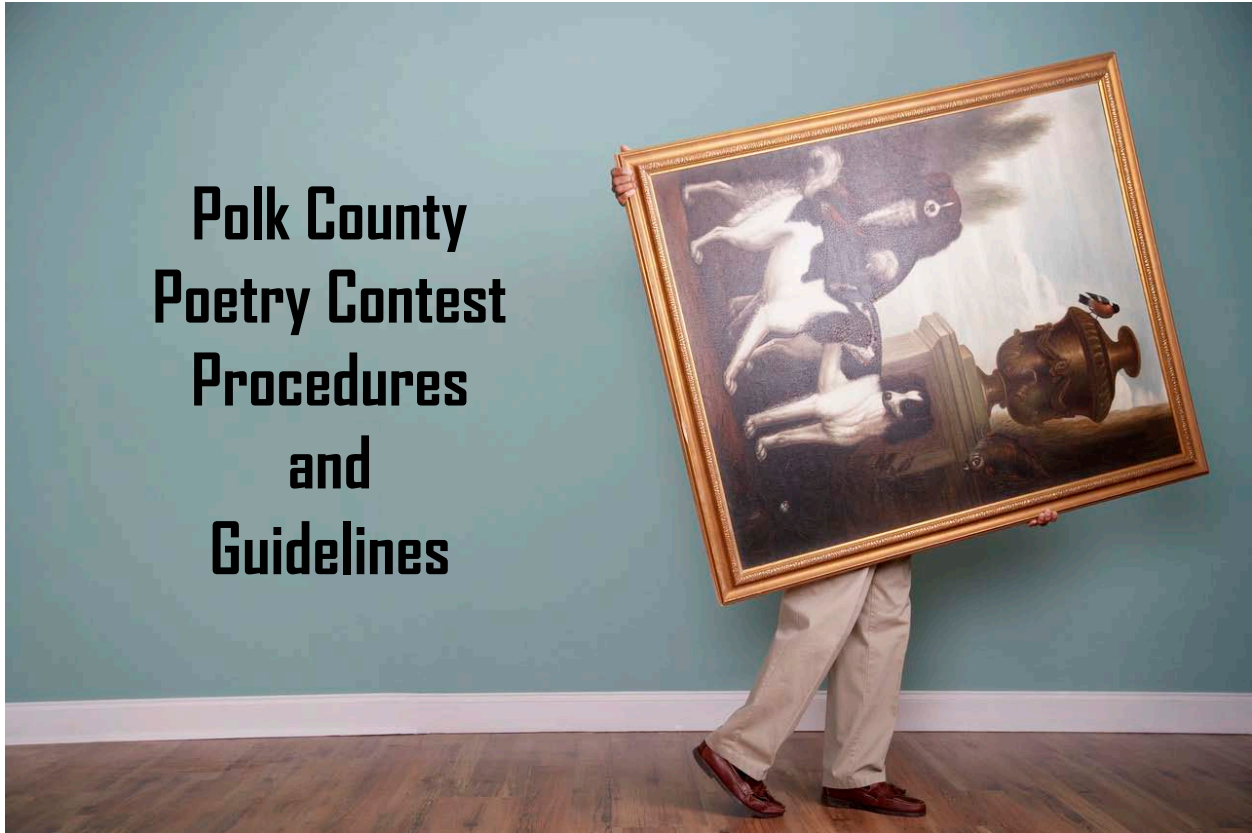


**Polk County  
Poetry Contest  
Procedures  
and  
Guidelines**



Revised for  
**2011-2012**

Polk County Council of Teachers of English  
and  
Diane Conley  
Senior Curriculum Coordinator  
6-12 Language Arts

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **PCCTE OFFICERS FOR 2011-2011**

President	Diane Plowden
First Vice President	Emily Davis
Second Vice President	Wendi Wooddell
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Treasurer	Pat Butler
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## POLK COUNTY COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH POETRY CONTEST

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM COMMITTEE:** As a department, please share winning poems with the student body prior to submission in order to detect plagiarism. Consider library display, school newspaper, morning announcements, parents' night, and/or class reading.

**PURPOSE:** To encourage and reward competency in the writing of original poetry.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Any student enrolled in the public schools of Polk County or private schools, grades six through twelve.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY:**

1. The poem submitted must be a minimum of six (6) lines but not more than twenty-five (25) lines long. (Strict adherence to this rule is mandatory.) Teachers review format of each poem before submitting.
2. A student may submit only one poem for contest purposes.
3. The poem must be an original composition of the student, not previously published outside the school.
4. The entry must be interpretable as poetry. While model poems are a teaching tool, they are unacceptable for this contest.
5. The poem must have a title.
6. The entries must be typed error-free on the submitted CD (see format on page 4).
7. Department chair or designee will submit the winning entries. Winning entries must be submitted in Microsoft Word on a CD by grade level (please see page 4 for format). Also include 2012 School Entry Sheet on CD (use provided attachment sent via email).
8. A student entry sheet, with all its required signatures, must accompany the school's CD on February 10, 2012. Student entry sheet is provided on page 7.

**\*See packing list on page 6.**

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. English faculties should encourage classes to participate.
2. A coordinator at each grade level may be appointed to receive only those entries that meet the requirements and that follow the attached guidelines for writing good poetry.
3. **Each school, not each teacher, is entitled to submit three poems from each grade level to the district poetry contest. If any grade level has an enrollment of more than 300, that grade is entitled to one additional entry for each 100 students or fraction thereof.**

**Examples: (Strict adherence to these numbers.)**

197 seventh graders = 3 entries  
75 eighth graders = 3 entries  
435 ninth graders = 5 entries

4. Each school should select the winning poems (three or more, as specified by the following procedures). These winning poems should be submitted to the district poetry contest. To avoid being disqualified, submit only the appropriate number of poems.

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#### REQUIRED PROCEDURES FOR JUDGING AT SCHOOL LEVEL:

1. Team of certified English teachers judge at school level.
2. Read, judge and select poems collectively following PCCTE procedures/guidelines.
3. Submit all poems according to the procedures/guidelines.
4. Publish these poems locally at the school to verify **authenticity** before poems are submitted to the district contest. It is the school's responsibility to check for plagiarized poems before submitting them to the District.
5. Teachers should also enter poem titles and key phrases into a search engine (such as Google.com) to eliminate plagiarism.

- 
6. **Entries must be submitted to Diane Plowden—no later than February 10, 2011 (see pg. 4 for format and pg. 6 for packing list).**
  7. **Judges reserve the right to disqualify poems which do not meet these standards or which have no merit according to the attached guidelines for writing good poetry.**
  8. Entries submitted for the district contest which are disqualified for plagiarism or other reasons not in keeping with contest rules **will not appear in the anthology.**

#### AWARDS:

1. All students whose poems appear in the anthology will be given a certificate suitable for framing.
2. Each district grade level winner will receive special recognition.
3. **Awards will be presented on Tuesday evening, April 26, 2012, in Branscomb Auditorium at Florida Southern College at 7:00 P.M. Students with winning entries, their English teachers, their parents, school board dignitaries, administrators, and the news media will attend.**
4. At this awards presentation, a copy of the volume containing all selected entries will be given to students whose poems have been selected for publication and to their teachers.
5. Copies of the poetry anthology will be given only to those present at the awards program.
6. Copies of the poetry anthology will be available for purchase after the awards program.

**\*It is the teacher's responsibility to see that the poems are edited, proofread, and typed before submitting to the contest. Teachers must review their own students' poems for instances of plagiarism prior to submitting to the county level.**



## FORMAT FOR TYPING POEMS FOR CD

- 12 font, Times New Roman
- Single space (unless spacing is needed for organization or expression)
- Title at top (in **Bold**)
- Underneath poem include:
  - Student name
  - School
  - Teacher
  - Grade

Example:

### **Reminders**

They marched across the Rubicon,  
Single minded and determined.  
Beneath the banner of their charismatic leader  
They sought to create an empire.

Through the smoke the patriots could see Concord,  
Flames. Screaming.  
Inspired by a common cause these patriots surged forward,  
Clashing with the king's men.

Serenity exists among the stars.  
Suddenly, the peacefulness is jarred, interrupted.  
On a pillar of flame a new variable entered into the cosmos.  
The cylinder of metal contained peculiar passengers,  
Donned with helmets and white suits.  
These passengers traveled from a wondrous, blue world.  
Looking for a brighter future they stepped down on their Moon,  
Planting a flag of peace and progress.

History reminds us that nothing is impossible.  
One man has the ability to reshape the entire world,  
Liberty is within the grasp of even underdogs,  
And the vastness of space can be conquered.

Aaron Waddell  
Winter Haven High  
Diane Plowden  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade

## **WHAT IS GOOD POETRY?**

Laurence Perrine, writing in *Sound and Sense* (Harcourt, 2002), lists the following as qualities of good poetry. Please use these as you direct and oversee your students' writing for the district contest.

### **SIX STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE:**

1. The good poem contains **no excess words**, no words that do not bear their full weight in contributing to the total meaning, and **no words used merely to fill out the meter**.
- \*2. **In the good poem, each word is the best word for expressing meaning; there are no inexact or inappropriate words chosen merely for the sake of rhyme.**
3. The word order in a good poem is the best order for expressing the author's meaning: distortions or departures from normal word order are for emphasis or some other meaningful purpose. Word order is not distorted for the purpose of filling out meter or producing rhyme.
- \*4. **In a good poem, the diction (word choice), the images, and the figures of speech are fresh, not trite. There should be specific, concrete images and/or figures of speech, not a jumble of abstract words.**
5. There are no clashes between the sound of a good poem and its meaning, form, or content: in general, the poet uses both sound and pattern in such a way as to support his meaning.
- \*6. **The good poem should be in some sense a "new" poem; it must elicit a fresh response from the reader. It will not be merely imitative of previous literature, nor will it appeal to stock, pre-established ways of thinking that are automatically stimulated in some readers by words such as "mother," "home," "freedom," "country," "faith," "God," "America," much as a coin put into a slot always gets an expected reaction.**

Please use the above standards of **good** poetry, generally accepted by literary critics, as guidelines when teaching poetry writing and when judging the poems submitted at your school.

\*Standards 2, 4, and 6 are particularly important.

### **STYLES TO AVOID:**

Perrine also discusses several kinds of inferior poems which, he says, frequently fool poor readers (and occasionally a few good ones) into thinking that they are good. Among these inferior poems are two kinds worth mentioning:

1. **The sentimental poem:** Perrine defines the sentimental poem as one that "aims primarily at stimulating the emotions directly rather than at communicating experience truly and freshly; it depends on trite and well-tried formulas for exciting emotion; it revels in old oaken buckets, rocking chairs, mother love, and the pitter-patter of little feet; it oversimplifies; it is unfaithful to the complexity of human experience."

2. **The didactic poem:** Perrine defines this as the poem that “has as its primary purpose to teach or preach.” It is recognizable, he says, by the flatness of its diction, the triteness of its imagery and figurative language, its emphasis on moral platitudes, and its general lack of poetic freshness. In short, its teaching/preaching purpose has entirely superseded its poetic purpose.

While our contest is one for young amateurs, still we should endeavor to develop their ability to write good poetry - poetry that adheres, to some degree, to the standards described above.

## **SENSITIVITY AND SENSITIVE ISSUES**

The subject matter and language of poems must be appropriate for students, parents, and other members of the community. Therefore, sensitive issues are not acceptable topics for poems that are submitted to the Polk County Council of Teachers of English Poetry Contest.

Furthermore, the Polk County Poetry Contest will support and abide by the Polk County Schools Code of Conduct. Within the subject matter of the poem, the student may not harm oneself or others.

## **DEPARTMENT CHAIR OR DESIGNEE PACKING LIST**

**Please include the following:**

On CD

Label outside of CD with school name and name of department chair or designee

- All student poems typed in correct format (see page 4).  
(It is helpful if poems are organized in folders by grade level)
- 2012 School Entry Sheet (use attachment included in email or email [Diane.plowden@polk-fl.net](mailto:Diane.plowden@polk-fl.net) for form)

(Please check CD to make sure everything was saved correctly.)

A **Student Entry Sheet** (see page 7) for **every student** with all required signatures (student's, parent/guardian's, teacher's and principal's).

**Send CD and Student Entry Sheets by Friday, February 10, 2012**

Via PCSB Courier:  
Diane Plowden  
Department of Rigor  
Route E

Or Via US Mail:  
Diane Plowden  
Department of Rigor, Instructional Services  
1925 Floral Ave.  
Bartow, 33830

You may also hand deliver to Diane Plowden at the Bartow District Office or to Diane Conley at Jim Miles Professional Development Center.

**POLK COUNTY COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH**  
**Polk County, Florida**  
**POETRY CONTEST**

Be sure all information is complete and correct. Type or print neatly.

POEM TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phonetic Pronunciation of Unusual Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Teacher (*full name, please*) \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME MI LAST NAME

.....  
**STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

I understand the meaning of plagiarism and hereby certify that this entry is **my own original idea**, word(s) and work.

I understand that copying someone else's work or borrowing from a song or another poem and calling it my own are illegal and unethical.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

I hereby certify that this entry is the **original** work of my child. I am aware that copying someone else's work and calling it your own is illegal and unethical, and I am fully aware of the embarrassment that such a situation could present and the punishment that could result.\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

**\* A student who submits a poem that is not his/her own creative work will be disciplined for falsifying information according to School Board Policy.**

**State School Board Policy: SECTION 5.02. CHEATING:** In addition to the academic ramifications for cheating, a student who participates in using, copying, or providing another student with any test answers or answer keys or another person's work representing it to be his or her own work, is guilty of unacceptable conduct punishable as follows:

**First Offense: Levels 1 – 3**

**Subsequent Offenses: Levels 2-6**

**State School Board Policy: SECTION 3.03. F. Level 6 – Out-of-School or Bus Suspension**

**State School Board Policy: SECTION 3.03. G. Level 7 – Secondary Alternative Education Disciplinary Programs (Grades Sixth through Twelfth)**

.....  
I have observed the poem through the growth process and attest to its authenticity. All rules have been followed for judging and submission per the Polk County Council of Teachers of English Procedures and Guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Judges' Selection Process

## Selection of Judges

1. Must be a member of Polk County Council of Teachers of English.
2. Judges chosen from volunteers on Polk County Council of Teachers of English membership applications or response to email invitation.
3. E-mails are sent to volunteers.
4. Once selected to be a judge, the judges are placed in a grade he/she does not teach.
- \*5. Judges must agree not to discuss the poems that are judged with students, acquaintances, or other teachers/colleagues.
6. Judges are expected to edit out errors not previously caught; this does not imply changing the author's intent in the poem.

\*Signatures required as to agreement on day of judging.

No one judges at the grade level(s) he/she teaches. All poems are anonymously judged. **Only an identifying number code appears on each poem (example: 9-127).**

# Scoring Procedures

## SCORING GUIDE FOR POETRY CONTEST

A six-point scoring scale will be used for this judging. Such a scale helps readers evaluate more effectively the qualities of the various poems. Every team member is required to read all poems. EACH READER WRITES THE EVALUATION NUMBER CLEARLY ON THE BACK OF EACH POEM. FINAL SCORES WILL BE PLACED ON A LEGAL PAD, FOLLOWING GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE POEMS.

6-5 **Clearly excellent poems**, with the 5 being a less impressive version of the 6 poem. These poems display adherence to the qualities of **effective poetic language, insight, and mastery of the conventions and mechanics of poetry**. The best 5-10 of these will be considered as finalists and will be sent to outside judges.

4 These are **good poems** which demonstrate adequate handling of the use of poetic language and expression. However, the language and style are not as impressive as that in the upper-level poems.

3 These are **acceptable poems** but may be lacking in one or more of the characteristics of a 4. They may be less mature in thought or less fine-tuned in their language and style.

2 These poems demonstrate **serious weaknesses or inappropriate topic** in one or more of the acceptable characteristics of a 3 poem. The team will need to decide which, if any, should be published in the anthology.

1 These poems are **below acceptable poetic standards**. This score may be awarded to a poem which has **no** use of poetic language and **no** real focus. These poems are written poorly and are unimpressive. **\*They will NOT be published in the anthology.**

\*\***NOTE:** All poems scoring 3, 4, 5, or 6 automatically will be included in this year's Polk County anthology. Please consider ages in your decisions, as middle school students often do not have the skills of older writers. Be as generous as possible in your assessments.

Scoring of the  
Robert J. Fisher Award  
Top Award

## **THE ROBERT J. FISHER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN POETRY**

**The ROBERT J. FISHER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN POETRY is given each year to a student whose poem best represents the most outstanding work from students in grades 6 through 12. (See criteria listed below.)** From this winning poem, a single phrase is chosen as the anthology title and will be illustrated inside the anthology. The winner of this award receives a plaque and a cash award of \$100.00. The careful selection of this winning poem is most important for obvious reasons.

### **CRITERIA:**

- ❖ Most outstanding poem overall
  - Expressive language
  - Unique style
  - Thematic development
  - Poetic expression
- ❖ Most outstanding in talent
  - Evidence of originality
  - Command of poetic expression
  - Superior quality

### **SELECTION PROCEDURE:**

- ❖ A copy of each poem nominated from each grade level for the RJF Award will be distributed to each poetry judge.
- ❖ One person will read the poem aloud from each grade level.
- ❖ After all 7 poems have been read, judges will write on a piece of paper the title of the poem that is his/her selection.
- ❖ Results will be tallied.
- ❖ The 3 poems that receive the most votes will be read again orally. After they have been read, judges may then discuss their qualities.
- ❖ The judges again will write their selection on a piece of paper.
- ❖ If a tie occurs, the previous steps will be repeated until one poem receives a simple majority of votes. This poem then becomes the official RJF award winner.
- ❖ **Each judge will sign a statement agreeing not to disclose the winning poem or any poems considered for this distinction.**

# County Judging Responsibilities

## **\*\*TEAM LEADERS' INFORMATION**

**\*Your team** will need to accomplish the following today:

1. Read each poem and write a NUMERICAL score directly **ON THE POEM**. (High 6, low 1) After each person has read all the poems, compare scores and come to agreement. **\*\*Write THIS ONE SCORE in RED INK on your TEAM LEADER'S master copy of the poem and on the legal pad. Please EDIT it well for grammar in RED INK.** If you have questions, see **Diane Conley or Jackie Baldwin**.
2. Out of the group that has a 6—or possibly a 5—overall score, choose **between 5 and 10 poems** as the winning poems to be sent to out-of-county judges. **\*\*TEAM LEADERS will list these in NUMERICAL order on your MASTER GRADE LEVEL SHEET.**
3. Choose a **PHRASE POEM (PP)** for your grade level. It will appear—along with supporting artwork— at the beginning of the grade level in the anthology, so please choose something that will work for drawing purposes. In the designated place, **\*\*TEAM LEADERS write the PP number, the PP title, and the EXACT PHRASE.**
4. **Determine the poems that are un-publishable** because of inappropriate content or inordinate errors. (We TRY to use ALL the poems, especially at the middle school level, so cut only if they are really weak!) **\*\*TEAM LEADERS will paper clip all un-publishable poems and label them with a sticky note.** Put these in a master separate folder labeled “UN-PUBLISHABLE”) **\*\*TEAM LEADERS will TURN IN ALL COPIES OF POETRY MATERIAL. NO papers MAY leave the scoring room!!!**

*\*\*It would be extremely helpful if you could have the first three things done by lunch.*

**\*\*\*FOLDERS FOR YOU TO FILL at the end:** 1) UNPUBLISHABLE, 2) PUBLISHABLE, 3) TOP TEN, 4) PHRASE POEM and 5) EXTRA PAPERS.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP!**

## JUDGES' INFORMATION—POETRY CONTEST

Your team will need to accomplish the following:

1. Read each poem and write a **NUMERICAL SCORE directly ON THE BACK OF THE POEM.** (High 6, low 1) After each person has read all the poems, you will compare scores and come to agreement. Your team leader will write **THIS ONE SCORE** in **RED** on a master copy of each poem and on the legal pad that also contains the poem's official number (example: 9-127). **EDIT each poem together for grammar and punctuation.**
2. Out of the group that has a 6—or possibly a 5—overall score, choose **between 5 and 10 poems** as the winning poems to be sent to out-of-county judges. **YOUR TEAM LEADERS** will list these in **NUMERICAL** order on your **MASTER GRADE LEVEL SHEET.**
3. Choose a **PHRASE POEM (PP)** for your grade level. It will appear—along with the supporting artwork— at the beginning of the grade level in the anthology, so please choose something that will work for drawing purposes. In the designated place, **TEAM LEADERS** will write the PP number, the PP title, and the **EXACT PHRASE.**
4. **Determine the poems that are un-publishable** because of inappropriate content or inordinate errors. (We TRY to use ALL the poems, especially at the middle school level, so cut only if they are really bad!) **TEAM LEADERS** will put these in a separate folder that will be labeled “UN-PUBLISHABLE”). **\*TEAM LEADERS will TURN IN ALL COPIES OF POETRY MATERIAL. NO papers MAY leave the scoring room!!!**

*\*\*It would be extremely helpful if you could have the first three things done by lunch.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXPERTISE AND LEADERSHIP!**

## Judges' Statement of Agreement Regarding Disclosure

I hereby agree neither to discuss nor disclose the results of the judging process relating to **any and all poems considered** for placement in the Poetry Anthology. This agreement applies to all levels of judging today.

\_\_\_\_\_ (write in today's full date and year).

\_\_\_\_\_ Print name

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ School



**GRADE LEVEL TOP POEMS**

**GRADE** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHRASE POEM**

**NUMBER OF PHRASE POEM** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF PHRASE POEM** \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITE OUT THE PHRASE** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**THE FOLLOWING TEN POEMS WERE SELECTED AS THE TOP  
AT THIS GRADE LEVEL AND WILL BE SENT AWAY FOR JUDGING:**

**NUMBER OF POEM**

**TITLE OF POEM**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## **SAMPLE POETRY JUDGING AGENDA FOR SATURDAY JUDGING**

- 8:30 Refreshments
- 8:45 Establishing of Ground Rules
- 9:30 Judging of Poems
- 11:00 Deciding on Top Poems
- 12:00 Wrap Up and Final Decisions

We should finish and be able to leave no later than 1:00 p.m.

Again, thank you for your willingness to help. We could not have this contest without the sacrifice, dedication, and talent of judges like you!

Be creative and write  
a poem for this year's  
Polk County Poetry Contest.



See your English  
teacher to submit  
your poems for  
the 2012 contest.