



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

The Read Hour campaign of the Children and Youth Foundation challenges us once again to spend an hour reading books on the international UN Literacy Day on 8 September.

The world would be quite colourless without the stories and knowledge provided by books. Reading expands our world and allows us to open our minds to new adventures. In our minds, we can go back into the past or sail into the future. When making these armchair trips, we learn to understand other cultures and to put ourselves in other people's shoes. There is a growing demand for open-mindedness and empathy in the world today. Books also give us an access to imaginary worlds, which enhances creativity.

Books are a source of unlimited freedom and happiness. They help us see things in a new light and challenge prevailing doctrines. When leafing through a book, we can look for new ideas that leave us with new food for thought. There is as much inspiration and information available as you are willing to look for. I encourage all of you to grab a book and dive into the realms of information and storytelling.

I wish you all a joyful reading time!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sauli Niinistö".

Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic of Finland
Patron of the Read Hour 2022 literacy campaign