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Autore	Lyons Martyn
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Sommario/riassunto	This Palgrave Pivot examines the history of literacy with illiterate and semi-literate people in mind, and questions the clear division between literacy and illiteracy which has often been assumed by social and economic historians. Instead, it turns the spotlight on all those in-between, the millions who had some literacy skills, but for whom reading and writing posed difficulties. Its main focus is on those we have often labelled 'illiterates', rather than those who enjoyed full competence in reading and writing in modern society. In offering a historical perspective on the 'problem' of illiteracy in the modern world, it also questions some enduring myths surrounding the phenomenon.

This book therefore has a revisionist objective: it intends to challenge conventional wisdom about illiteracy. Martyn Lyons is Professor Emeritus in History at the University of New South Wales, Australia.

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