

A 104-Year-Old Woman Learns How to Read and Write

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. flying colors /'flīɪŋ 'kælər/ with an overwhelming victory, triumph, or success
Example: He passed the test with flying colors.
2. salute /sə'loo̯t/ a gesture of respect, homage, or polite recognition or acknowledgment, especially one made to or by a person when arriving or departing.
Example: The officers gave the general a salute.
3. dedication /,dedə'kāSH(ə)n/ the quality of being dedicated or committed to a task or purpose.
Example: The president thanked the staff for their dedication and enthusiasm.
4. endeavor /ən'devər/ an attempt to achieve a goal
Example: His endeavors were unsuccessful.
5. put our minds /poot 'ou(ə)r,ər mīnd/ to give one's attention to (something) and try very hard to do it
Example: We can solve this problem if we put our minds to it.



A 104-year-old woman from Kerala, India has passed a nation's education test. Her name is Kuttiamma and she only learned to read and write a year ago. Despite having just a year's learning and being somewhat older than the average student, Kuttiamma passed her tests with **flying colors**. Such was her inspirational achievement, Kerala's education minister congratulated her.

He tweeted: "With the greatest love and respect, I wish Kuttiamma...the best." He uploaded a photo of the star student in which she is smiling from ear to ear. Another person tweeted: "I **salute** Kuttiamma for her **dedication**. It will inspire others for sure."

Kerala state has India's highest literacy rate at 96.2 percent and spends a lot of money to improve education. It has a strong focus on adult education, which Kuttiamma benefited

from. Her **endeavors** prove that age is just a number and that we can achieve anything when we **put our minds** to it.

Kuttiyamma did not have a formal education as she did not go to school. However, her state-assigned tutor called her "a very sharp woman". He said his student was "overjoyed" after she saw her test results. A state official said: "Kuttiyamma is a role model and motivation to all women in adult education". Kuttiyamma said she wants to start writing letters and continue her studies to improve her skills.

DISCUSSION

1. What problems do you have with reading or writing in English?
2. How important is literacy?
3. How inspirational do you think Kuttiyamma is?
4. When was the last time you smiled from ear to ear?
5. How good is your country's education system?
6. Can we do anything if we put our minds to it?