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Literacy in the ancient world

Many people point to Augustine's anecdote in *Confessions* to show that ancient people could not read silently. But in Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*, Alexander's private physician does exactly that.

In Robert Alter's commentary on the Pentateuch, in a discussion about the Law, he points out Gideon meets a boy in Judges 8 who not only knows the names of the leaders of Succoth, but is able to write out all their names. [#literacy](#)

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