

**At a time when political parties are being asked to outline their principles and policy, the United Kingdom Literacy Association offers its own Agenda for Action.**



*Learning to read and write involves much more than passing examinations and satisfying inspection criteria. The literacy of all children, young people and families will only improve when government policy takes a broader view of what it means to be literate in an ever-changing 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

## What does it mean to be literate in 2020?

As well as the fundamental ability to read and write, being literate also means being able to listen and speak effectively. But that is not enough. In a digital world, literacy means more than being able to read and write printed texts. It is essential that young people are able to communicate with others in the world in a variety of languages and kinds of text. They must also be able to question and challenge information through critical discrimination.



## UKLA believes that responsible government should:

- End child poverty and its effects on children's literacy development.
- Ensure that inspection of schools is collaborative and directly linked to professional development.
- Recognise the value and importance of multilingualism and the variety of languages and dialects spoken in home and community.
- Ensure that all language and literacy teaching is enquiry-based and carried out by qualified teachers.
- Draw on a wide and balanced range of research when developing educational policy.
- Acknowledge that teaching phonics is essential, but only part of learning to be a reader.
- Ensure that spoken language has equal status with reading and writing in the UK curriculum for English.

POLICY



# CURRICULUM

- Establish a UK-wide independent expert working panel to generate and lead literacy policy, teaching, curriculum and assessment, drawing on a range of kinds of evidence.
  - Fund and encourage inservice research-informed professional development working with subject associations, teaching schools and HEIs as key players.
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- Ensure that the English curriculum in England takes account of global communications media, digital literacies and multimodal communications, as well as more traditional texts, in line with the curricula of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Commit to a literacy curriculum designed to encourage enjoyment, motivation and purpose in language, reading and writing.
- Ensure that the reading curriculum reflects diversity of cultures and languages.
- Guarantee that every school will have a fully equipped up-to-date library run by qualified staff.
- Support schools in recognising and building on children's home and community language and literacy experience.



# ASSESSMENT

- Review current assessment arrangements in England to ensure accountability does not drive assessment and curriculum.
- Introduce a clear and rational approach to assessment and testing which is coherent and reliable.
- Maintain the rigour of assessment in successful teaching and learning, giving greater emphasis to formative and teacher assessments.
- Stop the introduction of the flawed baseline assessment in Reception classes in English schools.
- Abolish the inefficient and imprecise phonics check and grammar tests for 7 and 11 year olds in England.



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Visit the UKLA website for more about literacy teaching and learning  
[www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org)