



 **STARRED REVIEW**

**Blueprint for a Literate Nation: How You Can Help**

Cynthia Coletti

*Xlibris, 667 pages, (paperback) \$18.99, 9781493104697*

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This book presents an unusually detailed accounting of the author's plan for a grassroots effort to achieve full literacy in our country, openly striving to recruit allies in this noble battle.

Cynthia Coletti, an unrelenting literacy advocate and successful businesswoman, has endowed this book with her professional skills as well as the passion of a mother of two bright children who nonetheless struggled with reading at school. Her emphasis is on reading literacy as a foundation to all further education, which may sound obvious but is rarely spelled out so strongly.

The book consists of 14 chapters divided into three parts; three chapters are contributed by experts in literacy and special education. After sharing her own painful experiences as a parent, the author then shocks readers with literacy statistics, such as: "7 out of 10 U.S. students read at a basic or below-basic level"; "The U.S. ranks 24<sup>th</sup> out of 34 developed countries in reading literacy"—and more. The appendices — offering concrete steps and language for devising and implementing literacy law and reforming our reading instruction from pre-school through college — constitute two-thirds of the book (420 pages) and lay out the roadmap to regaining our nation's leading role in global education.

In addition to raising fundamental questions about the state of reading literacy, the book supplies detailed, elaborate answers. It links literacy to personal happiness and societal good, and ultimately to our economic success as a nation. Every statement is supported by meticulous references to original documents and sources.

Ironically, this strength—the thoroughness—is also its weakness. A book of this size inevitably abounds in redundancies, and readers may feel overwhelmed by the many numbers, charts, diagrams, and references. Some of the charts are very effective, while others are illegible and unexplained in the narrative.

Considering the book's value, these problems seem miniscule. Overall, this is an eye-opening, practical guide to raising a new generation of fully literate Americans and should be read by all parents, educators, business leaders, and legislators.

Also available in hardcover and ebook.