

Tips for Selecting a Poem

- ***Don't Limit Yourself to Reading Just a Handful of Poems.***
There are more than 900 poems in the anthology. Take the time to find more than a few that are right for you. Not only will selecting a unique poem be a fun challenge, but it may lead you to find new writers that you really enjoy!
- ***Try Using a Variety of Search Terms to Identify a Poem that Interests You.***
There are many poems in the anthology that deal with love. However, you won't find them all by just searching the term "love." Try using synonyms like "devotion" and "romance" to discover poems you might have missed.
- ***Read at Least Half of a Poem Before Deciding Whether to Stop or Continue.***
Remember the old cliché, "Don't judge a book by its cover"? Well, don't judge a poem by its first stanza! Reading at least half of the poem will give you a feel for the style and tone and will allow you to better decide if a poem is or isn't right for you. Not every poem will suit your needs and preferences, and that's ok! But every poem deserves a chance.
- ***Use the "Search Poets" Feature on the Website to Find Poets that Share Your Heritage.***
Sometimes the poems that have the strongest impact on us are those that relate to our own family story. Use the online anthology to search for poets who might share cultural similarities with you. For example, someone of Irish heritage might consider the work of Eavan Boland, who writes poetry about her life as a woman in Dublin.
- ***Explore Poems from a Diverse Set of Poets.***
Use the online anthology to find authors of all races, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds. Look for poets with both similar and different experiences from you. Check out writers of the opposite gender and different ethnicities, as well as contemporary and classic poets.
- ***Use the Search Bar on the Website to Search Poems by Themes or Hobbies.***
Search for poems relating to things you're interested in! Recitations are often stronger when the performer feels connected to what they're reciting, so if you enjoy something, find a poem that addresses it. The online anthology offers poems on many themes and interests, including sports, friendship, school, and family, among others.
- ***Don't be Afraid to Read a Poem a Few Times to Gain Understanding.***
Stuck finding your pre-20th century poem? Many poems written in the 1800s reflect language that isn't commonplace today. Feel free to look up words you might not understand or reread sentences that are confusing to you. Sometimes reading the poem a few times can help you understand and fall in love with an unfamiliar form or challenging language.
- ***Read the Poem Aloud!***
Often reading a poem aloud has a very different effect than reading it on the page. Find a quiet place to listen as you speak it, or whisper it to yourself as you walk down the halls of your school. Listen for the rhythms, and see how the poem feels when you say it instead of reading it.