



54<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
LETTER-WRITING  
COMPETITION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



# IMAGINE YOU ARE THE OCEAN

Write a letter to someone explaining why  
and how they should take good care of you.

## 2025

## PARTICIPANTS GUIDE



2021  
2030 United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

# YOU COULD BE A WINNER! SO GET WRITING!

In 2025, the UPU (Universal Postal Union) is partnering with IMO (International Maritime Organization) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) for the 54th edition of the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People. This collaboration unites UPU's mission to foster communication through letters, IMO's commitment to addressing the urgent need to protect our ocean and seas, as well as UNESCO's dedication to advancing ocean science and education through initiatives such as the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (Ocean Decade). The theme for this year is:

## IMAGINE YOU ARE THE OCEAN.

Write a letter to someone explaining why and how they should take good care of you.

Together, UPU, IMO and UNESCO inspire young minds to reflect on their roles in safeguarding marine ecosystems and promoting sustainability.



## Messages from the organizer and partners

### UPU

The UPU is a United Nations specialized agency founded in 1874 that helps connect the world through the mail. The UPU works with 192 member countries around the globe to make sure letters and packages can travel safely and quickly from one place to another. The UPU also sets international rules for the postal system to ensure everyone has access to reliable communication. Through initiatives like this letter-writing competition, we foster communication, literacy and cultural exchange, inspiring young voices to address global challenges like ocean conservation.

### IMO

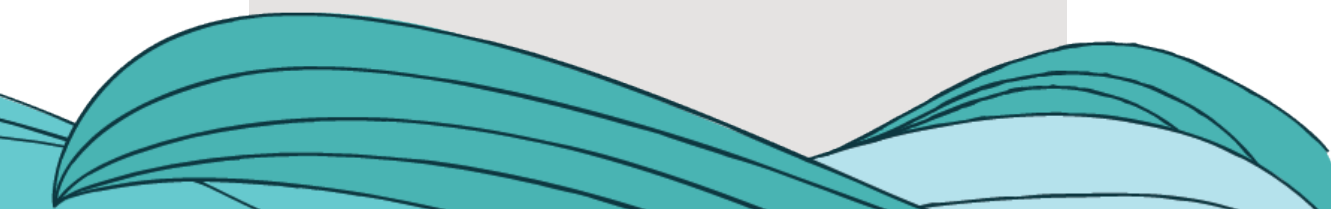
The International Maritime Organization, or IMO, is a global organization that helps make shipping safer, cleaner, and better for the planet. Since most of the goods we use—like clothes, electronics and food—are transported by ships, IMO creates important rules to ensure ships operate safely and don't harm the environment.

IMO also focuses on protecting the ocean by reducing pollution and tackling climate change with greener shipping technologies. By bringing countries together, IMO works to keep the seas safe and sustainable for future generations while supporting the world's trade and economy.

### UNESCO

Because the world shares the ocean, ensuring its sustainable future can only be achieved through multilateralism. With its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of 150 Member States and expertise in culture and education, UNESCO enables coordinated action among governments, scientists, the private sector, civil society and other UN organizations.

Our partnership with the UPU supports the Ocean Decade's mission to connect people and the ocean. Tied to the 2025 UN Ocean Conference in June, the competition encourages youth to speak on behalf of the ocean, sharing creative calls to action and fostering global care for this ecosystem.





# HOW TO WRITE A GOOD LETTER?

A well-written letter includes the following elements:

**Heading** (complete address of writer and the date of the letter)

**Greeting** (Dear, etc.)

**Body**

**IMAGINE YOU  
ARE THE OCEAN.**

Write a letter to someone explaining why  
and how they should take good care of you.

**Complimentary close**

**Postscript** (optional)

**Signature line**

## IN NEED OF INSPIRATION FOR THE THEME?

Toolkits: <https://www.theoceanagency.org/toolkits>

The 7 principles of ocean literacy: <https://oceanliteracy.unesco.org/principles/>  
The Ocean Decade: [Ocean Decade – The Science We Need For The Ocean We Want](#)

IMO work on marine environment: [Marine Environment](#)

World Maritime Day 2025: [Ocean-themed World Maritime Day 2025 launched by IMO Secretary-General and school children](#)



# WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

## Send your letter to:

*(Space for national organizer to put basic information about where compositions must be sent and contact information)*

To validate your candidature, along with your composition, **please include a cover letter** with the following information:

Your name

Your email address

Your postal address

Your age and date of birth

Number of words in your letter (maximum 800)

Your consent for the use of photos submitted to UPU

For more information about the UPU International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People, please visit the following website:

[WWW.UPU.INT/EN/ILWC](http://WWW.UPU.INT/EN/ILWC)



# YOU HAVE A VOICE... EXPRESS YOURSELF!



Every year since 1971, the Universal Postal Union, the United Nations specialized agency for postal services, has held an International Letter Writing Competition for Young People.

Millions of youths around the world have participated in the competition, practicing the valuable art of letter-writing by expressing their thoughts on topics and issues that concern the world at large.

Despite living in a digital age, learning how to express oneself properly through the written word is an ability that every young person should nurture to grow personally and prepare for the future. By participating in this competition, you help us advocate for goal four on "Quality Education" under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For more information, please consult the following website: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

So, take part in this exciting competition. If your letter wins at the national level, it could end up being selected as the year's top letter at the international level and you could win some fantastic prizes.

## COMPETITION RULES

Compositions must be in the form of a letter and contain the elements of a letter (heading, greeting, body, complimentary close, signature line and postscript (optional)).

Entries must adhere strictly to the theme and not exceed 800 words in the original language.

Submitted letters must be accompanied by a cover letter, entry form and high quality picture of the winner.



## HOW THE COMPETITION WORKS

Only young participants from 9 to 15 years may take part in the annual competition.

**Each country that decides to participate organizes its own national competition and selects national winner.**

**Each country sends its first-prize letter to the UPU HQ in Berne, Switzerland to then compete for the top prizes at the international level.**

**An international jury evaluates the letters and selects top three winners and up to five special mentions.**

## JURY DESIGNATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS

**An international jury compiled by the International Bureau judges the letters and selects the overall winners and candidates that merit a special mention.**

**UPU announces winners through website and social media channels.**

**Winners and member countries are informed of the results.**

# PRIZES



The top three international prize-winners will receive a beautiful medal bearing their name, or a certificate (honourable mentions).

But that's not all! If conditions permit, the UPU will arrange for the three prize-winners to attend a special awards ceremony in honour of their achievement. In 2025, this prestigious event is set to take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the UAE, transport and accommodation will be provided for the three prize-winners and two accompanying adults per winner.

The runners-up and national winners are generally celebrated at ceremonies organized by their home countries on World Post Day – 9 October – the anniversary of the founding of the UPU. We invite all participating countries to join in recognizing and honouring their winners on this special occasion.

"Participating in the competition was a unique opportunity for me to share my thoughts about the future with people from different countries. I'm glad that my work was among the winners. Recognition is very important for teenagers – it gives confidence, inspires creativity, and fosters growth. I am grateful to the organizers of the competition and encourage other young people to take part in it."

**Aliaksandr Piatrou (Belarus)**  
2024 gold-medal winner

"I participated and the experience was overwhelming. The whole experience was a roller-coaster of emotions that I will never forget. I was able to network and make new friends. It was amazing to meet Sarah the Robot one-on-one.

To my fellow children all over the world, writing is not easy, but I encourage you to begin somewhere. All great achievements require time. To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

Thank you to 'UPU' for giving children an opportunity to nurture their talents/abilities and to shine. Take the challenge, grasp the opportunity, and make a better future for all of us and our environment. Try something new and discover yourself every single day."

**Claire Gakii (Kenya)**  
2023 gold-medal winner



"Participating in the UPU competition has made my life better. My self-confidence has grown, and I look to the future with hope. I always believe I will succeed and am not afraid of challenges. The power of love is immense. I love the UPU family so much – it has become a big family for me. I now have friends from different cultures. After the competition, I realized that a pen and paper can change the world. Writing letters is freedom. Letters, like birds, cross seas and mountains. I want all young people to write letters, believe in themselves, and love others. Letters filled with love, knowledge, and kindness will save the world."

**Esra Sümeyye Öz (Türkiye)**  
2022 gold-medal winner



Learn more about the campaign

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#ILWC  
[www.upu.int/en/ilwc](http://www.upu.int/en/ilwc)

