

## Poet Laureate Billy Collins on Reading a Poem Out Loud

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### Purpose

To gain a better understanding of what it means to write, read, and hear poetry

### Exercise

Read the following article: [How to Read a Poem Out Loud](#) from the Library of Congress Poetry 180 with Former Poet Laureate Billy Collins

### Notes

Follow this structure when reading a poem out loud. Try it!

1. Title
  2. Author
  3. Anecdote
  4. Title (and 2 sec pause)
  5. Poem
  6. Title
- Read slowly. Read and breathe.
  - Read in your speaking voice rather than as if I'm on stage or speaking to an audience. Let the poem's words do the work just speak clearly and loudly.
  - Pauses happen at punctuation not when the line ends. Stopping at line breaks reads as choppy.
  - Look up dictionary definitions for any words that you don't know. Hear the word pronounced. For authors who have names you cannot pronounce, look up how they say it. Mark phonetic pronunciation on your paper.
  - Breathe! Remember, learning to read a poem out loud is the best way to understand the meaning.