

## Comparing the Prison and Household Populations

The 2003 adult prison and household populations differed in many characteristics. A higher percentage of prison inmates were Black or Hispanic and a lower percentage were White than adults living in households (table 3-1). Compared with adults living in households, a higher percentage of prison inmates were male (94 percent versus 48 percent), a lower percentage were age 40 or older (32 percent versus 56 percent), and a lower percentage spoke only a language other than English as children (9 percent versus 13 percent). A lower percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households completed any postsecondary education (22 percent versus 51 percent) and a lower percentage of the parents of prison inmates than the parents of adults living in households completed any education beyond high school (33 percent versus 42 percent). A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households had been diagnosed with a learning disability (17 percent versus 6 percent), but there was no measurable difference between the percentage of adults in prisons and households who reported that their overall health was poor or fair. A lower percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households reported having served in the military (10 percent versus 13 percent) (table 3-1).

Total Prison and Household Populations

Race/Ethnicity

Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Gender

Age

Language Spoken Before Starting School

Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Summary

**Table 3-1. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in selected groups: 2003**

Characteristic	Prison	Household
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	32	71*
Black	46	11*
Hispanic	18	12*
Other	5	6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94	48*
Female	6	52*
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Still in high school	†	3*
Less than high school	9	6*
Some high school	28	10*
GED/high school equivalency	28	5*
High school graduate	13	26*
Postsecondary	22	51*
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	16	17
25–39	52	27*
40+	32	56*
<b>Language spoken before starting school</b>		
English only	85	81*
English and other	6	6
Other only	9	13*
<b>Parents' highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	13	18*
Some high school	13	9*
GED/high school equivalency/ high school graduate	41	31*
Postsecondary	33	42*
<b>Veteran's status</b>		
Veteran	10	13*
Not a veteran	90	87*
<b>Self-reported health</b>		
Poor	4	4
Fair	11	11
Good	22	24*
Very good	35	36
Excellent	28	26
<b>Learning disability diagnosis</b>		
Yes	17	6*
No	84	94*

†Not applicable.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

The analyses in this chapter examine how literacy levels differed in 2003 between adults living in households and prison inmates. The first analyses in the chapter compare average literacy differences among the total population in each group. However, because of the differences in the characteristics of the two groups, it is also meaningful to look at differences in literacy for groups within each population with the same background characteristics (demographics, educational attainment, and language background). The majority of this chapter focuses on those analyses.

## Total Prison and Household Populations

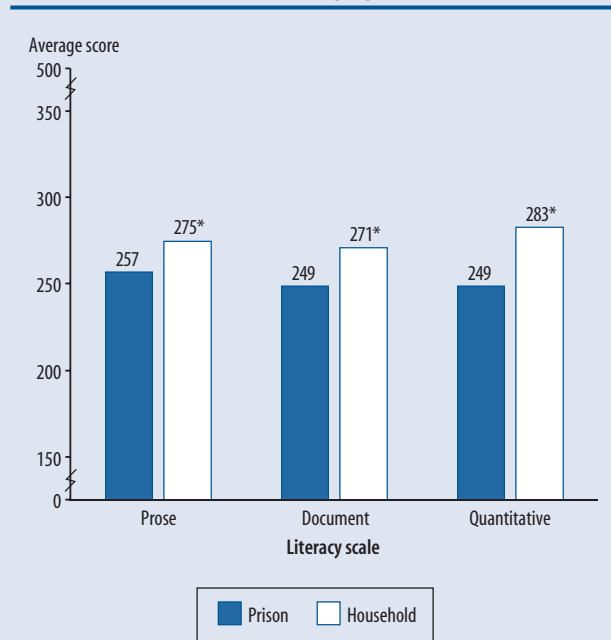
Prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-1).

A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households had *Below Basic* quantitative literacy (39 percent compared with 21 percent), but the differences in the percentage of prison inmates and adults living in households who had *Below Basic*

prose or document literacy were not statistically significant (figure 3-2).

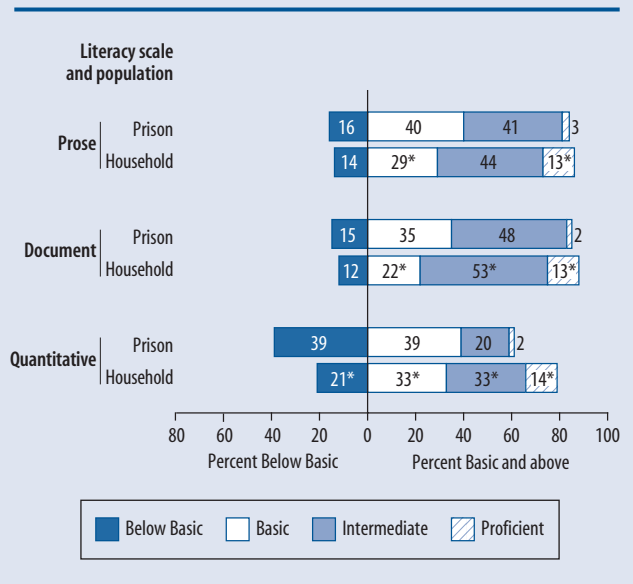
Among prison inmates, 2 to 3 percent had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy compared with 13 to 14 percent of adults living in households. A lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Intermediate* document or quantitative literacy and a higher percentage had *Basic* prose, document, or quantitative literacy.

**Figure 3-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.  
 NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-2. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.  
 NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Race/Ethnicity

Incarcerated White adults had lower average prose literacy than White adults living in households (figure 3-3). This finding was reversed for Blacks and Hispanics: Black and Hispanic prison inmates had higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults living in households.

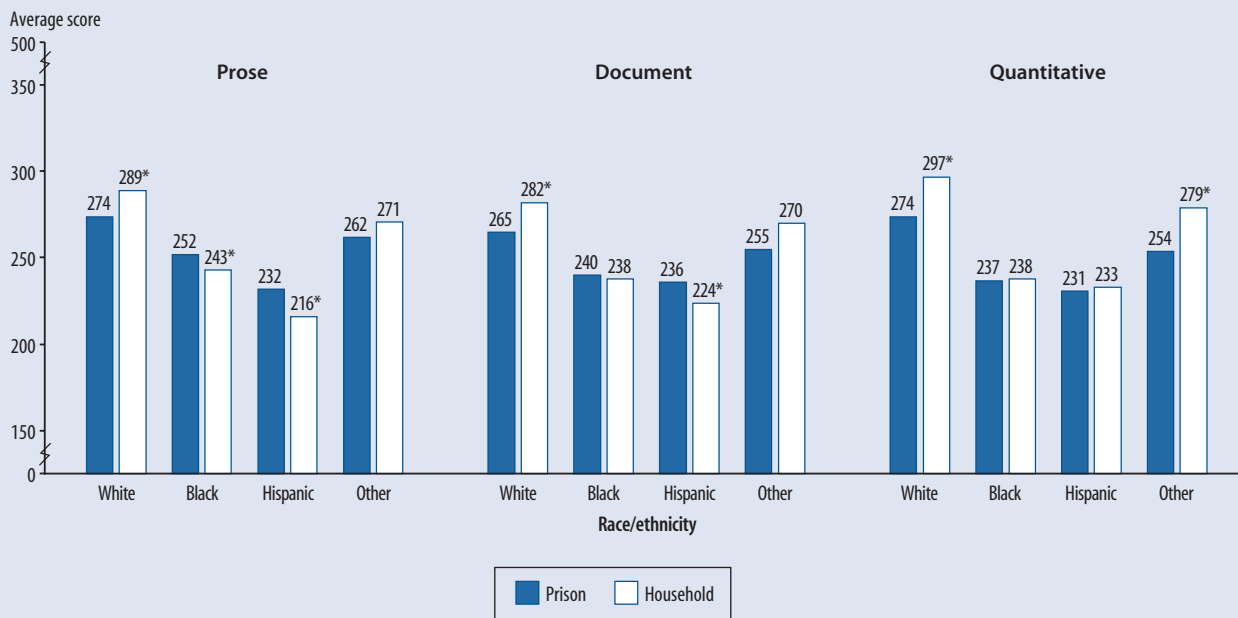
White prison inmates also had lower average document and quantitative literacy than White adults living in households (figure 3-3). Among Black adults, there was no statistically significant difference in document or quantitative literacy between those who were incarcerated and those who lived in households. For Hispanic adults, those who were

incarcerated had higher document literacy than those who lived in households.

Prison inmates are on average younger than adults living in households, and previous studies (Kutner, Greenberg, and Baer 2005) of the 2003 adult literacy data indicated that a relationship exists between age and literacy. Given this finding, analyses were conducted to compare the prose literacy of the prison and household populations by both race/ethnicity and age group.

As shown in table 3-2, within the same age group either White prison inmates had lower average prose literacy than White adults living in households or there was no statistically significant difference

**Figure 3-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

between the two groups. Black prison inmates in the 40 and older age group had higher average prose literacy than Black adults living in households, but the difference between Black prison inmates and Black adults living in households was not statistically significant in the 16 to 24 and 25 to 39 age groups. Among Hispanics, the difference in average prose literacy between incarcerated adults and adults living in households was not statistically significant in the 16 to 24 and 40 and older age groups. In the 25 to 39 age group, Hispanic adults in prison had higher average prose literacy than Hispanic adults in households.

The literacy of prison inmates by date of incarceration and race/ethnicity was also examined. Black inmates who were incarcerated prior to 2002 had higher prose literacy than Black adults living in households, but Black inmates who were incarcerated in 2002 or later had prose literacy that was not statistically significantly different from that of Black adults living in households (table 3-3).

An examination of the distribution by literacy level of prison inmates and adults living in households shows that 3 to 7 percent of White prison inmates had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy, compared with 15 to 17 percent of White adults living in households (figure 3-4). A lower percentage of White adults living in households than White adults in prisons had *Basic* prose and quantitative literacy.

A lower percentage of Black prison inmates than Black adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose literacy (figure 3-4).

A lower percentage of Hispanic prison inmates than Hispanic adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose or document literacy.

**Table 3-2. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and age: 2003**

Race/ethnicity and age	Prison	Household
<b>White</b>		
16–24	285	287
25–39	275	303*
40+	267	283*
<b>Black</b>		
16–24	238	249
25–39	260	253
40+	248	234*
<b>Hispanic</b>		
16–24	260	235
25–39	229	213*
40+	218	205

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table 3-3. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and date incarcerated: 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Incarcerated prior to 2002	Incarcerated 2002 or later	Household
White	275*	273*	289
Black	255*	249	243

\*Significantly different from household population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Because of sample size, these analyses are not reported for the Hispanic population. Black includes African American.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-4. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The 'Other' category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

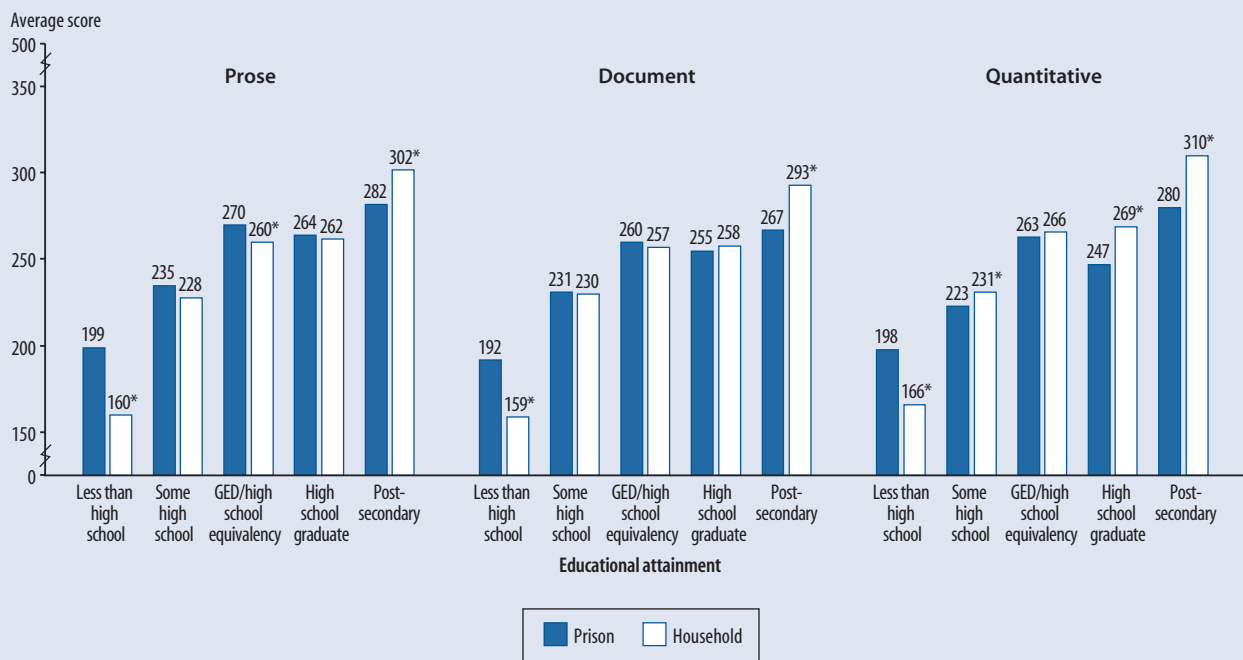
## Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Among adult who ended their education before starting high school (classified as “less than high school” in the figure), prison inmates had higher average literacy on all three scales than adults living in households (figure 3-5). Prison inmates with a GED/high school equivalency certificate had higher average prose literacy than adults living in households with a GED/high school equivalency certificate. For all other levels of educational attainment, either prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households with the same level of educational

attainment or there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (figure 3-5).

Among adults who ended their education before starting high school, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose and document literacy (figure 3-6). Among adults with postsecondary education, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults in households had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy and a higher percentage had *Basic* literacy on all three scales and *Below Basic* literacy on the quantitative scale (figure 3-6).

**Figure 3-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

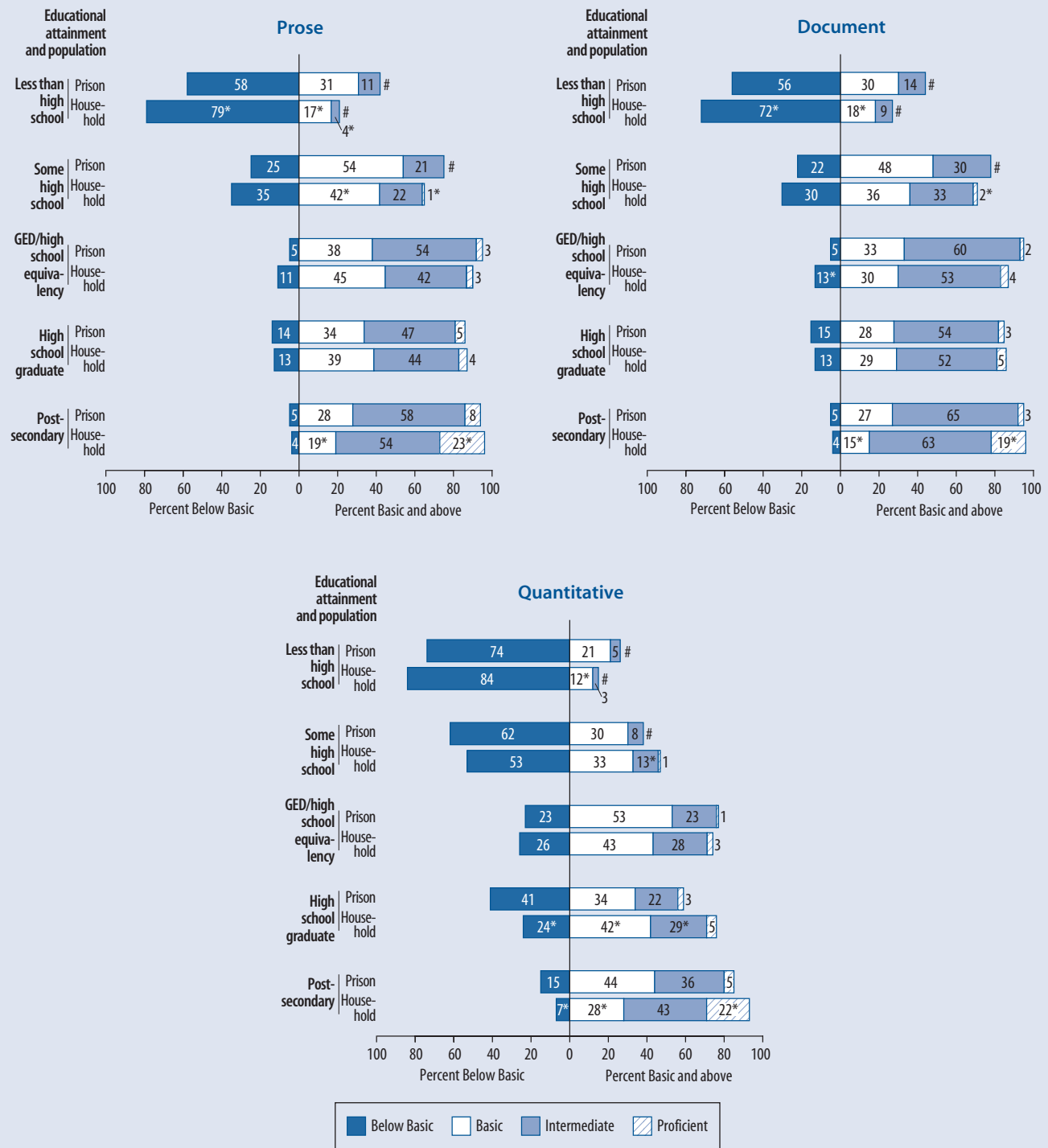


\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Figure 3-6. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003



# Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



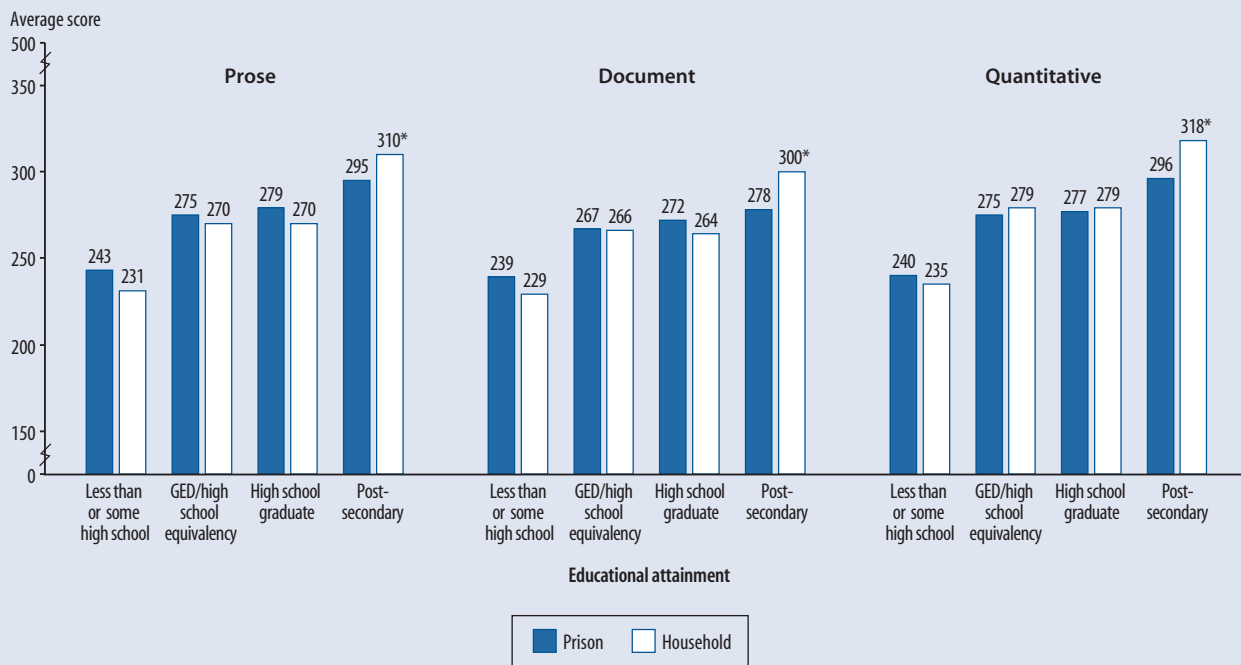
### Highest level of educational attainment and race/ethnicity

In this section, literacy results by highest level of educational attainment are reported separately for Black and White adults. Comparisons are made between adults living in households and prison inmates. Results are not reported separately for Hispanic adults by highest level of educational attainment because there were not enough Hispanic adults in the prison sample to support reporting at this level of detail.

Among White adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma, there was no statistically significant different between the prose, document, and quantitative

literacy of those adults who lived in households and those adults who were incarcerated (figure 3-7). However, among Black adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma, Black prison inmates had higher average prose literacy than Black adults living in households (figure 3-8). Among Black adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certification, Black prison inmates also had higher document and quantitative literacy than Black adults living in households. A lower percentage of Black adults in prison than Black adults in households had *Below Basic* prose and document literacy (table 3-4).

**Figure 3-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the White adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

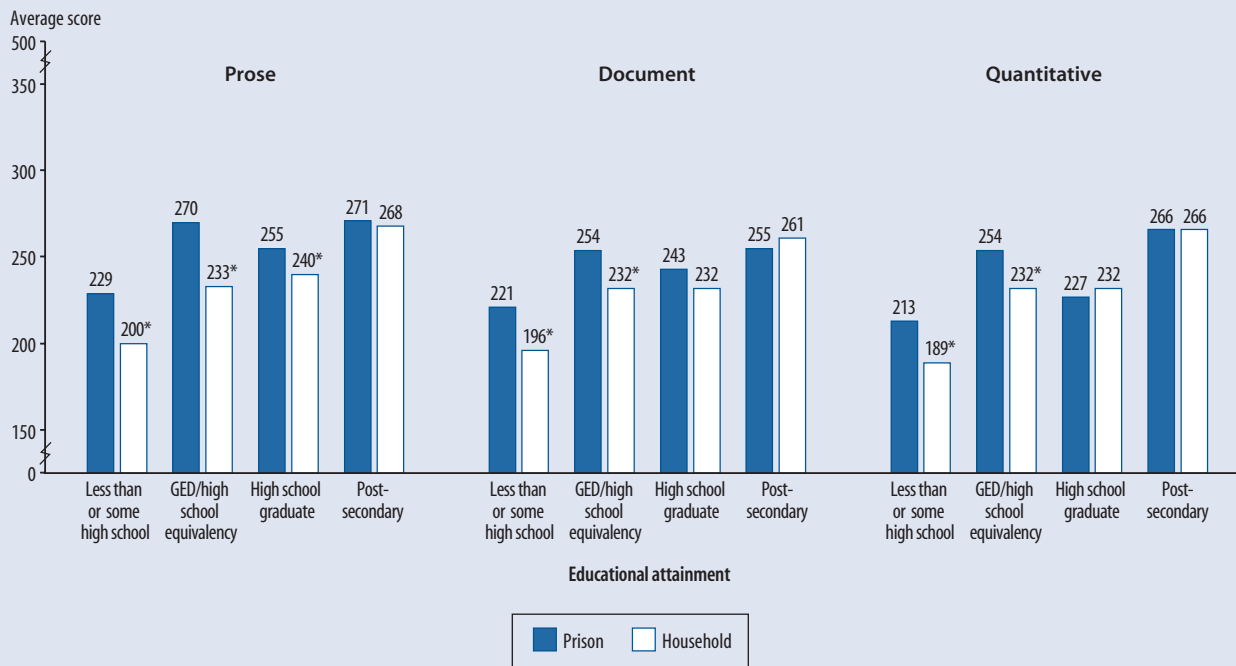
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Among White adults who had at least some education beyond high school, those living in households had higher literacy on all three scales than those who were incarcerated (figure 3-7). Additionally, a higher percentage of White adults who had at least some postsecondary education and lived in households than adults with the same level of education who

lived in prison had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales (table 3-4). Among Black adults who had at least some education beyond high school, there were no differences in average literacy between those who lived in households and those who were incarcerated (figure 3-8).

**Figure 3-8. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the Black adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table 3-4. Percentage of the Black and White adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Population, literacy scale, and educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>White adults</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	20	34	49	40	30	24	1	2
GED/high school equivalency	3	5	35	40	58	52	4	3
High school graduate	11	8	27	37	51	51	12	4
Postsecondary	5	2	19	15	61	56	15	27*
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	18	32	44	32	38	34	#	3
GED/high school equivalency	2	9	27	26	69	60	2	5
High school graduate	9	10	19	27	65	57	7	6
Postsecondary	3	2	18	12	74	63	6	23*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	47	50	37	33	15	15	1	2
GED/high school equivalency	12	15	55	45	32	37	2	4
High school graduate	20	17	39	42	36	35	5	6
Postsecondary	5	4	38	24	49	46	8	26*
<b>Black adults</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	29	54*	55	36	16	10	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	5	23	39	63	53	15*	3	#
High school graduate	14	23	44	49	41	27	1	1
Postsecondary	4	10	40	37	53	49	3	5
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	33	52*	44	31*	23	17	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	9	24	38	44	52	33	1	#
High school graduate	20	24	35	42	43	33	2	#
Postsecondary	7	8	38	30	53	59	1	3
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	70	76	26	20	4	5	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	31	53	51	40	17	7	1	#
High school graduate	54	52	31	37	14	10	1	#
Postsecondary	24	24	47	46	26	27	2	3

# Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

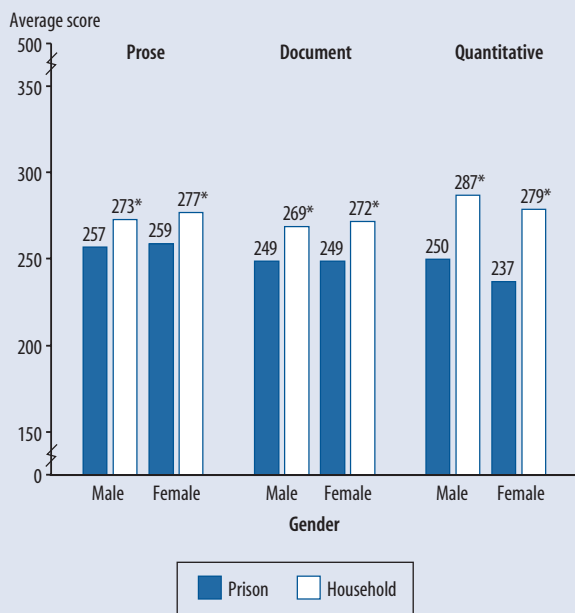
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Gender

Male and female prison inmates had lower average literacy on all three scales than adults of the same gender living in households (figure 3-9). A lower percentage of adult men and women in prisons had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy than men and women living in households (figure 3-10). A higher percentage of men and women in prisons than men and women living in households had *Below Basic* quantitative literacy.

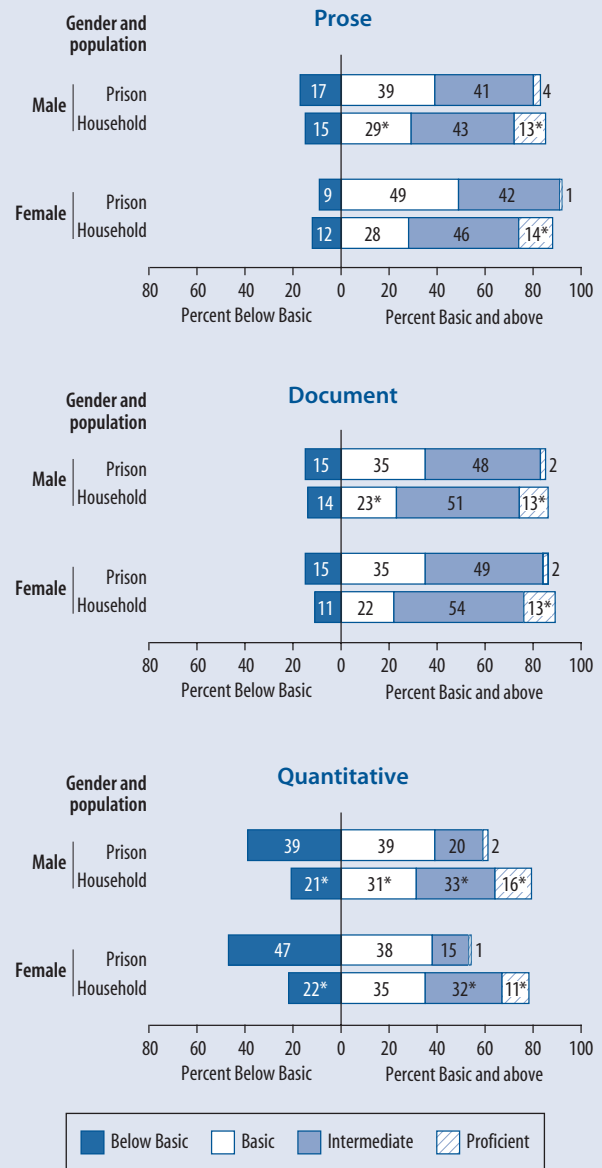
**Figure 3-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by gender: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-10. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by gender: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

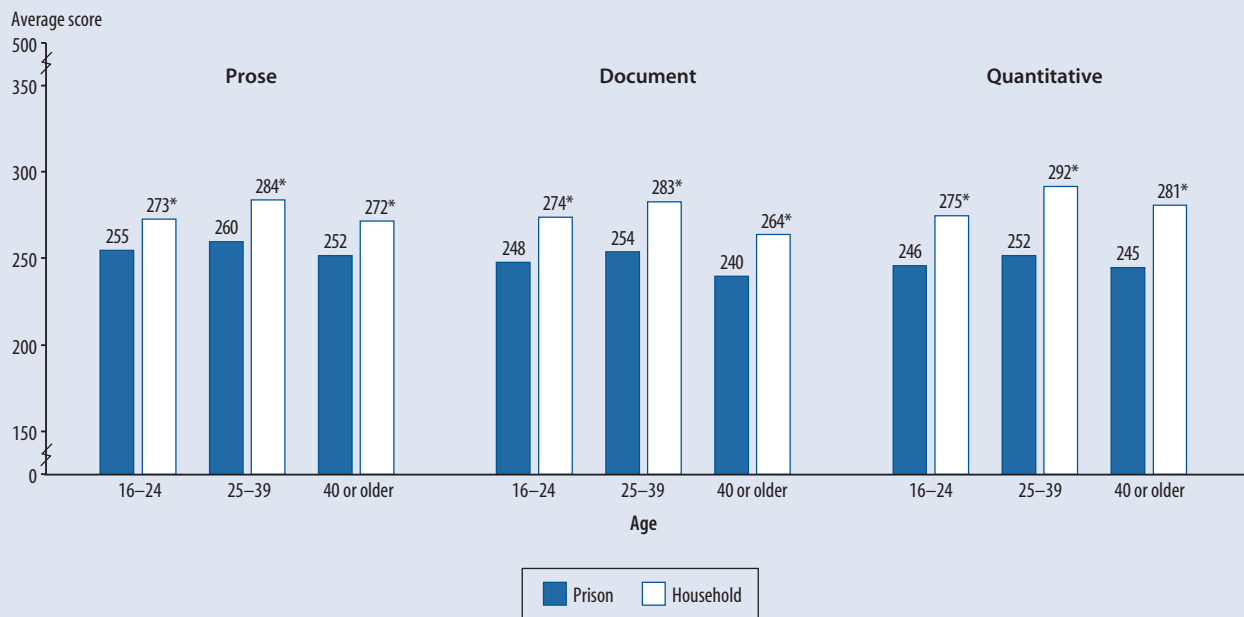
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Age

In every age group, adult prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-11). A lower percentage of adults in prison had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales than adults in the same age group in households (figure 3-12). On the quantitative scale,

a higher percentage of adult prison inmates had *Below Basic* literacy than adults living in households in the same age group (figure 3-11). Among adults who were age 40 and older, 20 percent of adult prison inmates had *Below Basic* prose literacy compared with 15 percent of adults living in households (figure 3-12).

**Figure 3-11. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by age: 2003**

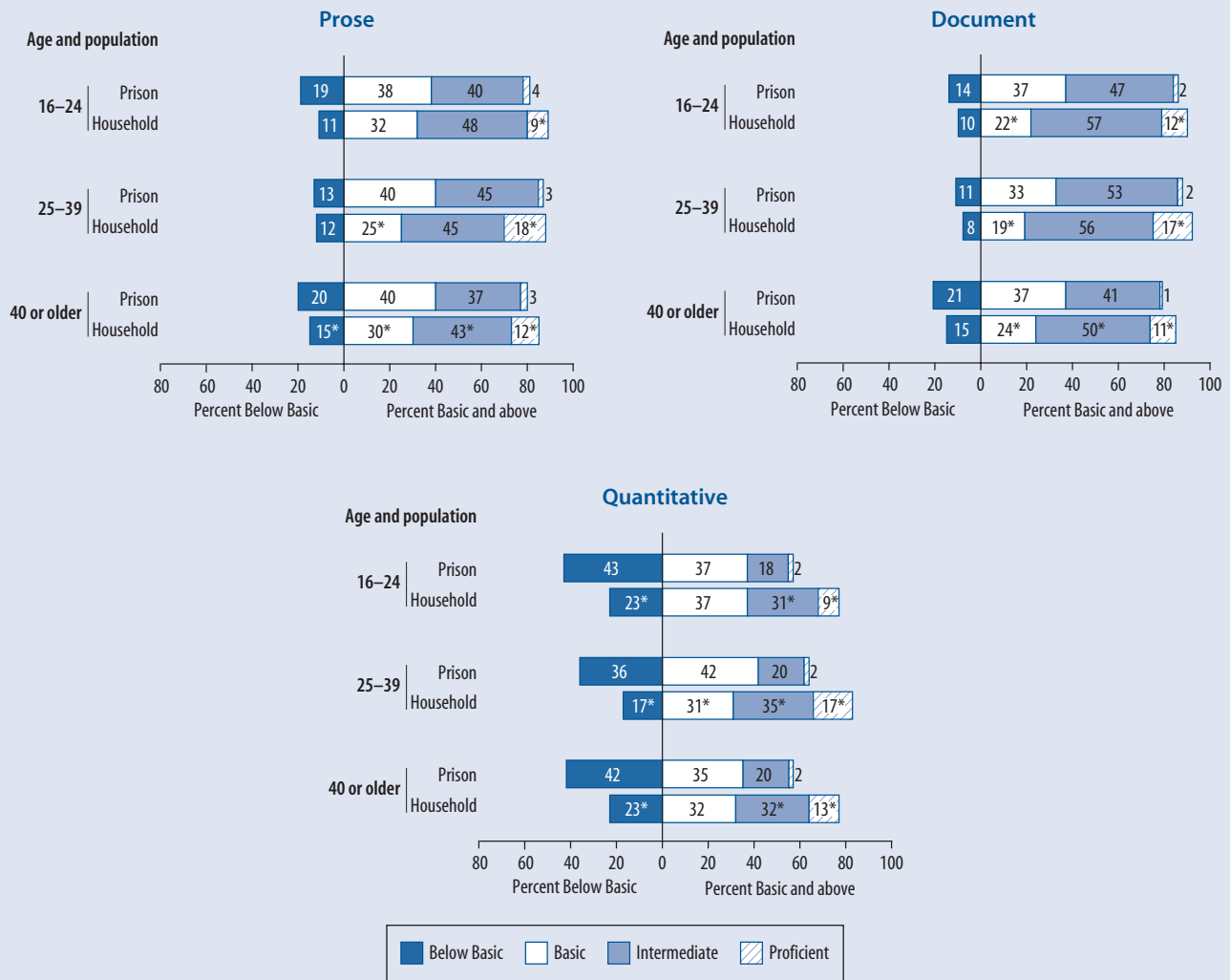


\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-12. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by age: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

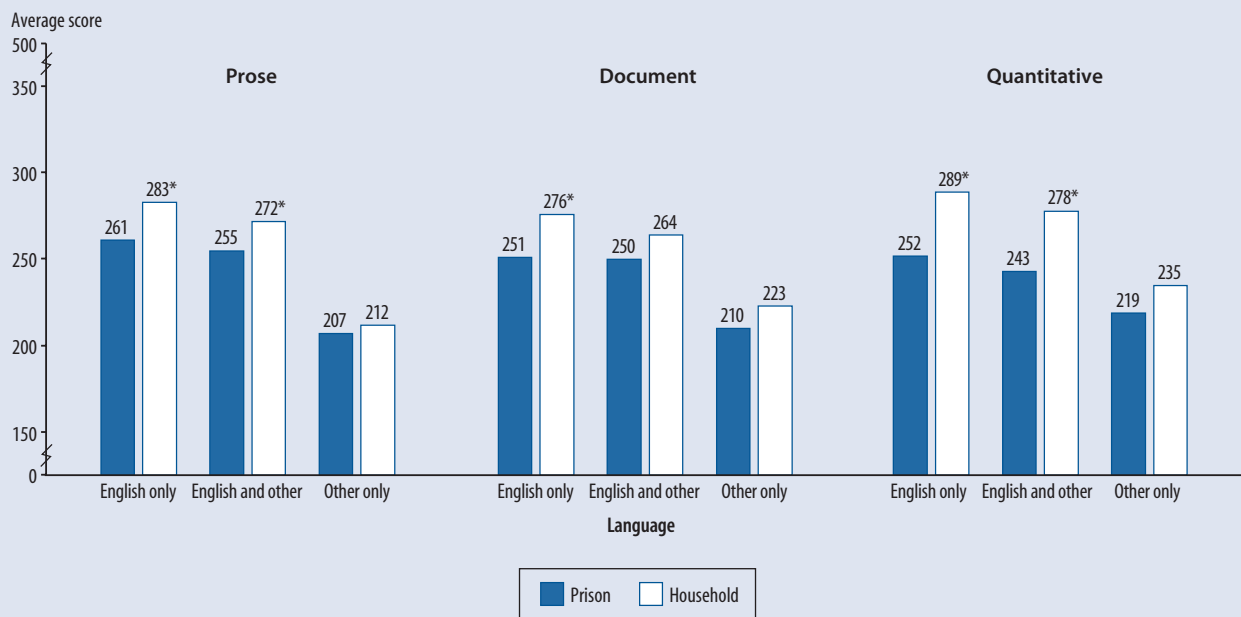
## Language Spoken Before Starting School

Among adults who spoke only English before starting school, those who were in prison had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those who lived in households (figure 3-13). Among adults who spoke English and another language before starting school, those who were in prison had lower average prose and quantitative literacy than those who lived in households. Among adults who spoke no English before starting school (classified as “Other only”), there were no statistically significant differences in average prose, document, and quantita-

tive literacy between prison inmates and adults living in households.

Among prison inmates who spoke only English before starting school, 2 to 3 percent had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales, compared with 14 to 15 percent of adults living in households with the same language background (figure 3-14). A lower percentage of adults in prison who spoke only English before starting school had *Intermediate* prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households with the same language background.

**Figure 3-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**

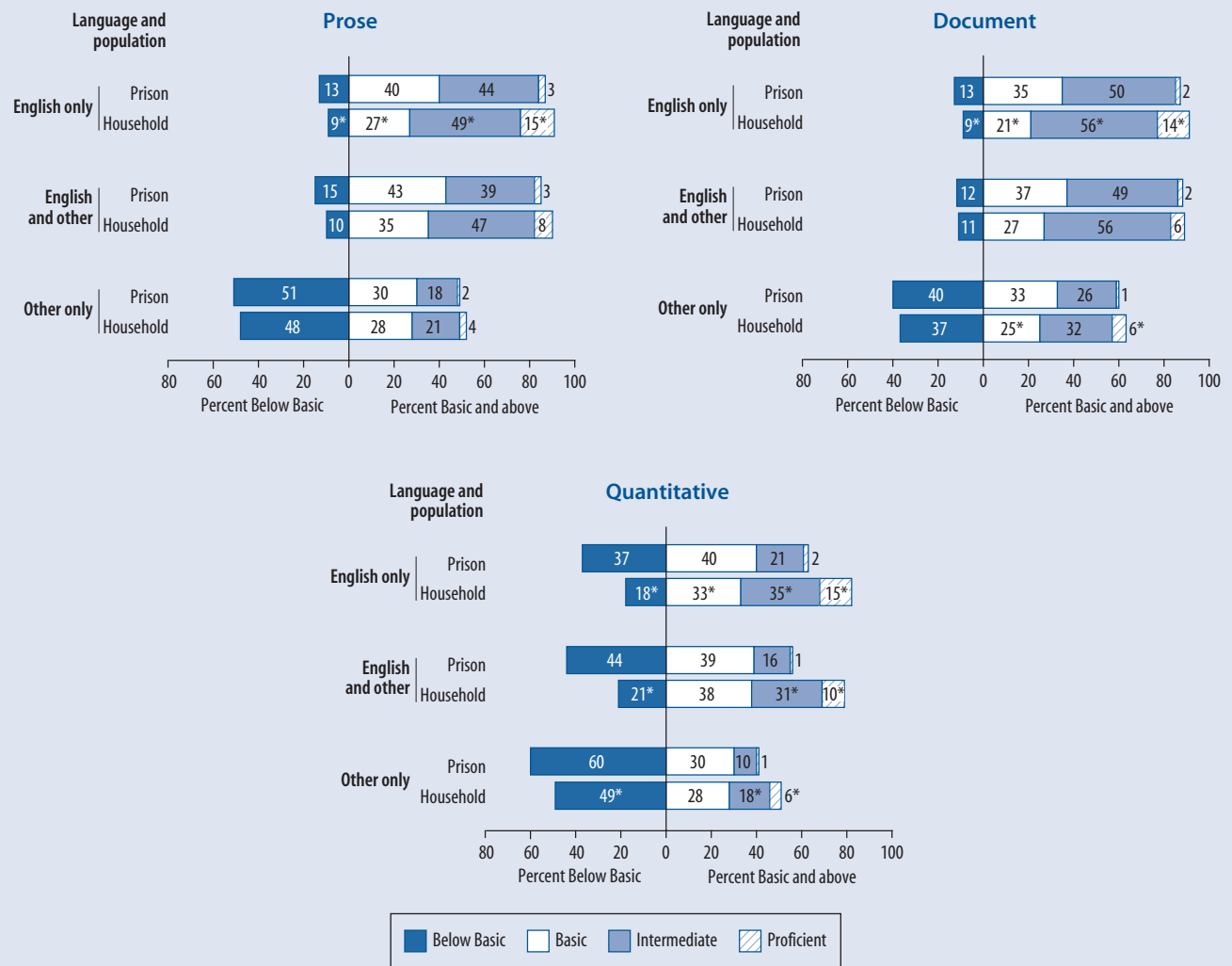


\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



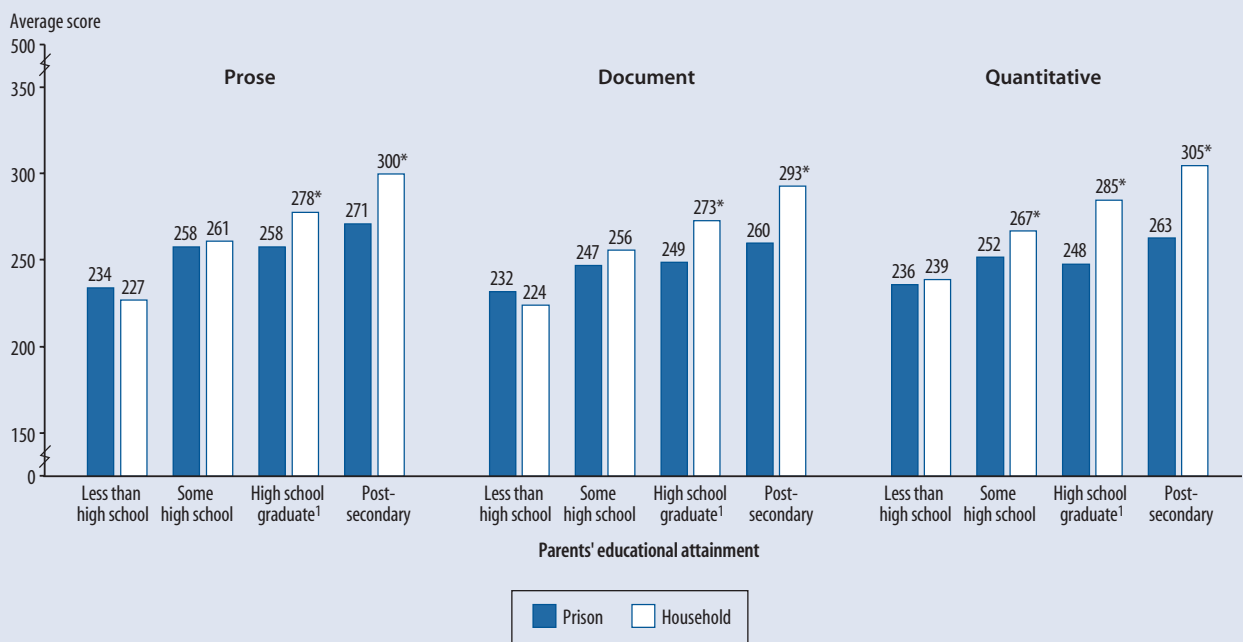
## Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Figure 3-15 shows the average prose, document, and quantitative literacy of adults living in prisons and households by their parents' level of educational attainment. Among adults whose parents were high school graduates or had attained postsecondary education, prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those adults who lived in households whose parents had the same

level of educational attainment. Prison inmates whose parents had some high school but did not complete high school also had lower average quantitative literacy than adults living in households whose parents had the same level of educational attainment.

Among adults whose parents were high school graduates or had postsecondary education, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales (figure 3-16).

**Figure 3-15. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**



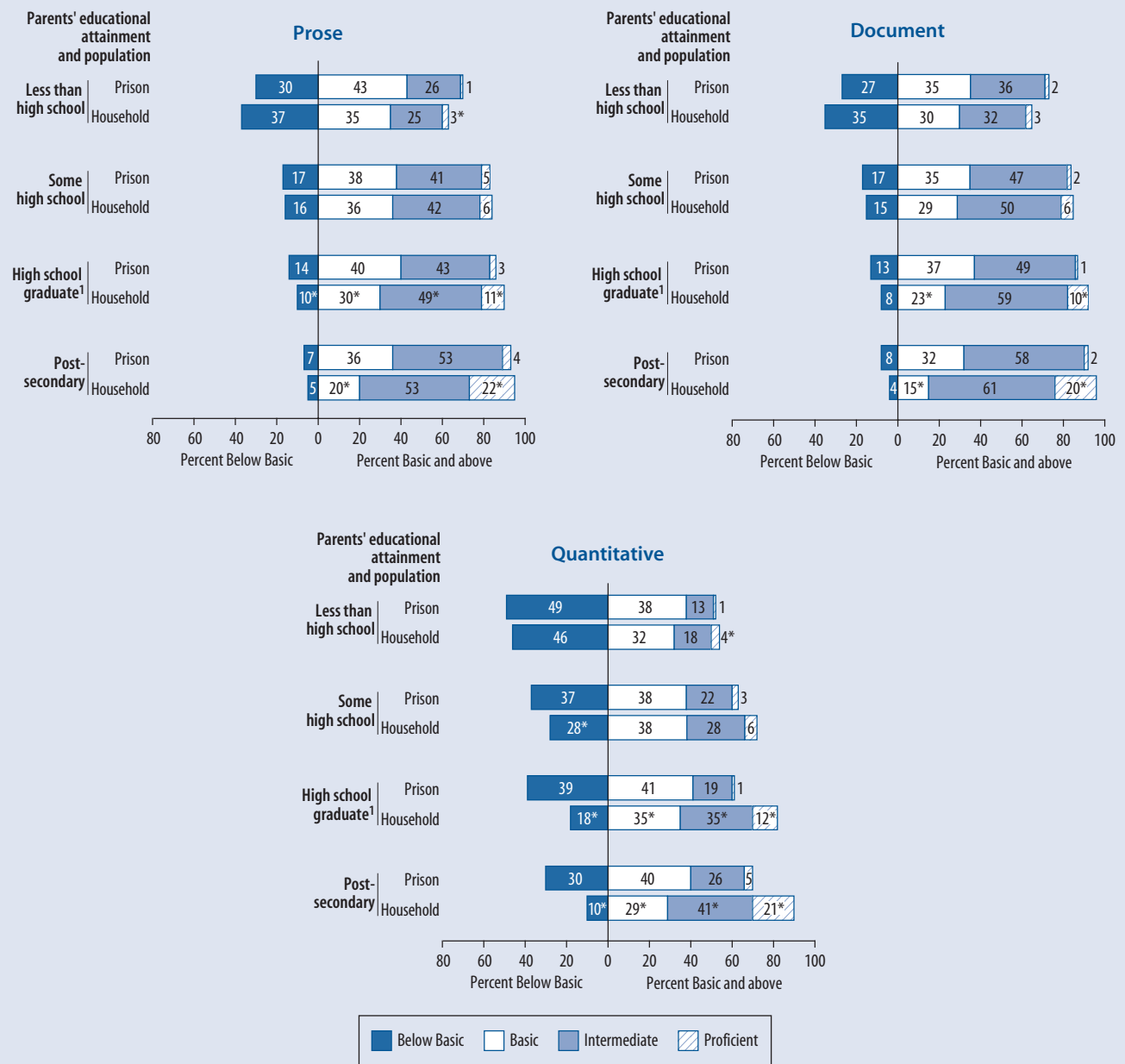
\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-16. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Summary

In 2003, there were demographic differences between the adult prison and household populations. A higher percentage of prison inmates were Black, Hispanic, male, under age 40, and spoke only English before starting school than adults in households.

On average, incarcerated adults had lower prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households. Across the various demographic, educational attainment, and language background groups examined in this chapter, adults in prison generally had literacy that was either lower than or not statistically

different from the literacy of adults living in households. An exception was the analysis of literacy by race/ethnicity, which showed that incarcerated Black and Hispanic adults had higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults living in households and that incarcerated Hispanic adults also had higher average document literacy than Hispanic adults living in households. However, there was no statistically significant difference in average prose literacy between the Black and Hispanic prison and household populations in two of the three age groups examined, but differences remained within one age group for each racial/ethnic group.

