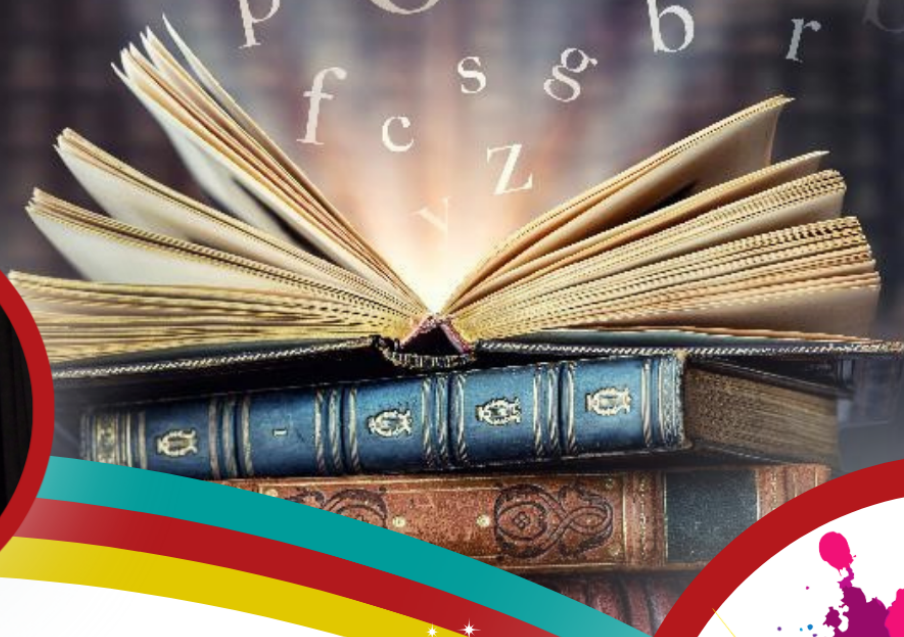




WORCESTERSHIRE CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

POETRY SYLLABUS



CATEGORIES:

VERSE SPEAKING
SET VERSE SPEAKING
VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS
GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE
SONNET
NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING
VERSE SPEAKING WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
WCAF POETRY SLAM



WCAAF
75TH ANNIVERSARY
2026



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POETRY Syllabus

These classes are intended to take place on Saturday 14th March 2026 at the Royal Grammar School, Worcester.

All large groups are free of charge and 25% 'early bird' discount is available for solos and duologues until 1st December 2025. We do not believe any performer should miss out due to financial hardship. Please contact us to discuss any free places and bursaries that may be available: admin:wcaf.org.uk

Categories in the poetry section this year:

Verse Speaking (own choice)

Set Verse Speaking (performers in classes 1000-1002 may be invited to perform again for the Bertulis Solo Verse Speaking Challenge Trophy at the Festival Concert)

Verse Speaking in pairs

Group Dramatised Verse

Sonnet

Non-competitive verse speaking (including Verse Speaking with English as an Additional Language)

Poetry Slam

Performers who are also singers or instrumentalists and were aged 15 years or under on 1st September 2025 may also wish to enter the Sproule Prize & Trophy for Speech, Drama and Music. Please see the Special Classes section for more details.

Unless otherwise stated, classes are competitive and places will be awarded. Times, dates and venues for all classes are subject to confirmation once all entries have been received. The committee reserve the right to combine and/or separate classes by age or size of group, dependent upon the number of entries received.

Solo performers may enter only one class appropriate for their age on 1st September 2025 and the open class in each section. Groups of more than one performer may enter only one class appropriate for the age of the oldest performer in the group on 1st September 2025 and the open class in each section. However, individuals may perform as part of more than one group as long as they adhere to the age limits. A different piece must be performed for each entry.

Full details of piece(s) to be performed do not have to be included at the time of entry (simply put TBC) but please ensure entries are updated with the title and poet by 16th January 2026, at the latest. Performers must provide a written copy of their poem or extract for the adjudicator.

Performers must announce the name of the poem and the poet at the start of their performance. Brief context may be given if relevant, but this is included within the time limit. Chosen verse to be performed from memory. No props or costumes are allowed, except for in classes 1020-1024 (Group Dramatised Verse) where movement, sound effects and hand props may be used.

Please also see essential information for entrants at the end of the poetry syllabus.

WCAF Poetry Slam

This gives poets of all ages, abilities and experience the opportunity to perform their own poetry and get feedback from a fantastic team of judges and a supportive audience.

The Slam will take place over four rounds. In round one, everyone will perform their own poetry. You will have a 3 minute maximum time slot. You may perform one poem or a few poems in this time but do not go over your 3-minute time limit! You do not have to use up the full 3 minutes. The judges will then score each performance.

If you score enough points to move into round two, the Quarter-Final, you will perform different poetry, again up to 3 minutes maximum.

If you score enough points to head into round three, the Semi-Final, you will perform a third time (again, different poetry) for up to 3 minutes maximum.

If you score enough points to head into round four, the final, you will perform a fourth time for up to 3 minutes maximum. It is up to you whether you perform different poetry or include poems you have already performed in the final.

You will need to enter the slam with enough poems to see you through what could be 3 rounds - if you score enough points! Please also write and upload a short introduction that will be read out to the audience before you come on stage to perform in round one. This can be a biographical note, or something about the poetry you are about to perform, or anything else you'd like to say by way of introduction, comical or serious! Your intro must be up to 30 words maximum, and can be written in either the first or third person.

Can I perform other people's poetry? No. Each poet must perform a different piece or pieces of their own poetry in each round. Do I have to learn my poems or can I read them? You may read your poems or recite them from memory.

Can I use props or music? You are not permitted to use, musical instruments, soundtracks or backing music/sounds. You may use small props if necessary.

Can I perform poetry with 'adult' themes and swearing? Audience members are aware that the event may contain adult language and subject matter. We will not censor poets. Your poems may be serious or comical and on any theme. Poets are permitted to issue a short 'trigger' warning before poems of a sensitive nature. This must be clearly indicated as a trigger warning and will not be included in the three minute time limit. The trigger warning must NOT be part of the poem.

Do I have to be a published poet or a professional performance poet to take part in the Slam? Anyone can take part - from an absolute beginner to a seasoned slammer. All you need is a heart that beats, and a mind that speaks.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1050 WCAF POETRY SLAM - Youth	17 and under	Up to 3 mins	£0.00
1051 WCAF POETRY SLAM - Adult	18 and over	Up to 3 mins	£0.00

Verse Speaking (Own Choice)

Performers may choose any published poem or extract within the time limit.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1007 VERSE SPEAKING - School year 2 and under	6 and under	Up to 1 min	£6.67
1008 VERSE SPEAKING - School years 3 and 4 Award: 191 WCAF Cup	Age 7 and 8	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1009 VERSE SPEAKING - School years 5 and 6	Age 9 and 10	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1010 VERSE SPEAKING - School years 7 and 8	Age 11 and 12	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1011 VERSE SPEAKING - School years 9 and 10	Age 13 and 14	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1012 VERSE SPEAKING - School years 11, 12 and 13 Award: 139 Droitwich Spa Advertiser	Between 15 and 17	Up to 4 mins	£13.33
1013 VERSE SPEAKING - Open	Any	Up to 5 mins	£16.00

Verse Speaking (Set Verse)

Choose the poem that best suits you from the relevant anthology. A short poem is just as likely to do well as a longer one! Performers in classes 1000, 1001 and 1002 may be selected to perform again in the Bertulis Solo Verse Speaking Challenge (date and time to be confirmed).

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1000 SET VERSE SPEAKING - School year 4 and under Award: Gala Concert - Trophy Number 204 Any poem or extract from: 'Blue Jelly and Strawberries' by Attie Lime Published by Otter-Barry Books	8 and under	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1001 SET VERSE SPEAKING - School years 5 and 6 Award: Gala Concert - Trophy Number 189 Any poem or extract from: 'Evidence of Dragons' by Pie Corbett published by MacMillan	Age 9 and 10	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1002 SET VERSE SPEAKING - School years 7 and 8 Award: Gala Concert - Trophy Number 201 Any poem or extract from: 'Centrally Heated Knickers' by Michael Rosen published by Puffin	Age 11 and 12	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1003 SET VERSE SPEAKING - School years 9 and 10 Any poem or extract from: 'Dark Sky Park' by Philip Gross Published by Otter-Barry Books	Age 13 and 14	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1004 SET VERSE SPEAKING - School years 11, 12 and 13 Any poem or extract from: 'England Poems from a School' Edited by Kate Clanchy 2018 published by Picador	Between 15 and 17	Up to 4 mins	£13.33
1005 SET VERSE SPEAKING - Open Any poem or extract from: 'The Poetry Pharmacy' by William Seighart	Any	Up to 5 mins	£16.00

Verse Speaking in Pairs

Own choice of a poem to be presented from memory by two performers, with minimal movement. Unison, solo and combination speaking may be used. The same pair of performers may enter only one class appropriate for the age of the eldest in the pair and the open class in this section, but individuals may perform in multiple pairs with different partners as long as they adhere to the age limits. A different piece must be performed for each entry.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1014 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - School year 4 and under Award: 141WCAF Cup	8 and under	Up to 3 mins	£20.00

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1015 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - School year 6 and under	10 and under	Up to 3 mins	£20.00
1016 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - School year 8 and under Award: 78 WCAF Cup	12 and under	Up to 3 mins	£20.00
1017 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - School year 10 and under	14 and under	Up to 4 mins	£20.00
1018 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - School year 13 and under	17 and under	Up to 4 mins	£20.00
1019 VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS - Open	Any	Up to 4 mins	£20.00

Group Dramatised Verse

Own choice of poem to be acted out by the group. Unison, solo and combination speaking may all be used, along with movement and sound effects. Hand props may be used. Performers must provide a written copy of their poem or extract for the adjudicator. Performers must also provide a brief spoken introduction at the beginning of their performance. This is included in the time limit.

Groups may enter only one class appropriate for the age of the eldest in the group and the open class in this section, but individuals may perform in multiple groups as long as they adhere to the age limits. A different piece must be performed for each entry.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1020 GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE - School year 4 and under Award: Trophy Number 124 Group of 3 to 15 people	8 and under	Up to 4 mins	£0.00 per group
1021 GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE - School year 6 and under Award: Trophy Number 10 Group of 3 to 15 people	10 and under	Up to 4 mins	£0.00 per group
1022 GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE - School year 8 and under Award: 116 The Astons Shield Group of 3 to 15 people	12 and under	Up to 5 mins	£0.00 per group
1023 GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE - School year 10 and under Award: Trophy Number 108 The Evans Cup Group of 3 to 15 people	14 and under	Up to 5 mins	£0.00 per group
1024 GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE - School year 13 and under Group of 3 to 15 people	17 and under	Up to 6 mins	£0.00 per group
1025 OPEN CLASS FOR GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE Award: Trophy Number 142 Group of 3 to 15 people	Any	Up to 8 mins	£0.00 per group

Sonnet

Any poem with the recognised characteristics of a sonnet may be performed - it doesn't have to be Shakespearean! Performers must provide an introduction at the beginning of their performance that will be included in the time limit.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1038 SONNET - School year 6 and under	10 and under		£8.00
1039 SONNET - School years 7 and 8	Age 11 and 12		£10.67
1040 SONNET - School years 9 and 10 Award: 114 Waitrose Shield	Age 13 and 14		£10.67

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1041 SONNET - School years 11, 12 and 13 Award: 13 WCAF Cup	Between 15 and 17		£13.33
1042 OPEN CLASS FOR SONNET	Any		£16.00

Non-Competitive Poetry

These are non-competitive classes for all abilities, where constructive comments on the performances will be given by the adjudicator, but no places awarded or comparison made between performances.

The age groups are fairly wide because these are non-competitive classes. However, if there are lots of entries, we will split the sections by age and/or number of performers.

Verse Speaking (Non-Competitive)

Performers may choose any published poem or extract within the time limit. Please consider whether the passage chosen is suitable for a mixed audience and highlight any potentially contentious themes or language.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1043 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING SOLO - School year 2 and under	6 and under	Up to 1 min	£6.67
1044 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING SOLO - School year 4 and under	Age 7 and 8	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1045 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING SOLO - School year 5 to 8	Between 9 and 12	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1046 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING SOLO - School years 9 to 13	Between 13 and 17	Up to 4 mins	£10.67
1047 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING SOLO - OPEN	Any	Up to 5 mins	£13.33
1048 NON-COMPETITIVE VERSE SPEAKING IN PAIRS	Any	Up to 5 mins	£13.33
1049 NON-COMPETITIVE GROUP DRAMATISED VERSE Group of 3 to 15 people	Any	Up to 10 mins	£0.00 per group

Verse Speaking With English As An Additional Language

The aim of these non-competitive classes is to give opportunity for experience of verse speaking in public for anyone for whom English is not their first language. You have the choice to either perform in person or to submit a video to be adjudicated online. Please ensure you enter the correct class and submit the video by the deadline, if applicable. We welcome performers from across the world!

Performers must provide a written copy of their own choice piece for the adjudicator. This must be a published poem (or translation) in English. Performers may choose any published poem or extract within the time limit. Please consider whether the passage chosen is suitable for a mixed audience and highlight any potentially contentious themes or language. Performers must provide an introduction at the beginning of their performance.

All entrants will receive a written adjudication and certificate, including constructive comments from the adjudicator.

Verse Speaking With English As An Additional Language (In-person))

These classes will be held in person. If you would rather submit a video to be adjudicated online and not in person, please enter the online class.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1026 VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School year 4 and under	8 and under	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1027 VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 5 and 6	Age 9 and 10	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1028 VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 7 and 8	Age 11 and 12	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1029 VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 9 and 10	Age 13 and 14	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1030 VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 11, 12 and 13	Between 15 and 17	Up to 4 mins	£13.33
1031 OPEN CLASS FOR VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) Award: Trophy Number 206	Any	Up to 5 mins	£16.00

Verse Speaking With English As An Additional Language (Online)

The following classes will be adjudicated virtually from video submissions. A written copy of the piece to be performed should be submitted along with the performance video via Play&Perform by 23:45 on 16th January 2026.

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1032 ONLINE: VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School year 4 and under	8 and under	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1033 ONLINE: VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 5 and 6	Age 9 and 10	Up to 2 mins	£8.00
1034 ONLINE: VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 7 and 8	Age 11 and 12	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1035 ONLINE: VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 9 and 10	Age 13 and 14	Up to 3 mins	£10.67
1036 ONLINE: VERSE SPEAKING (EAL) - School years 11, 12 and 13	Between 15 and 17	Up to 4 mins	£13.33
1037 ONLINE: OPEN CLASS FOR VERSE SPEAKING (EAL)	Any	Up to 5 mins	£16.00

Class	Age	Time	Fee
1052 WCAF DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY POETRY Help us to celebrate our 75th Anniversary! You can perform alone or in a group of any size. Perform any piece with 'Diamond' in the title or about diamonds or anniversaries...or any piece published in 1951 or a piece by a writer born in 1951. Get imaginative, join in and have fun. Don't hesitate to ask if you have any queries or aren't sure what to perform! Solo or Group of any size	Any	Up to 5 mins	Solo: £0.00 Group: £0.00 per group

Essential information for all poetry entrants

The Festival has an agreement with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society. This means that entrants do not have to seek copyright permission for any poetry, prose or SOLO dramatic item.

Unacceptable Language Thresholds: Some works performed explore adult themes and/or contain strong language. However, care should be taken when choosing or devising contemporary pieces. We ask that you present your work in a manner that respects the 'family' orientated nature of WCAF and avoids the unnecessary exposure of younger children to inappropriate themes and language. WCAF aims to celebrate the best and highest forms of literature and language, and therefore reserves the right to refuse entries that are made up of continuously bad language and/or gratuitous expletives. Therefore, all entrants to the speech, drama and musical theatre sections are now asked to confirm whether their performance contains adult language or content upon entry. If you indicate you have potentially contentious language or themes, we will be in contact to discuss. This does not necessarily mean you will not be able to perform the piece - we just want to make sure that we make appropriate arrangements for you to be able to perform to your best.