

"DEAR MARGUERITE" NATIONAL ESSAY CONTEST

Sponsored by Lettie Teague

About Lettie Teague

Lettie Teague has been the wine columnist of *The Wall Street Journal* since 2010. Before joining the Journal, Teague was the executive wine editor and columnist for *Food & Wine* magazine. She is the author of two books, *Wine in Words* and *Educating Peter*, and co-author and illustrator of *Fear of Wine*. She has won three James Beard Awards, including the M.F.K. Fisher Distinguished Writing Award. More importantly, Teague's equestrian life began when she was nine, the same year she read her first Marguerite Henry book (*Born to Trot*). Like Henry, she grew up in the Midwest and aspired to be a writer. Her biography of Marguerite Henry, *Dear Readers and Riders: The Beloved Books, Faithful Fans, and Hidden Private Life of Marguerite Henry* will be published by Trafalgar Square Books in the spring of 2024.

Teague is based in New Jersey, which has one of the highest horse populations in U.S. As Teague notes, it may be called the "Garden State," but it (really) should be titled "The Horsiest State."

General Rules:

- Contestants must write an original essay with limited guidance from others. Use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is prohibited and will result in disqualification.
- Your essay will become the property of the Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) once submitted and will not be returned.
- Due to the number of entries received, only winners will be contacted with the results.

Essay Contest Rules:

- Contestants must enter using the provided registration form. All fields on the online form are required, including uploading a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file of your original work with title, in English. To upload an essay submission, it will be necessary to be logged-in to a Google Account. If contestant does not have access to a Google Account, essay submission may be emailed to kdando@rideiea.org. (Please note "Dear Marguerite National Essay Contest" in the subject line.)
- Essays must address the official contest topics.

1. Grades 4 through 8:

Horse Heroes in History.

Marguerite Henry's books often feature heroic horses. Research and write about a real-life horse hero from history and their remarkable story.

Essays must be between 250 - 500 words.

2. Grades 9 through 12:

Horse Welfare and Ethical Equestrianism.

In Marguerite Henry's books, horses are not merely animals; they are characters with distinct personalities, emotions, and desires deserving of respect and humane treatment. Research the ethical treatment of horses within today's world and share your thoughts on responsible horse care, what practices do you think are good, what do think would improve horse welfare.

Essays must be between 500 - 1,000 words.

Recommended Reading List for Inspiration

These recommendations were made by [Trafalgar Square Books](#) to help educate essay participants in areas of horsemanship that would be similar to characters in a Marguerite Henry book. As Lettie says, part of what Marguerite Henry advocated for, in both books and actions, was equine welfare.

[*The Kid's Guide to Horsemanship and Grooming*](#)

[*Horse Fun*](#)

[*Arena Tracks*](#)

[*Liberty Biscuit*](#)

[*Bolder, Braver, Brighter*](#)

[*How Good Riders Get Good*](#)

[*World-Class Grooming for Horses*](#)

[*Essential Hoof*](#)

[*Winning with Horses*](#)

[*Finding Your Superhorse*](#)

[*The Athletic Equestrian*](#)

[*A Horse By Nature*](#)

- Essays must be typed and double-spaced in a 12-point font with a one-inch margin on all sides of the page.
- Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essays must be identified properly.
- Student registration forms must have a parent or sponsoring coach name. That person may review the submitted essay. It is to the student's advantage to have a coordinator review the essay to make sure it is complete, contains the necessary forms, is free from typographical and grammatical errors, and addresses the topic.
- Do not place your last name or your sponsoring coach's name on any of the pages of the essay. Only the registration form should include this information.

Contest Deadline:

- Your essay may be disqualified if it does not meet the requirements or is submitted after the submission deadline of **11:59 p.m. EST on February 2, 2024.**

Eligibility:

- IEA student riders are eligible to participate if they are registered IEA members in grades 4 through 12 for the current season.

Judging:

Judging will be conducted by a panel of equestrian authors & publishers based upon the following criteria.

- Interpretation and clarity of the topic to the reader.
- Creativity and originality related to the topic.
- One first place winner will be awarded to both Middle and Upper School IEA participants.

Prizes:

- First-place winner for grades 4-8 (Futures) will receive a \$500 cash award, an autographed copy of Lettie's new book, *Dear Readers and Riders: A Biography, The Beloved Books, Faithful Fans, and Hidden Private Life of Marguerite Henry*, as well as a Breyer Misty Gift Set.
- First-place winner for grades 9-12 (Upper School) will receive a \$1,000 cash award, an autographed copy of Lettie's new book, *Dear Readers and Riders: A Biography, The Beloved Books, Faithful Fans, and Hidden Private Life of Marguerite Henry*, as well as a Breyer Misty Gift Set.
- Recognition at Hunt Seat National Finals for winning essays published in the National Finals Show Program.
- Honorable Mentions receive recognition in press releases and social media, as well as an autographed copy of Lettie's new book, *Dear Readers and Riders: A Biography, The Beloved Books, Faithful Fans, and Hidden Private Life of Marguerite Henry*.

For more information or questions please email Kathryn Dando at kdando@rideiea.org.