

# During the time of Epicurus, who could read well enough to study philosophy?

Post by “Pacatus” of July 9, 2026 at 10:50 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

That is why it was not the reader who was the addresser of the text, but the listener — he was listening to the text which was read to him

And there were learned scribes (often slaves) to whom letters and texts could be dictated, to be read aloud to recipients – serving a function akin to professional secretaries today, which you describe and which likely fit into the “highly skilled” slaves mentioned by [Kalosyni](#).

For example, we have no writing attributed to the Stoic Epictetus; it was Arrian who wrote down the teachings that are incorporated in the Enchiridion and the Discourses. (Though Epictetus, before being freed, seems likely also have fit the category of a highly skilled – and literate – slave.

Also, the word “literate” is a relative term. I have no literacy in Greek, for example; I once was literate in differential calculus, but am no longer (have forgotten it all over years of disuse; I may be moderately literate in Epicurean philosophy, but far less literate than many on here (I wouldn't refer to myself as a philosopher).