

104-year-old woman learns to read and write

6th December, 2021



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via Jimmie on flickr.com

A 104-year-old woman from Kerala, India has passed a state literacy test. Her name is Kuttியമ്മ and she only learned to read and write last year. Despite having just a year's tuition and being somewhat older than the average pupil,

Kuttിയമ്മ passed her tests with flying colours. She achieved a score of 89 per cent on the Kerala State Literacy Test. Such was her inspirational achievement, Kerala's education minister congratulated her. He tweeted: "With the utmost love and respect, I wish Kuttിയമ്മ...the best." He uploaded a photo of the star student in which she is grinning from ear to ear. Another person tweeted: "I salute Kuttിയമ്മ for her dedication. It will inspire others for sure."

Kerala state has India's highest literacy rate at 96.2 per cent and invests heavily in education. It has a strong focus on adult education, which Kuttിയമ്മ benefited from. Her endeavours prove that age is just a number and that we can achieve anything when we put our minds to it. Kuttിയമ്മ did not have a formal education as she did not go to school. However, her state-assigned tutor called her "a very sharp woman". He said his student was "overjoyed" after she saw her test results. A state official said: "Kuttിയമ്മ is a role model and motivation to all women in adult education". Kuttിയമ്മ said she wants to start writing letters and continue her studies to improve her skills.

Sources: indiatoday.in / thenationalnews.com / india.com

Writing

Age is just a number and not a barrier to learning. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

India / literacy / read / write / tuition / average / pupil / achievement / star / sure / invests / education / focus / endeavours / minds / tutor / state / motivation / skills

True / False

- 1) A 104-year-old woman started learning to read last month. T / F
- 2) The woman was about average age in her class. T / F
- 3) India's education minister congratulated the woman. T / F
- 4) A person on Twitter said the woman was inspirational. T / F
- 5) India's literacy rate is over 96%. T / F
- 6) The woman told reporters that age was a barrier to learning. T / F
- 7) The woman's tutor said she was a sharp woman. T / F
- 8) The woman will now stop studying and enjoy her old age. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. tuition | a. greatest |
| 2. utmost | b. intelligent |
| 3. grinning | c. emphasis |
| 4. salute | d. motivate |
| 5. inspire | e. upgrade |
| 6. focus | f. instruction |
| 7. prove | g. ecstatic |
| 8. sharp | h. honour |
| 9. overjoyed | i. demonstrate |
| 10. improve | j. smiling |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How do you prepare for English writing tests?
- c) What problems do you have with writing in English?
- d) How good is your country's education system?
- e) Can we do anything if we put our minds to it?
- f) What advice do you have to improve your writing skills?
- g) Do you like writing letters?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Kuttിയമ്മ?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Despite having just a | a. rate |
| 2. passed her tests with flying | b. sure |
| 3. Such was her inspirational | c. official |
| 4. she is grinning from | d. colours |
| 5. It will inspire others for | e. year's tuition |
| 6. Kerala state has India's highest literacy | f. to it |
| 7. It has a strong focus | g. education |
| 8. when we put our minds | h. ear to ear |
| 9. have a formal | i. on adult education |
| 10. A state | j. achievement |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of reading and writing tests?
- How do you prepare for English reading tests?
- What problems do you have with reading English?
- How important is literacy?
- How inspirational do you think Kuttiyamma is?
- What advice do you have to improve your reading skills?
- What tests are you good at taking?
- When was the last time you grinned from ear to ear?

Spelling

- passed a state clayiret test
- having just a year's uioittn
- Such was her rtiionapsnila achievement
- nriniggn from ear to ear
- I salute Kuttiyamma for her natiidodce
- It will nisipre others for sure
- invests hivayle in education
- Her ounasverde prove that
- have a fmloar education
- her state-gassnide tutor
- ntoiovtima to all women
- irmvpoe her skills

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. a	3. j	4. h	5. d
6. c	7. i	8. b	9. g	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Literacy

You think literacy skills are most useful. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their skills aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): numeracy, art or music.

Role B – Numeracy

You think numeracy skills are most useful. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their skills aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): literacy, art or music.

Role C – Art

You think artistic skills are most useful. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their skills aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): numeracy, literacy or music.

Role D – Music

You think musical skills are most useful. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their skills aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): numeracy, art or literacy.

Speaking – Skills

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| • literacy | • survival |
| • numeracy | • business |
| • coding | • music |
| • first aid | • art |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.