

The Humanities in Our Lives

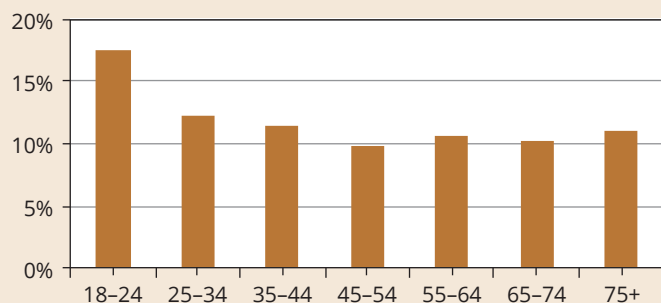
POETRY

The audience for poetry today is livelier—and younger—than it has been in years. Some of that growth may be due to the rise of social media, where poets post their work on Instagram or highlight their spoken-word performances via YouTube. As poet and professor Stephanie Burt puts it, “Poems are easy to share, easy to pass on, and when you read a poem, you can imagine someone’s speaking to you or for you.”

KEY FACTS

- In 2017, almost 12 percent of respondents report that they read poetry in the past year—an audience of 28 million Americans.
- 60 percent of poetry readers are women, and younger Americans read poetry at a higher rate than older Americans.

Share of U.S. Adults Reading Poetry, by Age Cohort, 2017



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

THE VALUE OF POETRY

A 2006 Poetry Foundation survey revealed that 95 percent of readers turn to poetry because it helps them to appreciate the world around them, while 90 percent agreed that it fosters understanding of other people. A full 88 percent valued poetry in times of sadness or difficulty, and 85 percent said that reading poetry helped their critical faculties.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Each year since 2012, the **National Student Poets Program** has chosen five 11th and 12th grade poets to represent different regions of the country. During their tenure, these students present their own work and advocate for poetry and creative writing generally, including at readings and literary festivals.

“[Their] work exhibits exceptional creativity, dedication to craft, and promise . . .”

These student-poets attend the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C., present at National Poetry Month events in April, and lead poetry-related service projects. They also receive opportunities for scholarships and are responsible for mentoring younger poets.

The program is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

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