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National Endowment for the Arts and
Poetry Foundation

How To: Film a Poetry Out Loud Recitation for a Virtual Competition

For examples of recitations recorded for a virtual contest, please refer to the videos from the 2021 and 2022 National Finals on the [POL YouTube page](#).



Video/Framing:

- Use a phone, tablet, computer, or other device to film your recitation. Ask your teacher or organizer for assistance on acquiring a device, if needed.
- Film with a horizontal orientation.
- Face the camera so it captures your head to mid-torso (medium shot). Top of head should be near top of frame, but not cut off. Camera should be at eye level.
- Frame yourself in the center of the shot.
- Each recitation should be filmed in one single shot from one static angle.
- The sound and picture must be clear.
- Videos cannot be edited. Do not add music, graphics, titles, virtual backgrounds, or computer animation.
- For video submission contests, each recitation requires its own separate video.

Location, Lighting, and Audio:

- Record your recitations indoors.
- Film your recitation in front of a neutral background, if possible, like a plain wall. Try to avoid wearing clothing in similar colors to the background.
- Do not film in front of an uncovered window or have light sources directly behind you. This is to avoid being backlit.
- Pick a quiet location. Be aware of fans, AC/heat, or other distractions that can go on during recording.

Additional Tips:

- Students may look directly into the camera, at a fixed spot, or at an imagined audience.
- Make sure you are the only visible and audible person in the video.
- Use a microphone, if possible. If the microphone is on the camera, position the camera close to you.



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- Have the camera on a tripod or solid surface during recording, if possible. Do your best to avoid camera movement.
- Start recording a few seconds before the recitation and stop recording a few seconds after the end.
- For video submission contests, check with the contest organizer if there are file size limits to videos and if there is a preferred naming convention to save your videos.

Reminder – Recitation Requirements:

- Students must begin by stating the title of the poem and the poet’s name, and the translator, if applicable.
- A student’s own editorial comments before or after the poem are not allowed.
- Poems must be recited from memory.
- For more details regarding the evaluation criteria, please consult the [Teacher’s Guide](#).

Accessibility:

- To request accommodations, please contact your contest organizer or [POL state coordinator](#).