

OKLAHOMA NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH LANGUAGE FAIR 2026
Modern Song in Native American Language (Live Performance)
Category Description and Guidelines

Students sing modern songs in Native languages. Modern song, as opposed to traditional song, includes original songs, popular music, rap or hip-hop and other types of song that creatively use language in non-traditional ways. Singing in Native languages has always been a tradition, but singing modern songs inspires Native language use in diverse social arenas and formats. Young language learners benefit from singing by bringing Native language into modern popular media, exploring lyrical creativity, learning poetic devices in translation and navigating sound patterns with or without musical accompaniment.

Category	Age Ranges				Size		Award		
	P-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Group	Individual	Trophy	Ribbon	Medal
Modern Song	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		If present

- This is a live in-person category. You must be pre-registered and present to perform and to receive awards.

DO

- ✓ Pre-register online
- ✓ Focus on **NATIVE LANGUAGE USE**
- ✓ Keep a five-minute time limit (plus two minutes for set-up and exiting the stage)
- ✓ Use props, costumes and Native regalia

DON'T

- ✗ Use scripts, notes or cheat sheets
- ✗ Speak or sing in English
- ✗ Have teachers on stage
- ✗ Use food, animals or organic materials (grass, bark, leaves) in the performance

Judging Performances

A panel of at least three elders, Native language teachers and/or Native musicians will judge performances on these criteria:

- Amount of Native American language used
- Presentation and poise of performance
- Ease and comfort of language use
- Spirit of performance

Notes

- Give us your background music cd or jump drive at registration; we'll take care of the audio.
- You can dance if you want but remember that it's about language use.
- You must pre-register to receive t-shirts and awards. Please do so as early as possible.
- Limited rehearsal space will be available. This space is shared with other groups.
- Contact us if you're concerned about whether your props and regalia count as "organic."
- Examples of Modern Song performances are available on our You Tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@oklahomanativeamericanyouth3680>
- Group sizes and performance venues are subject to change based on registered entries.
- Students performing in multiple categories may experience scheduling conflicts. We try to avoid this but help us out and let us know if you see a potential problem.
- Questions? Comments? Help? Contact us at onaylf.samnoblemuseum@ou.edu or at (405) 325-7588.