

Prompt for the 2027 Achievement Awards in Writing: The Meaning of Literacy Today

Context:

The meaning of literacy has expanded over time. While it has traditionally referred to the ability to read and write, today's world asks us to do much more. We encounter messages through social media, videos, music, images, and other digital platforms. We are constantly interpreting, questioning, and responding to the information around us. Because of this, being literate now spans many dimensions: *digital literacy* to navigate online spaces, *AI literacy* to understand changing technology, *financial literacy* to make smart choices, and *emotional literacy* to understand ourselves and others.

At the same time, literacy is deeply connected to identity. The stories we read, hear, and tell shape how we understand ourselves and others. Being literate today means not only making sense of the world but also finding and using your voice within it.

Consider the following quote:

Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world.

— Paulo Freire

Writing Directions:

Reflect on the meaning of literacy in today's world. Then create a response in which you explore your ideas about literacy, identity, and voice.

In your response, you may consider one or more of the following:

- What does it mean to be literate today?
- How do the messages you encounter (in school, online, or in your community) shape your identity?
- In what ways do you use your voice to tell your story?
- What responsibilities come with being literate in a world filled with information and misinformation?
- If "reading the world" comes before reading text, what is something about today's world that you had to learn to read or understand before you could find your own voice?

Use your own experiences, observations, and connections to texts—both traditional and nontraditional—to develop your response.

Format:

You may present your ideas in any format that best communicates your message. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Personal narrative
- Argument or opinion piece
- Letter
- Spoken word poetry
- Script or multimedia composition
- Hybrid or creative response
- Analytical commentary
- Graphic narrative
- Comic strip
- Podcast script