OFFICIAL RULES for the INDIANA LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE CONTEST

1. Indiana Letters About Literature is open to residents of the state of Indiana only.

2. Students must be in grades 4 through 12 during the 2026-27 school year.

3. The program year starts November 16, 2027 and concludes January 25, 2027

4. Entries will be accepted via email or via mail.

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 and which has had a lasting impact on their lives. **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 be typed.

10. Entries must include a date, greeting, body of the letter, closing, and name. In addition, the following information should be included on each letter: student name, teacher name, and school name. Note: All letter elements are included in the total word count.

11. Emailed entries must be sent by midnight on January 25, 2027 to this email address: **youngreaderscenter@library.in.gov**.

12. Mailed entries must be post-marked by January 25, 2027 and mailed to this address: **Indiana Center for the Book / Indiana State Library / 140 N. Senate Ave / Indianapolis, IN / 46204**

13. All entries whether emailed or mailed must be submitted with the proper form. Individual entries must use the 2026-2027 Individual Entry Form. Class Sets must use the 2026-2027 Group Entry Form. Forms must be filled out clearly in their entirety. Forms are located here: **https://www.in.gov/library/icb/lal/**

14. 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!

TERMS OF USE

1. ENTRIES: 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 Winners, an alternate winner may be determined. The Indiana Center for the Book suggests that students keep a copy of their entry. All submitted entries become the sole property of the Indiana Center for the Book and will not be acknowledged or returned. Limit one (1) entry per student.

2. INDIANA RESIDENCY: Residency is determined by the geographic location of the student's school address or, if submitting individually, the student's home address.

3. JUDGES: Decisions by judges are final and binding in all judging matters.

4. PRIZES: First Prize (1 per Level of Competition): $100 cash award and publication. Second Prize (1 per Level of Competition): $50 cash award and publication. Third Prize (1 per Level of Competition): $30 cash award and publication. Indiana Author Prize (given to the highest ranking letter written to an Indiana Author): $50 cash award and publication. Honorable Mention (several per Level of Competition at the discretion of the Indiana Center for the Book): publication. Teacher Prize (given to 1 teacher chosen by the Indiana Center for the Book): $150 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 may be determined. If the student is a minor, 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.

5. WINNERS' LIST: For names of the winners, visit **https://www.in.gov/library/icb/lal/**. Winners will be posted on the website and participants will be notified at the email provided.

SPONSOR: *The Indiana Center for the Book is located in the Indiana State Library, 315 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202. Indiana Letters About Literature contest is made possible by generous support from the James and Madeleine McMullen Family Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, with additional support from the Indiana State Library Foundation.*

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