Would Steiner Support *The Roadmap to Literacy* Curriculum?

Jennifer Militzer-Kopperl

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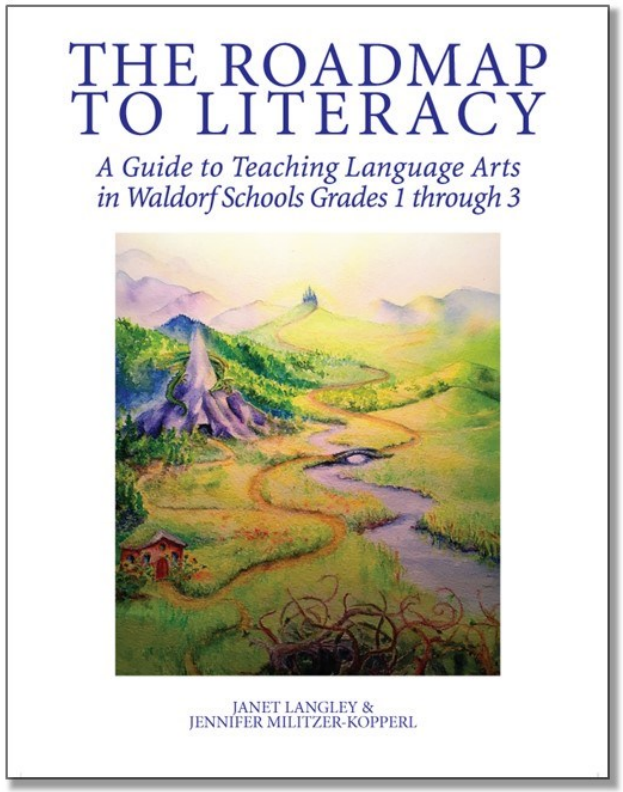
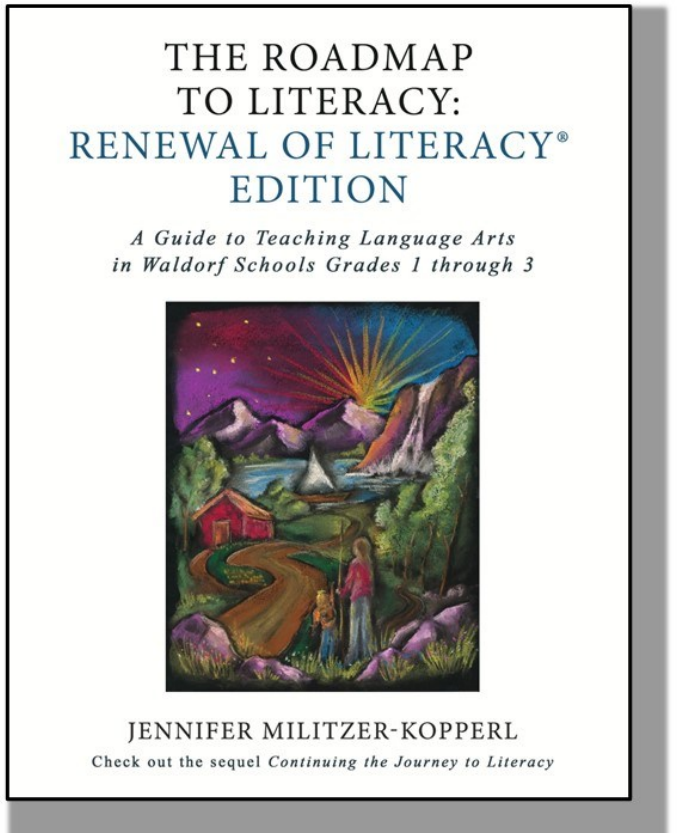
Take this quiz to find out.





Question 1:

In Steiner's schedule, which block receives the most weeks per school year? How many weeks?

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Answer: Language Arts Blocks

14 weeks in classes 1-3; 12 weeks in classes 4-8

Sources: Stockmeyer, Karl. 2001. *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Waldorf Schools.* Translated by Roland Everett-Zade. East Sussex: Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications. (pg. 17)

Question 2:

What is the primary focus of the language arts blocks in grades 1-3?

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Answer: Teaching literacy skills: writing, reading, grammar, handwriting, spelling, etc.

- Skills require explicit instruction and follow-up practice--most students are not going to teach themselves.
- Literacy skills are a prerequisite for the subject blocks in classes 4-8.
- It is likely that this is why Steiner scheduled more time in the schedule for language arts in the early classes—so students would get a solid foundation in literacy skills before they started studying subjects.

Question 3:

Would Steiner say that changes need to be made when the Steiner curriculum is brought into a different language/culture?

Question 3: Would Steiner say that changes need to be made to his curriculum when it is brought into a different language/culture?

- Answer: Yes. Steiner says: “If, for instance, some sort of Waldorf school could be opened in England, this would mark a significant step forward. Naturally, such a school would have to be adapted to the conditions and culture of that country.”

- Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 2003. *Soul Economy: Body, Soul, and Spirit in Waldorf Education*; *Lectures Presented in Dornach, Switzerland December 23, 1921–January 5, 1922*. Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 297)

Question 4:

Which Reading Philosophy Would Steiner Espouse: Whole Language or Phonics?

Question 4: Which Reading Philosophy Would Steiner Espouse: Whole Language or Phonics?

- Answer: Steiner says both approaches have merit, as does the spelling method. He says:

  > The most damaging effects . . . Are caused by one-sided illusions, by fixed ideas about how certain things should be taught. For example . . .The new phonetic method of teaching reading . . superseded the old method of making words by adding single letters—a method that was again replaced by the whole-word method . . The ideas that underlie all three methods are good—there is no denying that each has its merits. It is bad, however, when these things become fads. . . .
  >
  > . . . . With the whole-word method one gains only the physical aspect. With the phonetic method one approaches the soul realm. And . . . With the spelling method one actually enters the realm of the soul.

- Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1996. *The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice.* Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (First paragraph: pp. 78-79--order of last two sentences reversed; second paragraph pg. 83)

Question 5:

How many hours of prep time does Steiner ask teachers to do for every 30 minutes of class time?

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Answer: 2-3 hours of *concentrated* preparation for each half hour of teaching. Steiner says, “And [teachers] must be willing to do this if they want to avoid harming their students.”

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 2003. *Soul Economy: Body, Soul, and Spirit in Waldorf Education*; *Lectures Presented in Dornach, Switzerland December 23, 1921–January 5, 1922*. Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (pp. 118-119)

Question 6:

When does Steiner recommend teachers start teaching writing and reading skills?

Question 6: When does Steiner recommend teachers start teaching writing and reading skills?

Answer:

- At the change of teeth.
- During the seventh year.

- Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1996. *The Education of the Child and Early Lectures on Education.* Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 54)

Question 7:

What *age* is the seventh year?

Question 7: What *age* is the seventh year?

Answer: Age 6. Translator Katherine E. Creeger explains the difference between years and ages:

> The German translates literally as “in their eighth or ninth year” and is sometimes mistranslated in English as “eight or nine years old”; thus references to beginning school in “the seventh year” can be taken to mean that “children shouldn’t go to school until they are seven.” What Steiner said, however, was “in the seventh year of their life—that is, “six-going-on-seven.”

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1997. *Three Lectures on the Curriculum September 6, 1919.* Lectures on the curriculum translated by Katherine E. Creeger. Hudson New York: Anthroposophic Press. Found in *Discussions with Teachers: Fifteen Discussions with the Teachers of the Stuttgart Waldorf School August 21–September 6, 1919. (pg. 186)*

Question 8:

According to Steiner, when should Steiner School students be caught up with public school students?

Question 8: According to Steiner, when should Steiner School students be caught up with public school students?

Answer: Students should be caught up by the end of class 3. (See the answer to question 11 for Steiner's indication.)

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1996. *The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice.* Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 147)

Question 9:

Beginning at age six is a compromise. Would Steiner advocate teaching reading later?

Question 9: Beginning at age six is a compromise. Would Steiner advocate teaching reading later?

Answer: No. Steiner was satisfied that students in the Waldorf School at Stuttgart learn to read at age 8 or 9. He says so twice. The one time Steiner says the eleventh or twelfth year is best (i.e., age 10 or 11), he then states the following: “Naturally one will not be able to proceed as one really should today because the children have to pass from your Independent School into public life.”

Sources: Steiner, Rudolf. 1998. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner Volume 2: 1922–1924.* Translated by Robert Lathe and Nancy Parsons Whittaker. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press. (pp. 314 and 316)

Steiner, Rudolf. 1982. *The Kingdom of Childhood: Seven Lectures and Answers to Questions Given in Torquay, 12th–20th August 1924.* Translated by Helen Fox. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 44)

Question 10:

In Steiner's opinion, which is more important: helping students fit into modern life or educating the children as they ought to be taught?

Question 10: In Steiner's opinion, which is more important: helping students fit into modern life or educating the children as they ought to be taught?

Answer: Modern life. Steiner says:

> Sectarianism to any degree or fanatical zeal must never be allowed to creep into our educational endeavors, only to find at the end of the road that our students do not fit into life as it is; for life in the world does not notice one's educational ideals. Life is governed by what arises from the prevailing conditions themselves, which are expressed as regulations concerning education, as school curriculum, and as other related matters, which correspond to current ways of thinking. And so there is always a danger that we will educate children in a way that, through correct in itself, could alienate them from life in the world—whether one considers this right or wrong. It must always be remembered that one must not steer fanatically toward one's chosen educational aims without considering whether or not one might be alienating one's students from surrounding life.

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1996. *The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice.* Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 146)

Question 11:

In Steiner's opinion, is it good or bad to compromise with educational regulatory boards (e.g., AWSNA, OFSTED, individual state standards)?

Question 11: In Steiner's opinion, is it good or bad to compromise with educational regulatory boards (e.g., OFSTED)?

Answer: It is good to compromise. Steiner says:

> During the first three years the students in our school are to be educated, stage by stage and wherever possible, according to what is considered relevant to their inner needs. At the same time, the standards generally achieved in other schools are to be respected to the extent that, after completion of the first three years, the students of the Waldorf school should be able to fulfill the necessary requirements for entering corresponding classes in other schools, if desired. Such an offer, for our teachers, amounted to an "ingratiating compromise"—forgive this term, I cannot express it otherwise. A realistic mind has to take such a course, for discretion is essential in everything one does. A fanatic would have responded differently. Naturally, many difficulties have to be ironed out when such a policy is chosen, and many of our teachers would find it preferable to steer a straight course toward our aims and ideals. Lengthy and minutely detailed discussions occurred before a passage was found through these two conflicting approaches.

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1996. *The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice.* Translated by Roland Everett. Anthroposophic Press. (pg. 147)

Question 12:

What are Steiner's three stated goals for students at the end of class one?

Question 12: What are Steiner's three stated goals for students at the end of class one?

Answer: Steiner's three stated goals for class 1:

1. Students can write down simple dictations.
2. Students can compose things themselves.
3. Students can read what they write down.

Source: Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1997. *Three Lectures on the Curriculum September 6, 1919.* Lectures on the curriculum translated by Katherine E. Creeger. Hudson New York: Anthroposophic Press. Found in *Discussions with Teachers: Fifteen Discussions with the Teachers of the Stuttgart Waldorf School August 21–September 6, 1919.* (pg. 184)

Question 13:

Does Steiner support assessment of skills?

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Answer: Yes, Steiner supports assessment of skills.

While Steiner opposes final exams, he supports assessments in language arts to determine what students can do.

When discussing the teaching of foreign languages (i.e., English and French), Steiner says, “You need to create your tests positively and ask each child what he or she knows in order [to] find out the child’s capabilities.”

If teachers should assess students’ foreign language skills, how much more should they assess skills in the mother tongue?

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1997 *Discussions with Teachers* (25-26).

Source: Steiner, Rudolf. 1998. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner Volume 2* (625).

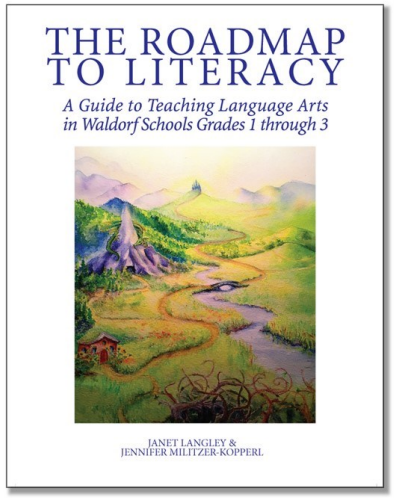
Conclusion: *The Roadmap to Literacy* is aligned with Steiner's indications.

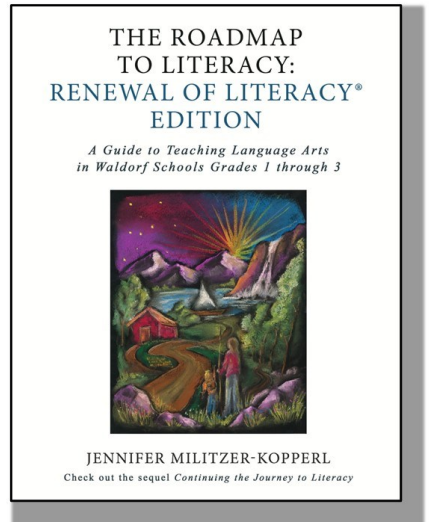
According to Steiner:

- Students must be able to participate in the modern world.
- Literacy skills get the most weeks of instruction.
- Reading instruction in phonics is fine—all educational approaches have merit.
- Students are to be caught up in reading by the end of class 3.
- They should be able to compose simple messages and read them by the end of class 1.

Steiner says that teachers should:

- Update his curriculum for English.
- Begin academic instruction at age 6/change of teeth.
- Over prepare their curricula and lessons.
- Compromise with state regulations.
- Assess to make sure students are learning.





Therefore:

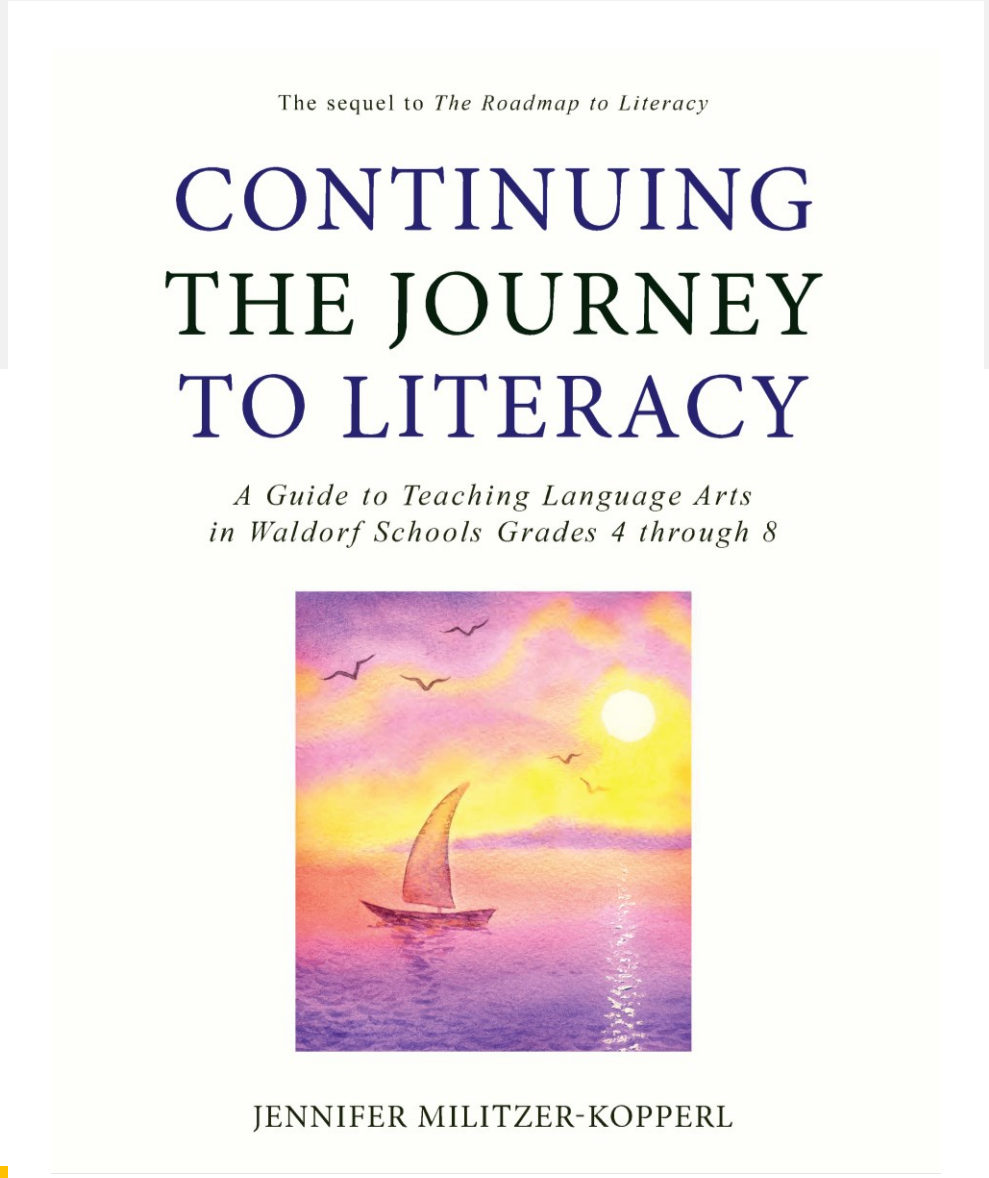
Teachers should hit the ground running in class 1!

The Roadmap to Literacy shows how.

- *Roadmap* is a systematic literacy program—one based on Steiner's indications and grounded in the English language.
- *Roadmap* helps school ace inspections while maintaining the principles of Steiner education.
- *Roadmap* will get students on level with their public-school peers by the end of class 3.
- *Roadmap* has templates for lesson plans and main lesson blocks.
- *Roadmap* provides benchmarks to guarantee students are making progress.
- *Roadmap* includes assessment protocols.

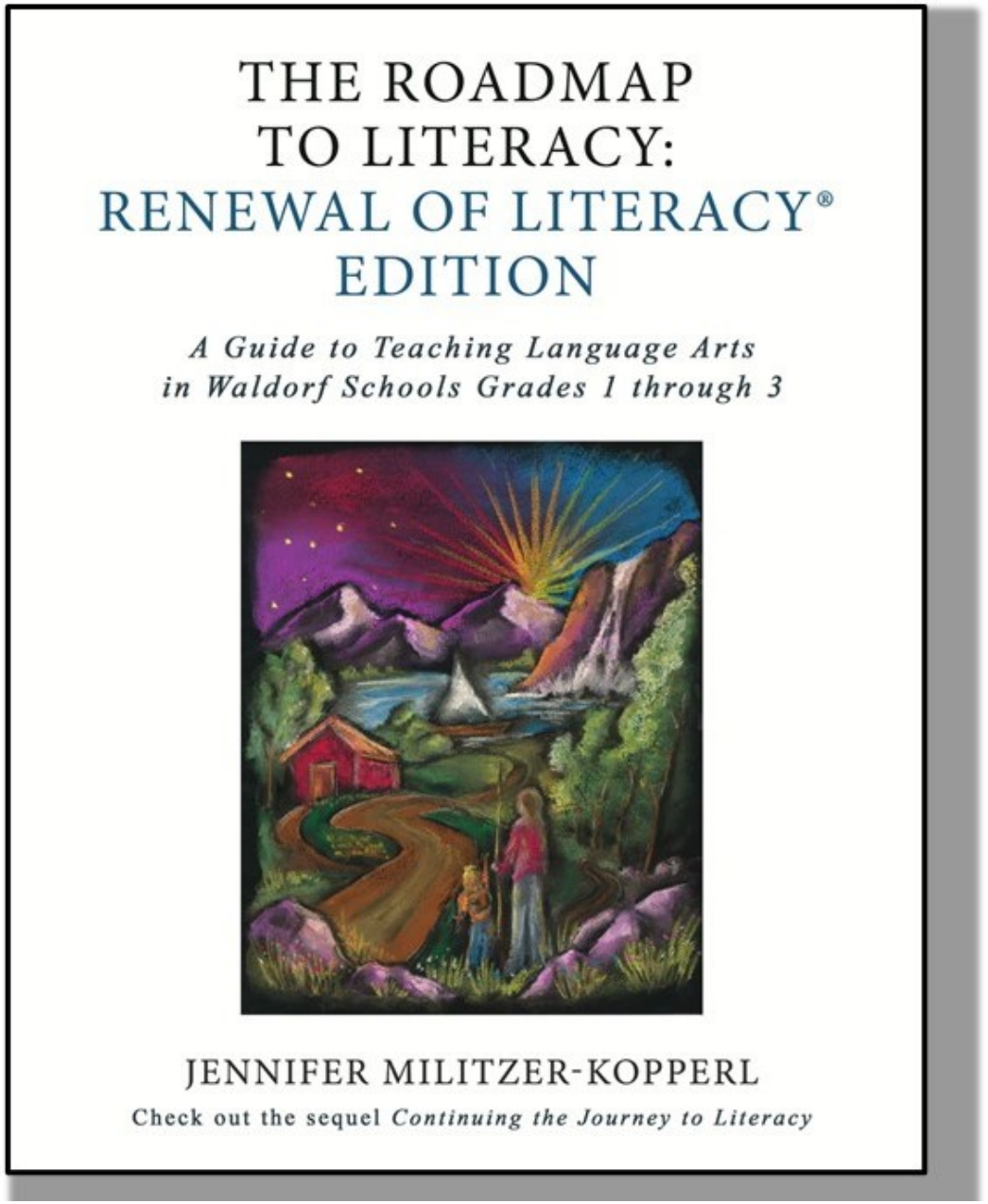
By Class 4, students will be ready for subjects—and for the sequel to *Roadmap*—

because literacy is more than just skills!

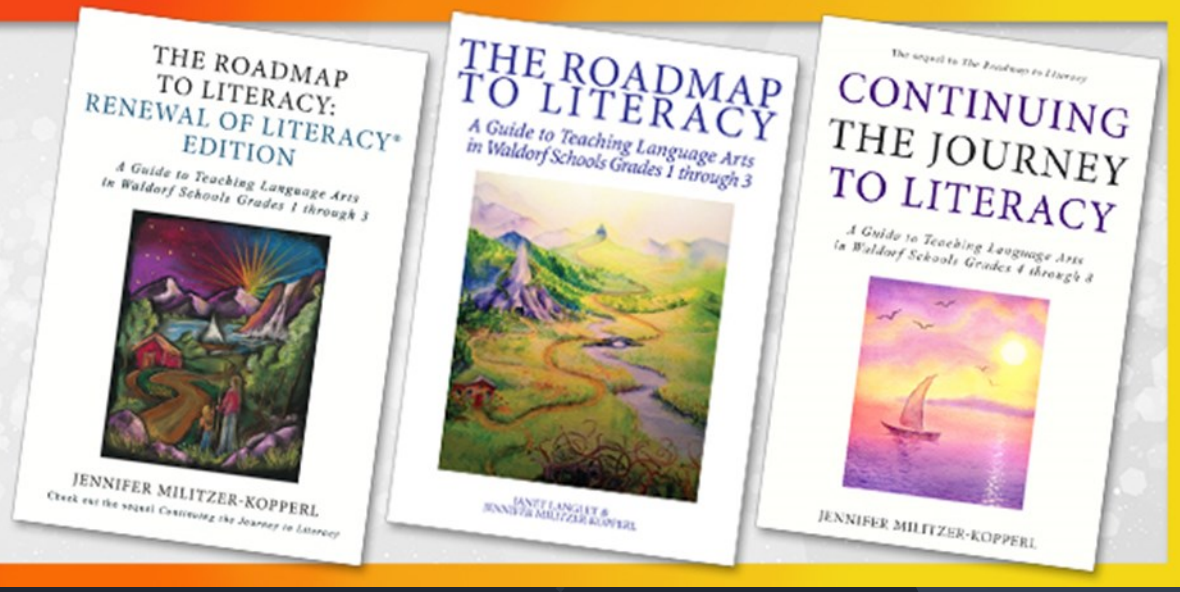


And the new edition of *The Roadmap to Literacy* brings *Roadmap* completely into alignment with Rudolf Steiner's indications—

and contains
all-new assessment material
for all comfort levels



Renewal of Literacy:

A complete language arts curriculum for Steiner Schools classes 1-8 that contains books and online, on-demand courses

LEARN TO READ
READ TO LEARN