



# Illiterate America

*Jonathan Kozol*

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## **Illiterate America** Jonathan Kozol

It is startling and it is shaming: in a country that prides itself on being among the most enlightened in the world, 25 million American adults cannot read the poison warnings on a can of pesticide, a letter from their child's teacher, or the front page of a newspaper. An additional 35 million read below the level needed to function successfully in our society. The United States ranks forty-ninth among 158 member nations of the UN in literacy, and wastes over \$100 billion annually as a result. The problem is not merely an embarrassment, it is a social and economic disaster.

In *Illiterate America*, Jonathan Kozol, author of National Book Award-winning *Death at an Early Age*, addresses this national disgrace. Combining hard statistics and heartrending stories, he describes the economic and the human costs of illiteracy. Kozol analyses and condemns previous government action—and inaction—and, in a passionate call for reform, he proposes a specific program to conquer illiteracy.

One out of every three American adults cannot read this book—which is why everyone else must.

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