

Types of First Language (L1) Literacy and Effects on Second Language (L2) Literacy Learning

L1 Literacy	Explanation	Special Considerations
<i>Preliterate</i>	L1 has no written form (e.g., many American indigenous, African, Australian, and Pacific languages).	Learners need exposure to the purposes and uses of literacy.
<i>Nonliterate</i>	Learners have no access to literacy instruction.	Learners may feel stigmatized.
<i>Semiliterate</i>	Learners have limited access to literacy instruction.	Learners may have had past negative experiences with literacy learning.
<i>Nonalphabet literate</i>	Learners are fully literate in a language written in a non-alphabetic script (e.g., Chinese).	Learners need instruction in reading an alphabetic script and in the sound-syllable correspondences in English.
<i>Non-Roman alphabet literate</i>	Learners are literate in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet (e.g., Arabic, Greek, Korean, Russian, and Thai).	Learners need instruction in the Roman alphabet in order to transfer their L1 literacy skills to English. Some, such as readers of Arabic, will need to learn to read from left to right.
<i>Roman alphabet literate</i>	Learners are fully literate in a language written in a Roman alphabet script (e.g., French, German, and Spanish). They read from left to right and recognize letter shapes and fonts.	Learners need instruction in the specific letter-to-sound and sound-syllable correspondences of English.