

# WRITING AND LITERACY



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Nau, UAM  
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Twelfth lecture  
January 07

С Новым годом! **GODT NYTÅR**

Yeni Yiliniz Kutlu Olsun

**selamat**

**¡feliz**

**tahun baru**

**año nuevo**

**KALENDIS IANUARIIS**

*Bonne année* नया साल मुबारक हो

**GLÜCKLICHES NEUES JAHR**

გილოცავთ ახალ წელს

謹賀新年 새해 복 많이 받으세요

恭賀新禧

**FELIZ ANO NOVO!**

# ACQUISITION OF LITERACY

## TODAY'S TOPICS

- Literacy worldwide
- Definitions of literacy
- Being illiterate in a literate society
- What does the acquisition of literacy involve?
- How is writing and reading taught to children?

# GLOBAL LITERACY RATES IN 2012

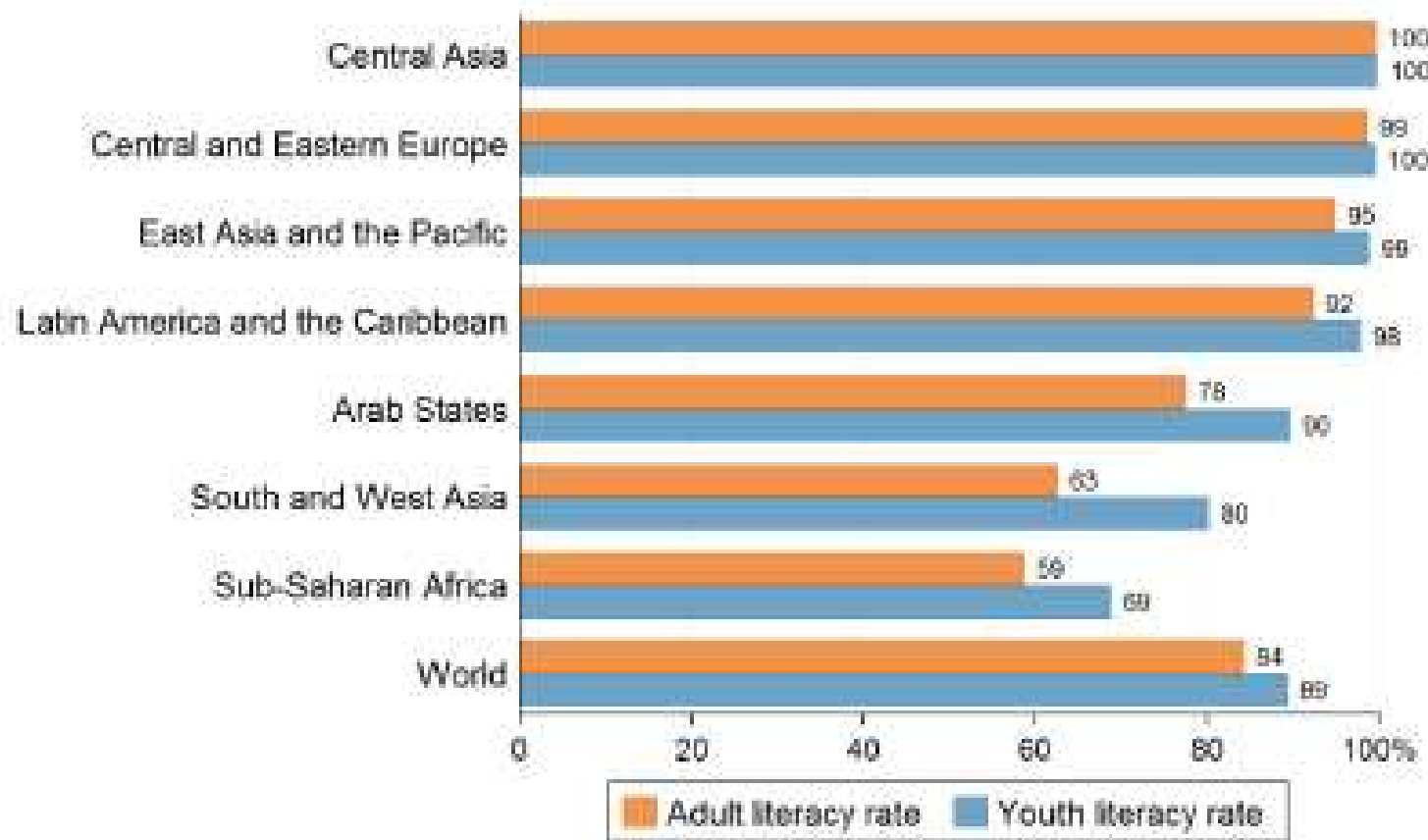
## (UIS/FS/2014/29)

Adult literacy rate, total	84.3%
Adult literacy rate, male	88.6%
Adult literacy rate, female	80.2%
Adult illiterate population, total	781 million
Adult illiterate population, female share	63.5%
Youth literacy rate, total	89.4%
Youth literacy rate, male	92.1%
Youth literacy rate, female	86.9%
Youth illiterate population, total	126 million
Youth illiterate population, female share	61.9%

Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), September 2014



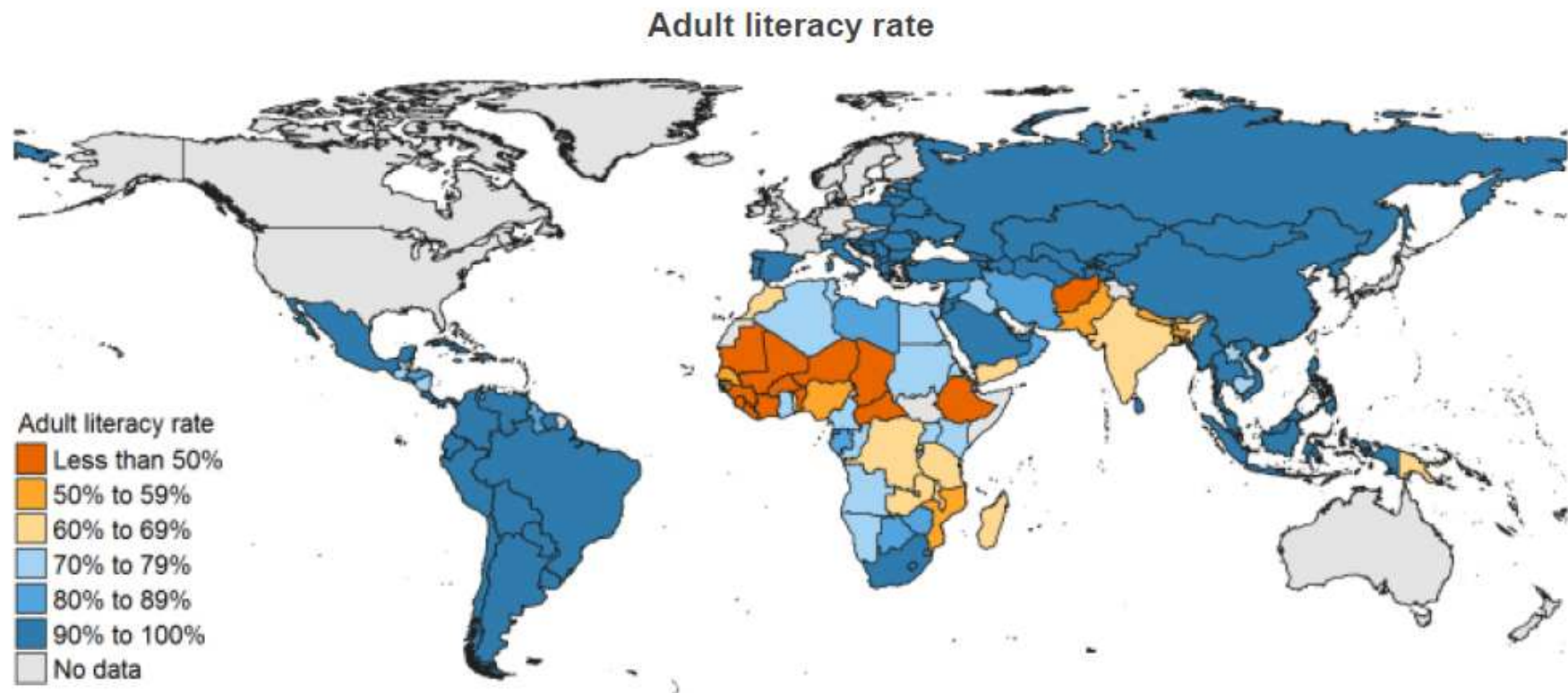
**FIGURE 2. WHAT IS THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT AND YOUTH LITERACY?**  
**LITERACY RATE BY REGION, 2012**



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), September 2014

# MAP (UIS/FS/2014/29)

**FIGURE 1. WHERE ARE LITERACY RATES LOWEST AND HIGHEST IN THE WORLD?**  
GLOBAL MAPS OF LITERACY RATES FOR ADULTS AND YOUTH, 2012



# HOW TO DEFINE LITERACY?

**“What is literacy?” is a three-word question that deceptively suggests simplicity, but instead opens up a world of complexity. (Keefe & Copeland 2011)**

- **different understanding in different cultures**
- **different understanding at different times**
- **different definitions in different contexts and for different goals**

# LITERACY DEFINED IN CHINA

**‘In urban areas: literate refers to a person who knows  
a minimum of 2,000 characters.**

**In rural areas: literate refers to a person who knows a  
minimum of 1,500 characters.’**

**(cited from *Literacy for Life* 2006).**

# UNESCO DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY

simple definition (literacy as a skill, out of context)

- "a literate person is one who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life"

## functional literacy

(literacy as skills for functioning in society)

- "A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group." (Gray 1969: 24)



## ■ UNESCO Expert meeting 2003

(functional literacy + skills for personal development)

“Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.”

(source: *The plurality of literacy...*)

- "For the United Nations, literacy is no longer defined primarily in terms of individual skills in reading and writing, but rather as a **complex, contexted, diverse set of practices**. At the same time, however, there is still a **focus** in the United Nations' approach **on print-based** rather than electronic-based literacies."  
(Liddicoat 2004)

Definition by the Department of Education in Queensland, Australia:

- "Literacy is the flexible and sustainable mastery of a **repertoire of practices with the texts** of traditional and new communications technologies via spoken language, print, and multimedia".  
(cited from Liddicoat 2004)

# LITERACY IN THE USA AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY. SURVEYS

- 1985 Young Adults Survey, definition of literacy:  
"Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."
- 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey; definition:  
"an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."

(Kirsch et al. 2002)

# THREE SCALES, EACH WITH 5 LEVELS

1. **Prose literacy** – the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction; for example,
  - finding a piece of information in a newspaper article,
  - interpreting instructions from a warranty,
  - inferring a theme from a poem, or
  - contrasting views expressed in an editorial.

**2. Document literacy** – the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in materials that include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs; for example,

- locating a particular intersection on a street map,
- using a schedule to choose the appropriate bus, or
- entering information on an application form.

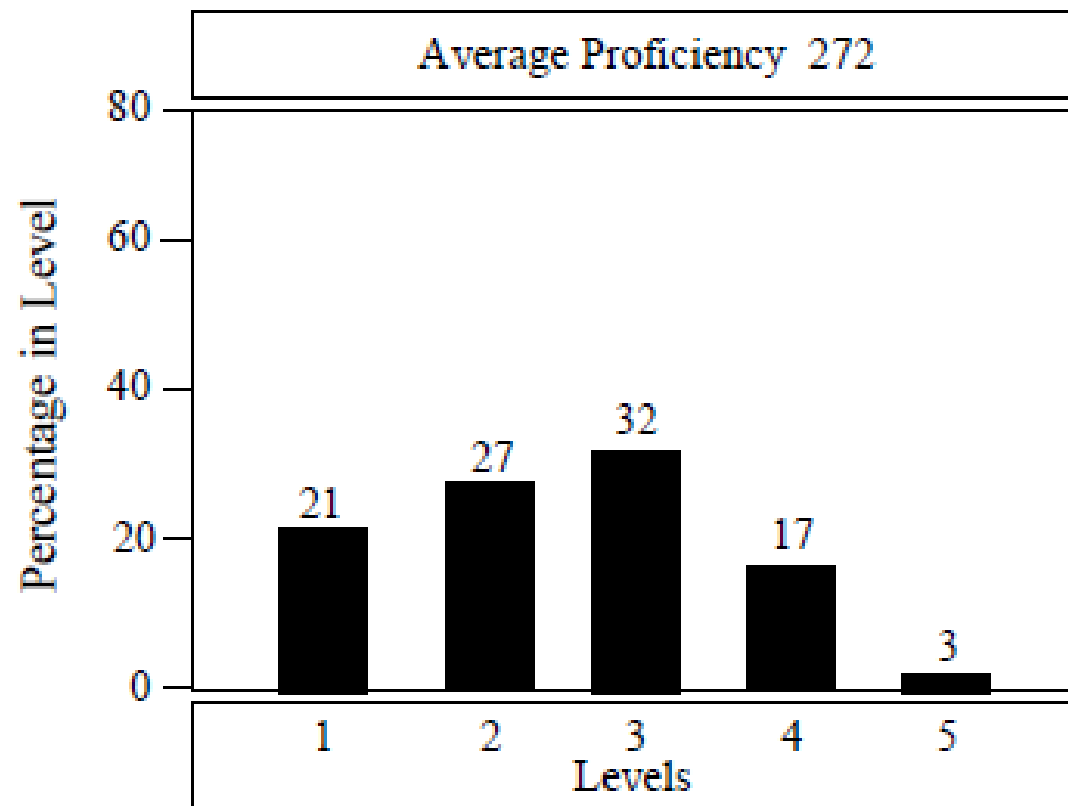
**3. Quantitative literacy** – the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials; for example,

- balancing a checkbook,
- figuring out a tip,
- completing an order form, or
- determining the amount of interest from a loan advertisement.



# OVERALL RESULTS FOR 1.

## PROSE



# EXAMPLE TASK FOR LEVEL 1

Underline the sentence that tells what Ms. Chanin ate during the swim.

## Swimmer completes Manhattan marathon

The Associated Press

NEW YORK—University of Maryland senior Stacy Chanin on Wednesday became the first person to swim three 28-mile laps around Manhattan.

Chanin, 23, of Virginia, climbed out of the East River at 96th Street at 9:30 p.m. She began the swim at noon on Tuesday.

A spokesman for the swimmer, Roy Brunett, said Chanin had kept up her strength with “banana and honey” sandwiches, hot chocolate, lots of water and granola bars.”

Chanin has twice circled Manhattan before and trained for the new feat by swimming about 28.4 miles a week. The Yonkers native has competed as a swimmer since she was 15 and hoped to persuade Olympic authorities to add a long-distance swimming event.

The Leukemia Society of America solicited pledges for each mile she swam.

In July 1983, Julie Ridge became the first person to swim around Manhattan twice. With her three laps, Chanin came up just short of Diana Nyad’s distance record, set on a Florida-to-Cuba swim.

Reduced from original copy.

## EXAMPLE TASK FOR LEVEL 2

A manufacturing company provides its customers with the following instructions for returning appliances for service:

When returning appliance for servicing, include a note telling as clearly and as specifically as possible what is wrong with the appliance.

A repair person for the company receives four appliances with the following notes attached. Circle the letter next to the note which best follows the instructions supplied by the company.

A

The clock does not run correctly on this clock radio. I tried fixing it, but I couldn't.

C

The alarm on my clock radio doesn't go off at the time I set. It rings 15-30 minutes later.

B

My clock radio is not working. It stopped working right after I used it for five days.

D

This radio is broken. Please repair and return by United Parcel Service to the address on my slip.

# AN ILLITERATE FAMILY IN THE US IN THE 1990-S (PURCELL-GATES 1997 [2001])

Jenny and Big Donny, parents

Donny and Timmy, children

- How does Jenny's world function without reading and writing? Does her daily life differ from the daily life of literate persons? If it does, how?
- Do you think her life is somehow "poorer" than that of literate Americans?  
Does she think so? In which situations does she miss literacy?



# **DONNY – UNABLE TO READ AND WRITE AFTER ONE YEAR OF SCHOOLING**

- Why didn't Donny learn to read and write in school?
- What did Donny know about reading and writing before entering school? What did he NOT know that children from literate families usually know?
- Find examples in the text of how reading and writing is taught at Donny's school (class room activities, homework). What was the effect of this teaching on Donny (what DID he learn, what didn't he learn)?
- If you were Donny's teacher, what would you do to teach him reading and writing?

# WHAT DOES LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE INVOLVE? ONE SKILL OR MANY?

Recommendation by UK expert group in 1989:

"Teachers should recognize that reading is a complex but unitary process and not a set of discrete skills which can be taught separately in turn and, ultimately, bolted together. "

(source: Parker 1996)

# HOW IS / WAS (ALPHABETIC) WRITING TAUGHT TO CHILDREN? SOME QUESTIONS

- Mother tongue or second language?
- Reading and writing: which sequence, how combined?
- One script or two? (block print, *cursive writing*)
- How important is handwriting?
- Synthetic (from letters to words) or analytic (from words to letters) approach?
- Own texts or given texts?
- Creative writing encouraged, invented spelling allowed?

## **CASE STUDY: NN, SCHOOLED IN GERMANY, FIRST GRADE 1969 AGE 6.8**

- language: German (mother tongue and national language)
- writing and reading together
- first only cursive script for writing and reading, block print only at the end of first grade
- handwriting was practiced in extra lessons in grade 1-3
- analytic approach (whole words first in reading)
- given texts
- no encouragement of creative writing

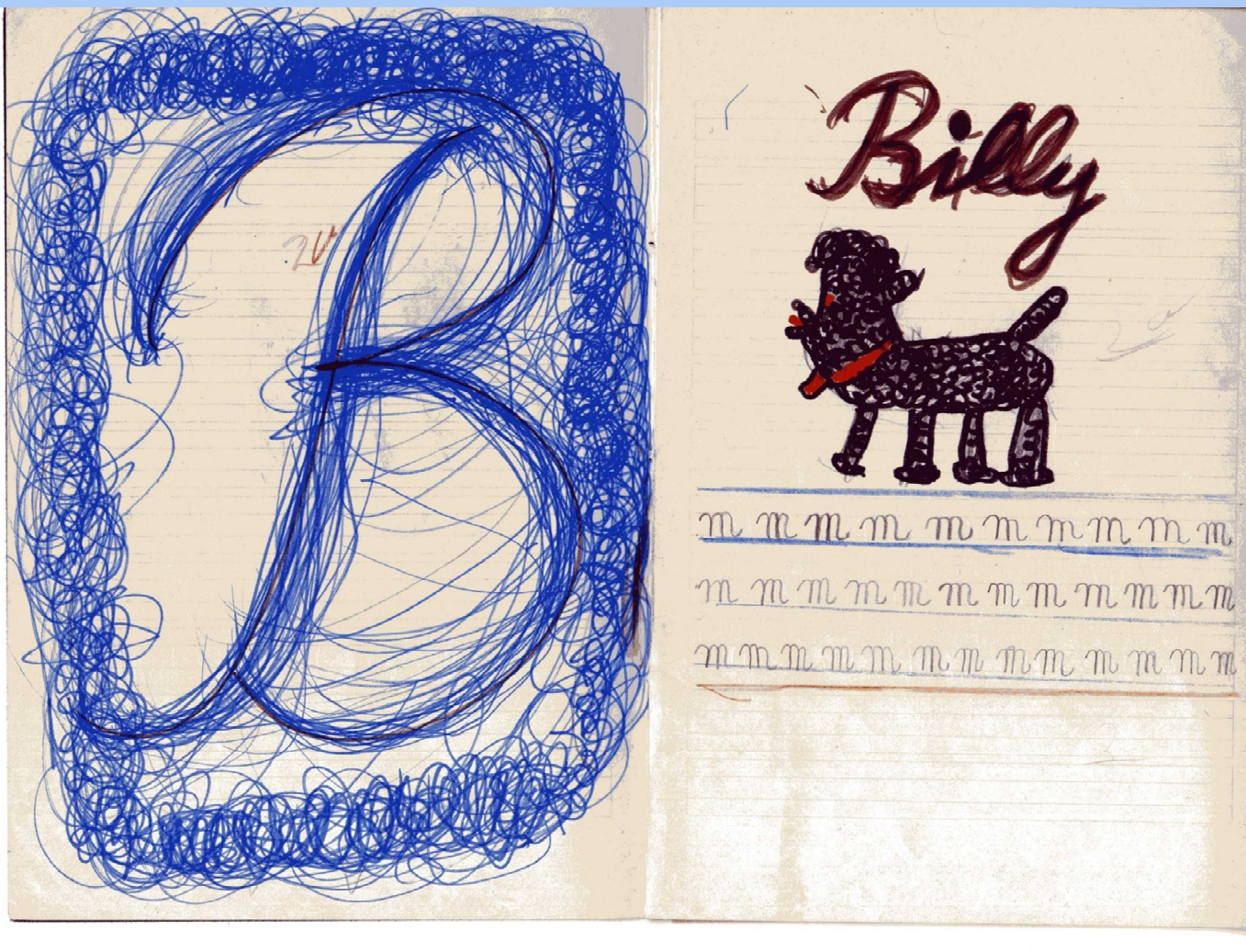
Fangt fröhlich an!

## NN'S PRIMER





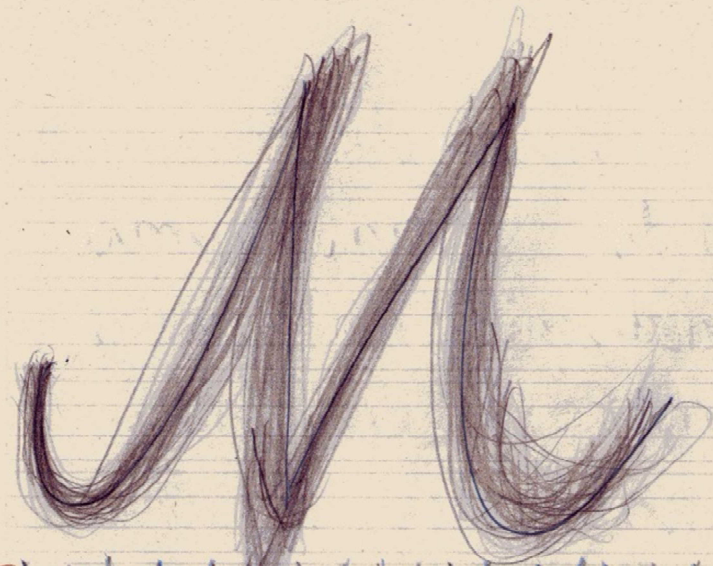
# LEARNING TO WRITE





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Eva Eva Eva Eva Eva

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und das Schaf

der gute Esel

# CURSIVE WRITING IN GERMANY: DIFFERENT SYSTEMS

Lea schreibt einen Satz.

Lateinische  
Ausgangsschrift (LA),

Lea schreibt einen Satz.

Schulaukgangsschrift  
(SAS),

Lea schreibt einen Satz.

Vereinfachte  
Ausgangsschrift (VA)

Lea schreibt einen Satz.

Grundschrift



## A children's book printed in cursive

„Guten Tag!“ sagte er.  
„Geh weg da, kleiner Mann mit dem großen Hut!“ sagte der Fleischer.  
„Die Leute haben keinen Platz und können nichts kaufen.“  
„Bitte sehr!“ sagte der kleine Mann und ging zum Stand der Gemüsefrau.  
„Guten Tag!“ sagte er.  
„Geh weg da, kleiner Mann mit dem großen Hut“, sagte die Gemüsefrau, „die Leute wollen mein Gemüse kaufen.“  
„Bitte sehr!“ sagte der kleine Mann und ging zur Äpfelfrau.  
„Guten Tag!“ sagte er.  
„Geh weg da, kleiner Mann“, sagte die Äpfelfrau.  
„Mit deinem großen Hut verdeckst du die schönen Äpfel!“



„Bitte sehr!“ sagte der kleine Mann und ging zur Blumenfrau.  
„Guten Tag!“ sagte er.  
„Guten Tag, kleiner Mann“, sagte sie.  
„Hast du einen schönen, großen Hut! Möchtest du meine Blumen anschauen?“  
„Ich möchte eine kaufen“, sagte der kleine Mann.

# LITERACY EDUCATION TODAY: VIDEOS

- Scribbling with an electronic device:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ohv1W5ccMg>
- Phonics: example of a classroom lesson  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkIC4YIs5I>
- Phonics: video for children (fast)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnLv9GgEnVQ>
- Phonics: rules (for teachers?)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDISy0xTEa4>
- Blending (video for children)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpUEG9L1ilw>
- Blending: explication by teacher  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEzfpod5w\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEzfpod5w_Q)
- New media, new methods???  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJmnPn9hz6I>

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