NEBRASKA Letters About Literature
An annual writing contest from the Nebraska Center for the Book.

**Competition Levels:**
- Level 1: Grades 4 - 6
- Level 2: Grades 7 - 8
- Level 3: Grades 9 - 12

**Submissions accepted between:**
Nov. 1, 2019 - Jan. 15, 2020

**Theme:**
How did an author’s work change your view of the world or yourself?

**READ**
Select a fiction or nonfiction book, a poem or play you have read and about which you have strong feelings. (Sorry, no song lyrics!) It might be a book that helped you through a difficult time or it might be a book that simply touched your heart or inspired you.

**REFLECT**
Think before you write. How did this author’s work change you or your view of the world? How do you know it did? How and why are you different now than you were before you read this work?

**Persuade**
Write a personal letter to the author, stating how reading his or her work changed you. Be personal but also persuasive! Support your ideas with specific details, including details from the work itself. This is not a fan letter but rather a reflection on how an author influenced you.

**WRITE**
Type your entry in letter format – do not send handwritten letters. Your name and complete return address (either school or home) must appear in the upper right corner of the first page of the letter.

**SUBMIT**
Submit your letter at www.nebraskacenterrforthelibrary.com/submit by the deadline date.
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 your world.

**Submitting your letters**

**Online Entry:** Each letter must be submitted via the Letters About Literature online platform. Details can be found at read.gov/letters.

**Students Under 13:** Students under the age of 13 (as of November 1, 2019) must obtain and upload a signed consent from their parent/legal guardian. The downloadable consent form can be found on the Nebraska LAL webpage.

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

**Contact Information:** For questions please contact CenterForBook@ncl.state.ne.us or Tessa Terry at (402) 471-3434.

**Teachers:** Please go to CenterForTheBook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html to review the online teacher’s resource page for specific tips and to download our free Teacher’s Guide. Teachers may submit class sets online by using one account and completing the online submission form for each entry.

**Assessment**

ALL ENTRIES WILL BE JUDGED ON THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

**Audience.** Is the entry in letter format and does it address the author of the work? Entries that are not in letter format and are written about the author, rather than to the author, will be eliminated.

**Purpose.** Does the letter 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.

**Grammatical conventions.** Is the letter written in a clear and organized way with specific details to support its main ideas? At least 400 - 800 words? Single-paragraph letters and those with significant grammatical errors will be eliminated.

**Originality.** Does the letter express ideas creatively, communicating a unique or powerful point of view? Letters that are formulaic without evidence of a writer’s voice will be eliminated.

**Judges:** Judges selected by the Nebraska Center for the Book choose the top letters in each competition level. Winners and alternates receive a cash prize. The prizes are presented during a recognition day in Lincoln, which includes a luncheon and a photograph with the Governor at the Capitol. The winners also sign copies of their letters at the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library, where they are placed in the Nebraska author archives.

Find out more at CenterForTheBook.nebraska.gov  
Questions? Contact Tessa Terry