

# WRITING AND LITERACY



Prof. Nicole  
Nau, UAM  
2015/16

First lecture  
October 8

# COURSE PROGRAM

- Introduction (today)
- History and typology of writing systems (15.+22.10.)
- **ATTENTION: NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 29** (extra reading instead)
- Written vs. spoken language (05.11.)
- Approaches to literacy (12., 19., 26.11.)
- **MID-TERM ASSESSMENT (03.12.)**
- Writing and literacy in society; practical and symbolic values; writing and religion (10.+17.12.)
- Writing, literacy, and endangered languages (07.01.)
- Acquisition of writing and literacy (14.+21.01.)
- Summary and final assessment (28.01.)

# MEANINGS OF *WRITING* GIVEN IN DICTIONARIES

(quoted from [www.wordnik.com](http://www.wordnik.com))

## 1. An act or process

- “The act of one who writes.”
- “The activity of putting something in written form.”
- “The process of representing a language with symbols or letters.”
- “The recording of words or sounds in significant characters; in the most general sense, any use of or method of using letters or other conventional symbols of uttered sounds for the visible preservation or transmission of ideas”

## 2. The result of this act in general

- “That which is written.”
- “Graphism of symbols such as letters that express some meaning.”
- “Letters or symbols that are written or imprinted on a surface to represent the sounds or words of a language.”

## 3. Written texts

- “A written work, especially a literary composition.”
- “A work of an author.”

# MEANINGS OF *LITERACY* GIVEN IN DICTIONARIES

(quoted from [www.wordnik.com](http://www.wordnik.com))

literacy = the condition or quality of being literate

„the state of being literate, knowledge of letters; ability to read and write; possession of education [...]”

=> literate

**American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language**

1. adj. Able to read and write.
2. adj. Knowledgeable or educated in a particular field or fields.
3. adj. Familiar with literature; [literary](#).
4. adj. Well-written; polished: *a literate essay*.
5. n. One who can read and write.
6. n. A well-informed, educated person.

# WRITING AS AN ACT(IVITY)

What writers write about writing...

Read the quotes on the handout and write down some notions or questions that are associated with writing.

# WRITING AS WHAT IS WRITTEN: DO THESE PICTURE SHOW WRITING?









# HOMWORK (READING)

Choose one of the options 1) OR 2), read the text(s) and answer the study questions (of course you may also read all the texts :) You can find texts and study questions on the [homepage](#).

1) Crystal, David, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, pp. 206-212 [CrystalEnc206\_212]

and:

Wicherkiewicz, Tomasz [2014] Writing. Writing systems of the world (only this first part, you don't need to read the part „Developping a written form...”), online here: <http://languagesindanger.eu/book-of-knowledge/writing/>

2) Fisher, Steven, *A History of Writing*, pp. 11-33