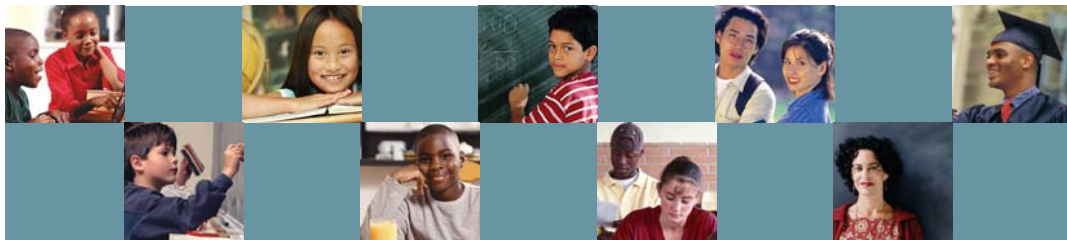


the condition of education 2006



INDICATOR 20

Adult Reading Habits

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2006*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2006*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.sap?pubid=2006071>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Adult Literacy

Adult Reading Habits

Adult reading habits are positively associated with educational attainment: the more education a person attained, the more likely that person was to report reading newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes daily in 2003.

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) reports on the literacy habits of adults age 16 or older in the United States by asking them how often they read three types of printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes. On a daily basis, 48 percent of adults reported reading newspapers or magazines, 32 percent reported reading books, and 51 percent reported reading letters and notes (see supplemental table 20-1). In comparison, the percentages of adults who reported reading less than once a week or never was 15 percent for newspapers or magazines, 38 percent for books, and 20 percent for letters and notes. Eighty-eight percent of adults reported having 25 or more books in their home.

Along with other personal and family characteristics, a person’s educational attainment was positively associated with the frequency of reading any of the three types of printed materials as well as having 25 or more books in the home in 2003. For example, 46 percent of adults with a bachelor’s or higher degree reported reading books daily, compared with 35 percent of those with some college education,

24 percent of those with a high school diploma or equivalent, and 21 percent of those with less than a high school diploma.¹

Among the other individual and family characteristics related to differences in reading habits were sex and race/ethnicity. Females were more likely than males to report reading books or letters and notes daily. White adults were more likely than Black or Hispanic adults to report reading newspapers or magazines or letters and notes daily, and to have 25 or more books in the home. Hispanic adults were less likely than White, Black, or Asian adults to report reading in English any of the three types of materials daily or to have 25 or more books in the home.

Poverty was negatively associated with adults’ frequency of reading any of the three types of printed materials in 2003 and having 25 or more books in the home. That is, poor adults were less likely than near-poor adults, who were in turn less likely than nonpoor adults,² to report reading any of the three types of printed materials daily or to have at least 25 books in their home.

¹ Included in this category are those still enrolled in high school. In 2003, this accounted for 3 percent of the total population age 16 or older.

² “Poor” is defined to include those families below the poverty threshold; “near-poor” is defined as 100–199 percent of the poverty threshold; and “nonpoor” is defined as 200 percent or more than the poverty threshold.

NOTE: Respondents age 16 or older living in households or prisons were asked about how often they read newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes in English; they could respond “every day,” “a few times a week,” “once a week,” “less than once a week,” or “never.”

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), previously unpublished tabulation (December 2005).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Supplemental Notes 1,3

Supplemental Table 20-1

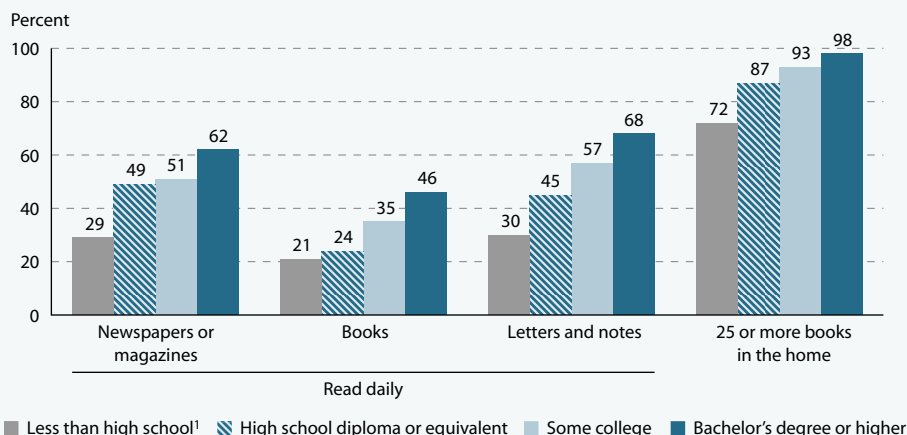
NCES 2005-094

NCES 2006-470

NCES 2006-471



ADULT LITERACY: Percentage of adults age 16 or older who read newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes daily and who had 25 or more books in the home, by educational attainment: 2003



Adult Reading Habits

Table 20-1. Percentage of adults age 16 or older who participated in literary practices, by frequency of participation and materials in the home and selected characteristics: 2003

Characteristic	Read newspapers or magazines			Read books			Read letters and notes			25 or more books in the home
	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	
Total	48.4	36.4	15.2	31.6	30.4	37.9	50.6	29.3	20.1	88.2
Sex										
Male	49.4	35.0	15.6	24.5	30.7	44.8	47.3	30.5	22.2	87.2
Female	47.4	37.7	14.9	38.3	30.2	31.5	53.7	28.2	18.1	89.0
Age										
16–18	23.3	55.8	20.9	35.8	33.6	30.6	32.1	42.7	25.2	88.8
19–24	28.6	52.3	19.2	24.3	35.6	40.1	36.2	39.8	23.9	79.6
25–39	37.5	45.1	17.4	27.9	33.0	39.1	52.6	29.3	18.1	87.7
40–49	49.9	35.8	14.4	33.0	29.6	37.4	58.3	24.1	17.6	91.6
50–64	61.7	25.7	12.6	36.2	27.4	36.4	58.8	23.4	17.7	90.8
65 or older	72.3	16.7	11.0	33.8	25.9	40.2	43.1	31.4	25.5	86.5
Education										
Less than high school ¹	28.6	39.4	32.0	21.4	27.0	51.6	30.0	33.1	36.9	72.3
High school diploma or equivalent	48.6	37.1	14.3	23.8	29.8	46.4	44.6	33.4	22.0	86.5
Some college	50.7	37.7	11.6	35.3	30.8	33.9	57.3	28.1	14.6	93.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	61.9	31.1	7.0	46.4	33.7	19.9	68.0	21.9	10.1	97.5
Race/ethnicity ²										
White	53.7	34.6	11.6	33.8	30.0	36.2	53.7	28.7	17.6	92.7
Black	42.3	42.1	15.7	32.5	35.9	31.6	49.1	32.4	18.5	81.8
Hispanic	27.4	36.8	35.9	18.8	26.8	54.4	34.8	28.9	36.3	66.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	38.0	47.9	14.1	29.7	34.9	35.4	51.6	29.0	19.4	90.5
American Indian	45.3	36.7	18.0	18.1	34.7	47.2	44.7	34.2	21.1	86.3
More than one race	43.8	42.8	13.4	39.2	25.2	35.7	48.5	35.0	16.4	92.2
Language spoken before starting school										
English only	51.3	36.4	12.3	33.4	30.7	36.0	52.8	29.5	17.7	91.1
English and Spanish	44.9	40.8	14.2	34.2	36.6	29.2	56.9	28.8	14.3	82.8
English and other language	56.8	34.6	8.5	33.3	39.1	27.6	59.7	24.2	16.1	92.0
Spanish	19.8	33.6	46.5	14.3	23.1	62.6	26.4	28.6	45.0	59.3
Other language	43.6	40.0	16.5	29.2	29.8	41.1	45.3	30.9	23.9	87.3
Household income										
Less than \$15,000	35.2	39.7	25.1	25.9	28.6	45.5	36.3	32.8	30.9	71.7
\$15,000–29,999	44.3	36.9	18.8	27.9	28.4	43.8	43.0	32.6	24.3	83.1
\$30,000–49,999	48.7	37.7	13.7	29.8	30.3	40.0	46.7	32.3	21.0	88.8
\$50,000–74,999	50.7	38.4	10.8	32.5	30.6	36.9	57.1	27.6	15.3	93.5
\$75,000 or more	60.1	31.3	8.6	39.6	32.9	27.6	67.1	22.5	10.5	97.9
Poverty ³										
Poor	31.0	41.7	27.3	23.9	28.5	47.6	35.2	33.1	31.7	72.8
Near-poor	44.8	37.3	17.9	28.5	28.4	43.2	42.8	32.2	25.1	84.0
Nonpoor	55.0	34.9	10.2	34.9	31.4	33.6	58.4	27.1	14.5	93.7

¹ Included in this category are those still enrolled in high school. In 2003, this accounted for 3 percent of the total population age 16 or older.

² Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and American Indian includes Alaska Native. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

³ "Poor" is defined to include those families below the poverty threshold; "near-poor" is defined as 100–199 percent of the poverty threshold; and "nonpoor" is defined as 200 percent or more than the poverty threshold. NOTE: Respondents age 16 or older living in households or prisons were asked about how often they read newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes in English; they could respond "every day," "a few times a week," "once a week," "less than once a week," or "never." Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), previously unpublished tabulation (December 2005).

Adult Reading Habits

Table S20. Standard errors for the percentage of adults age 16 or older who read newspapers or magazines, books, or letters and notes daily and who had 25 or more books in the home, by educational attainment: 2003

Educational attainment	Newspapers or magazines	Books	Letters and notes	25 or more books in the home
Less than high school	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2
High school diploma or equivalent	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.7
Some college	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), previously unpublished tabulation (December 2005).

Adult Reading Habits

Table S20-1. Standard errors for the percentage of adults age 16 or older who participated in literary practices, by frequency of participation and materials in the home and selected characteristics: 2003

Characteristic	Read newspapers or magazines			Read books			Read letters and notes			25 or more books in the home
	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	Every day	A few times a week or weekly	Less than once a week/ never	
Total	0.66	0.62	0.57	0.56	0.53	0.78	0.79	0.60	0.56	0.49
Sex										
Male	0.85	0.75	0.68	0.81	0.77	1.03	1.03	0.80	0.74	0.58
Female	0.84	0.77	0.62	0.67	0.70	0.81	0.90	0.77	0.66	0.53
Age										
16–18	2.05	2.09	2.03	1.92	1.79	2.03	1.81	2.33	2.27	1.36
19–24	1.42	1.52	1.29	1.28	1.51	1.63	1.48	1.44	1.28	1.22
25–39	1.00	0.99	0.93	0.89	0.90	1.03	1.16	0.97	0.88	0.61
40–49	1.27	1.28	1.01	0.92	1.01	1.28	1.26	1.05	0.92	0.68
50–64	1.26	1.04	0.79	1.20	0.82	1.26	1.28	1.00	0.84	0.67
65 or older	1.24	1.12	0.83	1.28	1.28	1.53	1.57	1.61	1.41	0.89
Education										
Less than high school	1.09	0.97	1.32	0.95	1.18	1.41	1.10	1.01	1.01	1.19
High school diploma or equivalent	1.03	1.04	0.73	0.84	0.97	1.13	1.19	0.99	0.83	0.68
Some college	0.97	0.88	0.57	0.95	0.80	1.06	1.01	0.92	0.62	0.41
Bachelor's degree or higher	1.09	1.01	0.64	1.23	1.06	0.87	1.12	0.99	0.63	0.32
Race/ethnicity										
White	0.80	0.76	0.52	0.72	0.63	0.86	0.96	0.73	0.59	0.42
Black	1.02	1.31	0.99	1.34	1.16	1.48	1.65	1.41	1.20	1.27
Hispanic	1.65	1.30	1.95	0.95	1.06	1.43	1.46	0.92	1.50	1.59
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.32	2.16	2.31	2.49	3.23	3.25	3.54	2.69	2.31	2.00
American Indian	7.72	6.77	5.07	3.70	6.44	5.32	6.02	7.27	4.83	4.07
More than one race	5.17	5.04	2.86	3.93	3.45	4.49	3.94	3.72	3.33	1.98
Language spoken before starting school										
English only	0.75	0.70	0.47	0.65	0.59	0.80	0.94	0.71	0.58	0.36
English and Spanish	2.80	2.92	2.10	2.57	2.47	2.37	2.73	1.94	2.25	2.05
English and other language	2.86	2.83	1.66	3.30	2.99	2.80	3.18	2.61	2.19	1.54
Spanish	1.52	1.58	2.04	0.99	1.26	1.71	1.41	1.25	1.68	1.95
Other language	2.39	2.21	1.99	2.16	1.89	2.71	2.73	2.55	2.42	1.63
Household income										
Less than \$15,000	1.56	1.35	1.65	1.23	1.19	1.60	1.34	1.22	1.31	1.35
\$15,000–29,999	1.42	1.16	1.10	1.16	1.04	1.10	1.57	1.30	0.99	0.97
\$30,000–49,999	1.31	1.21	1.02	1.09	1.26	1.28	1.30	1.25	1.18	0.87
\$50,000–74,999	1.11	1.32	0.71	1.10	1.16	1.49	1.32	1.27	0.91	0.61
\$75,000 or more	1.37	1.37	0.63	1.34	1.23	1.14	1.32	1.01	0.89	0.39
Poverty										
Poor	1.62	1.31	1.69	1.27	1.25	1.75	1.42	1.19	1.38	1.45
Near-poor	1.49	1.18	0.98	1.09	0.91	1.17	1.50	1.20	1.08	0.94
Nonpoor	0.79	0.87	0.44	0.72	0.67	0.87	0.85	0.66	0.59	0.36

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), previously unpublished tabulation (December 2005).