

FENWICK



Letter to the Author Project

Freshmen Only

Letter writing Project Description: The emphasis of this project is interpretation and communication.

Incoming freshmen can select this or one of the other three options for this year's One Read Reflection Project. Read through all four projects before deciding which option lends itself to demonstrating your unique skills. Keep in mind, however, that selecting the Letter to the Author Project comes with a chance that your letter might be chosen for entry into a state-wide writing contest later in the school year. That's a good thing!

Getting started on your Letter to the Author Project begins with reading the book. Make sure it's part of your early summer schedule. Think about what you read before sitting down to write your letter. In this case, the author was sitting (Hannah Tinti was a student here) right where you'll be sitting in the fall. You probably have more in common than you know.

You might ask someone or everyone in your house to read *The Good Thief* too! Being able to talk about the book turns the experience of reading into something deeper and broader and things are usually easier when we share them with others. You can exchange ideas about scenes in the book, ways the story makes you feel and, because sometimes people's perceptions are different, it can be fun to hear their thoughts about characters, places, and plot elements. Remember, this is a work of fiction so don't be afraid to stretch your imagination. The setting, characters, and themes are meant to help us to know ourselves in new ways. As you read, notice your reactions to moments of conflict, love, fear, hatred, and joy in *The Good Thief*. Reading good fiction causes us to feel and those feelings expand our awareness of what it means to be human.

Letter writing is quickly becoming a lost art. New, brief forms of communication like emails, texting and chat apps are fast, informal and not appropriate for this activity. This is a chance to communicate with a professional author who graduated from Fenwick and likes teenagers. Do a good job!

Your letter needs to follow a standard format using MSWord, single spaced, at least five paragraphs, no less than one page and no more than two. You will print and sign two copies, one is submitted to your homeroom teacher on the first full day of school and the other you will mail directly to the author as soon as you complete the assignment. Ms. Tinti is eager to hear from you.

What about reading *The Good Thief* has changed you or the way you see the world? It may not be obvious at first but taking an active approach to reading this book will help you later when you sit down to write your letter. **Tips:** while you read, make notes in the margin of your book about your thoughts and reactions to passages, paste sticky notes on pages that seem particularly important to the story or use a highlighter to select quotes that are meaningful to you.

See a Sample Letter to the Author on the other side...

Please see the FAQ sheet & SAMPLE LETTER document for the Letter to the Author Project and the rubric for details. For more information, contact Diane Smith, Library Director dms@fenwick.org

August 2, 2018

Ms. Hannah Tinti
c/o One Story
The Old American Can Factory
232 Third Street #A108
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear Ms. Tinti,

This is an example of the format used for a standard letter to an author. The letter needs to look like this example and follow the criteria detailed in the Letter to the Author project description sheet. The length of the letter will be no less than one page (at least five single spaced paragraphs) and no more than two, be typed using MSWord, 12 point Times New Roman font.

The body of your letter needs to focus on how reading *The Good Thief* changed your view of self and/or the world. It is important to organize your ideas and clearly present them using details and examples from the book. Avoid writing a fan letter or a book report. Statements like, "You write very well and it was interesting," says little. To write something meaningful to this author, try writing about how reading Ren's story that is set in old New England helped you to see, for example, the challenge of not knowing who your parents are or where your next meal comes from shapes a person's view of the world. Be sure to put into words what the story helped you to understand. Mention what specifically in *The Good Thief* caused you to see in new ways.

The second and third paragraphs in the body of your letter give you opportunities to raise another issue (s). What do you think about practicing grave robbing to survive? Would Ren have been better off staying at St. Anthony's? How is Ren different from Brom and Itchy? Use examples from the book, like a quote or paraphrasing a scene, that helped you understand something better. Make your letter specific using details that will really resonate with the author.

Don't forget to say a little bit about yourself. What goes on in your life that caused you to be curious about and interested in the story. Maybe you or one of your friends has a non-traditional family. Has reading *The Good Thief* caused you to see the idea of family in new ways? Did you know that Hannah Tinti played sports during her time here at Fenwick? Do you have any questions for the author? She lives in New York city, has written three books and co-founded an online magazine called *One Teen Story*. Are you inspired to write your own short story?

In your conclusion it is important to write honestly about your reading experience. The letter's intent is to show the author that you read her book, reflected on the ideas in the book and, most importantly, that you are sincerely interested in *The Good Thief* and how the story changed you or your way of appreciating the world. It is likely that sending this letter will help Ms. Tinti better realize the impact of her book and understand her readers a little bit better.

Sincerely,

Lucy Letter
123 Your Street
New England Town, MA 12345