

# Sonnet Sound Off Contest!

*I wrote these sonnets for an in-school live broadcast, using words from the school's official vocabulary list (e.g., elaborate, tempt, attempt, emerge, reinforce...). Students watched on classroom SmartBoards as various actors read the poems, then each classroom voted on the best performance. The sonnets are campaign speeches, in which the character tries to convince the audience to vote for him/her. The characters are familiar to the students, as they appeared in previous school drama productions.*

## Jacobs Junior's Sonnet

*Jacobs Junior is a perky, opinionated puppet, named after our school's principal, Shubert Jacobs. He appears daily on the school's Morning Meeting broadcast. To see JJ on a typical broadcast, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwMSKdnt1SM>*

Oh! Isn't this a most delightful day?  
A contest! Well, let me elaborate:  
Vote for me and if I win I may  
Just take you to Rye Playland on a date!  
Rye Playland! Where the sunlight's often fine,  
And skies by clouds do rarely ever dim.  
We'll stay 'til night, and, when the red moon shines,  
Eat cupcakes laced with luscious cinnamon.

Now, when these words I'm speaking to you fade,  
Will you still vote me in 1<sup>st</sup> place? Whoa-ho!  
The next contestants may throw down some shade,  
But I would never, ever stoop so low.

For I'm the BEST one running, don't you see?  
There's nothing to debate....Just vote for ME!

## Fisherwoman's Sonnet

*The Fisherwoman has appeared in many school plays that I have written. She always starts out calm and relaxed, but quickly gives herself over to anxiety and starts to cry loudly. The children in the audience love it when she bawls at high volume.*

Oh! How many days that I have spent  
Fishing for some fishies far and wide.  
I fish the pond, the stream, the ocean tide,  
And sit and wait until my rod is bent.  
I fish with worms, whatever bait will tempt  
The fishies to emerge from where they hide.  
And though I've tried, it cannot be denied  
That I have failed at every darned attempt!

Do not tell me what you think I need –  
Don't imply that what you know is best.  
No matter what you say, I'm feeling...blah.  
I need to readjust my strength and speed,  
Reinforce myself and never rest.  
'Cause if I don't, I'll just...

I'll just...

I'll just break down and....

WHAAAAA!!

## Athena's Sonnet

*Athena appeared in a school vocabulary drama about Hercules and the Stymphalian Birds. To see this production, click here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwE1WlwC\\_Yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwE1WlwC_Yc)*

I'm Athena, shining like the sun  
In songs you've sung and books that you have read.  
And when it's time to say who's champion?  
You'll count the votes and see that I'm ahead!  
All these contestants whimper, yak and whine,  
They moan and groan and give me such fatigue;  
But here's my poem, and you know it's fine.  
I'm not like them – I'm in a special league.

Yes, I'm a goddess, with enhanced know-how  
To win this contest clean, precise and neat.  
The rest of you behind me should just bow,  
Bow, kowtow, and humbly kiss my feet!

For the judges know that I am rare.  
My poem's done. And none of yours compares!

## Scooter Score's Sonnet

*Scooter Score first appeared as a bully in a school vocabulary drama; his behavior was so outrageous that the audience booed him. He has since reformed his ways and is popular. The actor who played him also played Hercules in this show: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwE1WlwC\\_Yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwE1WlwC_Yc)*

I'm Scooter Score, so watch me with your eyes  
And listen hard to everything I state.  
The Fisherwoman, burdened with her cries,  
Will never reinvigorate her fate.  
And that Athena, well, she acts possessed –  
She thinks she's champion? She's got no hope!  
And Jacobs Junior boasts that he's the best?  
Well, he should pump his mouth out with some Scope!

I used to be the one whom you'd despise  
The nasty boy you could not tolerate.  
But to the pinnacle I shall arise  
And win this match without further debate.

Because I'm handsome, smart and everything,  
That means you'll vote for me! Yes! I am king!

## Student Sonnet (For two students)

*Two 5<sup>th</sup> Grade boys performed this sonnet. They worked out their delivery and concluded with an elaborate handshake routine. They were the only child actors in this contest – and they let you know it in the final couplet.*

A: Well, this sonnet contest's almost over –  
Who do you think will win the prize today?

B: I doubt we will; we'd need a four-leaf clover,  
Or other lucky charm to look OK.

A: We're just two students, at Bronx Better Learning.  
We do our homework, and take lots of tests!

B: No matter what the grade is that we're earning,  
We study hard and always do our best.

A: We go to lunch, and play outside at noon,  
And Morning Meeting brings us close together.

B: Our music teacher teaches us new tunes,  
And the roof leaks during rainy weather...

Both: And ...so ... *our winning card is that we're young –*  
*Which we prefer to any song that's sung!*

## Winner

*The next day I appeared on the school's Morning Meeting broadcast to announce the winner.*

The sonnet contest brought to school new light  
As children watched SmartBoards with careful eye.  
The six contestants stepped into their sight.  
Each read a verse with aims to satisfy  
The keen and careful intellect of kids  
Who stay alert, and are not hypnotized  
By drowsy hoaxes causing drooped eyelids,  
Or actors' egos that are supersized.

The six contestants tried so very hard,  
Pretended to be hostile to each other.  
The verbal banter seemed like no-holds-barred,  
In fact, they're close, like sisters and like brothers.

But only one won...I can't say more.  
The one who rocked the vote? Scooter Score.