

## Essay Contest Instructions: "Books That Inspire Us"

**Welcome to the "Books That Inspire Us" Essay Contest!** This contest is open to all school-aged children (ages 5-18). It's a fun opportunity to dive into a great book, share your thoughts, and reflect on how stories can shape your own life. Whether you're in elementary, middle, or high school, we encourage you to pick a book that excites you and enter your essay!

### Contest Rules and Guidelines

1. **Choose and Read a Book:** Select any age-appropriate book (fiction or non-fiction) that you've read recently or want to explore. It could be a classic like *Charlotte's Web*, an adventure like *Harry Potter*, or something else that sparks your imagination.
2. **Write Your Essay:** Focus on sharing what you loved about the book and how it connects to your world. Here's the breakdown:
3. **Guidelines**
  - **Age group 5-8:** On one page create a picture of an event, character or theme of your book, and write a paragraph about what you enjoyed most about this book (relatable characters, funny moments, important lessons).
  - **Age group 9-12:** Write a one-page essay that summarizes and shares what you liked about your book including key events, characters, themes, funny moments, relatable characters or important lessons. Think deeply about your book. Does it remind of something happening at school, with friends or in your family? Did it inspire you? How did it inspire you?
  - **Age group 12-18:** Write a two-page essay that summarizes and shares what you liked about your book including key events, characters, themes, funny moments, relatable characters or important lessons. Think deeply about your book. Does it remind of something happening at school, with friends or in your family? Did it inspire you? How did it inspire you?
4. **Formatting Requirements:**
  - Use **size 11 font** (like Arial or Times New Roman—easy to read!).
  - **Double-space** your essay (add an extra line between each line of text).
  - Standard margins (1 inch on all sides) and include your name, age, grade, and the book's title at the top of the first page.
5. **Submission Details:**
  - Submit your essay as a typed document (PDF or Word file) via email to [info@swcplib.com](mailto:info@swcplib.com).
  - Deadline: January 30, 2026
  - One entry per student. Parents or teachers can help with typing, but the ideas must be your own!
6. **Judging and Prizes:** Essays will be judged on creativity, clarity, originality, and how well you follow the structure. Winners will receive a special collectible coin donated by an anonymous patron.

### Tips for Success:

- Read the book carefully and take notes on your favorite parts.
- Be yourself—there's no "right" answer; we want to hear your unique voice!
- Proofread for spelling and grammar to make your essay shine.
- Have fun! Reading and writing can open new doors in your mind.

We can't wait to read your essays and see how books are inspiring the next generation. Good luck! If you have questions, ask a teacher or parent for help.