

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

- Participants must be enrolled in a junior high, high school, or a GED program (or have completed it during the same academic year of LTAB) and be 19 years old or younger on the day of the event.
- Teams must be sponsored by a community organization or school.
- If you register and find out later that you will not be able to attend, please notify LTAB organizers ASAP so that an alternate team may have the chance to participate in the slam.
- Participants **must** attend the Crossing the Street opening plenary event in its entirety. Non-attendance may result in disqualification. Notify LTAB organizers ASAP about participant absence.
- Participants **must** be physically present and checked in at least 15 minutes before their bouts begin. Tardiness to a scheduled bout time will result in disqualification for the team.

POET INTRODUCTIONS

- All poets are required to state their name and their school/team before they begin their piece.
- To encourage community and positive energy in the space, poets may engage with their teammates in a brief call and response prior to beginning their piece.

TIMEKEEPING

- Timing will begin at first utterance after statement of team name or team shout out.
- Any titles, dedications, or prefaces to the piece will be included in the allotted time.
- Each poem must be under 3 minutes in length. Scores will be penalized for going over the time limit. Penalties will begin at 3:10, with a .5 point deduction for every ten seconds over time (i.e. a 3:22 poem will receive a 1-point deduction assuming no other deductions apply).
- Poets will be asked to leave the stage if they reach 5:00

PLAGIARISM

- Participants must perform pieces of their own original writing. Participants who plagiarize will be disqualified. Clearly quoting/sampling other works and utilizing literary allusions are not plagiarism.

PROPS, COSTUMES, & MUSIC

- Props, costumes, and/or musical accompaniment may not be used in the slam (i.e. performing a piece involving a hoodie and wearing a hoodie is allowed. Using a hoodie you're wearing as a prop to emphasize your words is not. Dressing as a team in a way that illustrates the content of your piece is also grounds for deduction).

CENSORSHIP

- There is no censorship in the slam, however no racist, sexist, homophobic, gender-biased, ableist, or otherwise derogatory speech that is degrading to any specific group of people will not be tolerated. Failure to heed this can result in point deduction as determined by the bout manager and Competition Director.

JUDGING

- A panel of artists, educators, youth and audience members will judge each bout. Judges should in no way be affiliated with the teams who participate in LTAB. Teams may challenge the appointment of a judge by speaking with the bout manager if unfairness is anticipated.
- Challenges to the appointment of judges must be brought to the bout manager before the first poet takes the stage.

PROTESTING RULE INFRACTIONS

- All protests of possible rule infractions must be lodged with the bout manager prior to signing the score sheet at the end of each bout.
- The bout manager will review the complaint with the Competition Director before making a decision regarding potential consequences. The decision will be presented to the affected individuals as soon as possible.

TEAMS

- Each team must have a minimum of four and a maximum of eight poets and up to two additional alternates, for a total of 10 participants.
- There are up to eight active poets on a team per bout. The team may elect to use these eight poets interchangeably in both preliminary rounds.
- Only one team may represent each school/program (e.g., one high school may not send four teams to slam). Poets in LTAB should be affiliated with the organizations they represent or the schools they attend.
- Teams must consist of the same poets (alternates included) whose names are on the entry form, unless the LTAB organizers are otherwise notified

before the first bout, after which only registered team members may compete. If a registered team member cannot compete after the festival has started, only a registered alternate may serve as a replacement.

- There are five rounds in each team bout. The first four rounds are for individual pieces. The final round is for the mandatory 4-person group piece.
- Each team must compete in two preliminary bouts, guaranteeing at least 10 performances per team over the course of the festival.
- Teams may repeat poems in different preliminary bouts. This means that each team must prepare a minimum of four individual poems and one 4-person group poem.
- No individual poet may perform more than one individual poem in a single bout.
- While the entire team may contribute to the writing of a group piece, only four team members may perform the group piece, and all group piece performers must have been involved in the writing of that piece.
- Barring any ties, the four top-ranking teams from quarterfinals will compete in LTAB Finals.
- LTAB Finals may consist of five rounds. The Competition Director will announce the Finals bout structure and details when teams are announced.

AUTHORSHIP & COLLABORATION

Our community values young people and their power to represent themselves. To this end we require that students present their own original work at our festival. This standard should be clear in individual poems. The expectation for individual poems is that the student performer is also the primary author of the poem.

This standard can be less clear in group pieces. In a group piece each student performer should have played a role in the writing of the poem. However, in the case of group poems, a role in the writing can be as simple as assisting in the editing and revision of a poem. Group poems are collaborative in nature and should be composed and performed in that spirit. Collaboration can look many ways.

Here are a few examples of acceptable collaborative styles:

- Example 1) All students (team and alternates) sit together to decide a theme/topic and then write individually on that topic. The resulting writing is synthesized by one or all of the students to form a single group poem. In this example all students have been a part of the process of creation even if in the building of the final piece a particular student finds none of their specific lines have been used.
- Example 2) Student A has a draft of a previously written poem that they think could be a promising start to a group poem. All the students work with this text to assign parts, write any necessary additional pieces, and revise. In this example though one student starts as the primary writer they offer their creative work to the community. All the students work together to move the poem from individual creation to viable collaborative stage work.
- Example 3) The poem is built similarly to a pop song with some kind of hook or refrain and individual “verses” that are primarily authored by individual students. In this example the structure allows for you to change a group piece text by substituting one student’s “verse” for another.

Remember the spirit of LTAB is collaborative. All poems can be helped by the poet(s) utilizing the collective wisdom of the team, mentor, and community. If you have any concerns about the eligibility of any of your poems, please ask the LTAB Coordinator.

LTAB RECOMMENDATIONS

- LTAB is rooted in the craft of poetry. Although we encourage poets to hone their performances skills, writing and language is valued over any performance elements.
- We encourage you to memorize your poems, though it is not required.
- We encourage teams to have alternate members, in case some team members need to drop out of the festival at any point.
- Don't start your poem until you are ready. Make sure the mics are well placed and that the audience and judges can hear you. A bout manager will be there to assist you with what you need.
- Be respectful of yourself, the youth writing community, and the group you represent.
- Bring people out to support you when you read.
- We advise teams to have as much fun as possible and be as prepared as they can be.
- We encourage coaches to talk to their poets about Louder Than A Bomb as a poetry festival, where community-building and sharing of poetry is more important than winning.

While LTAB is structured as a competition, please remember that the point is not the points, the point is the poetry!