

*Dummy up, beatniks! Step outta Squaresville and groove on down to a hip poetry slam. With each round, the challenges are gonna get more and more wild, ya dig? This ain't no money run. Poets will lose letters that they can't use in their words anymore. An' we wanna hear you blow our minds with far-out rhyming poems that'll let other poets guess your word. Have you got the hippest rhymes, daddy-o?*

- Components**
- 26 Letter Cards
  - 9 Word Prompt Cards
  - 50 Speed Tiles
  - 30 Snap Tiles
  - 70 Lost Letter Chips
  - 50 Slams
  - 10 Player Boards
  - 10 Player Screens
  - 10 Pencils
  - 1 Score Pad

**Goal**

The goal of Poetry Slam is to earn the most respect points of any poet by the end of the game.

**Setup**

1. Shuffle the *Word Prompt Cards* and place them in a deck in the middle of the table.
2. Shuffle the *Letter Cards* and place them in a deck next to the *Word Prompt Deck*.
3. Place the *Lost Letter Chips* and *Slams* in piles on the table where all players can reach.
4. Give each player:
  - A *Score Sheet* taken from the *Score Pad*, and a Pen or Pencil to write with
  - A *Player Screen*, and *Player Board*
  - 3 *Snap Tiles* (placed Beatnik side up)



**Wordsmith**

Designate a player to be the Wordsmith for the entire game (usually the player best at word games).

**Rounds**

The Wordsmith should shuffle all the *Speed Tiles* making sure they all have their point values (dots) face-up. Next, form a row of *Speed Tiles*, from left to right, beginning with a 5-point tile, then a 4-point tile, then a 3-point tile, and so on. After the 1-point tile, repeat the pattern once again.

Number of Players	Chips to Draw
6	1
7	2
8 to 10	3

If playing with 6 or more players: Remove one *Speed Tile* of each value (1 to 5).

From these 5 tiles, randomly draw a number of tiles, according to the following table:

Using *Lost Letter Chips*, all players must cover up a letter of their choice on their *Player Board* in the tier of letters corresponding to the value of each *Speed Tile* drawn. Place the 5 *Speed Tiles* removed for this step back with the rest of the *Speed Tiles*.

Organize the *Speed Tiles*

Note: The Wordsmith does not need to place all the *Speed Tiles* in this row now, but they will add to it as needed as the game is played.

Keep this row (and any other *Speed Tiles* that haven't yet been placed in the row) near the Wordsmith.

**Game Play**

**Word Phase**

**1 Speed Tiles**

At the start of each round, the Wordsmith will remove *Speed Tiles* equal to the number of players off of the left end of the row they have made. The removed tiles should be placed in the middle of the table in reach of all players.

Note: If the row of *Speed Tiles* is too short, the Wordsmith should add to the end from the pile of *Speed Tiles* that have not yet been placed in the row continuing the 5-4-3-2-1 pattern as before.

Example: The example above represents Round 1 of a 4 player game so the first four tiles are taken off the row: values 5, 4, 3, 2. In Round 2, the next 4 tiles are taken off the row will be values 1, 5, 4, 3.

**2 Word Prompt**

The Wordsmith should flip over the top card of the *Word Prompt Deck* and the top card (or top two cards if required by the *Word Prompt Card*) from the *Letter Deck*.

Example: The *Word Prompt* is "Second letter is \_", and then the *Letter Card* drawn is "T". Players must come up with a word matching this prompt (so the second letter of their word must be a "T" as in "athlete").

Note: An index explaining all *Word Prompt Cards* can be found at the end of this rulebook.

**3 Writing Words**

When the Wordsmith is finished drawing *Word Prompt* and *Letter Cards*, players may immediately begin writing a word on their *Score Sheet* in the row for the current round using their *Player Screen* to hide their word.

- Words MUST meet the following conditions to be considered valid:
- Be at least three letters long
  - Be in an English dictionary if challenged
  - Not be a proper noun
  - Not be a contraction
  - Not be an abbreviation or acronym (exception: words like "laser" that were originally acronyms but are now common words)

Compound words are considered valid. Compound words include those that are written as one word (i.e. "crosswalk"), written as two words (i.e. "ice cream"), and those written using hyphens (i.e. "deep-fried").

On rare occasions your group may need to make a judgment call about a specific word. Players should use their best judgment for words not covered by the above rules. Majority rules when a word's validity is unclear. In the case of a tie, the Wordsmith can break ties. Invalid words will earn a Slam (see Slams)

Note: If a player cannot think of a word that matches the *Word Prompt Card*, they may pass on writing a word. They will earn no points for their word, but may still earn points by guessing other players' words during the Poetry Phase.

**4 Take Speed Tiles**

As soon as a player has completed their word they take a *Speed Tile* of their choice from the middle of the table.

Note: Higher-valued *Speed Tiles* will earn you more points but will cause you to lose a more valuable letter for future rounds.

**5 Record Points**

Once a player has written his/her word, they may write point values for Speed and Length in the appropriate columns of their *Score Sheet*. Speed points correspond with the number of dots on the players' chosen *Speed Tile*. Length is scored based on the length of your word as shown in the chart to the right (also found on the *Player Board* and *Player Screen*):

**Poetry Phase**

Once all players have recorded their scores, the Poetry Phase begins! Each player must come up with a rhyming couplet. A rhyming couplet is two lines of approximately the same length that both rhyme and complete a thought. The poem MAY NOT contain the player's word but should allow the other players to guess what the poet's word is.

Example: If the *Word Prompt* is "Second Letter is E" and the player's word is "heaven," the poem could be, "This is where the angels fly, and where good folks go when they die."

There is no turn order in Poetry Slam! If a poet is ready, they may begin. Once the poet begins their poem the other players can start guessing what their word is. Each player gets only one guess per poem; thus, if you guess wrong you can't guess again until the next poet begins.

**Guesses don't need to be exact.**

Rulings should be based on the discretion of the poet and the table as a whole. If a player guesses a derivative of the poet's word, it can be considered a correct guess.

Example: A guess of "IRONIC" where the poet's word is "IRONICALLY" would be acceptable.

**If the word is guessed correctly:**

- The guesser will get 1 point.
- If the guess came before the poet managed to finish reciting his or her poem: the poet gets 2 points.
- If the poet does manage to finish his or her poem: the poet gets 3 points.

Record any earned points as tallies in the Poetry column of the *Score Sheet* for the current round. If a reasonable amount of time has passed without a correct guess (about 10 seconds) or each player has guessed incorrectly, no points are awarded for the poem.

Note: Sometimes one poet will have written down the same word as another poet. If this happens, and the word is guessed correctly, any poet with a duplicate word who has not yet performed may simply state this is the case and take 2 points for their poetry performance.

**Players may not use a "Blank" in their poem to represent their word.**

Example: "When the moon hits your eye. Like a big BLANK pie." Players who do not make a valid poem will not get points for other players guessing their word.

Points for number of letters used in word

Points from Speed Tile



Continue the Poetry Phase until all players have recited a poem and points have been awarded accordingly.

- If a player cannot come up with a poem in a reasonable amount of time, they may pass.
- If a poem doesn't rhyme (to the group's satisfaction) or does not meet the requirements for a poem as described above, no points are scored for the poem.

### Letter Loss Phase

Once all players have had an opportunity to complete the Poetry Phase, players must now flip over the Speed Tile they selected and lose a letter on their Player Board as indicated on the tile.

Some Speed Tiles will simply have a letter on the underside. If this is the case, simply take a Lost Letter Chip and place it over that letter on your Player Board.



If the chosen letter is already covered, cover another letter of the same value (i.e. 'M' could be used if 'L' is already covered).

If all letters of the Speed Tile's tier are already covered, lose a letter from the tier below (i.e. letter from tier 3 when tier 2 is fully covered).



Note: Going into the final round of the game, each player should have seven Lost Letter Chips on their Player Board.

If it is not possible to lose a letter from the tier below, lose a letter from the tier above (i.e. lose a letter from tier 4 when tier 5 is fully covered).



Other Speed Tiles will instruct you to cover up a letter of a particular tier. This will give you a choice of what letter to lose. Follow the rules from the above paragraph if all the letters of the Speed Tile's value are already covered.

After everyone has covered up a letter, discard all selected Speed Tiles and the Word Prompt and Letter Cards and begin a new round (if there are more to play).

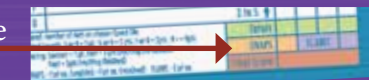
### Snaps

How do a bunch of beatnik poets show appreciation for each other's work? Not by clapping... but by snapping their fingers of course!

Each poet starts the game with three Snap Tokens. These all start Beatnik side up. If you end the game with un-given Snaps, they will each count as one point against you.

If during any point of the game you are particularly impressed with another poet's word, poem, or guess... give them a Snap Token! Flip it to the Snap side and give it to the player in appreciation of their work. A Snap Token with Snap side up is worth +1 point for the player who owns it!

There is an area at the bottom of the Score Sheet to record Snap points.



You may only give out three Snaps over the course of the game, and you may only give out one each round.

### Slams

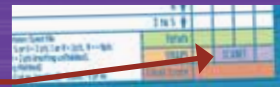
Everyone makes mistakes – even the best poets! *Slams* are given out when poets make mistakes. A poet will get slammed, and gain one *Slam* for each of the following mistakes:

- Their word does not match the *Word Prompt Card*.
- Their word violates the rules for valid words.
- Their word is spelled incorrectly.
- Each use of a *Lost Letter* in their word.

exception: if the *Word Prompt Card* requires use of the particular letter, you are allowed to use it once without a *Slam*.

A poet will get an additional three *Slams* if no attempt was made to form a valid word, and the word was clearly used only to circumvent the rules (Example: A nonsense word like "Aaaaaaah"). At the end of the game, *Slams* will count against your score.

Each *Slam* is worth -2 points. There is an area near the bottom of the *Score Sheet* to record the points lost from *Slams*.



### Game End

After the correct number of rounds have been completed, the game ends and poets may add up their points. Remember to subtract *Slams* and add/subtract *Snaps*. Whoever has the most points is the winner!

### Point Summary

#### Speed

1 to 5 points: based on the number of dots on the *Speed Tile* you took.

#### Word Length

Letters	Points
3 or 4	1
5 or 6	2
7 or 8	3
9+	4

#### Slams

-2 points each

#### Poetry

- Someone correctly guesses your word  
- After you finish saying your poem: 3 points  
- Before you finish saying your poem: 2 points  
- Each correct guess of another player's word: +1 point

#### Snaps

+1 point each *Snap* you've been given  
-1 point for each of your *Snaps* you did not give out

### Freeform Poetry Variant

If playing with groups who might struggle to come up with rhyming couplets (or when playing with younger children), feel free to use freeform poetry in the Poetry Phase. These freeform poems, or free verse poems, don't need to rhyme or have any common meter.

In this version of the game, players should come up with a short, creative, storytelling clue to the players' words to share in the Poetry Phase. Groups may feel free to come up with their own rules for these freeform poems while emphasizing creativity and fun!



Example: Instead of the earlier described rhyming couplet for the word "heaven", a player might use the following freeform poem, "Oh! To be here in paradise is so sweet! An eternal reward up in the clouds."

Note: Not all players would have to play with this variant if some feel comfortable coming up with rhyming couplets (good for groups with diverse ages and/or wordsmithing skills).

### Word Prompt Card Index

• "First letter is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the first letter in the word. (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "tornado" or "top".)

• "Second letter is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the second letter in the word. (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "star" or "etymologist".)

• "Third letter is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the second letter in the word. (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "artist" or "orthopedic".)

• "Last letter is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the last letter in the word. If the letters C,I,J,Q,U,V, or X are drawn, discard and redraw a new Letter Card (see "May Discard: \_" instructions below). (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "rat" or "acrobat".)

• "Second letter from the last is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the second to last letter in the word. If the letters J or Q are drawn, discard and redraw a new Letter Card (see "May Discard: \_" instructions below). (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "behemoth" or "gate".)

• "Starts with the letter \_ and ends with the letter \_" : Draw two Letter Cards. The first drawn letter must begin the word and the second drawn letter must end the word. The Wordsmith may discard either or both letters and redraw new ones (See the "May Discard: Wordsmith Decides" instructions below). (i.e. If the Letter Cards drawn are a "T" and "R", valid words could be "triangular" or "taper".)

• "Third letter from the last is \_" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be the third to last letter in the word. (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "toe" or "anecdotal".)

• "Contains both letters drawn: \_ and \_" : Draw two Letter Cards. Both letters must be contained in the word but may appear in any position and in any order. The Wordsmith may discard either or both letters and redraw new ones (See the "May Discard: Wordsmith Decides" instructions below). (i.e. If the Letter Cards drawn are a "T" and "R", valid words could be "artistic" or "tandoor".)

• "Has the letter \_ twice in a row" : Draw one Letter Card. The drawn letter must be used twice in a row somewhere in the word. If the letters A,C,H,I,J,K,Q,U,W,X, or Y are drawn, discard and redraw a new Letter Card (see "May Discard: \_" instructions below). (i.e. If the Letter Card drawn is a "T", valid words could be "tattoo" or "scatter".)

• "May Discard: \_" : Word Prompt Cards containing this instruction indicate certain Letter Cards that should immediately be discarded when drawn from the Letter Deck and replaced with new Letter Cards.

• "May Discard: Wordsmith Decides" : Word Prompt Cards containing this instruction indicate that the Wordsmith may choose to immediately discard a drawn Letter Card if they feel it will not produce a variety of good answers.

### Credits

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**Designer's Note:** I just want to thank my incredibly supportive and wonderful wife Chelsea, my fellow Game Artisans of Canada, the other designers and playtesters meeting weekly at the Sentry Box in Calgary, and all the family and friends who are helping make my dreams a reality.

