




LOW HANGING FRUIT

Letters About Literature

By Jeannie Standal

What do Chris Crutcher, Anthony Doerr, Susan Nipp and Earnest Hemingway have in common? They are all successful, distinguished authors, of course, and they have all called Idaho home! They followed vastly different paths to a writing career, crediting being read to by a parent, writing for the school newspaper, seeing the Make Way for Ducklings sculpture in Boston, or absconding with Dad's Playboy magazine with getting them started. Letters About Literature is an opportunity to let students explore their talents as writers and readers, and follow in these Idahoans' footsteps.

In our Facetime, text, blogpost world, students don't get much opportunity to practice letter-writing, but Letters About Literature (LAL) is a reading and writing contest that students can use to flex their writing muscles. An LAL entry requires a student to write a letter to the author of a work that made a lasting difference his/her life or point of view. Students must pull events and ideas from the book to support



Idaho Core Standards:
LAL is aligned with Idaho Core Anchor Standards for grades 4-12 and fits neatly under Shifts 1 & 2.
Supports ICS Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Texts and ICS Writing Standards for Grades 4-12.

the change they discuss in the letter. This is no book report, rather it is a way students can find evidence to support their ideas and explore why a text affected real life.

In addition to all the academic benefits that come from participating in LAL, students can win fabulous prizes! Winners in each category receive cash, books, and a framed certificate, along with a trip to the awards celebration in Boise. In addition, national winners receive \$1,000!

The contest is open to individuals or classes, and to public, private, or home-schooled students. See Links to More Learning for rules, teacher guidelines, and entry deadlines. Collaborate with your school librarian to kick off Letter About Literature in your school!



2015 Letters About Literature Winners for Idaho at the Awards Celebration at the Capitol

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



Letters About Literature

Get all the details about how and when to enter at <http://read.gov/documents/GUIDELINES-LAL-2015-FINAL.pdf>

Center for the Book

Read letters from past national and state winners at <http://read.gov/letters/>

The Emily Post Institute

The leading authority on all things etiquette, including letter writing. <http://emilypost.com/advice-type/notes-and-letters/>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Curricular Connections

Find links between books and Core Standards in both NoveList Plus and NoveList Plus K-8. Curricular Connections (found in the "Quick Links" menu option) provides lists of book in different subject areas with their ties to the standards and options for cross-curriculum application. From literature that addresses Math concepts to informational reading on weather events, it is a great tool to find ties between literature and other school subjects.

DIGITAL TOOLS



The following are available at: www.lili.org

Gale Virtual Reference Library

Includes a number of literature resources covering literary themes, contemporary novelists and poets.

Literary Reference Center

Provides information on thousands of authors and their works.

NoveList & NoveList K-8

Help students find fiction and non-fiction reads based on their interests or previous favorites.



