

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

OFFICIAL RULES

1. Letters About Literature is open to legal residents of the 50 United States, District of Columbia and U.S. territories.
2. Students must be in grades 4 through 12 during the 2018-19 school year.
3. The program year starts September 1, 2018, and concludes June 1, 2019.
4. Entries will be accepted online starting November 1, 2018.
5. There will be three (3) Levels of Competition:
 - a. Level 1 for Grades 4 – 6
 - b. Level 2 for Grades 7 – 8
 - c. Level 3 for Grades 9 – 12
6. Students select a fiction or nonfiction book, short story, poem, essay, or speech (excluding song lyrics) that they have read and about which they have strong feelings. Note to teachers: Please do not assign a particular work to students; rather, allow students to choose a piece of literature that speaks to them personally.
7. Students write a personal letter to the author of their selected piece of literature explaining how the work changed the student's view of themselves or their world. The letter's aim is not to flatter the author, summarize the piece of literature, or serve as a book report; rather, the letter creates a conversation with the author in which the student expresses thoughts, feelings, and/or ideas inspired by the author's writing, as well as its impact on the student's life. Students should write honestly and from their own perspectives.
8. Entries must use no fewer than 400 words and no more than 800 words.
9. Entries must include a date, greeting, body of the letter, closing, and name/signature. Entries must NOT include a return address on the letter. Note: These elements will be included in the entry's word count.
10. Entries must be submitted via the online submission platform by the appropriate due date for the student's state. Details may be found at the Letters About Literature website at <http://read.gov/letters>. All required information fields must be completed and submitted with the student's letter. The online submission platform is set up to accept class or individual entries.
11. Students under the age of 13 (as of 11/1/18) must obtain and upload signed consent from parent/legal guardian to be eligible for entry. The downloadable consent form can be found at <http://read.gov/letters>. Entries by/for students under the age of 13 without a signed, uploaded form will be ineligible and discarded.

TERMS OF USE

- 1.** Each entry (a) must be the original creation of the submitting student; (b) must be previously unpublished and cannot have been submitted to any other competition; (c) must not infringe upon or violate the rights of any third party; and, by the act of submission, warrants and represents that the student (and parent/legal guardian if student is a minor) fully and completely conforms to the stated requirements for entry. No other form of participation other than as stated in these Official Rules is valid. If the entry is selected as a winner, the student's parent/legal guardian will be contacted for permission to publish. If permission is declined for National Winners or National Honorable Mention Winners, an alternate winner will be determined. The Library of Congress suggests that students keep a copy of their entry. All submitted entries become the sole property of the Library of Congress and will not be acknowledged or returned. Limit one (1) entry per student.
- 2.** Per online submission guidelines, students under the age of 13 (as of 11/1/18) must obtain and upload signed consent from parent/legal guardian to be eligible for entry. The downloadable consent form can be found at <http://read.gov/letters>. Entries by/for students under the age of 13 without a signed, uploaded form will be ineligible and discarded.
- 3. STATE LEVEL JUDGING:** Entries will be judged at the State Level, which is determined by the geographic location of the student's school address or, if submitting individually, the student's home address. Students may not enter in more than one State. For the purposes of this program, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories will be considered States. Entries in each State will be judged against entries within the same State and Level of Competition by representatives from the state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book in that State or by other representatives identified by the Library of Congress Center for the Book. Decisions by judges are final and binding in all judging matters related to the State Level.
- 4. NATIONAL LEVEL JUDGING:** Once the top three (3) entries from each State (one (1) per Level of Competition) have been determined, the National Level Judging will occur. Entries will be judged by representatives from the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, whose decisions are final and binding. The one (1) entry in each Level of Competition (three total) with the highest cumulative point score will be declared the National Winners. After the National Winners are determined, the next two (2) entries with the highest cumulative point scores for each Level of Competition (6 total) will be declared the National Honorable Mention Winners. In case of a tie, entries will be evaluated by a new judge according to original criteria, and the tied entry with the highest cumulative score by the new judge will be declared the winner. National Winners and National Honorable Mention Winners will be notified in late spring 2019.
- 5. PRIZES:** National Prize (1 per Level of Competition): \$2000 cash award. National Honorable Mention Prize (2 per Level of Competition): \$500 cash award. Expenses not specified herein are solely the responsibility of the winners. If the winners cannot accept their prize as stated, the prize will be forfeited in its entirety and an alternate winner will be determined. If the student is a minor, National Winner and National Honorable Mention prizes will be awarded in the name of, or to, the winner's parent/legal guardian who must execute all documents and agree to all obligations and undertakings of the winner, both on behalf of himself/herself and the winner, or the prize may be forfeited and an alternate winner will be determined.
- 6. WINNERS' LIST:** For names of the winners, visit <http://read.gov/letters>. Winners will be posted in late spring 2019.

SPONSOR: *Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540. The Library of Congress Letters About Literature national writing contest is made possible by a generous grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, Goodlettsville, Tennessee, with additional support from gifts to the Center for the Book.*