the James & Madeleine McMullan FAMILY FOUNDATION

LettersAboutLiterature

CALL FOR STUDENT ENTRIES!

The Indiana Center for the Book invites students from Indiana in grades 4 through 12 to enter the 25th annual **Indiana Letters About Literature** writing contest.

Polish up your reflective writing skills and write a letter to an author—living or deceased—explaining how their work changed your view of yourself or your world.

ENTER ONE OF THREE COMPETITION LEVELS

Level 1: Grades 4, 5 and 6
Level 2: Grades 7 and 8
Level 3: Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12



2024-2025 DEADLINES

Emailed entries must be sent by midnight on **January 25, 2027**.
Mailed entries must be post-marked by **January 25 2027**.

AWARDS

First place winners in each competition level will receive a **$100 cash award**.
Second place winners in each competition level will receive a **$50 cash award**.
Third place winners in each competition level will receive a **$30 cash award**.
The highest placing winning letter **written to an Indiana Author** will receive a **$50 cash award**.
One participating teacher will be selected for our Annual Teacher Prize of a **$150 cash award**.
Over 100 winners will be selected for publication in our annual anthology.

SUBMITTING YOUR LETTERS

ENTRY FORM: Letters must be submitted with an entry form. Individual entries should use the **2026-2027 Individual Entry Form**. Class sets should use the **2026-2027 Group Entry Form**. In addition, the following information should be included on each letter for class sets: student name, teacher name, and school name. Entry forms are available at: **https://www.in.gov/library/icb/lal/**

SUBMIT VIA EMAIL: Letters can be submitted via email. Send entries as email attachments. PDF, JPG, and DOC accepted. Class sets may be combined into one PDF. **Please do not send a link to a Google Doc(s).** Letters must be accompanied by an entry form. Email entries to: **youngreaderscenter@library.in.gov**.

SUBMIT VIA MAIL: Letters can be submitted via mail. Letters must be accompanied by an entry form. Mail letters to: **Indiana Center for the Book / Indiana State Library / 140 N. Senate Ave / Indianapolis, IN / 46204**

OWNERSHIP: All letters become the property of the Indiana Center for the Book. Please keep a copy of your entries, as no letters will be returned.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For questions, please contact **youngreaderscenter@library.in.gov** or Suzanne Walker at (317) 232-3700.

HOW TO ENTER IN EASY STEPS!

1. Read a book: Select a fiction or nonfiction book, short story, poem, essay, or speech (**excluding song lyrics**) that you have read and about which you have strong feelings.

2. Think about what to write: Imagine sitting down with the author and sharing your personal thoughts. Your letter should be personal and sincere, more like a private conversation rather than a book report or a fan letter. Keep in mind that this is a reflective writing contest. Think about how reading changed how you see yourself or how you see the world.

3. Start writing your letter: Share **specific details** both **about the work** and about **your reaction to the work**. Write honestly and from your own perspective.

4. Type it up: Type your letter, which must be **at least 400 words** and **no more than 800 words**.

5. Format it correctly: Make sure your letter includes a date, greeting, body, closing, and your name. In addition, the following information should be included on each letter for class sets: student name, teacher name, and school name. *Note: All letter elements are included in the total word count.*

6. Edit your work: Have someone else read your letter and give you some feedback. Review and revise your letter. The best letters are proofread and polished, not first drafts.

7. Fill out the form: Ensure that your letter is accompanied by the **proper form and follows all contest rules**. Forms and Official Contest Rules can be found at the contest website at **https://www.in.gov/library/icb/lal/**.

8. Submit your letter: Submit your typed letter via email or via the mail.

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9. Students are encouraged to send a copy of their letter to the author if the author is living. Contact information can usually be accessed on the author's website. If a student receives a response, even after the January 25 deadline. we would love to see a copy of it!

10. Reach out with questions: If you have questions about your entry, feel free to email Suzanne Walker at **youngreaderscenter@library.in.gov.**

11. Watch for the Winner List! The Winner List will be distributed to the email address listed on your entry form.

ALL ENTRIES WILL BE JUDGED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

ADDRESSES THEME: The entry is written to the author and provides details to support how the author's work changed the reader's view of the world or self. Change is important in this contest. How did reading change you or change how you see the world? The reader relates the book to themselves rather than summarizing the book's plot or literary elements and provides specific examples from the text to reflect upon.

EXPRESSION and VOICE: The writing in the entry is fluent and includes appropriately chosen vocabulary. The entry is personalized, with unique and creative language and content.

STRUCTURE: Entry presents ideas in a logical, organized manner without unnecessary repetition. It is in the form of a letter.

GRAMMAR: The letter is proofread for spelling errors and punctuation.

The Indiana Letters About Literature contest is brought to you by the Indiana Center for the Book located in the Indiana State Library, and is made possible by generous support from the James and Madeleine McMullen Family Foundation, with additional support from the Indiana State Library Foundation.

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