



Slam Poetry Guidelines

The Difference between Slam and Performance Poetry:

Slam Poetry is poetry written to be performed at slams. All slam poetry is spoken word poetry which gives the speaker the opportunity to be controversial, challenging, and emotional.

Spoken Word Poetry is poetry that is written to be performed. Not all spoken word poetry is written to be performed at slams and the speaker uses the traditional soft-spoken delivery.

What is Slam Poetry?

- Slam poetry is a competition.
- Contestants get three minutes to perform an original work. Exceeding this earns a time penalty.
- Props, costumes, and musical accompaniment are not allowed.
- The speaker is judged on a scale of zero to ten by five judges selected from the audience.
- Both quality of the writing and performance are considered.

Tips to Write Slam Poetry:

- Choose themes and subjects that many people can relate to.
- Have a central image or metaphor- three at most.
- Establish a clear theme and stick with it.
- Do not stray from that imagery.
- Do not get too elaborate or you will lose the audience.
- Use sound, rhythm, and rhyme
- The written piece must be original.
- Your poem should be clear and convey a message.

Techniques:

- You get one chance to get your impression across. The audience must get it.
- This is performance art. No one sees what you have written.
- Your voice is a tool. So too is your body language.
- Make your poetry slam original. Be personal and authentic.
- Keep it simple. Complex verse form is wasted here.
- Start and finish strong. You need to end with an impressive twist
- Memorization is compulsory. Write something you can remember.
- Use sound bonding to create a rhythm and repetition to help you remember.
- Full volume recitation is important. Practise to prevent running out of breath.

Adapted from: <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/help-with-writing/128513-slam-poetry-and-spoken-word/>
<https://powerpoetry.org/actions/5-tips-slam-poetry>
<https://www.digitalpoet.net/what-is-a-poetry-slam>