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## ABSTRACT

International Literacy Day, observed September 8 and at events throughout the week, focuses attention on worldwide literacy issues and needs. Because International Literacy Day coincides with the beginning of a new school year in many countries, classroom teachers use this special day to recognize the importance of literacy in the lives of children and adults. These information sheets provide teachers with: idea starters for International Literacy Day activities and events; a fact sheet about International Literacy Day; tips for writing news releases and public service announcements; information for councils about International Literacy Day, and Honor Council opportunities; and information on the International Reading Association's global activities in support of literacy. (PM)

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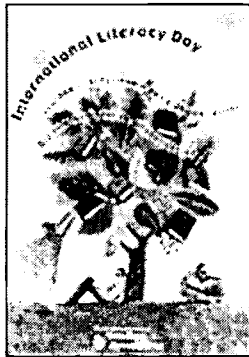
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)



## Celebrate International Literacy Day September 8 . . .

*And show the world your commitment to literacy*

International Literacy Day, observed September 8 and at events throughout the week, focuses attention on worldwide literacy issues and needs. It is estimated that 860 million of the world's adults do not know how to read or write (nearly two-thirds of whom are women) and that more than 100 million children lack access to education. Progress is being made, but slowly, and the advent of new technologies means that the gap between rich and poor countries is growing wider.

Since 1979, the International Reading Association has recognized outstanding literacy programs throughout the world through the annual International Reading Association Literacy Award, presented on International Literacy Day. The US\$15,000 award has benefited programs in nations representing every region of the world, including many of the most economically and educationally disadvantaged. The winner of the 2003 International Reading Association Literacy Award is the Dhaka Ahsania Mission of Bangladesh, featured in the *Reading Today* article, "Changing lives through literacy." Honorable mention goes to Fundación Alfabetizadora Laubach, based in Medellín, Colombia.

The Association also cosponsors an annual celebration of International Literacy Day, which follows a symposium format and includes representatives from many groups working in partnership with the Association on international literacy projects.

Because International Literacy Day coincides with the beginning of a new school year in many countries, classroom teachers use this special day to recognize the importance of literacy in the lives of children and adults. A growing number of International Reading Association Honor Councils involve their members and communities in International Literacy Day activities at the state and provincial level, and many national affiliates celebrate the day by presenting an award or organizing a special event.

To find out more about International Literacy Day, download our International Literacy Day brochure. Please note that this full-color brochure is posted in PDF format, and you will need a copy of Adobe's Acrobat Reader to view it (PDF help page).

To find out how your organization can get involved in planning or

ED 480 267

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[Media Tips](#)

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sponsoring International Literacy Day activities, look over these information sheets:

[Idea starters: International Literacy Day activities and events](#)

[Fact sheet: Facts about International Literacy Day](#)

[Media tips: News releases and public service announcements](#)

[Honor Council information: Opportunities for IRA councils to participate in International Literacy Day](#)

[Global efforts: The International Reading Association's global activities in support of literacy](#)

To find out more about International Literacy Day, and to request a Celebration Kit containing materials to help you plan and sponsor International Literacy Day activities, please contact the Public Information Office, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Rd., PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. Tel. 302-731-1600, ext. 293; fax 302-731-1057; e-mail [pubinfo@reading.org](mailto:pubinfo@reading.org).

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## How Will Your School or Community Celebrate International Literacy Day?

### Idea starters

- Organize a special in-school event and invite people from government, business, education, and the media to attend and participate. Ask an adult learner involved in a literacy program to give a testimonial. Rather than hold a formal symposium, ask students for creative suggestions.
- Establish a one-day hotline that community members can call if they have questions about reading education, learning disabilities, literacy programs, and resources. Staff the hotline with reading professionals and volunteers from local literacy organizations.
- Develop a short-term campaign for when children need extra incentive to read, such as summer. To reach adults, target times when people need information most: tax season, before an election, planning vacation, etc. Offer resources and reminders, and reinforce the importance of lifelong learning.
- Have older students make books that can be shared with younger students at their school.
- Conduct a readathon and have children raise sponsor money for a community literacy program by reading.
- Create news releases and public service announcements about your event (see [media tips](#)). Approach a television or radio station, magazine, or newspaper about joining forces on a specific project.
- Ask a manufacturer in your region to help heighten awareness about a reading or literacy topic. A supermarket might agree to print a literacy message on its shopping bags; a local dairy might carry tips for parents on its packaging.
- Invite a publisher to your classroom or school to discuss how books are developed.
- See if a local bookstore will donate books for disadvantaged children or for use as prizes for reading awards at schools.
- Initiate an annual contest or award. Hold a writing contest for students or senior citizens, a recognition award for the learning disabled student who has made the most progress, a contest for the best home video about reading, an award for the best literacy tutor in

your state/province, etc.

- Think globally, act locally. The Internet is a great resource for communicating with people throughout the world. Tap into its potential as a tool for making global contacts.
- Invite students, parents, or guests who have lived in other parts of the world to read a story from or to talk about literacy issues in those countries. Or select a country and have older students read materials, write essays, or present reports focusing on the similarities and differences of literacy issues internationally.
- Form links with a school or educational group in another country and have letter-writing campaigns, book collections, and other activities that generate media and public interest in your school or group's activities as well as interest in literacy issues in other parts of the world.

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## Fact Sheet: Facts About International Literacy Day

- International Literacy Day is celebrated each year on September 8th.
- International Literacy Day was first observed on September 8, 1967.
- The aim of International Literacy Day is to focus attention on the need to promote worldwide literacy.
- It is estimated that 860 million of the world's adults do not know how to read or write (nearly two-thirds of this number are women), and that more than 100 million children lack access to education.
- On International Literacy Day, individuals, organizations, and countries throughout the world renew their efforts to promote literacy and demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all.
- The [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) is the founder of International Literacy Day, and is responsible for appointing a jury to award international literacy prizes.
- Four [literacy prizes](#) are awarded annually on International Literacy Day. They are: The International Reading Association Literacy Award, the Noma Literacy Prize, and two King Sejong Literacy Prizes.
- The International Reading Association has sponsored the International Reading Association Literacy Award since 1979. The award is presented at the UNESCO celebration of International Literacy Day.
- As part of a network of literacy organizations, the International Reading Association cosponsors an [annual celebration of International Literacy Day](#), which typically includes featured speakers, representatives from a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental institutions, members of the press, and invited guests.
- State and provincial councils and national affiliates of the International Reading Association often sponsor International Literacy Day activities and celebrations.
- Because International Literacy Day coincides with the beginning of a new school year in many countries, classroom teachers use this day to recognize the importance of literacy in the lives of both children and adults.



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[Idea Starters](#)

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## Media Tips

[News releases](#)

[Public service announcements](#)

### Some Tips for Writing News Releases

Good news releases take time and effort, but getting your message across clearly to the press can lead to excellent coverage of your event. Here are some tips for writing effective news releases.

- Allow enough time for the press to respond to your announcement and prepare for your event. Try to mail news releases at least two weeks before the event.
- State your message simply, without a lot of "educationese" or jargon.
- Make sure to include vital information such as time, place, and location of the event, plus the name of a contact person with phone number and e-mail address.
- State clearly who is sponsoring the event and who will benefit from it.
- State clearly the costs of the event, if any, and give information about who may attend.
- Double-check phone numbers, the spellings of people's names, and dates and times that appear.
- Keep it short, use wide margins, and double space the text.
- Proofread the news release carefully, and ask someone else to look it over for you to make sure the information is complete and makes sense.
- Make sure that the contact person listed on the news release is aware that his or her name and phone number are being provided to the press.
- Make sure your group's full name and its address, phone, fax, and e-mail are clearly identified.
- Give a quick summary of what your group does somewhere in the news release. This is often the concluding paragraph.
- Make sure that each envelope has the correct name and address of

the media contact, and that it includes an accurate return address.

- Make sure every envelope has the correct postage.

## **Public Service Announcements for Radio and Television**

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is a "no charge" message that acts like a commercial. PSAs usually are 10, 15, 30, 60, or 90 seconds in length. To have the greatest impact, your PSAs should go at the same time to all the radio or TV stations in the area you wish to cover. Example [International Literacy Day PSAs](#) are available on this site.

### **No-cost PSAs**

One type of PSA is created at no cost by the station from your script. An announcer reads the edited copy while the information about your organization or event is seen on the TV screen or heard on the radio.

When submitting a PSA, include:

- Organization, name, address and telephone number
- Name of publicity contact and phone number
- Start and stop dates for PSAs to air
- Length in seconds
- Type double-spaced copy to allow for easy reading
- Phonetic spellings of any name or word difficult to pronounce

### **Pre-produced PSAs for broadcast**

The second type of PSA is produced outside the station by a professional production company for a fee. It can be submitted on paper in script form or it can be produced on CD for radio or on videotape for TV. Ask a public service director at a station for names of production companies. Send companies a cover letter with background information on your organization that includes your nonprofit tax I.D. number.

The producer may supply special effects, work with you on script and music, and arrange for off-camera voice, if needed. The production company will create a "master" tape of your PSA and may make hard copies for you to distribute to TV stations. TV stations accept 1", 3/4" reel-to-reel tapes (not VHS) and Beta tapes. **Note:** Don't use home video equipment to produce a video PSA. It does not meet broadcast standards.

When the tape or CD is ready, make sure the label identifies the name of the organization and lists each cut and length in the correct order. If your PSA is promoting a dated event, make sure that stations receive it a few months in advance.

### **Distribution of PSAs**

To distribute the videos or CDs you may need to employ a different



company. Research a variety of companies and compare their costs and services. Ask for detailed explanations of their services.

**Cable TV**

If cablevision is available in your area, it is likely that at least one cable channel, called the public access channel, broadcasts information from citizens and nonprofit events and services.

For more information on PSAs for radio and television, contact the Public Information Office of the International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, Delaware, 19714-8139; tel. 302-731-1600, ext. 293; fax 302-731-1057; or e-mail [pubinfo@reading.org](mailto:pubinfo@reading.org).

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## Honor Council Information



### Information for Councils About International Literacy Day and Honor Council Opportunities

If your IRA council or national affiliate conducts or participates in an International Literacy Day celebration, your council may be able to use this activity to meet part of the Honor Council requirements.

In order for your council to achieve Honor Council status, it must participate in an international project. International Literacy Day celebrations and related activities can be a worthwhile way to meet this goal.

For more information about Honor Council requirements, and for more information about international projects that have been undertaken by councils in North America, please contact Association Headquarters. Sending your request by e-mail is the fastest way for Headquarters staff to respond.

Contact:  
Lori Martin Copson  
International Reading Association  
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PO Box 8139  
Newark, DE 19714-8139  
(302) 731-1600  
(800) 336-READ  
E-mail: [lcopson@reading.org](mailto:lcopson@reading.org)

Examples of International Literacy Day projects undertaken by IRA councils include the following:

- Local celebrities and international students shared their favorite books (some in their native languages) with classes.
- Children of various ages were recruited to talk about their favorite books, with tape recordings played throughout the day on a local radio station.
- A local bookstore manager spoke to students about literacy on a worldwide level, then gave away books and bookmarks to commemorate the occasion.

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- Prominent local community people who have come from another country discussed their experiences and how they had grown in their worldwide cultural literacies.

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## Global Efforts of the International Reading Association

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With members in nearly 100 countries, the International Reading Association truly lives up to its slogan, "We teach the world to read." The Association works toward this goal through more than 1,250 active councils and affiliates in approximately 50 countries worldwide, as well as through a network of International Development Committees working to promote literacy in various regions of the world. In addition, the Association is involved in a series of wide-ranging projects to expand global literacy both in industrialized nations and developing countries.

### Conferences

**World Congress.** Every other year, our World Congress on Reading brings together educators from throughout the world to share the latest information on the teaching of reading.

**Affiliate Conferences.** Many of our national affiliates sponsor conferences that provide professional development opportunities for educators in their countries.

**Special Conferences.** Conferences such as the Pan-African Reading for All conference, which was hosted by the Reading Association of Nigeria, October 7-12, 2001, in Abuja, Nigeria, draw together educators from throughout the region to share ideas and information.

### Projects

**Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT).** This project has grown from 9 to 29 participating countries since its inception in 1997. An initiative of the Association and the Soros Open Society Institute, with leadership from the University of Northern Iowa and Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the project links educators from North America, Europe, and Australia with emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Based on the idea that democratic practices in schools play an important role in the transition toward more open societies, RWCT is designed to be adaptable to different settings and contexts. For more information, please visit the [RWCT website](#).

**Strengthening Professional Networks in Latin America and Africa (SPIN).** IRA supports its affiliates in Latin America and Africa as they build a professional community that can activate and sustain

<b>U.S. Policy</b>	model teacher-training programs and educational reform. With funding from the Ford Foundation, The International Development Committees (IDCs) for Africa and Latin America disseminate information about regional initiatives through Web sites, newsletters, and regional conferences. By overcoming communication barriers, they hope to establish new professional ties, locate technical and human resources for regional projects, and inspire other educators to join or start local reading associations.
<u>LAT</u>	
<u>Government Relations Report</u>	
<u>E-Newsletter</u>	
<u>Workshop</u>	<b>Reading for All—A Pan-African Voice for Literacy.</b> This strategy is being implemented in several African nations and will benefit from the professional network created by the Pan-African Reading for All conference and other efforts linked to the SPIN project (see above). Diverse partners such as the Nigerian Ministry of Education, Shell International, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Children's Book Project (Tanzania), and the Ford Foundation have joined us in supporting development of African affiliates and modeling research-based instructional methods for teacher educators and teachers. The initiative makes visible a community of civil society groups which are actively contributing to meeting the goals of Education for All.
<u>No Child Left Behind</u>	
<u>Evidence-Based Reading Workshop</u>	
<u>National Reading Panel</u>	
<u>Urban Education</u>	<b>Campaign for World Literacy.</b> This fund offers initial support to literacy projects in developing countries and assistance with membership.
<u>Standards for the English Language Arts</u>	<b>Teaching Preschool Through Grade 12 in South Korea.</b> This is a recruitment program for certified teachers whose native language is English.

**Other Projects.** Ongoing projects with UNESCO, the International Book Council, the International Board on Books for Young People, and many other groups throughout the world allow the Association to support grassroots literacy efforts and improve universal access to books and information resources.

**Literacy Prize.** The Association recognizes meritorious contributions to the promotion of literacy by sponsoring the International Reading Association Literacy Award, presented each year by UNESCO as part of the world celebration of International Literacy Day on September 8. Through their projects, recipients of the award have aided millions of people around the world in improving their literacy skills.

In addition, the Association is taking the lead on the International Literacy Network's (ILN) efforts to raise the profile of International Literacy Day in North America. The world's preeminent literacy organizations, both international and domestic in scope, are members of ILN. The group meets periodically to plan International Literacy Day and other substantive programs about literacy and human development issues.

### **Publications on Global Literacy Issues**

The International Reading Association's newspaper and journals all contain articles designed to provide information for educators everywhere, and authors for these articles come from all over the world. *Lectura y Vida*, the Association's peer-reviewed quarterly Spanish-language journal, which is edited in Buenos Aires, Argentina, focuses specifically on topics of interest to educators in Latin America. *Thinking Classroom/Peremena*, an international journal of reading, writing, and critical reflection, is available in English and Russian. Originally developed as an RWCT journal, it is now reaching a wider audience as a publication of the International Reading Association.

In addition, the Association has published several books that spotlight international issues.

*Promoting Reading in Developing Countries*, edited by Vincent Greaney. This book explores the many obstacles and challenges involved in promoting literacy in the developing world, with specific examples in Africa, South America, and Asia.

*ESOL Literacy in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by Chiou-Lan Chern, Meei-Ling Liaw, and Victor Tien-cheng Shen. This new anthology represents an array of research interests, methodologies, and practical concerns affecting literacy in the different areas of the Asia-Pacific region.

*Language Instructional Issues in Asian Classrooms*, edited by Cheah Yin Mee and Ng Seok Moi. This book offers insights into the challenges of literacy learning in Asia and the social, cultural, and linguistic factors that can constrain a teacher's instructional approach. The authors present attitudes toward the English language, strategies to cope with learning English, and teaching methods and approaches.

*Ideas Without Boundaries: International Education Reform Through Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking* by David Klooster, Jeannie Steele, and Patricia Bloem. Contributors to this book detail their experiences as participants in the RWCT project.

All of these publications can be purchased from the International Reading Association Headquarters office.

They also can be found on the Association's online bookstore at [bookstore.reading.org](http://bookstore.reading.org).

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In September 1966, the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy was held in Tehran, Iran. It was recommended that September 8, the date of the inauguration of the conference, be proclaimed International Literacy Day. On this day each year individuals, organizations, and countries throughout the world would renew their efforts to combat illiteracy and would demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began officially observing International Literacy Day in 1967.

In support of these goals, the government of Iran proposed that UNESCO should establish and award an International Literacy Prize for meritorious work in the promotion of literacy and offered to sponsor such an award. This prize, the Mohammed Reza Pahlavi Prize, was awarded from 1967 to 1978. The Soviet government and the government of Iraq sponsored additional awards for many years.

At present, four international literacy prizes are awarded annually on International Literacy Day. Prize recipients receive a cash award, a silver medal, and a diploma. Honourable Mention and Recognition categories are also awarded. The winners are selected by an international jury appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO.

# September 8... A Day for Renewing Efforts

## International Literacy Prizes:

- The **International Reading Association Literacy Award**, created in 1979 and sponsored by the International Reading Association, a nongovernmental educational organization with members in approximately 100 countries throughout the world.
- The **Noma Literacy Prize**, created in 1980 and sponsored by the late Shoichi Noma, president of Kodansha Ltd., Publishers of Japan.
- The two **King Sejong Literacy Prizes**, created in 1989 and sponsored by the government of the Republic of Korea to commemorate a king whose invention more than 500 years ago of an alphabet consisting of 22 easy to learn letters permitted his subjects to master reading and writing.

## Promoting Literacy... A Cause for Celebration

The aim of International Literacy Day is to focus attention on worldwide literacy issues and needs. It is estimated that 860 million of the world's adults do not know how to read or write (two-thirds of this number are women) and that more than 100 million children lack access to education. Progress is being made, but slowly, and the advent of new technologies means that the gap between rich and poor countries is growing wider.

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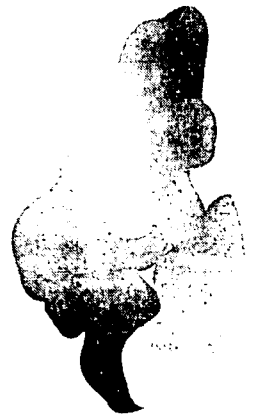
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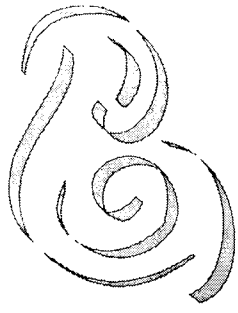
On  
**September 8**  
the nations of the world  
recognize the vital  
importance of literacy  
to society by celebrating

# International Literacy Day

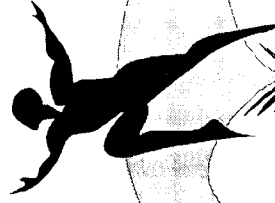


## The International Reading Association Literacy Award

- 1979 Papua-New Guinea Branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics
- 1980 Ethiopian Coordinating Committee for the National Literacy Campaign
- 1981 Department of Adult Education of the State of Bihar, India
- 1982 Directorate of Community Education (PENMAS) of Indonesia
- 1983 Department of Adult Education, Government of Kenya
- 1984 National Institute for Adult Education of Mexico
- 1985 Literacy and Adult Education Division of the Kingdom of Morocco
- 1986 National Literacy Plan of Colombia, 'Camina'
- 1987 Literacy Programme of the Autonomous Andalusian Government, Spain
- 1988 National Literacy Plan of Argentina
- 1989 Adult Education Department of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- 1990 Universidad Central Del Este (UCE), Dominican Republic
- 1991 UNESCO Co-Action Learning Center Movement, Japan
- 1992 Fouta Djallon Agricultural Rehabilitation Project of the Republic of Guinea
- 1993 Sebenta National Institute of Swaziland
- 1994 National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education of Malawi
- 1995 Community Academic Services Program (CASP), New Brunswick, Canada
- 1996 Mini-Schools Project of La Saline District, Port-au-Prince, Haiti
- 1997 Don Bosco Roga Project of the Salesian Society of Paraguay
- 1998 Directorate of Literacy and Promotion of National Languages of Chad
- 1999 Family Literacy Program of the Basic Skills Agency, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- 2000 Adult Literacy Organization of Zimbabwe
- 2001 Workbase, The National Centre for Workplace Literacy and Language, New Zealand
- 2002 Division of Adult Education (DAE), Eritrea
- 2003 Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh



# Celebrate



**INTERNATIONAL**

**LITERACY DAY**  
*September 8*

*...and Show the World*

*Your Commitment to  
Literacy*





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