OFFICIAL RULES*
*Official rules as of 12/03/2019

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

● Participants must be 19 years old or younger on the day of Crossing the Street (exceptions may be made on a case by case basis)
● Participants must register no later than February 22, 2019 in order to perform as a member of an LTAB team or as an Indy Poet.
● Participants on school teams must be enrolled in that institution, or have graduated within that academic year.
● Teams must be sponsored by a school or community organization. Indy poets must be sponsored by a mentor or coach who works at a school or community organization.
● Attendance to Crossing the Street is mandatory for all participants and coaches. Non-attendance may result in disqualification. Notify LTAB organizers as soon as possible about participant absence.
● Participants must be physically present and checked in at least 30 minutes before their bouts begin. Tardiness to a scheduled bout time may result in disqualification.

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

● Poets who wish to compete as members of an LTAB team must register with their school team. If poets do not have an active LTAB team at their school, they are eligible to join a Community Organization Team or can choose to work with Young Chicago Authors or a community organization to start a poetry slam team at their school.
  ○ We acknowledge that schools are, at times, unsafe spaces for some of our participants. If a student feels unsafe on their school team, there will be a process that will seek to restore safety on the school team for that student, and if at the end of the restorative process, the student continues to feel unsafe on their school team, they are welcome to join a community organization LTAB team.

TEAM REGISTRATION, BOUTS, & ADVANCEMENT

● Team Registration
  ○ Teams must consist of the same poets whose names are on the team roster. If you have changes to your roster, LTAB organizers must be notified before February 16, 2019, after which only registered team members may compete.
  ○ There must be a minimum of four people on each team, a maximum of ten. No alternates. All 10 members are eligible to perform during LTAB bouts.
  ○ Each LTAB Team must select a team captain. Poets competing as individuals may self-select as captains. All captains are required to attend the LTAB 2019 Captain’s Council Meeting in January.
  ○ Teams are encouraged to bring additional youth to the festival, who may serve as sacrificial poets at any bout in which their school or organization is not
competing. Sacrificial Poets perform prior to the start of the bout in order to calibrate the judges. To sign your poet up for this opportunity, please email Festival Coordinator Britteney Kapri at britteney@youngchicagoauthors.org.

- **Bout Structure for Teams**
  - Each team must participate in two Preliminary bouts, one weekday bout and and one weekend bout (unless special scheduling is requested and approved).
  - Preliminary and Quarterfinal bouts will consist of five rounds. In the first four rounds teams must send up individual pieces. In the 5th round teams must send up the mandatory 4-person group piece.
  - Semifinals will consist of five rounds. In Semifinals, there will be no specified group piece round. Instead, teams will be free to perform their group piece and four individual poems in any order they choose.
  - For Semifinals only, scores will not be announced publicly during the bout. Coaches will be able to view scores digitally during the bout if they so choose.
  - Team Finals will consist of four rounds. In Team Finals, there will be no specified group piece round. Instead, teams will be free to perform their group piece and three individual poems in any order they choose.
  - If at any point a group piece does not consist of exactly 4 poets, the team will receive zero points for the piece. However, individual poets from the team who performed in other rounds will still be eligible to advance as Indy Poets.
  - A representative from each team will participate in a bout draw before the start of each bout to determine the order in which their team will perform. Teams will draw A, B, C, or D and perform in the following order:
    - Round 1: ABCD
    - Round 2: BCDA
    - Round 3: CDAB
    - Round 4: DABC
  - Teams may repeat poems throughout the festival. However, teams may not send up the same poem in one bout.
  - No individual poet may perform more than one individual poem in a single bout.

- **Team Advancement**
  *Refer to “Coaches Guide to LTAB Rules” under “Advancement Eligibility” for more detailed information on the advancement process.*
  - The 32 top ranking teams from preliminaries will be asked to compete in the Quarterfinal round. There will be 8 Quarterfinal bouts with 4 teams each.
  - Barring any ties, the top two teams from each Quarterfinal bout will advance to Semifinals.
  - Barring any ties, the top-ranking team in each Semifinal bout will compete in LTAB Finals.
  - At any point in the festival, if your team does not advance to the next round, high scoring poets from your team may be eligible to advance as Indy Poets.
The winner of LTAB Team Finals will receive travel and registration expenses paid for 6 youth team members and 1 adult chaperone for the Brave New Voices Festival.

INDIVIDUAL (“INDY POET”) REGISTRATION, BOUTS, & ADVANCEMENT

- **Indy Poet Registration**
  - All schools or organizations may register up to three Indy poets.

- **Bout Structure for Indy Poets**
  - Indy poets must participate in two Preliminary Bouts, one weekday bout and one weekend bout (unless special scheduling is requested and approved).
  - In Preliminary, Quarterfinal and Semifinal Bouts there will be up to three Indy Poets in each bout. Indy Poets will perform one poem in each bout.
  - There are five rounds in Preliminary, Quarterfinal, and Semifinal bouts. Indy Poets will perform within the first four rounds.
  - Indy Poets will participate in a bout draw before the start of each bout to determine the order in which they will perform. Indy poets will draw A, B, C and perform in the following order:
    - Round 1: -
    - Round 2: Indy Poet A
    - Round 3: Indy Poet B
    - Round 4: Indy Poet C
  - Indy Poets may repeat poems throughout the festival.
  - Indy Finals will consist of three rounds. Poets should come prepared with three poems. They may repeat poems used in previous bouts.

- **Indy Poet Advancement**
  *Refer to “Coaches Guide to LTAB Rules” under “Advancement Eligibility” for more detailed information on the advancement process.*
  - If an Indy Poet’s Preliminary Bout scores qualify them to advance, they will advance to a Quarterfinals. If an Indy Poet’s Quarterfinals scores qualify them to advance, they will advance to Semifinals. Indy Poets that qualify to advance from Semifinals will advance to Indy Finals.
  - Throughout the festival, advancing Indy Poets will be chosen from all high-scoring poets whose teams are not advancing to the next round as well as those registered as Indy poets.
  - Only the top scoring Indy Poet from teams advancing to Team Finals will be eligible to advance to Indy Finals.

POEMS & PERFORMANCE

- **Poet Introductions**
  - All poets should introduce themselves in the following order:
● their name (REQUIRED)
● their school/community organization name. (REQUIRED)
● a brief call and response to encourage positive energy in the space prior to beginning their piece (OPTIONAL)
● the title of the poem. If the poem is untitled then the poet must say, “This piece is untitled.” (REQUIRED)

● Timekeeping
○ Each poem must be under three minutes in length. After three minutes, there is a 10-second grace period (up to and including 3:10.00). Starting at 3:10.01, a .5 penalty is automatically deducted from the poet’s overall score for every ten seconds over time. See examples below:
  ■ 3:10 and under = no penalty
  ■ 3:10.01–3:20 = -0.5
  ■ 3:20.01–3:30 = -1.0
  ■ 3:30.01–3:40 = -1.5
  ■ and so on [-0.5 for every 10 seconds over 3:10]
○ Timing will begin at first engagement with the audience (vocal or physical) after the poet introduction is delivered.
○ Any dedications or prefaces to the poem will be included in the allotted time. If dedications or prefaces are made before the Poet Introduction is completed, the time will start when the dedication begins.
○ Note: Dedications or prefaces to poems are not discouraged. If a dedication or preface is used, please make sure to give it after the poet introduction and know that it will be timed.
○ Poets may be asked to leave the stage if they reach 5:00.

● Plagiarism & Authorship
○ Participants must perform their own original writing. Participants who plagiarize will be disqualified.
○ Clearly quoting/sampling other works and utilizing literary allusions is not considered plagiarism. Determining plagiarism infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers and/or grand master slam.
○ While the entire team may contribute to the writing of a group piece, only 4 team members may perform the group piece, and all group piece performers must have been involved in the writing of that piece. *Refer to the Coaches Guide to LTAB Rules under “Authorship” for examples of group piece authorship.
○ Repeating poems from previous LTAB festivals is not allowed.

● Props, Costumes, & Music
○ Props, costumes, and/or musical accompaniment may not be used in the slam. (i.e. performing a piece involving a hoodie while wearing a hoodie is allowed. Using a hoodie you’re wearing as a prop to emphasize your words is not). Determining prop, costume and music infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers.
• Safe Space Rules
  ○ LTAB participants must abide by YCA’s safe space rules: *No racist, sexist, homophobic, gender-biased, ableist, transphobic or otherwise derogatory speech that is degrading to any specific group of people.* Failure to heed this can result in point deduction as determined by the bout manager and Grand Master Slam.
  ○ Discriminatory language are prohibited. Violations will result in a .5 penalty for every infraction. Determining content infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers. *Refer to The Coaches Guide to LTAB Rules under “Profanity/Safe Space” for examples of content infractions.*
  ○ Any disparaging of other teams by LTAB poets in their poems is strictly prohibited.
    ▪ If a poet and/or team writes a poem disparaging another competing team or poet, their score will be zeroed out for the round.

JUDGING & PROTESTING

• Judging
  A panel of artists, educators, youth and audience members will judge each bout. Each bout will have 5 judges. 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 coaches are required to sign off on the score sheet with the bout manager at the end of each bout. Any 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 grandmaster slam will review the complaint with the rest of the tournament staff before making a decision regarding potential consequences. The decision will be presented to the affected individuals the next morning (or earlier if time-sensitive).
Welcome to the 18th season of Louder Than A Bomb: The Chicago Youth Poetry Festival! As a coach/mentor, you are one of the most important movers in making this festival happen and making it happen in the best way for all of our young people. This short guide is meant to offer additional guidance and support as you prepare your students for LTAB.

**POET REGISTRATION**

At LTAB, we want as many students as possible to be able to join our community while at the same time offering the same advantages to all schools or organizations. Accordingly, we have expanded team registration to allow for up to 10 participants on an LTAB team.

In addition to those 10, the coach of an LTAB team may also sponsor three other Indy Poets at their school/organization.

This means up to 13 poets can be affiliated with any one school/organization.

If you have more than 13 poets interested in being involved in LTAB, consider the following options:

- In order to participate in special events such as the Jordan Slam, MC Olympics, and/or Queeriosity please email Ana@youngchicagoauthors.org
- **Sign up to perform as a sacrificial poet** during an LTAB bout by emailing britteney@youngchicagoauthors.org (Keep in mind sacrificial poets may not perform in the same bout as their school or community organization.)

If your school/organization has fewer than 4 poets able to compete, please inform the Grand Master Slam and LTAB Program Manager no later than February 16, 2020, so that we can change your team registration to individual registrations. This is no problem because we want your young people to play an active role in LTAB. Transferring incomplete team registrations to individual registrations whenever possible will also help us preserve competitive balance in the team competition.

**REFUND POLICY**

Teams cannot request a refund if they do not inform the Grand Master Slam that they will not be participating in the festival 24hrs before their first bout time.

**AUTHORSHIP**

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. In the tradition of hip hop,
at LTAB we encourage the use of literary allusion, sampling, found poems, and poems that reference other works while still maintaining their own original voice. When sampling or modeling new work after a pre-existing poem or song, it is best practice to shout out the original author in the title or dedication of the poem.

Examples...

GROUP POEMS
Group poems are collaborative in nature and should be composed and performed in that spirit. In a group piece, each student performer should play an active role in the writing of the poem. Collaborative writing for group pieces can take many forms. 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.

A final note on Authorship:
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 pieces, please ask the Grand Master Slam.

PROFANITY/SAFE SPACE

LTAB is first and foremost a community space. In this spirit we limit the language at our slam, not because we believe in censorship, but rather so that we can provide access to the widest
audience for our poets and our festival. To this end, the following words and all their variants are NOT allowed in the competition:

(1) Fuck
(2) Shit

The following words are allowed within reason:

(1) Damn
(2) Ass
(3) Hell

In addition to the words above, there are a number of words that we feel can be used either to challenge structures of intolerance or, conversely, to attack members of particular groups and destroy safe space. The context determines which of these outcomes is achieved. Therefore, if these words/phrases appear in poems, particular attention will be paid to who is saying them and in what context:

(1) Nigger/Nigga and other derogatory terms for racial or ethnic groups.
(2) Bitch, Slut, Hoe, THOT, and other derogatory terms for women.
(3) Faggot/Fag, Tranny, and other derogatory terms for queer people.

Again, we believe these words (and all words) are powerful and must be used responsibly. If you find students using this language on stage (or in general) in a damaging context, please use that opportunity to engage with them, dialogue, and encourage them to make the most thoughtful choices about their language and their art. In general, whenever students are attempting to use these words (or any words) we should, as mentors, challenge them to think about if it is the best and most essential way to communicate what they intend to communicate.

If you have any specific questions or concerns about these guidelines please contact the Grand Master Slams at Britteney@youngchicagoauthors.org

SCORING STRUCTURE

Scoring Components
In the tabulation of LTAB scores (team and individual), we consider the components of scores in this order:

(1) Bout Rank
(2) Head-to-Head Matchups
(3) Point Differential
(4) Total Score
(5) Raw Score

Bout Rank
Scores given by panels of judges are subjective and vary from bout to bout. We consider bout
rank first in order to ensure that teams with the highest rankings advance even if they were in a “low scoring bout”. This means that if TEAM A had a total score of 135.0 in a bout and took first place, they would be ahead in the standings for Quarterfinals qualification of TEAM B that had a total score of 140.0 in a separate bout and took a second place.

Head-to-Head Matchups
In the event of a tie of bout rank we will look at head-to-head matchups when available. For example if TEAM A and TEAM B both had a first place and second place finish and faced each other in a bout we would consider the outcome of that bout. So if TEAM A took first place in the bout against TEAM B then TEAM A would be ranked ahead of TEAM B.

Point Differential
The point differential system measures how close a team came to winning their particular bout. If two teams are tied with a "4" ranking, for instance (one team finished in second in both prelims; the other finished in first and third place in their bouts), then the tie would be broken by tabulating how far from victory they were: TEAM A finished in second place in both bouts. They lost their first bout by -.6 points and their second bout by -1.9 points. Their total point differential is a -2.5. TEAM B finished in first place in their first bout, and third in their second bout. Their differential for the first bout is +.5 because they won by that margin. Their differential for bout three is -2.2 points. Their total point differential is a -1.8. In this scenario, Team B would advance because their point differential is higher. It rewards teams for competing as strong as they can in any particular bout, and also keeps consistency between bouts by asking teams to compete against their own judges, and no others.

Total Score
A total score in a round is calculated by adding the 3 middle scores from the judges while dropping the highest and the lowest score.

A team’s total score is the sum of all of their preliminary rounds (individual and group).

Raw Score
A poet’s raw score is calculated by adding the scores from all five judges.

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement Eligibility: Quarter Finals

The Quarterfinal round will consist of the top 32 teams as determined by our scoring structure.

Once the teams are determined for Quarter Finals, the 24 individual Quarterfinalists are determined from ALL poets who competed in two preliminary individual rounds and are not moving on to Quarterfinals with a team. Tiebreakers are the same for individuals as for teams.

Advancement Eligibility: Semi-Finals

The top 16 teams in the Quarterfinal rounds will be invited to compete in Semifinals. This means the top two teams from each Quarterfinal bout will advance to Semifinals. If there are
ties for second place standing in any Quarterfinal bout, we reserve the right to institute a “sudden-death round,” in which the tied teams each perform one additional poem for the right to advance to Semifinals. In a “sudden-death round,” the additional poem’s score will be added to the team’s total score in order to determine the final score.

Once the teams are determined for Semifinals, the Individual Semifinalists are determined from ALL poets who competed in two preliminary individual rounds and are not moving on to Semifinals with a team. Tiebreakers are the same for individuals as for teams.

Advancement Eligibility: Finals

The winning team of each Semifinal bout will advance to Finals. If there is a tie for first place, then both teams will advance.

Once the teams are determined for Finals, the Individual finalists are determined from top-scoring poets who competed in Semifinals as an individual, including those advancing to Finals with a team. This means the top three poets--by ranking in each bout--will advance to Indy Finals*. If there are ties, the raw score (the added scores of all 5 judges) will be used as a tiebreaker. If ties still exist, then all tied poets will advance.

*Note: Only the top scoring Indy Poet from teams advancing to Team Finals will be eligible to advance to Indy Finals. This rule is intended to provide an opportunity for broader representation of poets from various teams and community organizations at Indy Finals.

LTAB RECOMMENDATIONS

- LTAB is rooted in the craft of poetry. Although we encourage poets to hone their performances skills, writing and language are valued over any performance elements.
- We encourage you to memorize your poems, though it is not required.
- 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!