

## **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.
- Three literacy prizes are awarded on International Literacy Day. They are: The International Reading Association Literacy Award, two King Sejong Prizes and two Confucius Prizes. King Sejong Prizes give special consideration to the creation, development and dissemination of mother tongue languages in developing countries, while the Confucius Prizes aim at rewarding outstanding activities in the field of literacy for rural adults and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls.
- 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.