Letters Without Borders

GEMA International Letter Writing Competition 2026

Words have the power to connect hearts beyond all boundaries.

[Ages 7–18] [Global Participation] [Deadline: Sept 30, 2026]

Reviving the Timeless Art of Connection

In a highly digital world, a thoughtful handwritten letter remains the most powerful way to inspire empathy, gratitude, and global citizenship.

Inspire

Nurture the next generation of writers and changemakers.

Strengthen

Build critical storytelling and written communication skills.

Awaken

Encourage awareness of social, environmental, and global issues.

Connect

Build bridges of understanding across cultures and communities.

The 2026 Theme: Letters Without Borders

Write a letter that transcends boundaries—geographical, cultural, emotional, or social—to someone anywhere in the world.

Global Unity

Peace between nations, cultural exchange, and kindness beyond differences.

Hope for the Future

Voices of children shaping the future, dreams for a united world, and deep compassion.

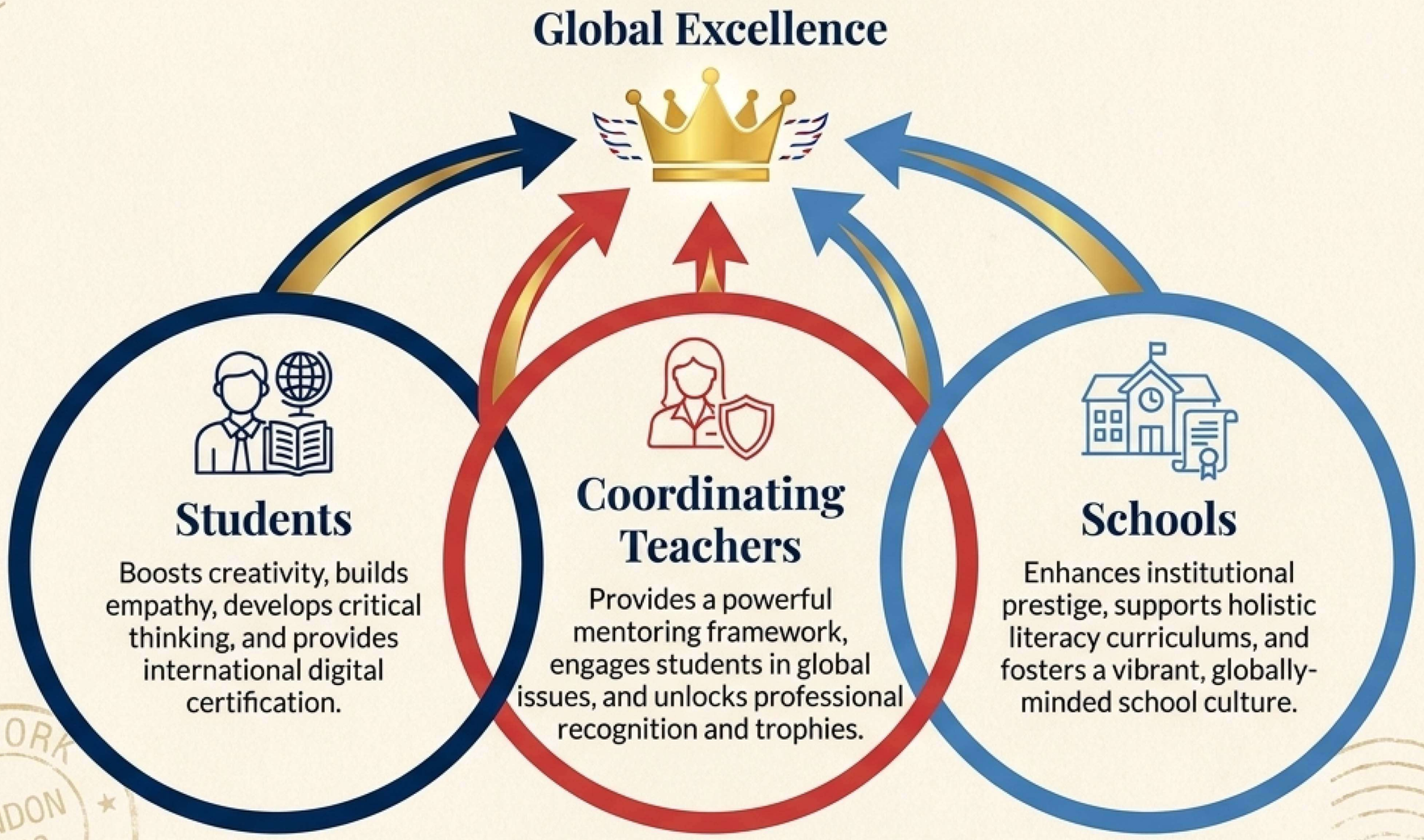
Humanity & Responsibility

Climate action, helping vulnerable populations, and human connection across cultures.

Creative Perspectives

A message to humanity, a story connecting generations, or an inspiration for positive change.

An Ecosystem of Impact



Tailored Tiers for Every Stage of Development

Category	Age Range	Core Focus	Writing Prompt Example	Key Judging Criteria
A	7–9 Years	Simple ideas & heartfelt emotions	Write to a child in another country about friendship.	Creativity, simple expression, warm emotions.
B	10–12 Years	Real-world awareness & personal impact	Share a story about solving a world problem together.	Thoughtful ideas, emotional connection, storytelling.
C	13–15 Years	Global awareness & thoughtful reflection	Reflect on breaking stereotypes or future visions.	Depth of thought, intellectual impact, personal voice.
D	16–18 Years	Deeper analysis & mature perspectives	Pen an open letter challenging social boundaries.	Powerful storytelling, emotional maturity, sophistication.

Shaping the Narrative: The Everyday Hero Approach

An effective strategy is writing to an inspiring figure, scaling the concept to the student's age.

Ages 7-9

Local Helpers

Parents, teachers, firefighters.

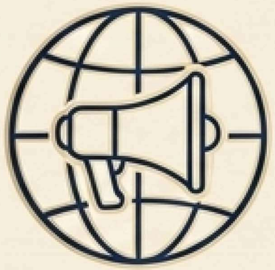
Focus: Gratitude, kindness, and immediate environment.

Ages 10-12

Community Leaders

Nurses, local volunteers.

Focus: Fairness, care, and small-scale solutions.



Ages 13-15

Movement Leaders

Activists, organizers.

Focus: Inspiring action, climate, and equality.

Ages 16-18

Global Figures

Human rights defenders, historical icons.

Focus: Advocating systemic change and global peace.

The Blueprint of Connection

Set the Intention

Imagine writing to someone in a different culture; explain why you are reaching out.

Building Bridges

Offer insights on respect, empathy, and listening.

Understand Diversity

Reflect on different customs, languages, and shared human values.

Personal Experience

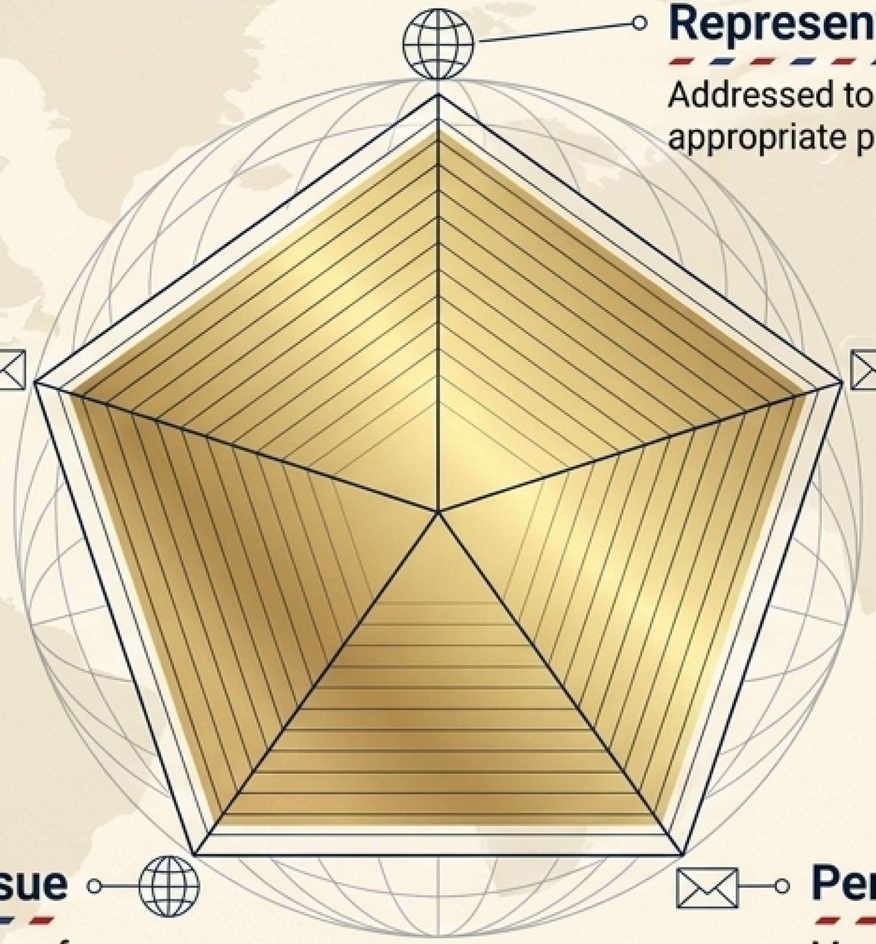
Share who you are and what your community looks like to build context.

The Call to Action

Close with a hopeful message about global friendship, followed by a signature.

What the International Jury Looks For

The anatomy of a Level 4 (Exceptional) submission



Representative Addressed

Addressed to a clearly identified, highly appropriate personal or public hero.

Use of News Story

Accurately summarizes and cites a relevant local/global event to support the issue.

Personal Connection

Meaningful, specific link between the global issue and the writer's community.

Explanation of Issue

Insightful, persuasive explanation of the systemic causes of the problem.

Call to Action

Persuasive, realistic recommendation appropriate to the hero's specific role.

Celebrating Global Voices

The Pinnacle

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place Trophies
(Gold, Silver, Bronze)
+ **Winners' Certificates** per category

The Standard

A **Digital Certificate** awarded to
EVERY single participant

The Honors

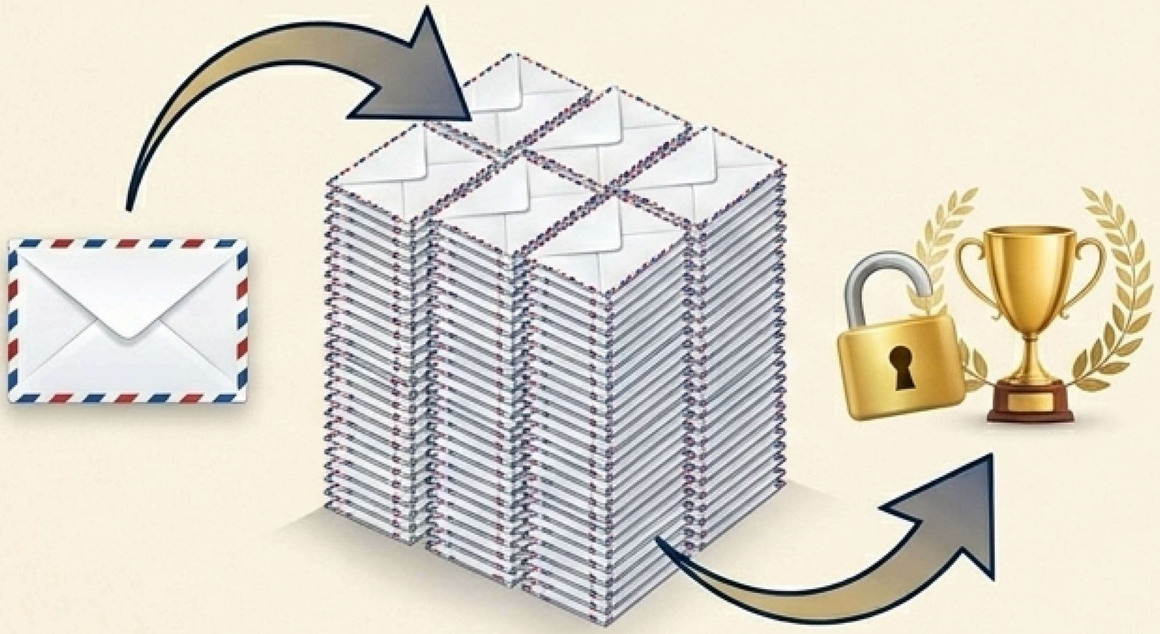
5 Appreciation Medals
awarded in each category

Global Visibility

Wide publicity for prize-winners and
their schools via the International Bureau

Institutional Impact: The 50+ Advantage

Schools submitting **50+ entries** unlock **exclusive institutional recognition** while completely removing individual registration friction.



- Custom **School-Level Winners** recognition.
- **Trophy & Certificate** awarded to the **Coordinating Teacher**.
- **Trophy & Certificate** awarded to the **Participating School**.
- **Frictionless payment:** Single-click bulk payment via combined link.
- **Simplified submission:** Attach all entries in a single email with no individual forms required.
  (contact@letterwritingcompetition.com)

Technical Submission Standards

Accepted Standards

- **Word limit**: Up to 1,000 words maximum.
- **Medium**: Handwritten (fountain pen, ink, or ballpoint) or Typed (Word Doc).
- **Paper**: Single side of an A4 sheet.
- **Artwork**: Doodles and border designs are allowed if they do not obscure text.

Strict Disqualifications

- Writing in pencil or colored pencils.
- Photographing the letter (It **MUST** be scanned clearly in PDF).
- Double-sided letters.
- Edits or replacements after the final submission.

The Submission Journey

Step 1: Create

Write or type the original letter adhering to the 1000-word limit and theme.

Step 2: Digitize

Scan the letter in color (PDF/Word). Take a clear, high-res photograph of the candidate (JPEG, 300dpi, 1MB+). Scan a valid student student ID proof (School ID, fee receipt, or passport).

Step 3: Register & Pay

Fill out the online portal form and pay the non-refundable entry fee of US$10 (via Stripe/Razorpay/PayPal). Save the receipt.

Step 4: Upload

Upload all four assets (Letter, Photo, ID, Receipt) to the online portal and submit. Only 1 entry per registrant.

Frictionless Filing (FAQ)

Tech Error: Server Reject

If you see this error, the Google Drive of your email is full. Delete files or use a new email address to log into Chrome.

Tech Error: System Admin

This means your browser is logged into an email that blocks external sharing (often school/work emails). Switch to a personal email.

Pen Names

Pen names are fully permitted for public credit. However, legal names are strictly required on the form for prize distribution.

Notifications

Winners are notified within 30 days of results. Prizes are shipped within 90 days. Non-winners will receive a status update email.

Mark Your Calendars

Main Deadline

September 30, 2026 (Midnight)
Note: Deadline officially extended due to global events.

Age Requirement

Strictly 7 to 18 years old at the time of entry.

Entry Fee

US$10 per entry (Non-refundable).

Make Every Word Count.

The world is ready to listen. Help your students cross borders, inspire hope, and remind humanity that we are more connected than divided.

Scan to Access the Portal & Register

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