

# Functional illiteracy and illiterate society comprehension



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Comprehension

1. Illiteracy is a danger to the democratic society because the number of eligible voters that are illiterate is by far enough to sway a vote. This could lead to the electing a president that is not as politically fit as another candidate.
2. Kozol states that, “ The answers to these questions represent a reasonable test of our belief in the democracy to which we have been asked in a public school to swear allegiance.” People pledge liberty and justice for all just about every day, when such a high number of illiterates are not brought to justice due to their illiteracy.
3. When Kozol says that being illiterate leads to circumscribed existence, he means that being illiterate traps you in a place where you cannot do things other people can do because you do not have the literacy necessary.
4. If an illiterate person ever gets lost and is alone, they have no way of seeking help. Their illiteracy would deny them the ability to read their location and tell others where they are, perhaps a cop. In any legal problem or courtroom complication arises, not being able to read documents and explain their case to a cop or a judge poses as a setback.
5. Throughout the excerpt Kozol blames the government for the fact that nothing is being done to fix the detrimental issue of the high illiteracy rate in the world power of the United States. Toward the end of the argument he writes, “ This is the nation that we live in. This is a society that most of us did

not create but which our President and the other leaders have been willing to sustain by virtue of malign neglect.”

Purpose and Audience:

1. Kozol States his thesis in the middle of his essay, Choice, in almost all its facets, is diminished in the life of an illiterate adult.
2. He tries to put the reader in the shoes of the illiterates and have the audience see how illiterate struggle in day to day life. He uses many political references, so politicians would probably be a good audience.
3. I would say that Kozol’s purpose for this essay is to inform, persuade, and to express emotions. Yes, he probably does have additional, more specific purposes as well.

Style and Structure:

1. The references to Socrates and James Madison are illusions. These examples show how much more emphasis was placed on being intelligent than is now, and that may be the reason that so many are illiterate.
2. He uses this to give a personal relationship to what he continues to talk about throughout his essay. He uses this as his first example because it is the most personal to him.
3. I think that these short examples are in some instances more effective than the long ones. Some examples do not need to be drawn out because when this happens they sometimes lose strength.

4. Kozol's use of statistics is very and highly effective. The statistics support his examples of the personal cost of illiteracy. Numbers don't lie.

#### Vocabulary Projects

1. prescient2. farce3. mendacious4. countenance5. Cyrillic6. sedative7.  
admonitions8. incognizant9. jargon10. numerate11. opprobrium12.  
concession13. firmament14. capitulation