



National Literacy Day, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Henry Peter Brougham once observed, "Education makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave." Literacy, as the foundation of education, is essential to a truly free people.

The ability to read and comprehend the written word and to express our own ideas effectively is vital to understanding and participating in democratic government. Every American should be able to read the Constitution and other great works that have shaped our life as a Nation; each of us should also be able to convey informed opinions about issues and events that affect our families and communities.

Literacy means more than the ability to read and write, however; it is the tool that enables us to learn from the past and prepare for the future; it is the vital characteristic of a work force that has the skills our jobs require and the ability to compete in a rapidly advancing global economy; it is also the rich legacy of families that pass on the love of learning from generation to generation. Literacy is not simply a basic skill, but a key that opens the door to the realm of ideas and enables one to participate more fully in the world around us.

Tragically, however, millions of Americans suffer from illiteracy. These individuals do not have the basic skills they need to function effectively in school, in the workplace, and in other daily activities. The impact of illiteracy is evident in our prisons and juvenile facilities, in unemployment and welfare lines, as well as among school dropouts and students at risk because their families cannot support their efforts to learn. We also witness the effects of illiteracy on businesses that have difficulty finding skilled and productive workers.

America is confronting the need for greater literacy. Innovative programs have been launched not only by Federal, State, and local government, but also by hundreds of businesses and corporations, the media, religious groups, and community organizations. Hundreds of thousands of professional educators and concerned volunteers are joining together nationwide to help their neighbors learn to read.

To recognize these ongoing efforts and to encourage even greater commitment to the fight against illiteracy, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 96, has designated July 2, 1989, as "National Literacy Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 2, 1989, as National Literacy Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and volunteers to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

George Bush