



**Project
Read**
LIFE-CHANGING EDUCATION



April 1, 2025

Dear Student and Tutor,

It's that time again! The 2025 Project Read Writing Contest is underway! Feeling a sense of belonging is a powerful part of the human experience. This year, Project Read's writing contest invites you to explore the theme *You Belong Here*. Whether it's a place where you felt comfortable and happy, a time when you've felt like an outsider, or the advice you'd give your younger self about finding friends and community, we want to hear your story! Through words, you can also inspire others to create welcoming spaces where everyone feels at home.

Tutors, please assist your student in completing and submitting at least one entry. This will give your student an opportunity to practice writing, share it with others, and potentially gain recognition for his or her work. Please read the attached document to your student at your next tutoring session and discuss and choose which prompt(s) he or she would like to respond to.

The ideas for the responses must originate with the student, but you may assist him or her with grammar, appropriate sentence sequence, spelling, etc. so that your student can submit the best representation of his or her work. Your student is also encouraged to attend our Literacy Labs to receive help with writing and editing.

All entries must be submitted to the Project Read Office no later than Friday, June 6, 2025, to be considered. Electronic entries are preferred, but both hard and electronic copies will be accepted. Please forward entries to Aleah at aleah@projectreadutah.org. Winners will be announced at our Annual Recognition Event on June 24th (Utah County) and June 26th (Salt Lake County). All submissions will be published in a writing contest booklet and our student anthology, *Readers Write*.

Thanks in advance for using this opportunity to build confidence and writing skills!

Sincerely,

Shauna K. Brown, Director

Shauna K. Brown
Executive Director, Project Read



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2025 Writing Contest

You definitely belong at Project Read! And we hope all of our students will participate in our yearly writing contest. Consider the following prompts to think of ideas. Then, write and submit your contest entry by Friday, June 6th. We can't wait to read what you come up with!

I Belong Here

Think about a time when you felt like you truly belonged. Where were you? Who was with you? How did it feel? It could be a moment with family, friends, at work, or in a new place. Why do you feel like you belong there?

In your writing, try to include:

- **A clear setting:** Where did this happen?
- **People or experiences:** Who was with you? What was happening?
- **Your feelings:** How did it feel to belong? Did anything help you feel included?
- **Reflection:** Why is this moment important to you? What does belonging mean in your life?

A Place I Feel at Home

Think of a place where you feel comfortable, safe, or happy. This could be a real place, like your home, a park, a library, or a friend's house. It could also be a place in your imagination, from your memories, or from a movie or book.

In your writing, try to include:

- **A clear description:** Where is this place? What does it look like, sound like, or smell like?
- **Your connection to the place:** Why do you feel comfortable or happy there? What makes it special to you?
- **A personal experience:** Tell about a time you were in this place. What were you doing? Who was with you?
- **Your emotions:** How do you feel when you are there? Why is it important to you?

Feeling Like an Outsider

Think about a time when you felt like you didn't belong. This could have been in a new school, workplace, community, or even among friends or family.

In your writing, try to include:

- **The situation:** Where were you? What was happening? Why did you feel like an outsider?



- **Your emotions:** How did it feel to be in that situation? What thoughts were going through your mind?
- **What you did:** Did you try to change the situation? Did someone help you feel included? What steps did you take to overcome the feeling?
- **The outcome:** Did things change? What did you learn from the experience? How did it make you stronger or more understanding?

A Letter to My Younger Self

Imagine you could write a letter to your younger self, giving advice about finding friends and community.

In your letter, try to include:

- **A greeting to your younger self:** How old were you? What was happening in your life at that time?
- **A challenge you faced:** When did you feel like you didn't belong? What were your thoughts and emotions?
- **Advice and encouragement:** What would you tell your younger self? What lessons have you learned about finding belonging?
- **A message of hope:** How did things change over time? What do you wish your younger self had known?
- **A closing:** End your letter with words of kindness, encouragement, or reassurance.

Making Others Feel Welcome

Think about a time when you helped someone feel included, accepted, or comfortable. It could have been a new classmate, coworker, neighbor, or even a stranger. Or you can write about another person or a person from history who has helped others feel welcome.

In your writing, try to include:

- **The situation:** Who was the person? Where were you? Why did they feel out of place?
- **Your actions:** What did you do to make them feel welcome? Did you talk to them, invite them to join, or show kindness in another way?
- **Their reaction:** How did the person respond? Did they seem happier or more comfortable?
- **Your feelings and reflections:** How did it feel to help someone? Why do you think making others feel welcome is important?