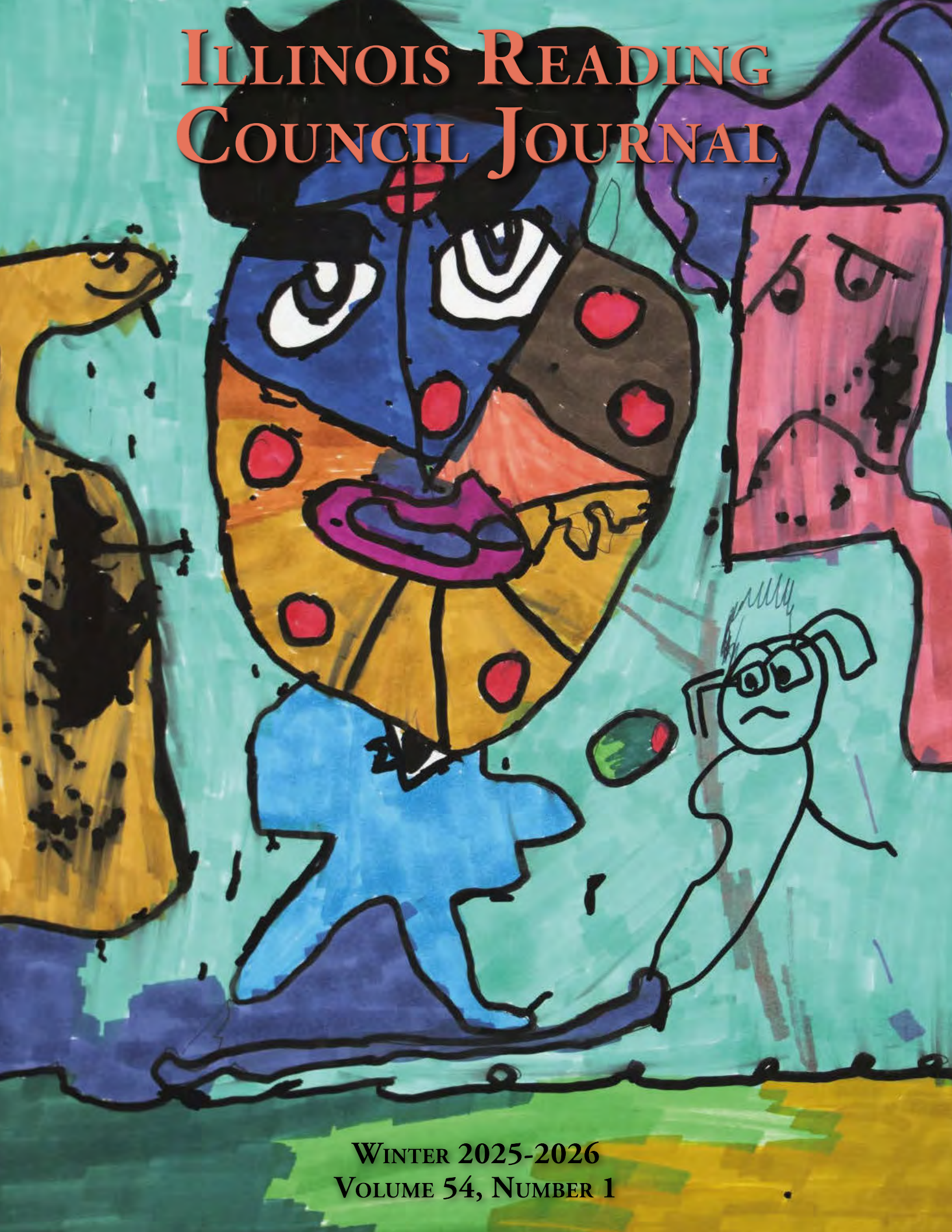


ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL JOURNAL



WINTER 2025-2026
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The Illinois Reading Council Journal (IRCJ) is published quarterly and is distributed as a service to all members of the Illinois Reading Council. Membership in the Illinois Reading Council can be obtained through local and special interest reading councils in Illinois. For information, contact the Illinois Reading Council at 1100 Beech Street, Building 8, Suite 2, Normal, IL 61761. IRC staff may also be reached by telephone at (309) 454-1341. Libraries and educational institutions can subscribe to IRCJ at an annual rate of \$50.00; address inquiries to the Executive Director at the IRC office. Because the IRCJ serves as an open forum, its contents do not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement or advocacy by the Illinois Reading Council, its officers, or its members.

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Publication services for the *IRCJ* are provided by Sandra K. Larimer, Copy Editor, and Shanee J. Plate, Layout/Design. Honor Allen and Ayma Siddiqui are Editor Roxanne Owens' graduate assistants.

About the Artists in this Issue

Arts of Life

Arts of Life is a 501(c)3 nonprofit founded in January 2000 with a shared vision: to create a person-centric, working artistic community and provide a work environment of equality and inclusion in Chicago. Started by founding artist Veronica Cuculich and two co-directors, Arts of Life was launched with nine intrepid individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our shared vision grew from a passion for artistic expression and a need for an alternative system. Today, we support over 80 artists. A career in the visual arts is an opportunity for meaningful employment. At our three professional art studios, each artist has their own studio space and works independently from individualized project plans or receives 1:1 visual arts facilitation to increase their artistic skill set. Artists earn a monthly stipend for participation in the program with eligibility to receive bonuses based on personal annual art sales. In 2021, we launched community programs in partnership with art centers in Evanston and Highland Park to engage more artists in their own communities.

<https://artsoflife.org>

Front cover: "Pizzaman" by Omar Abulsheikh

Back cover: "Statue of Liberty" by Caroline Chun

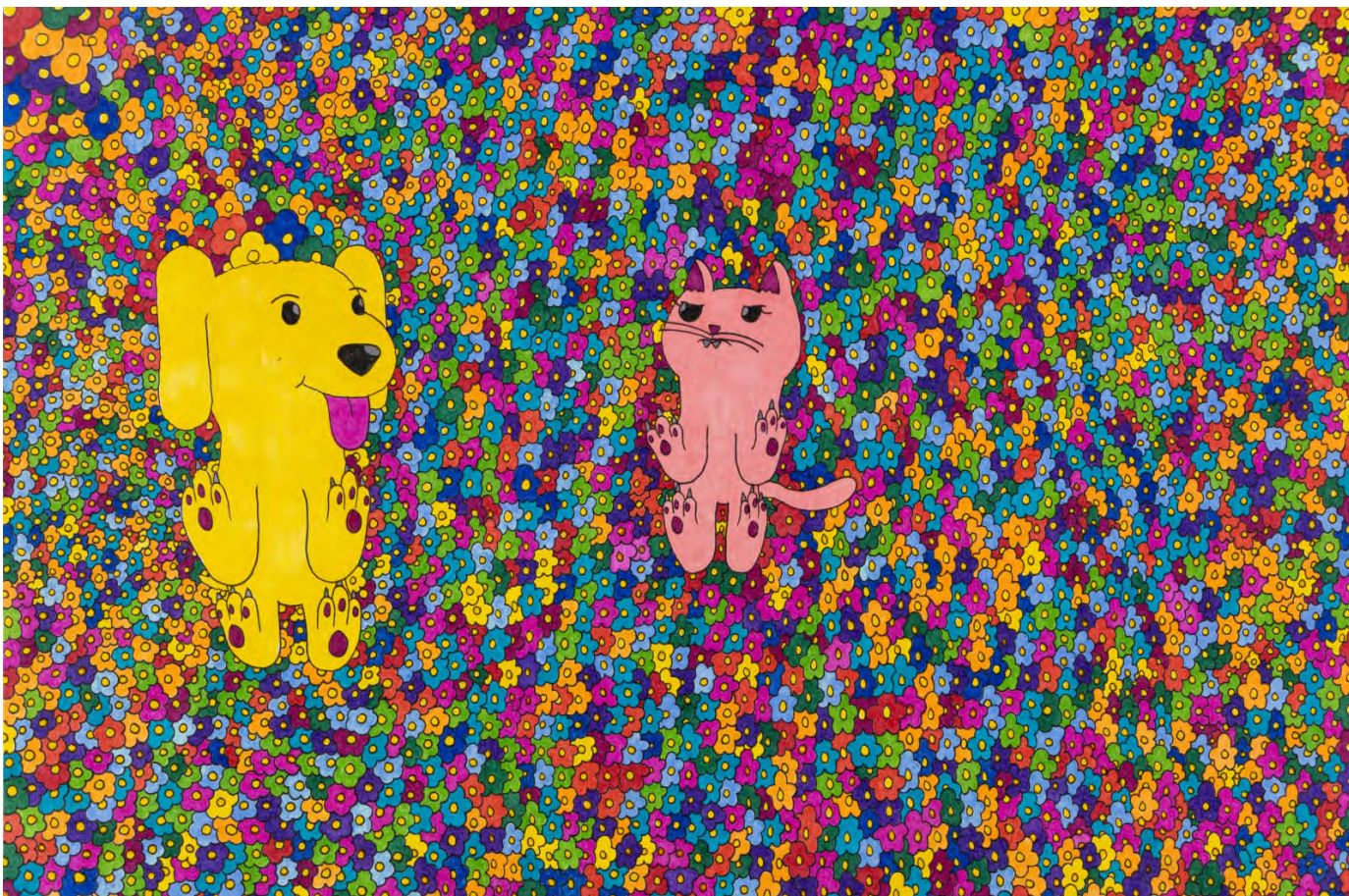
Other artwork by Arts of Life artists can be found on pages 1, 35, 48, and 66.



Maria Vanik, "Rainbow Rooster"



Marcelo Aguilar, "Heart Raising"



Rocco Dicaro, "Untitled"

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IRC Announces 2025-2026 Grant Recipients

REGION 3

Fox Valley	Diana Wolf	\$1,000	A Shared Shelf: Uniting Our School Through Stories
Prairie Area	Katy Boehm	\$1,500	Writing Workshop with Kate Hannigan
Prairie Area	Helen Dukhan	\$600	Fairy Tale Stem Challenges
West Suburban	Gabriela Escobedo Garcia	\$1,000	Listen & Learn Library: VOX Books for Grades K-2

REGION 4

Western Illinois	Trish Bertelsen	\$875	Collaborating for Success: Using Literacy to Strengthen the Home to School Connection
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REGION 7

Illini	Kelly Vail	\$750	One School, One Book
--------	------------	-------	----------------------

REGION 8

National Road	Andrea Kinder	\$450	Let's Read the Monarch Books of 2026!
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REGION 9

South Eastern	Sherrie Blackford	\$1,500	Soaring to New Reading Literacy Heights
Southern Illinois	Melinda Graham	\$700	Continuing Cultural Connections with Books

REGION 10

SRL	Alan Holtz	\$750	Battle of the Books 2026
SRL	Alan Holtz	\$600	Mock Newbery ~ Picking the Best of the Best 2026
SRL	Alan Holtz	\$350	Media Center's Manga Madness

**The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education
and
The Illinois Reading Council**

STATIC STICK DECAL CONTEST

The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education (ICARE) and the Illinois Reading Council (IRC) invite **YOU** to design a STATIC STICK DECAL that encourages children to read.

QUALIFICATIONS

You must be a student in grade 4, 5 or 6 in a school in the state of Illinois.

GUIDELINES

Make your original design in the 4 inch square on the back of this sheet.

(Teachers may copy the application form as many times as needed.)

Invent an **original** character(s) to include in your design. You may **NOT** use any published cartoon or comic characters (including characters such as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Super Heroes, Pokémon, etc.) nor any computer-generated art.

Develop an **original** saying or slogan.

You are limited to three colors plus black and white. The label with Illinois Reading Council and Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education must be on the STATIC STICK DECAL design but it may be moved from the location on the application form.

Complete the application form on the back of this sheet. Mail it with your design to:

Illinois Reading Council
Attn: Kathleen Sweeney
1100 Beech Street
Building 8, Suite 2
Normal, IL 61761

ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15!

THE STATIC STICK DECAL CONTEST WINNER WILL RECEIVE:

An autographed book by a well-known children's author.

An invitation for the winner and his/her parents to be our guests at the Friday Luncheon at the annual Illinois Reading Council Conference. The winner will sit in a place of honor and be introduced during the luncheon.

30 STATIC STICK DECALS with the winning design to distribute to classmates.

TIPS

Don't forget – The work MUST BE ORIGINAL. You may not use any published trademark, cartoon, comic characters or computer-generated art.

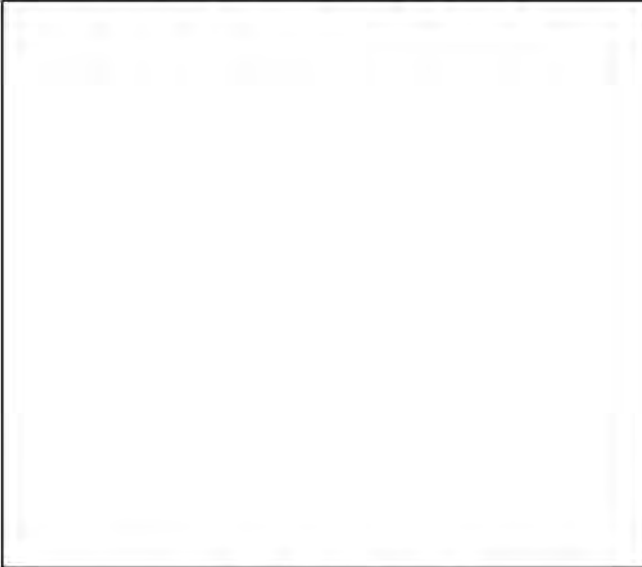
Keep the art work simple and positive. Too much detail within the space provided may result in a smeared look when the cling is reproduced.

Fine line markers, pens and pencils work the best. Crayon is usually difficult to read. A white background provides a cleaner design.

Spelling must be standard and correct.

The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education and The Illinois Reading Council

STATIC STICK DECAL CONTEST APPLICATION


Illinois Reading Council Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education

Student Name _____

Grade _____ Age _____

Teacher's Name _____

School _____

School Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

School Phone _____ Email _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Email _____

Mail entries no later than **January 15** to:

Illinois Reading Council
Attn: Kathleen Sweeney
1100 Beech Street, Building 8-2
Normal, IL 61761

Request for Membership on IRC Standing and Special Committees

Please consider becoming more involved in the Illinois Reading Council. Members of the local reading councils may submit their own names for consideration. Below are brief descriptions of committee goals.

IRC STANDING COMMITTEES:

Budget, Finance, and Strategic Planning Committee - Prepare a yearly budget, report on the audit, and review dues structure. Work to establish a well-defined vision for the future of IRC.

Bylaws, Policies and Procedures Committee - Review and update the IRC bylaws and policies.

Conference Committee - Make plans for the annual conference of the council.

Membership Committee - Stimulate membership of ILA, state, local, and special interest councils.

Nominating Committee - Prepare a slate of candidates for IRC Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.

Organization/Council Bylaws Committee - Act as liaison between ILA and local and special interest councils.

IRC SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Advocacy Committee - Gather and disseminate information concerning legislation related to reading.

Book Club Committee - Host four virtual book clubs in the spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Educational Media Committee - Assist state, local, and special interest councils with newspapers in education and with the integration of technology and literacy.

Family Literacy Committee - Collect and disseminate information concerning adult, parent, and family literacy.

ILA Exemplary Reading Program Award Committee - Assist ILA in recognizing outstanding reading and language arts programs in Illinois schools.

Illinois Reads Committee - A yearly statewide project to encourage reading for all Illinois citizens.

International Projects Committee - Address issues, provide resources, and encourage others to become involved in literacy projects in third world countries.

IRC Literacy Support Grants Committee - Recommend financial grants for literacy projects.

Jerry Johns Reading Educator of the Year Award Committee - Recognize an outstanding teacher contributing to literacy.

Obama Literacy Fund Committee - Promote the importance of multicultural literature and focus on providing multicultural literature for teachers' use.

Prairie State Award Committee - Review nominations to select an outstanding Illinois children's/YA author.

Professional Learning - Share best practices in educational initiatives and effective professional development to support all grade levels and content areas.

Publicity and Publications Committee - Provide templates and support to IRC and local councils to promote membership and events. Provide guidance in creating and publishing IRC materials.

Sticker Design Contest Committee - Promote the Static Sticker Decal Contest that encourages children to read.

**Please complete the information below and mail the form to:
Illinois Reading Council, 1100 Beech St, Building 8, Suite 2, Normal, IL 61761**

I wish to be considered for membership on the following committee(s) _____

Name _____

Reading Council _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Home _____ School _____ Email _____

Calls for Contributions for Future Issues of the Illinois Reading Council Journal

The Illinois Reading Council Journal seeks manuscripts dealing with topics, issues, and events of interest to educators involved in literacy programs at all levels of education.

About The Review Process

The complete review process takes approximately 10 to 16 weeks. Upon receipt of a manuscript, an initial review will be conducted and feedback sent to the author. Manuscripts accepted for peer review will be evaluated by at least two reviewers who are uninformed as to the identity of the author. The editor will compile notes from the reviewers and send feedback to the author, including whether the article has been accepted for publication and any requests for revision. Manuscripts are evaluated in terms of interest, quality of writing, appropriate documentation of ideas, uniqueness, and needs of the journal. Research articles should include a clear description of the methodology and should be written in a style that will be readable by classroom teachers. The final decision for acceptance of manuscripts resides with the editor. Please review articles in the journal before submitting manuscripts for consideration. Any questions about the submission process should be directed to Roxanne Owens, IRCJ Editor, by e-mail at ircjournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

Short Submissions

For each issue, short items such as original poems, cartoons, artwork, or personal anecdotes may appear throughout the journal. Such submissions should be one-half page to one page in length, double-spaced, and word-processed. Front and back cover art is also accepted. The editor selects these items.

If you have questions about the submission process, please e-mail Roxanne Owens, *IRCJ* Editor, at IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

IRCJ Submission Guidelines

Article submissions should be eight to 25 double-spaced pages, including references. Please prepare and submit your manuscript consistent with the following guidelines.

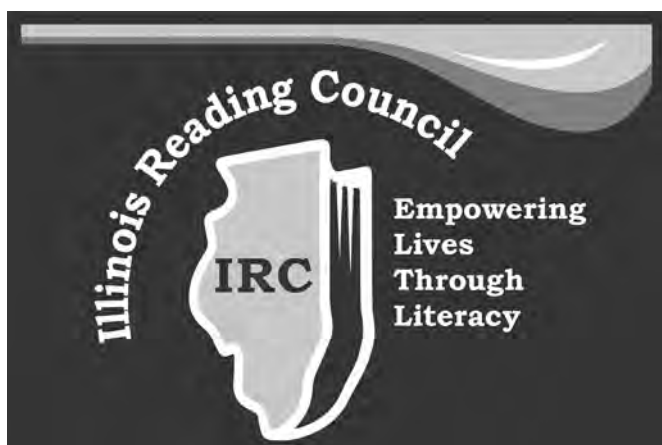
Manuscript Submission Guidelines

NEW! You can now submit your article online at <http://illinoisreadingcouncil.org/ircjournalsubmission.html>:

- *Anonymize the Manuscript Text:* Remove any names or references to the author(s) and affiliated institutions (clearly marked placeholders may be employed, e.g., [Author Name]; [Name of Institution]).
- *Text Formatting:* In general, apply APA style guidelines (7th ed.) to your text (e.g., Times New Roman 12 point or a similar serif font, double spaced, 1-inch margins, etc.).
- *File Type:* Save the manuscript as a MS *Word* document .doc or docx. (MS *Word* is used to provide in-text comments and revisions, so please do not submit pdf., .pages or .rtf.)
- *File Name:* This should conform to the following format:
article v1_{title of article}_mm-dd-yy
Example: article v1_Reading is essential_5-10-20
- Download the cover letter template from the submission webpage and fill it out.
- Rename the cover letter file name as follows:
cover_{title of article}_mm-dd-yy
- Example: cover_Reading is essential_5-10-20

Additional questions can be sent to

IRCJournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org



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Editor of *Illinois Reading Council Journal*

Roxanne Owens
ircjournal@illinoisreadingcouncil.org

Illinois Reading Council Membership

Locations of IRC Local & Special Interest Council Regions by Counties

The annual membership of \$50 includes membership in the Illinois Reading Council **and** a local or special interest council. The annual preservice teacher membership is \$30 for one who has not been certified in the teaching profession and is working toward an initial teaching certificate. Please select the council(s) you wish to join from the list below. Residence in any of the designated council counties you join is not required. If you join more than one local or special interest council at this time, each additional council is \$15. Preservice teachers pay \$5 for each additional council. IRC Membership comes with online access to the webinars, book clubs, *IRC Journal*, and more. The *IRC Journal* and other membership benefits will also be sent by email to you. If you wish to purchase a print journal, it is an additional \$20 per year. Follow the steps on the front of this form.

REGION 1	REGION 4	REGION 7
Northern Illinois Reading Council - (Boone, DeKalb, Winnebago, Eastern Lee & Ogle)	Black Hawk Reading Council - (Rock Island, Mercer, Western Henry & Whiteside)	East Central-EIU Reading Council - (Moultrie, Shelby, Cumberland, Coles, Clark, Edgar, Douglas)
Northwestern Illinois Reading Council - (Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll)	Illinois Valley Reading Council - (Stark, Putnam, Marshall, Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Eastern Fulton, Mason)	Illini Reading Council - (Champaign, Piatt, Southern Ford)
Sauk Valley Reading Council - (Eastern Whiteside & Henry, Western Lee, Ogle, & Bureau)	Mississippi Valley Reading Council - (Adams, Brown, Pike, Scott, Greene, Calhoun)	Vermilion Valley Reading Council - (Vermilion)
Starved Rock Reading Council - (LaSalle, Grundy, Kendall, Livingston, Eastern Bureau)	Western Illinois Reading Council - (Henderson, Warren, Knox, McDonough, Hancock, Schuyler, Western Fulton)	REGION 8
REGION 2	REGION 5	Lewis and Clark Reading Council - (Macoupin, Jersey, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Washington, Clinton)
Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA) - (Chicago Area - Cook County within the Chicago city limits)	South Suburban Reading Council - (Those parts of Cook Co. bounded on west by Will-Cook Rd., north by 115th St., and/or Chicago City limits)	National Road Reading Council - (Bond, Effingham, Fayette, Marion)
Lake Area Reading Council - (Western Lake, McHenry, Northwestern Cook)	Two Rivers Reading Council - (Kankakee, Iroquois, Northern Ford)	REGION 9
Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA) - (Eastern Lake, Northern Cook)	Will County Reading Council - (Will)	South Eastern Reading Council - (Lawrence, Richland, Crawford, Jasper, Edwards, Clay, Wabash, Wayne, White)
REGION 3	REGION 6	Southern Illinois Reading Council - (Jefferson, Randolph, Perry, Franklin, Williamson, Saline, Gallatin, Union, Johnson, Pope, Alexander, Hardin, Pulaski, Massac, Jackson, Hamilton)
Fox Valley Reading Council - (Kane)	Central Illinois Reading Council - (Logan, Menard, Cass, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Montgomery)	REGION 10
Prairie Area Reading Council - (Western DuPage County)	Macon County Reading Council - (Macon)	CIRP - (College Instructors of Reading Professionals)
West Suburban Reading Council - (DuPage County east of Route 83 and those parts of Cook County west of Austin Boulevard excluding all areas within the Chicago city limits)	MID-State Reading Council - (McLean, DeWitt)	ICARE - (Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education)
		SRL - (Secondary Reading League)

5-24

IRC

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