



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PLANET WORD LAUNCHES “EYES ON READING,” A FREE DISCUSSION SERIES
ILLUMINATING RESEARCH, PERSPECTIVES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE LITERACY
CRISIS IN AMERICA**

Washington, D.C. (May 9, 2023)—[Planet Word](#) announces “**Eyes on Reading**,” an in-depth discussion series dedicated to illuminating the challenges and potential solutions to [the literacy crisis in America](#). With free in-person and virtual events throughout May, the series delves into the research around literacy acquisition, and highlights the personal stories and high stakes involved for those involved in, and affected by, this pressing issue.

Each “Eyes on Reading” event provides a unique perspective on [the science of reading](#), currently a trending topic in education that draws on a vast body of research and evidence-based best practices. A scientifically informed approach to reading instruction is considered a means to address the alarming issue of declining literacy rates and growing concerns that children are not developing strong reading skills.

Events include a [film screening](#) of *The Right to Read* by filmmaker Jenny MacKenzie and executive producer LeVar Burton; a [virtual workshop](#) with author and advocate Maya Smart, author of *Reading for Our Lives: A Literacy Action Plan from Birth to Six*; and a [conversation](#) with Emily Hanford, creator of the podcast *Sold a Story*.

“Reading is not just a skill, it’s a fundamental human right that opens doors and builds foundations for a lifetime of learning. If you are reading this, you are one of the 46% of Americans who can read above a sixth-grade level, but imagine the millions of Americans who struggle to access this basic right. Literacy is an issue that impacts us all,” argues Ann Friedman, founder and CEO of Planet Word. “With ‘Eyes on Reading,’ Planet Word is creating a forum for those who believe that ensuring all children become skilled readers is critical to the health of our democracy.”

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Planet Word Presents: Eyes on Reading

All events are free and open to the public, but advanced registration is required. Visit www.planetwordmuseum.org/events to register.

Film Screening: *The Right to Read*

Thursday, May 11, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

FREE | Friedman Family Auditorium at Planet Word

Join Planet Word for a screening of *The Right to Read*, a documentary that shares the stories of an activist, a teacher, and two families fighting for the civil right to literacy. Following the film, share your thoughts, reactions, and questions during a light reception.

How to Give Your Child a Smart Start with Maya Smart

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

FREE | Online

Author and advocate Maya Smart hosts a virtual workshop that outlines research-based strategies for fostering literacy in infants and early elementary years. Smart, author of *Reading for Our Lives*, describes how reading unfolds during the early years of development and how caregivers can nurture it at each stage.

A Conversation with Emily Hanford, Creator of *Sold a Story*

Tuesday, May 30, 2023 | 6:30 p.m.

FREE | Friedman Family Auditorium at Planet Word

Emily Hanford, Senior Education Correspondent for American Public Media, visits Planet Word to share her journey in uncovering the root causes of why many children struggle to read.

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