

# LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

## WE ARE GIVING OUR STUDENTS THIS YEAR THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER THE LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE PROGRAM

This is a national program in which students write letters to an author who has made a difference in their lives. They are encouraged to write a letter of correspondence (as opposed to a letter of compliments, or a fan letter), telling the author why the book is special to them, what memories it brings to mind, how they see themselves, others or the world differently. They will be competing between grades 4-6.

Students who would like to enter will first enter the state competition:

<https://libraries.ok.gov/ocb/letters-about-literature/>

The deadline is January 11, 2019, but we will submit our letters before Christmas. If they win at the state level, there is an assembly and they win a cash prize. Then their entry goes to the national level. (Winning prize \$2000; 2 \$500 prizes)

The national website is: <http://read.gov/letters>

If you would like to see past winning entries, you can go to that page. At the top there is a menu and the middle link is : Prize Winners. It may give you an idea of what other students have done.

Entries must be between 400-800 words.

Entries must include a date, greeting, body of the letter, closing and name/signature (NO return address). These items are all included in the word count.

If you would like your student's entry submitted, you must sign and return the other side of this form.

The letter must convey the voice of your student. I think it is great for parents to review and help edit the letters, but if they don't sound like the student, they will not be successful. **It is fine for parents to type the letter and submit it online or email to me:**

[shana.fields@guthrieips.net](mailto:shana.fields@guthrieips.net)

We would also like to mail our letters to the authors to see if they will respond.

If you would like to encourage a response from your author, it is suggested that you send a stamped blank envelope with your student. I cannot provide that for all 550 of my students (as it would cost \$275 extra). I have read online that it helps get responses from authors. We will encourage replies to come to the school so author's do not have the home addresses of students.

Thank you for helping your student(s) with this fun project!

Shana Fields

## ALSO RECENTLY, WE HAVE:

- > Participated in a webinar with our National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, Jacqueline Woodson, and many students are reading her new book, Harbor Me, about 6 kids who are in a room and asked to become harbors for each other.
- > Read Christmas books.
- > Discussed Letters About Literature & watched videos about it
- > Learned about books written in verse. Verse looks like poetry but it doesn't usually rhyme or have a pattern. It tells a complete story. Students took turns reading various new books to our library about subjects such as: a basketball player with a sick dad, a football player in a coma after a camp, a Vietnamese girl immigrating to the USA, the true story of Jacqueline Woodson, the unrest in Darfur, a deaf girl whose home is for sale, and several others by acclaimed authors

## PREVIOUSLY, WE:

Watched book trailers for all of the 5/6th grade **Sequoyah nominees**. I read a 5th grade picture book to them called:

*Sergeant Reckless*

about a Vietnam assistance horse. If the 5th graders read 2 more books they can vote for the winner in early March. Some classes are reading Sequoyah nominees that can count toward this also.

The 6th graders need to read 3 books off the list to vote.

The Sequoyah Book Award is our state book award and your student can vote for the winner. Learn more: <https://www.oklibs.org/page/01Sequoyah>