

The Young Poet Laureate submissions criteria

Outline

The Young Poet Laureate opportunity is free to enter and is open to **Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3** students in primary and secondary schools in England. Entries will be judged in these key stages. Schools that have not yet registered are invited to do so via this link: [Young Poet Laureate Programme Registration](#). Registration enables schools to submit student entries and access the full programme materials.

How to enter

- Submit your students' entries by **19 January 2026**.
- Submit your entries through the online form.
- Both poem and an accompanying personal statement must be typed on the same Word document.
- The supporting statement cannot exceed 200 words maximum (see further guidance below)
- The poem cannot exceed 40 lines.
- Poems must be the young poets' own original work.
- Poems must have not been produced by AI.
- Poems with joint authorship are not allowed.
- Once submitted, poems cannot be edited or resubmitted.
- Teachers must state which year group the pupil submitting the poem is in.
- Teachers must ensure that all submitted poems have been reviewed and reflect each young poet's best effort.
- Teachers make sure that all young poets understand the role of the Young Poet Laureate role before submitting their poem.
- Teachers must ensure that, if one or more of their students are shortlisted, they are able to accompany them to the regional masterclasses. The dates and locations will be confirmed by February 2026. The masterclasses will take place in the Summer term between 20 April to 8 May 2026.
- Read the terms and conditions before entering.

Guidance for supporting statements

Students should submit a personal statement (maximum of 200 words) about why they wish to be a young poet laureate for their region, and why they think they would be suited to the role. This might include:

1. Their thoughts about why they would make a good ambassador for poetry,
2. What poetry means to them, or
3. The ways in which they feel they might represent poetry within their communities.

Timeline

- The closing date for entries is **19 January 2026**.
- The shortlisted schools and young poets will be informed week commencing **16 March 2026**.
- Shortlisted schools and young poets will be publicly announced on the Young Poet Laureate website week commencing **23 March 2026**.
- Regional masterclasses and judging panels will be held between **20 April to 8 May 2026**. Shortlisted young poets must be available to attend a masterclass in their region and be accompanied by a member of staff from their school. More details to follow.
- All shortlisted Young Poets will be informed of the judging panel's decision week commencing **1 June 2026**.
- 12 Young Poet Laureates announcement occurs week commencing **8 June 2026**.
- Anthology launch will occur week commencing **8 June 2026**.
- Young Poet Laureates in role between **8 June 2026 – July 2027** (end of the academic year).

The post of Young Poet Laureate

The appointed Young Poet Laureates will serve as young ambassadors for poetry in their region and inspire a new generation of poets and creatives. This is a valued and active role that offers exciting opportunities and requires a level of commitment.

Teachers should ensure that students understand what the role involves before entering, and that, as Laureates, they should be ready to take on the role with

enthusiasm and a willingness to participate in events, commissions and other activities throughout their term.

As part of the role, Young Poet Laureates will have the opportunity to:

- Champion poetry as an artform
- Share their poetry and write commissions
- Attend performance opportunities
- Engage with their local community

The young poets will be appointed officially week commencing 8 June and they remain in post for one year following their appointments (8 June 2026 to July 2027).

Terms & Conditions

- a. These terms and conditions apply to the Young Poet Laureate opportunity. The promoters are the National Literacy Trust and the National Poetry Centre.
- b. Schools submitting entries on behalf of their students must be registered with the Young Poet Laureate programme.
- c. The eligible age for entries to this opportunity is students aged in Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3.
- d. Entrants must have parent/guardian permission. Entries will be judged in the two different age groups.
- e. The closing date for entries is 19 January 2026. Entries entered after the deadline will not be considered by the judges.
- f. Entries are to be submitted by an entrant's school through the online form.
- g. Each entrant may submit only one poem.
- h. Poems may not be edited after they are submitted.
- i. Poems with joint authorship are ineligible.
- j. Submitted poems must be the entrant's original work.
- k. Poems must be typed on a Word document.
- l. Poems in all languages, including BSL are accepted. If a poem is submitted fully or partially in a language other than English, an English translation must be included.

- a. Young poets submitting poems for the opportunity to become Young Poet Laureate, must be made aware by teachers of the roles and responsibilities of the Laureateship role, and that they will hold this position for one year (8 June 2026 – July 2027).
- b. Shortlisted young poets must be available to attend a masterclass in their region (which will take place between 20 April to 8 May 2026) and be accompanied by a member of staff from their school.
- c. One entry in each of the two key stage categories will be chosen by a regional judging panel that includes a group of community representatives.
- d. The 12 appointed Young Poets and all shortlisted students will be informed of the judging panel's decision week commencing 1 June 2026.
- e. The 12 Young Poet Laureates will be formally announced week commencing 8 June 2026.

The General terms and conditions for competitions shall apply.

- 1. This opportunity is open to all Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils in England. Schools may use learning resources without choosing to submit an entry.
- 2. The Young Poet Laureate opportunity is free of charge to enter.
- 3. Entries must be submitted by a member of school staff supplying their full contact details and entry documentation/evidence as set out on the Young Poet Laureate Programme webpage.
- 4. No responsibility is accepted for entries lost, damaged or delayed as a result of any network, computer hardware or software failure of any kind. Proof of entry will not be accepted as proof of receipt.
- 5. There will not be a notification of receipt for entries.
- 6. Appointments are non-transferable. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances the promoter reserves the right to appoint a new Young Poet Laureate.
- 7. Appointed Young Poet Laureates will be notified through their schools using the contact details supplied for entry and asked to acknowledge the notification.

8. If we do not receive confirmation of acceptance within 28 days of notification the appointment will be forfeited, and a new young poet will be selected.
9. By accepting an appointment, the young poet's school will consent to their success being publicly announced by the National Literacy Trust and The National Poetry Centre in newsletters, on our website and those of any competition partners and in other media. You will never be approached directly by a journalist. The National Literacy Trust will contact schools of appointed Young Poet Laureates to seek consent to publish the names and photographs of those students.
10. By taking part in this competition, all entrants will be deemed to have accepted and be bound by these terms and conditions.
11. Contact details provided for entering the competition will be managed according to our privacy policy which can be found here: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/privacypolicy/>
12. The National Literacy Trust may in their absolute discretion modify, amend, cancel or suspend these terms and conditions at any time if they deem necessary or if circumstances arise beyond their control.
13. The National Literacy Trust reserves the right in their absolute discretion to disqualify from this competition any entrant who they believe has not complied with these terms and conditions or acted in good faith.
14. The promoters' decisions are final in all matters relating to this competition and no correspondence will be entered into.
15. These terms and conditions shall be governed by the laws of England and Wales and are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.