

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE TEXAS

A Reading and Writing Promotion Program from the Texas Center for the Book

Call for Student Entries!

The Texas Center for the Book invites students in grades 4 through 12 to enter the 29th annual Letters About Literature writing contest.

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

Enter one of the three competition levels

Level 1: Grades 4-6

Level 2: Grades 7-8

Level 3: Grades 9-12

2020-2021 Deadlines

Entries accepted online starting November 4, 2020

Deadline December 17, 2020

Awards

Texas winners receive \$100 and travel assistance to the Texas Library Association Annual Conference for a special awards ceremony.

The Texas Center for the Book at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission will announce all winners and publish all the winning letters on its website.

Submitting your letters

Online Entry: Each letter must be submitted via the Letters About Literature Texas online platform. Details can be found at www.tsl.texas.gov/lettersaboutliterature.

Students Younger Than 13: Students under the age of 13 (as of November 4, 2020) must obtain and upload signed permission from their parent/legal guardian to be eligible for entry. The downloadable permission form can be found at www.tsl.texas.gov/lettersaboutliterature. Entries by/for students under the age of 13 without a signed, uploaded form will be ineligible and discarded.

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www.tsl.texas.gov/centerforthebook

Ownership: All letters become the property of the Texas Center for the Book at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Please keep electronic copies of entries.

Contact Information: For questions about the online submissions process, please visit <https://submittable.help> or contact Submittable support at letters@submittable.com.

For general questions about the contest, please contact LettersAboutLit@tsl.texas.gov.

Teachers: Please go to www.tsl.texas.gov/lettersaboutliterature to review the online educator resource page for specific tips and to download our free Teaching Guide. Teachers may submit class sets online by using one account and completing the online submission form for each entry.

How to Enter in 10 Easy Steps!

1. Select a fiction or nonfiction book, short story, poem, play, essay or speech (excluding song lyrics) that you have read and about which you have strong feelings.
2. Imagine sitting down with the author of this work 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.
3. Share specific details both about the work and about your reaction to the work. Write honestly and from your own perspective.
4. Keep in mind that this is a reflective writing contest. Think about what you read and the meaning you gleaned from the author's words.
5. Type your letter, which must use at least 400 words and no more than 800 words.
6. Make sure your letter includes a date, greeting, body, closing and your name or signature. Please do not include a return address on your letter. Note: All letter elements are included in the total word count.
7. Review the details about online submission at www.tsl.texas.gov/lettersaboutliterature.
8. If you are younger than the age of 13 (as of November 4, 2020), you must obtain and upload signed permission from your parent/legal guardian to be eligible to enter. The downloadable form can be found at www.tsl.texas.gov/lettersaboutliterature.
9. Submit your typed letter via the Letters About Literature online submission platform. You can upload your letter as a Word document or you can type your letter directly into the submission form.
10. Remember to complete all required information fields on the entry form before submitting your letter online.

Assessment

All entries will be judged on the following criteria:

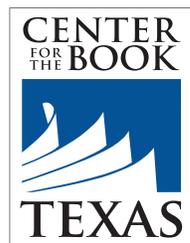
Round 1: Entries are evaluated for basic eligibility and by how well they address the audience and the purpose/theme of the contest. The judges ask these questions: Is the essay in letter format, and does it address the author of the work? Does the essay address the contest theme of how an author's work changed the reader's view of self or the world? Is personal reflection evident in the letter? Entries that are book summaries or fan letters will be eliminated. Entries that are not in letter format and are written about the author, rather than to the author, will be eliminated. Letters that meet the criteria above will advance to Round 2.

Round 2: Entries are evaluated for grammar and writing. Judges ask: Is the essay written in a clear and organized way with specific details to support the essay's main ideas? Does the essay express ideas creatively, communicating a unique or powerful point of view? These letters are evaluated with the Letters About Literature rubric, which examines all five criteria (addresses audience and theme, grammar, structure, content and expression), and they receive a numerical score. Letters that are formulaic, without evidence of a writer's voice, will be eliminated. Single-paragraph letters and those with significant grammatical errors will also be eliminated. Letters that meet the criteria above will advance to Round 3 and 4 level judging.

Round 3 and 4: Letters that advance past the first and second round are evaluated by a day of live and in-person judging at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission; entries are evaluated with the Letters About Literature rubric, which examines all five criteria (addresses audience and theme, grammar, structure, content and expression) and receive a numerical score.

The top 10-20 entries in each level are then evaluated again with the Letters About Literature rubric, which examines all five criteria (addresses audience and theme, grammar, structure, content and expression) and receive a numerical score.

Judges: Judges include authors, publishers, librarians, literary professionals and educators.



Letters About Literature Texas is a reflective writing competition sponsored by the Texas Center for the Book at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, made possible by the Texas Library and Archives Foundation with additional support from gifts to the Texas Center for the Book.