

But then I read *I Am David* and the things all of those people were trying to tell me came to life and left a lasting impression on me! You know how people tell you to be thankful for your house and the food you have every day? All of those things are true, but you hear it so much that you forget about it right when you go home to eat dinner!

Thanks to your book, *I Am David*, I'm grateful for the even smaller things that a lot of people don't think about: the ability to smile, being able to read and write, and knowing what an orange is! This book is the most dramatic thing that happened to me when I was twelve years old. I was so excited about this book I was telling everyone who would listen that they have to read your book.

I'm now thirteen and I think that the most important thing that I can take from this book is not only to be thankful and to see how blessed I am, but the most important lesson for me right now is to be like David and not let ANYBODY take away my individuality. Re-reading it I see how comfortable David was in his own shoes and how he wasn't going to let anybody take that away from him. That's a rare quality in today's teens, but this book is inspiring me to be myself and to be happy for who I am. David is the most amazing boy I have ever met. My favorite thing about him is that he thinks before he does anything, and he's considerate about the people around him. David was also able to achieve the impossible! Now, if anything seems impossible I can just say, "If David could do it, I can certainly do this."

*I live with my mom and grandma and am in 8th grade and home-schooled through Hallmark Charter School. I love music and have been playing the piano for three years, and this is my first year playing the violin. On Sunday afternoons, I volunteer at Hope Now for Youth by babysitting the little kids while their parents go to church. My family (especially my little cousins) provides my inspiration for many of my stories. I am so glad I made the top ten in California, and I hope to become a writer someday.*

L E V E L T W O



**Miriam Michelle Million, Age 13, Grade 8**  
**Individual Entry**  
**San Diego, CA**

**Dear Mrs. Rowling,**

"...we are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided...we can fight it only by showing an equally strong bond of friendship and trust. Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open."—*Dumbledore*

Between the lines of your Harry Potter books I've found messages of love and inspiration that have taught me to accept who I am, while strengthening the person within. Your books have also taught me to hope. I was once told that hope is for the hopeless but now I've grown to learn that isn't true. You've shown me that even when hope is frail it's hard to kill. With that sense of hope that I've acquired reading your books I've been able to remain strong in a time of sadness in my family.

Recently someone very close to me was diagnosed with cancer. It's been very difficult lately. If it's not taking them to the hospital, it's praying with them and asking God to watch over my loved one. But like in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* when Mr. Weasley was attacked by a snake and sent to St. Mungo's, my family is staying united, like the Weasleys. Without the words of strength in your stories I couldn't be as strong as I am now.

When I was younger I despised reading; I couldn't feel the emotions of the book. But one day I discovered *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. From the first page my outlook on reading changed. I couldn't stop reading and for days I was sucked into the incredible story. After I finished the last page I was hungry for more. Year after year I waited until the next part of the series hit the bookstores. But in the meantime I explored the library. Your books introduced me to my love of reading, but they also opened the window to a whole new world of wonderful plots and conflicts.

Now when I feel my world is crashing around my ears, I find myself in a corner, lost in the pages of one of your Harry Potter books. Seconds after I turn the first page I'm gone...lost in the corridors of Hogwarts.

It has been years since I opened the first of your books, and since then I've discovered things about myself that I never knew existed. Traveling through Harry, Ron and Hermione's trials and tribulations made me realize the fears and doubts I have inside myself that I had yet to acknowledge. Before, I was trying to be someone I'm not, but now I'm trying to be someone I am.

Because of your books I know that no matter how bad things get, there is always light in a pitch black room. Like magic, it's there and strong but you can't see it. You just have to believe to see.

As I grow older I will remember the last lines of your sixth book that were so down to earth and true that they will stay with me forever:

"...in spite of everything, in spite of the dark and twisting path he saw stretching ahead for himself, in spite of the final meeting with Voldemort he knew must come, whether in a month, in a year, or in ten, he felt his heart lift at the thought that there was still one last golden day of peace left to enjoy with Ron and Hermione."—*Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*.

Thank you, for writing the Harry Potter series and enriching my life.

*To be named a state finalist for the Letters About Literature contest is a great honor and I am very thankful to be given an opportunity to express my love of reading. All my life thus far I've had two true passions, one being free writing, and the other being reading. I love to read and write with all my heart, and I hope to one day soon write a novel. I would like to thank my English teacher at The Preuss School UCSD, Miss Tiffany Thomason on behalf of this*

*accomplishment, for being a great teacher, and also my family for all the support they have provided me.*

L E V E L T W O



**Cindy Tay, Age 13, Grade 7**  
**Individual Entry**  
**Fremont, CA**

**Dear Mr. London,**

I write to enlighten you of an event that drastically changed my life before I had crossed the threshold of my ninth year. You may ask in what manner this occurred, and what spurred me to contact you concerning it. In fact, you have every right to be informed, being the author of *White Fang*, the novel that brought about the alteration in my lifestyle. Before I read that book, I was just an average second grade girl. After that point, I was not. No doubt you are bursting to learn the details, so without further ado, allow me to explain.

It did not take me long to notice some major differences between *White Fang* and books published in the present. Your novel used literary composition forms that are almost extinct. I observed your sentences, which varied in length as well as structure type. It was a delight for me to read aloud your thick, juicy paragraphs dripping with rich vocabulary. Your fountains of vivid comparisons refreshed my parched mind. These were the hallmarks of a classic, and *White Fang* was probably the first one I ever read. It influenced me profoundly. I desired to resurrect your style from the tombs of classic authors and redeem my generation from the abyss of artistic decline. So I immediately embarked on a journey of self-improvement. I wrote papers on various subjects and read them, searching for weaknesses and using your skills to mend them. The local library was suddenly depleted of its stock of Jack London books as I consumed novel after novel like a bookworm. My writing soon gleamed with the luster of pure gold, and my vocabulary stores were amply provisioned. My imagination swelled a hundredfold, and my sentences flowed beautifully into each other. I developed a style mixed with modern and classical taste, producing a unique blend.

Up until this point, I have spoken only of improvements in my writing. However, that does not cover all changes you wrought in me. I also underwent a shift in moral values. In the primitive world, before the rise of modern humans, this was the law: kill, or be killed. Eat or be eaten. The world today follows the same decree, though in more refined methods than the slaughter of animals to gain food. Innocent though my perception of the world was, the law was plain: survival of the fittest. I might