of Virginia or use the "submit" button on our web page: <https://www.poetrysocietyofvirginia.org>.
- Follow the directions in Submittable.
- Overseas entrants may receive winning and honorable mention certificates for printing via Zoom.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 19, 2026
(Edgar Allan Poe's Birthday)

The Poetry Society of Virginia Initiatives for Young Poets

Student PSV Membership Cost: \$10.00
Join at <https://www.poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/>
Classroom PSV Membership Cost: \$10.00
Join at <https://www.poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/>

•PSV Student Contest

January 19, 2026 is the deadline for poems. Enter the contest on PSV's Submittable.
Contact: Cathy Hailey, Chair haileycp@gmail.com

•Youth Poetry Chair Contact: Nathan Richardson

•Poetry in the Schools Contact: Jae Dyche, Chair
jae.dyche@gmail.com

•Young Poets in the Community Contact: haileycp@gmail.com and
PSVYoungPoets@gmail.com



Applications are available at <https://poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/youth-programs/>.

•Virginia Voices

Virginia Voices is a Centennial initiative by Angela Dribben, former Vice President of the Western Region. Since May 2022, Virginia Voices has featured two PSV poets reading three poems and answering three questions at 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. Beginning in June 2023, Virginia Voices has usually featured one established poet and one young poet, beginning with students who were selected as Young Poets in the Community. Contact: Steve Bucher & Cathy Hailey, Hosts, haileycp@gmail.com

VA Poets Laureate

Current Virginia Youth Poet Laureate

Elani Spencer

Inaugural Virginia Youth Poet Laureate

Kashvi Ramani

Current Virginia Poet Laureate

Mattie Quesenberry Smith

The Virginia Youth Poet Laureate Program is part of the larger National Youth Poet Laureate Program: Urban Word. Teens With a Purpose (TWP) launched the inaugural Virginia Youth Poet Laureate Program in 2023. The Virginia Youth Poet Laureate Program seeks to identify young writers who are committed to civic and community engagement, performance poetry, leadership, and education across the state of Virginia. For more information, visit the TWP website: <https://www.twp-themovement.org/what-we-do/ypl/>. The Poetry Society of Virginia is a supportive partner of Teens With a Purpose. In Northern Virginia and Metro DC, Words, Beats, and Life coordinates local poet laureate competitions. Visit their website: <https://wblinc.org/>.

PSV Resources for Teachers and Students

For more information about The Poetry Society of Virginia, visit our website:
<https://www.poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/>

Recorded readings are available for classroom use on our website and at the following YouTube channels (prescreen for age appropriateness):
<https://www.youtube.com/@virginiapoetryonline5270>

<https://www.youtube.com/@poetrysocietyofvirginia7859/videos>



The Poetry Society of Virginia

Annual Student Contest

Founded in 1923 at the College of William and Mary, The Poetry Society of Virginia (PSV) seeks to promote the writing and enjoyment of poetry through a wide range of programs and events, offered in seven regions across Virginia. The Society sponsors annual contests for students and adults, virtual and in-person readings by members and visiting poets, poetry workshops, festivals and other events for poets of all ages. Membership in the society has grown to over four hundred, with about fifteen percent from outside Virginia. The organization is instrumental in assisting the Governor of Virginia with the selection of Poet Laureate. An appointed committee makes recommendations to the organization's elected President who then forwards nominations to the Governor for his final review and decision.