



PETERBOROUGH DRAMA FESTIVAL 2027



SYLLABUS FOR 2027 FESTIVAL

The Peterborough Drama Festival is a registered charity: 1032610

Affiliated to the British and International Federation of Festivals



www.peterboroughdramafestival.org.uk



pdfsecretary@hotmail.com

FESTIVAL INFORMATION

The Drama Festival committee:

President: Mr David Cupit

Chair: Mrs Pam Tedcastle

Honorary Secretary: Mr Ben Newstead

Honorary Treasurer: Ms Sue Mallows

Committee members:

Mrs Maureen Cupit, Mrs Susan Edwards, Mr Peter Warren, Mr Ian Wilkinson, Mrs Lisa Nesbit

What is it like to enter the festival?

Anna Slater recalls her festival experience:

I took part in the Peterborough Drama Festival from when I was in Key Stage 1! From around 2005 to 2016, I competed every year in multiple different categories. I won, lost and sometimes came in the middle. At the time, competing in the Drama Festival was a fun thing to do, outside of school, to harness my passion for Drama and English. It was a way to perform and compete at something I really loved.

Looking back on the Drama Festival now as a journalist in my 20s, I can recognise the skills that were born all those years ago at the Peterborough Drama Festival. It helped me gain confidence in public speaking from a young age, and developed my knowledge for the spoken and written word. Competing against my peers taught me resilience and determination, not to mention commitment because of the practice needed. It was a great educational thing to do outside of the classroom, and the competitive nature gave me something to work towards.

The Drama Festival is always something I saw myself going back to year-on-year and enjoying every single time. It can push you out of your comfort zone and help you to discover talents that could've otherwise stayed hidden!

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALL FESTIVAL NEWS



Follow us on Facebook and X, visit our website and scan the QR code to join our email mailing list.



www.peterboroughdramafestival.org.uk

Email contact list





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KEY INFORMATION

What is the Peterborough Drama Festival?

The Peterborough Drama Festival promotes speech and performance skills for all age groups to increase confidence, develop artistic expertise, promote enrichment opportunities and to provide competition amongst all keen students of the arts.

The annual festival is always full of excitement as all competitors arrive to showcase their hard work and skill to our adjudicators, who are affiliated to the British International Federation of Festivals (BIFF). All competitors receive feedback forms and certificates. The highest scoring performers in each class receive one of our prestigious trophies or cups.

The Peterborough Drama Festival has been running an annual festival in the city for over 70 years and continues to be run by a small committee of dedicated volunteers who are committed to promoting fair access to the arts.

More information can be found on our website. Please email our secretary if you have any queries or if you would be interested in arranging a visit to your school or group by a committee member to find out more.

We look forward to you joining us at the 2027 festival.

Entries are accepted from:

We are an inclusive charity of the arts and we welcome entries from keen individuals and groups. These include pupils and students of all ages; as well as adults who are welcome to enter any of our open classes. We also welcome entries from schools, youth groups and theatre groups or schools.

Our 2027 entry fees:



£8

individual



£14

duo



£20

small group



£32

choral speaking group

How to submit entries:



All entries and payments to be received by
Friday 18th December 2026

submitted online through the Microsoft Form
(accessed by scanning the QR code) or via email



2027 SYLLABUS

Friday 5th March 2027 - School entry day

On Friday 5th March 2027, we invite all schools to extend their **World Book Day** celebrations and develop their **enrichment offer** by joining us at The Peterborough Drama Festival during the school day. We will be offering the following classes for schools to enter on this day.

More information about the rules of each class is available on our website.

Choral Speaking (select one of the two choices):

Years 1 & 2:

Cleaning Machine by Diane Humphrey
My Pet Dragon by Michael Alexander

Years 3 & 4:

The Way Through the Woods by Rudyard Kipling
Mr. Nobody by Walter De La Mare

Years 5 & 6:

The Crocodile by Roald Dahl
Sick by Shel Silverstein

Entry time limit: 10 minutes

Key Stage 3:

A Smuggler's Song by Rudyard Kipling
The Spider and the Fly by Mary Howitt



Key Stage 4:

The Listeners by Walter De La Mare
Macavity: The Mystery Cat by T.S. Eliot

Verse Speaking

Entry time limit: 2 minutes

Year 1: Animals
Year 2: Seasons
Year 3: Family
Year 4: Transport
Year 5: Celebrations
Year 6: Sport
KS3: In the past
KS4: Discovery
Open: Own Choice

Prose Reading

Entry time limit: 2 minutes

Year 1: Pirates
Year 2: Pets
Year 3: Fantasy Worlds
Year 4: Friends
Year 5: The Sea
Year 6: Villains
KS3: Travel
KS4: Detectives
Open: Own Choice

**New classes
for 2027!**

Write & Perform a Monologue

Entry time limit: 3 minutes

Individual competitors
write an original
monologue that they
perform at the festival.

Small props and
accessories permitted.

**Entries open to all
year groups in KS2,
KS3, KS4 and Open**

Write & Read a Story

Entry time limit: 4 minutes

Individual competitors write an
original story that they present
confidently at the festival.

**Entries open to all year groups
in KS2, KS3, KS4 and Open**

Write & Speak a Poem

Entry time limit: 4 minutes

Individual competitors write an
original poem that they speak
confidently at the festival.

**Entries open to all year groups
in KS2, KS3, KS4 and Open**

2027 SYLLABUS

Saturday 6th March 2027 - All entries welcome

On Saturday 6th March 2027, we will host our full syllabus of classes and look forward to welcoming all individual and group entries to participate in the following classes.

More information about the rules of each class is available on our website.

Verse Speaking

Entry time limit: 2 minutes

Year 1: Animals
Year 2: Seasons
Year 3: Family
Year 4: Transport
Year 5: Celebrations
Year 6: Sport
KS3: In the past
KS4: Discovery
Open: Own Choice

Storytelling

Entry time limit: 3 minutes

Key Stage 2: Own choice
Open class: Own choice

Prepared Speech

Entry time limit: 5 minutes

Key Stage 2: Own choice
Open class: Own choice

Prose Reading

Entry time limit: 2 minutes

Year 1: Pirates
Year 2: Pets
Year 3: Fantasy Worlds
Year 4: Friends
Year 5: The Sea
Year 6: Villains
KS3: Travel
KS4: Detectives
Open: Own Choice

Improvisation

Entry time limit: 3 minutes (solo) and 5 minutes (duologue)

Solo & Duologue entries

Classes for Key Stage 2, 3, 4 & Open

Theme will be provided at the start of the class.

Entry time limit: 10 minutes (group)

Group entries

Key Stage 2: Thank goodness that's over!
Key Stage 3: I told you so!
Key Stage 4: Just get over it!
Open: A difficult decision!

Piece to include this theme.

Acting

Entry time limit: 3 minutes (solo), 5 minutes (duologue) and 10 minutes (group)

Solo, duologue & group entries

Classes for Key Stage 2, 3, 4 & Open

Own choice.

Shakespeare

Entry time limit: 3 minutes

Classes for Key Stage 2, 3, 4 & Open

Perform a sonnet or speech from a play.

Mime

Solo, duologue & group entries

Classes for Key Stage 2, 3, 4 & Open

Own choice.

More information can found on our website:



www.peterboroughdramafestival.org.uk

Please email our secretary if you have any queries or for further information:



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CATEGORY RULES

Choral Speaking

Groups are required to perform a poem, or an extract from a poem, in a lively and imaginative style. This may include vocal sound effects, occasional solo voices, small groups speaking separately, juxtaposition, echoes and many other effects to create the atmosphere of the poem. The group must work as a disciplined choir, speaking and moving together. Some groups even set the tone of the poem in the way they move onto the stage. The use of props and costume is not allowed. The piece must have a title. A copy of the poem must be given to the adjudicator's clerk before the performance. Choirs must be no fewer than eight and no more than thirty. The time limit is ten minutes and poems must be taken from themes listed in the year's festival syllabus. With the exception of Key Stage One classes, all performances must be unaided.

Time limit: 10 minutes

Verse Speaking

Each age group is set a different theme such as "The Sea", "Winter", "Space" or "Night". Competitors (with their teachers) choose a poem within this given theme that may be recited within the two minutes time limit. The poem must be learnt. No copies should be used for performance on the day, but a copy should be given to the adjudicator's clerk on the day of performance. Adjudicators are looking for expression, interpretation, communication and enjoyment.

Time limit: 2 minutes

Prose Reading

Each age group is set a different theme, genre or author such as "Mystery", "Legend", "Fairy Tale" or "Sea", "School" and "Magic". Competitors (with their teachers) choose a book that fits the appropriate title and they prepare a short passage from the book that is read on the day of performance, lasting no more than two minutes. The actual book must be used on the day – no photocopies. Adjudicators look for expression, confidence, communication with the audience and an understanding of the text. Competitors should try to make the book come alive so that their reading is dramatic and entertaining.

Time limit: 2 minutes

Write and Speak a poem

Competitors are to write a poem on a theme of their own choice, which they will read aloud at the Festival. Any kind of poem theme may be used, but all must be suitable for a family audience. The poem must be learnt. A signature of a parent or guardian is required to verify that it is the student's unaided work. No copies should be used for performance on the day, but a copy should be given to the adjudicator's clerk on the day of performance. Adjudicators are looking for expression, interpretation, communication and enjoyment.

Time limit: 4 minutes

Write and Read a story

Competitors are to write a story on a theme of their own choice, which they will read aloud at the Festival. Story tellers may sit or stand for their performance. Any kind of story from thriller to fairy story may be used, but all must be suitable for a family audience. Adjudicators are looking for confidence and clarity in a story that captures interest through the use of expression, tension or humour, communication of meaning, different voices and dramatic pause. A signature of a parent or guardian is required to verify that it is the student's unaided work.

Time limit: 4 minutes

Write and Perform a monologue

Competitors are to write and perform an original dramatic monologue. The use of small props and accessories is permitted but full costume should not be worn. Adjudicators will be looking for a clear development of the story with appropriate dramatic elements included and an effective conclusion. Characterisation, interaction and reaction are important. Themes should remain age-appropriate. A signature of a parent or guardian is required to verify that it is the student's unaided work.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Prepared Mime

There are three classes under Prepared Mime – solo, duo and group. A group is no less than three and no more than six. Hand props, costume and make-up may not be used. Performers prepare a mime up to three minutes in length. In the past these have included babysitting, working-out, flying away on a balloon, taking a shower and a scene on the beach. Performers have a free choice. Adjudicators look for clear representation of what is happening, a logical development, good facial expression and body language, perspective, reaction and interplay between the characters.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Storytelling

Competitors choose and prepare their own story, either traditional or original, up to three minutes in length. No script should be used on the day. Stories must be told, not read. Story tellers may sit or stand for their performance. Any kind of story from thriller to fairy story may be used, but all must be suitable for a family audience. Adjudicators are looking for confidence and clarity in a story that captures interest through the use of expression, tension or humour, communication of meaning, different voices and dramatic pause.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Prepared Speech

Each age group has a different title to prepare their speech around. Competitors prepare a speech lasting up to five minutes. All themes are age-appropriate and recently have included titles such as “A World Without Music”, “My Alternative Olympics”, “Stagestruck” and “Is the Film Better than the Book?”. Appropriate props and crib notes may be used. Adjudicators look for clear presentation, appropriate use of humour, interesting content, sincerity, good communication and train of thought, confidence, and the ability to present their arguments to the audience.

Time limit: 5 minutes

Shakespeare

Under this section, competitors perform a sonnet or speech from a play. The time limit is three minutes. No costume or make-up is allowed. Hand held props may be used. The title of the piece should be clearly announced with a brief introduction setting the scene. Adjudicators are looking for a dramatic performance faithful to the works of Shakespeare. Adjudicators will look for good communication with the audience and a clear empathy with the character. A script should be given to the adjudicator’s clerk before the performance begins.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Improvisation (solo and duologue)

The subject will be given at the start of the class. These may include titles such as “Disaster”, “Mistaken Identity” or “Lost in Town”, and performers improvise a short play around the theme lasting up to three minutes. Adjudicators will be looking for a clear development of the story with a dramatic starting point and a good conclusion. Characterisation, interaction and reaction are important. Themes are age-appropriate.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Improvisation (group)

As with solo and duo improvisation classes, competitors make up a short play, but in group improvisation the title is supplied in advance by the festival committee. This theme/title is listed in the festival syllabus. The theme may give a location (eg “In the Attic” or “Behind the Curtain”), a closing/opening line (eg “I have certainly learnt my lesson” or “Did you hear that?”), a title (eg. The Soldiers of the Queen” or “The Lost Tickets”) and performers should use this theme to develop a short play with a clear beginning, development and conclusion. Adjudicators will be looking for good characterisation and clarity of story, as well as interaction and reaction amongst the actors and communication with the audience. There is a time limit of ten minutes for this class. Groups are no less than three and no more than six members

Time limit: 10 minutes

Solo Acting

Competitors perform an appropriate speech from a play lasting up to three minutes. No costumes or make-up may be used. The performance should begin with the title and a brief introduction to set the scene. Small hand props may be used if appropriate. A table and chairs will be available if needed. Adjudicators are looking for a convincing and sincere performance where the audience believe in the character and the scene is brought alive through words and movement. A script should be given to the adjudicator’s clerk before the performance begins.

Time limit: 3 minutes

Duo Acting

Similar to the solo acting classes, but the extract from the play may last up to five minutes and is performed by two people. In addition to the key points listed under solo acting, adjudicators will also be looking for interaction, relationship and response between the two characters in the play. A script should be given to the adjudicator’s clerk before the performance begins.

Time limit: 5 minutes

Group Acting

Performers present an appropriate extract from a play up to ten minutes in length. (A “group” must be no less than 3 and no more than 6 members.) The rules for solo-acting and duologue apply. The play should be suitable for a family audience. A script should be given to the adjudicator’s clerk before the performance begins.

Time limit: 10 minutes

The festival mark scheme for speech & drama

The Peterborough Drama Festival is affiliated to the British and International Federation of Festivals (BIFF). The Peterborough Drama Festival adopted the revised BIFF mark scheme in full in 2025, as we are dedicated to using BIFF Adjudicators to adjudicate our festival and celebrate the hard work of all entrants in the most positive manner.

All entrants will continue to receive a certificate and personalised adjudicator remark sheets. There are now 7 bands used to judge all entries. The Peterborough Drama Festival will still continue to use trophies, cups and shields for all class winners.

The new mark scheme is shown below for your reference:

SPEECH & DRAMA

Marking Band	Descriptors	Criteria
DEVELOPING 65 - 69	A performance demonstrating an awareness of technical skills, requiring more consistency & artistry.	An inconsistent performance with an overall need for accuracy and /or continuity and artistic development.
PROGRESSING 70 - 74	A performance showing development of technique and/or communication and commitment.	A generally secure performance in need of artistic development.
MERIT 75 - 79	A competent performance, showing some artistic awareness and/or technical ability.	A performance of some ability but requiring greater vocal or physical expression.
COMMENDED 80 - 84	A convincing performance technically & artistically, with increasing stylistic & communication skills.	A performance showing a degree of ability in presentation with developing modulation and interpretation.
HONOURS 85 - 89	An excellent performance, demonstrating fluent technical and artistic skills with emerging individuality.	Assured and expressive, demonstrating a high level of technical security, imagination and stylistic insight and with a real sense of communication and performance.
OUTSTANDING 90 - 94	An impressive performance technically and artistically, displaying spontaneity & clear individuality.	A performance of heightened sensibility in interpretation which commands audience involvement, sincere in its intention, content and style of the piece.
EXCEPTIONAL 95 +	A superlative performance, displaying exceptional artistic individuality.	An astonishingly impressive performance displaying effortless technical control and superlative individuality in its artistic interpretations.

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July 2023



Festival rules:

Competitors work hard preparing for the Festival. Please make their experience enjoyable by following the rules of all festivals:



No mobile phones

Please switch off all mobile phones.



No photography

To comply with Safeguarding regulations photography is strictly forbidden.



No videography

To comply with Safeguarding regulations videography is strictly forbidden.



Quiet please

Please show consideration by being as quiet as possible at the festival.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Copyright rules and conditions of entry:

The Peterborough Drama Festival has entered into an agreement with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society which means that entrants do not have to seek copyright permission for any poetry, prose or solo dramatic items performed to a time limit of 10 minutes.

Solo and dramatic items must be announced with title and author at the time of performance to qualify for copyright indemnity and the performers must not change the words or gender of the character.

Duologues and group dramatic performances are not covered by this agreement and copyright for these should be sought by the performers at the time of entry.

Performers and teachers should know that authors are directly reimbursed as a result of their works being performed.

All time limits must be strictly adhered to, otherwise penalty points will be imposed.

Adjudicators' decisions are final.

Ages must be reckoned as at the first day of the Festival. In duologue and group classes the class is determined by the oldest competitor.

Competitors should give a copy of their script/readings to adjudicators at the time of performance.

Trophies:

The Peterborough Drama Festival is delighted to award a range of trophies and cups at our classes.

If you are awarded a trophy or cup:

- A trophy agreement must be signed.
- Responsibility for engraving trophies rests with the winning competitor.
- Trophies won at the Festival must be returned. Arrangements to return can be made via email to the festival secretary.