

INFO PACK
2025



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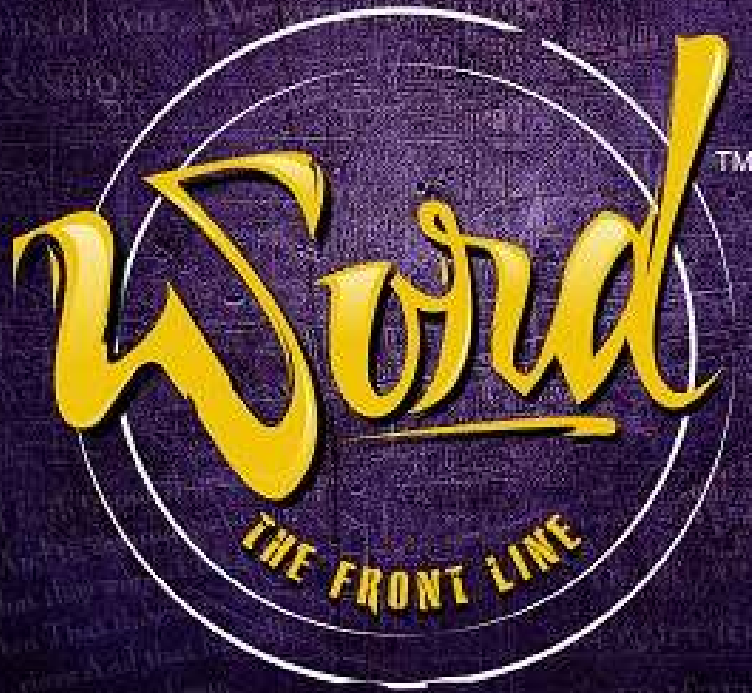
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WORD - The Front Line Ōtautahi 2025

WORD - The Front Line is an inter-high school spoken word poetry competition, bringing together teams of young people from across Christchurch to share their stories in an explosion of youth expression. It is a poetry slam with the purpose of engaging and growing the potential of our future leaders.

It is the only creative battlefield of its kind, equipping young people with poetry prowess and leadership principles for an opportunity to battle for themselves and the challenges that their generation face. The programme focuses on writing, performance, teamwork, personal development, youth voice, identity, leadership, and community. WORD - The Front Line is a platform for young people to express themselves, connect with others, and discover how they can change the world.

In 2025 we are proud to partner with the Word Christchurch Festival to bring you the 3rd annual Word - The Front Line Ōtautahi, with our Grand Slam Finals taking place as part of this year's Festival Programme.



The Heart

IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM

WORD - The Front Line was birthed out of a realization that our youth need an avenue where they can be heard; express their views and share their stories, while being supported in an environment that promotes their personal growth. We also wanted to do this in a way that brings the youth and their communities together to support and celebrate their experience.

Outcomes

1. Engaging Our Youth

The target of our first outcome is to engage the youth of Christchurch in a way that is fun, educational, informative and inspiring. 'WORD - The Front Line' will provide a series of workshops for qualifying schools leading up to the main event. These will be set up to facilitate young people exploring their creative ability and to help develop their literary skills. The leadership principles built into this programme will ensure youth take away personal life tools to support them in the future whatever their chosen path. From the young writers taking part, to their peers in the audience, we hope to encourage a love of language, communication and engagement with literature.



2. Engaging Our Community

The target for our second outcome is to engage our community with Spoken Word through the voices of our own young people. To build a stronger community we need to bridge the divide between generations, communication is a key factor in this. 'WORD - The Front Line' attracts the young and old to a stage where this powerful dialogue of connection begins. A platform where young people courageously confront their truth and share their journey in the creative expression of spoken word poetry.

Better Together

AGENTS OF CHANGE

Our young people should know that their city wants to see them as individuals confident and thriving. 'WORD - The Front Line' exists for this purpose. But it will take a collaborative effort from community leaders to see this vision get off the ground successfully. Your support of this exciting programme is invaluable. WORD - The Front Line activates leadership beyond the stage where they are encouraged to engage in their communities and strengthen their leadership skills in this process.



QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

"This opportunity was awesome! My family came to watch and they loved it. I never saw myself as a poet but now I'm starting to think I can actually do this as a career. English isn't really my strong suit but poetry makes me feel powerful"

- **Angie Vaea**

"It was pretty fun writing poetry because I've never really done it and I got to do it with my friends. Also competing against other schools was cool. It brought me out of my shell and gave me confidence to speak in front of a lot of people."

- **Brooke Nuualiitia**

"It's a space that lets you be open to who you are and tell your stories truthfully and honestly without being judged. It's a space you can always come back to because it never leaves, and your voice never leaves. You can always return because spoken word is community, it's a group of people, it's a space, it's an opportunity to be truthful, to be honest with yourself."

- **Kate Laughter, Marcellin College**

Slam

COACHES

Every team that competes at Word - The Front Line will be given a slam coach. The Coaches job is to help the team to develop their poems for the slam and to grow as artists, leaders, and speakers. Coaches are dynamic poets, performers, and MCs that are chosen because of their unique skillset and life experience.

Action Education has MSD accreditation, As part of this, all of our staff, contractors, and volunteers have undergone Police Vetting and safety checks in order to work with students.

WORKSHOPS

All team members are expected to attend both workshops and the Grand Slam. If your school requires notice in order for your team to participate please make sure to let them know as soon as possible. These workshops are the heart of the programme where the different poets get a chance to connect across school, cultural, and societal borders. They also have a chance to grow as writers and performers.



PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

One thing that we highly recommend for competing teams is to take a stage BEFORE the slam. For many poets, Word - The Front Line will be the first time they have performed. Competing poets should try to get as much stage time as possible before the Semi-Finals.

Through-out the year there are multiple opportunities for poets to perform, whether in person OR online. We recommend checking out what all ages poetry open mics or even setting up a performance at your school.

COMPETING TEAMS

After attending the workshops, each team will participate in the Grand Slam Finals. Also, a 5th WILD CARD team will also progress to the finals.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Poets in the Grand Slam will be judged by a carefully selected panel of experts and nationally acclaimed poets. Between rounds, these judges will deliver feedback to the poets that performed that speaks to how they resonated with the poet, and what they think they did well.

RULES

- There will be 3 rounds in the Grand Slam. Each team will perform 1 poem in each round. This means that all teams need to have 3 poems prepared for competition.
- All team members (4-6) need to have been represented in both writing and performance. This means you will need to use at least 1 team piece in the Grand Slam.
- A team piece is defined as any poem with more than one voice including duos, trios, or up to full team poems.
- Poems should be between 2:50-3:10. After this, a 10 second grace period will be given. Poems outside of this time frame will incur point deductions as follows:

Poem Time	Point Deduction
2:10-2:19	3
2:20-2:29	2
2:30-2:39	1
2:40-2:49	0.5
2:50-3:20	No Deduction
3:21-3:30	0.5
3:31-3:40	1
3:41-3:50	2

RULES CONTINUED

- Poems must be memorised and performed, not read off phones or paper.
- Plagiarised material will result in disqualification.
- Sampling or quoting other work within your poems is ok, as long as credit is given to the source. E.g. Maya Angelou once said “there is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you”
- Poets cannot use props in their performance, this includes objects, recordings, instruments, costumes, and performers outside of the team.
 - Objects: Only objects that are readily available to everyone can be used (i.e. the microphone, mic stand, the stage itself). No items brought onto stage on your person can be used to enhance your performance (i.e. an article of clothing, jewelry, wallet, phone etc.)
 - Recordings/instruments: Everything must be performed live. Beat boxing, singing, stomping, clapping are allowed. No instruments permitted.
 - Costumes: A costume is defined by any article of clothing that is worn by a performer that directly enhances the material in their poem. Articles of clothing that hold significant religious or cultural meaning that are worn by the performer on a regular basis are permitted. Changing clothes between rounds to enhance the message of your poem is a violation of this rule. School uniforms, or dressing in a uniformed way is fine.
*If there are any doubts around this rule, please seek advice from your coach.
- Bullying, heckling, or intentional disruption of another team’s performance will result in disqualification.
- Poems which have been performed in previous years of Word – The Front Line competitions cannot be used in the current Word – The Front Line competition. This includes at the Regional Heats.
- An original poem performed at the Regional Heats can be used in Semi-Finals and Grand Slam, as long as they adhere to all of the rules.
- Word – The Front Line is an uncensored space, however hate speech will not be tolerated. This includes racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, or discrimination of any kind purposefully directed in a harmful way. This will result in disqualification.
- **HAVE FUN.**



Calendar

Event	Date	Time	Venue
Workshop # 1	Saturday 31 May	10AM - 4PM	Chamber at The Piano
Workshop # 2	Saturday 26 July	10AM - 4PM	TSB Space at Tūranga
Grand Slam Finals	Wednesday 27 August	7PM	The Piano Concert Hall



Contact Us

WHO ARE WE?

Action Education is a non-profit organisation set up to engage and empower young people through creative and action based methods. South Auckland Poets Collective are a group of storytellers with a passion for using Spoken Word to engage and inspire the youth of Aotearoa. Together we form a dynamic team of youth workers, artists, poets, educators, and mentors that care about the community and drawing out the leadership potential in young people.



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WORD - The Front Line Ōtautahi Teaching Lead: Amy Paulussen - pla@cashmere.school.nz

For info or bookings please contact info@actioneducation.co.nz

Check out our website for more information about our organisation and what we do at
www.actioneducation.co.nz

Instagram - [actioneducationnz](https://www.instagram.com/actioneducationnz)

Facebook - www.facebook.com/actioneducationinc

YouTube - [Action Education](https://www.youtube.com/ActionEducation)

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