

Letters About Literature

a National Writing Contest for Young Readers



sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in cooperation with participating state centers for the book

Letters About Literature supports national language arts and reading standards.

LAL promotes reader response to literature and as such supports national standards established by both The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.

LAL welcomes entries from *all students*—reluctant readers and struggling writers as well as enthusiastic and accomplished readers and writers.

Standard <i>Students will . . .</i>	Letters About Literature <i>Guidelines and teacher resources encourage participants to . . .</i>
Read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, themselves, and cultures in the United States and the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a work of literature—novel, nonfiction book, speech, essay, or a poem—as the subject of their letter. • Reflect on ways in which this work of literature has somehow changed or mirrored the reader’s life.
Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw on their current or prior experiences in reflecting upon and writing about the work of literature. • Correspond, rather than compliment; synthesize, rather than summarize.
Adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language for a variety of audiences and purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write personally and honestly to an author, keeping mind that he/she wrote the work and knows what it is about. • Focus on the LAL theme to explain how the work somehow changed the reader’s perception of the world or self.
Employ a wide range of writing strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for presenting responses (chronological, compare/contrast, classification, etc.), with particular attention to organization and opening and closing paragraphs.
Apply knowledge of language structure and conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write their letters using supporting details and vivid descriptions to clearly communicate with the audience. • Eliminate irrelevant details that do not contribute to the overall message of the letter. • Revise and proof-read their letters so as to avoid unnecessary repetition and grammatical errors
Use a variety of technological and information resources to create and communicate knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write their ideas using proper letter format. • Present these letters, when possible, in typewritten documents that are clear and easy to read.
Participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative and critical members of a literacy communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form conclusions about the purpose or value of a written text in relation to their own lives and to share, if desired, those ideas with others.
Use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (learning, enjoyment, persuasion, exchange of information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express themselves using their own voices rather than imitating or modeling the voices of others.