CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES
for Ages 5–18

Literacy is the foundation of all learning.

On INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY, people throughout the world renew their efforts to make literacy education accessible to all.

Join @IRAToday and @CloudyMovie for the #ILD13 Twitter chat
September 9, 2013 | 8 PM EST
About International Literacy Day

In 1965, UNESCO declared September 8 International Literacy Day (ILD) in an effort to focus attention on worldwide literacy needs. More than 780 million of the world’s adults (nearly two-thirds of whom are women) do not know how to read or write, and between 94 and 115 million children lack access to education.

This year, the International Reading Association, in partnership with Sony Pictures and the release of Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2, has selected the theme “Invent Your Future” to encourage students to focus on literacy as a way of achieving their dreams. To increase participation from schools and libraries, we will observe International Literacy Day on Monday, September 9, 2013, and continue the celebration throughout the month of September. We encourage educators to celebrate ILD and share the message that strong literacy skills pave the pathway to success—not only in the classroom but also the workplace.

Let us know how you celebrate. Share pictures and videos on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (using our official hashtag #ILD13), or send them to ILD@reading.org.
Suggested Activities for Any Age

Get Tweeting

Participate in the IRA/Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2 Twitter chat on Monday, September 9, at 8 PM EST. Use #ILD13 to join the conversation.

Organize a Celebrity Read-Aloud

Bring some star power to your school or classroom celebration by inviting a local celebrity—your town’s mayor, a fireman, or even a meteorologist—to read the book Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. Then post photos and videos from the read aloud using the official hashtag #ILD13.

Plan a Foodimals Festival

In Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2, Flint Lockwood discovers that his invention, a machine that turns water into food, is still operating. Only now it’s creating food-animal hybrids like tacodiles, shrimpanzees, hippotatomuses, and cheespiders. Ask your students to create their own foodimals by combining their favorite foods and animals. Have them build 3D models of their foodimals (they could even use real food!) and, following the steps in the Lights! Camera! Animals! teaching tip, use Windows Movie Maker to create a “documentary” about them.

Design Posters to Raise Awareness

Have students create inspirational posters about literacy and its link to future success to hang around the school or in the community. Bonus points if these posters reflect the “Invent Your Future” theme!

Compare Careers Worldwide

Have students research various careers, including opportunities for students in other parts of the world. What literacy skills are needed for each of these careers? Think about having students report their findings in a graphic blog, such as the kind you can create using Glogster.

Talk Up Encouragement

Talk to kids and teens about confiding in their parents and friends about their future goals. Remind them to be supportive of their friends’ dreams as well. We all need encouragement along the way!
Suggested Activities for Ages 5–9

Read and Dream

Choose a book from the Think Like an Inventor booklist from ReadingRockets.org, or choose an inspirational book on your own, and read it aloud to students. After reading, invite kids to think about what they would like to invent or be when they grow up.

Careers from A to Z

While practicing phonemic awareness, have students brainstorm careers that start with each letter of the alphabet using the online Alphabet Organizer tool. From astronauts to zoologists, students can use the interactive tool to think about different career options they might pursue. Print out a career alphabet book for students to read throughout the year.

Inventing a Better Future for Mankind

In Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2, Flint Lockwood’s genius is finally being recognized as his idol Chester V invites him to join The Live Corp Company, where the best and brightest inventors in the world create technologies for the betterment of mankind. Ask your students to invent a machine that will help mankind. Then, using the Can You Convince Me? lesson plan, have each student craft a convincing argument as to why their invention is the most useful.

Letter to My Future Self

Invite students to write a letter to themselves using the online Letter Generator tool, telling their grown-up counterparts about what they wish for their future. This can include not only career-related dreams but also their hopes for life (e.g., I hope you have a house on the beach and a kid just like me!).

Host a Career Day

Meeting a professional person can give kids a better sense of what a job actually entails. Reach out to caregivers and community members to arrange visits to your classroom. Encourage show and tell; for example, if you invite a musician to your class, ask him or her to bring an instrument and play a song. If organizing an in-person event seems too unwieldy, have students view job videos online to learn more about different career options.
Suggested Activities for Ages 10–14

Exploring Your Interests
What students are interested in now will often influence which careers they might pursue in the future. Ask students to follow the seven steps on the Exploring Your Interests page. Then, have them match those interests to potential careers. Lead a class discussion on what it will take for students to achieve their career goals.

Virtual Job Fair
It’s one thing to hear someone talk about their job; it’s another to see them in action! Line up parents or community leaders who are willing to Skype with your class from their workplace, giving a brief look at what happens during the day. After your visit, have students create a Trading Card that allows them to reflect on what they learned about the person, the workplace, or some term that is specific to that career.

Our Community, Our Jobs
Follow the steps outlined in this Building Classroom Community teaching tip and have your students create a classroom township—complete with neighborhoods, businesses, and budgets. Let them elect the town mayor and apply for the jobs of their choice, such as business owner, librarian, or law enforcer.

Exploring and Blogging About Careers
What does it take to be an animal trainer, a park ranger, or a crane operator? In the lesson plan Exploring Careers Using the Internet, students learn about these careers and others as they research a wide variety of occupations the world has to offer. After researching, they write occupational summaries, which get published and shared on a class blog.

Persuasive Podcasting
Developing a persuasive argument in writing or speaking is a critical skill that students learn in middle school and will use regularly in the workplace. Modify the Creating a Persuasive Podcast lesson by asking students to research careers that interest them and then create a podcast that explains why. For example, can a student justify why becoming a professional basketball player is the best career for her? Tune in to her podcast to hear the argument!
Suggested Activities for Ages 15+

Overcoming Obstacles
Listen to the Text Messages episode Life Stories, and introduce the titles to your students as options to find connections to their own lives. Encourage students to talk about obstacles they’ve had in their lives and how they’ve persevered.

What’s My Strength?
Sometimes we don’t realize the talents and strengths we possess. Have students complete a personality quiz, like the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, to gain awareness of what positive and negative attributes they have. Then, use the results to fuel discussions about how their strengths translate into workplace skills.

Market Myself
Today’s high school students must market their experiences, skills, achievements, and accolades to set them apart from others when applying to college or for a job. Use the Resumes and Cover Letters for High School Students lesson to help your students build effective resumes and cover letters with the interactive Resume Generator and Letter Generator tools.

Prepping for an Interview
Being interviewed for a job or for college can be an intimidating experience. Have teens practice interviews using the Possible Interview Questions sheet. Share the Top 50 Job Interview Questions, and have students pair up to interview one another. The practice will bolster their confidence.

Map Out My Future
One way to inspire students is to show them how they can visualize the steps to reaching their goal in manageable pieces. Encourage students to use the interactive Timeline tool to map out each steppingstone on the way to reaching their ultimate dream.
About the International Reading Association

The International Reading Association is a nonprofit, global network of individuals and institutions committed to worldwide literacy. More than 53,000 members strong, IRA supports literacy professionals through a wide range of resources, advocacy efforts, volunteerism, and professional development activities.

To learn more about IRA, visit www.reading.org.