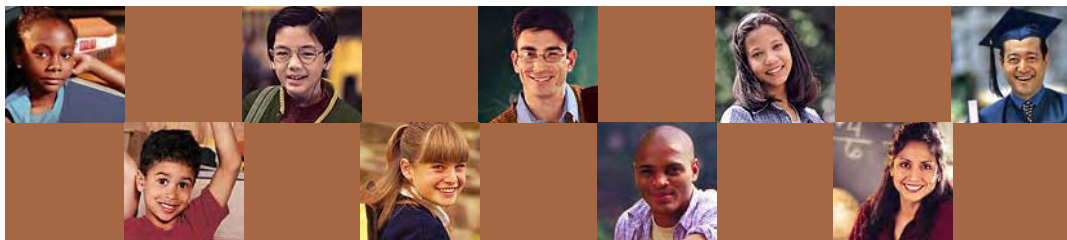


the condition of education 2005



INDICATOR 15

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2005*. 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 2005*, visit the NCES website (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.sap?pubid=2005094>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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Adult Literacy

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

The percentage of adults age 25 or older who reported having read a novel, short story, play, or poem in the past 12 months decreased between 1982 and 2002.

This indicator examines trends in literary reading (novels, short stories, plays, and poems) from 1982 to 2002 among adults age 25 or older and the relationship between reading habits and educational attainment. The percentage of the population that reads literature regularly is an important measure of adult literacy.

The percentage of adults age 25 or older who reported reading any literature in the past 12 months declined between 1982 and 2002, from 56 to 47 percent, with most of the decrease occurring between 1992 and 2002 (see supplemental table 15-1). White adults were more likely than Black and Hispanic adults to report literary reading from 1982 to 2002. Between the two years, the Black literary reading rate was about the same, while the White and Hispanic reading rates decreased. Females were more likely to report literary reading than males, and females had a smaller decline in reading than males from 1982 to 2002. Adults ages 25–44 had a larger decline in the literary reading rate than older adults during this period.

A positive relationship exists between reading and educational attainment: the more education a person has, the more likely that person is to report having read literature in the past 12 months. For example, in 2002, 19 percent of adults age 25 or older with less than a high school diploma reported that they had read literature, compared with 67 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher (see supplemental table 15-2). Other factors such as family income, sex, and race/ethnicity are also related to literary reading. The positive relationship between educational attainment and literary reading persists even when one considers differences in reading rates associated with sex, family income, or race/ethnicity. For example, 13 percent of males and 25 percent of females with less than a high school diploma reported reading literature in 2002, compared with 58 and 76 percent, respectively, of their counterparts with a bachelor's degree or higher.

NOTE: Literature in this indicator refers to any type of fiction, plays, and poetry that the respondent felt should be included and not just what literary critics might consider literature. The 1982 and 1985 surveys asked "During the last 12 months, did you read any novels, short stories, or plays?" The 1992 and 2002 surveys, however, asked these as three separate questions and included the question, "With the exception of books required for work or school, did you read any books during the last 12 months?" On the 2002 survey, there was a strong correlation between literary reading and any book reading.

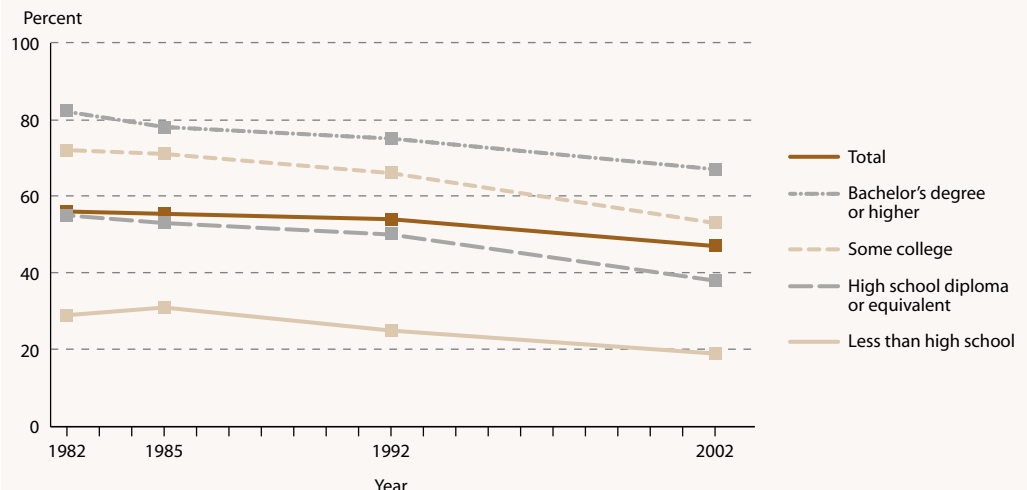
SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 1982 Bureau of the Census National Crime Survey, 1985 and 1992 Bureau of the Census National Crime Victimization Survey, and 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 2
Supplemental Tables 15-1,
15-2

National Endowment for the
Arts 2004a, 2004b

LITERARY READING: Percentage of adults age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by educational attainment: Various years, 1982–2002



Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

Table 15-1. Percentage of respondents age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by selected characteristics: Various years, 1982–2002

Characteristic	1982	1985	1992	2002
Total	55.7	55.7	54.3	47.3
Sex				
Male	48.2	48.3	47.4	37.7
Female	62.3	62.4	60.6	56.1
Race/ethnicity ¹				
American Indian	—	36.9!	52.6	49.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	—	51.5	38.7	41.2
Black	38.6	41.5	44.4	38.2
White	59.3	58.8	58.2	51.7
Hispanic	34.4	41.5	33.6	27.6
Age				
25–34	62.1	59.3	54.6	47.8
35–44	59.7	61.2	58.9	46.6
45–54	54.9	56.1	57.0	51.3
55–64	52.8	49.8	53.0	49.0
65 or older	44.8	48.8	46.6	41.7
Education				
Less than high school	29.0	31.0	25.0	18.9
High school diploma or equivalent	54.9	53.4	49.6	38.1
Some college	72.4	70.7	66.2	53.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	82.0	78.2	74.8	66.8
Family income				
Less than \$15,000	—	—	38.3	33.3
\$15,000–29,999	—	—	50.3	38.4
\$30,000–49,999	—	—	60.3	47.2
\$50,000–74,999	—	—	69.2	52.4
\$75,000 or more	—	—	77.7	61.0
Employment status				
Employed	59.0	58.3	—	49.4
Looking for work	48.5	49.2	—	44.4
Not in labor force	50.5	51.8	—	43.4
Community type				
Urban	55.1	55.7	52.4	48.4
Suburban	59.8	61.4	56.7	48.9
Rural	51.2	48.4	52.5	41.3
Citizenship				
U.S.-born	—	—	—	49.2
Naturalized U.S. citizen	—	—	—	37.5
Non-U.S. citizen	—	—	—	32.4

— Not available.

! Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

¹ American Indian includes Alaska Native, Black includes African American, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

NOTE: Literature in this indicator refers to any type of fiction, plays, and poetry that the respondent felt should be included and not just what literary critics might consider literature. See *supplemental note 2* for more information on the Current Population Survey (CPS). See *supplemental note 3* for more information on the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA).

SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 1982 Bureau of the Census National Crime Survey, 1985 and 1992 Bureau of the Census National Crime Victimization Survey, and 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

Table 15-2. Percentage of respondents age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by highest educational attainment and selected characteristics: 2002

Characteristic	Less than high school	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college	Bachelor's degree or higher
Total	18.9	38.1	53.0	66.8
Sex				
Male	13.0	26.2	40.8	58.2
Female	24.5	47.7	63.4	76.0
Race/ethnicity¹				
American Indian	3.0!	45.7	75.7	59.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	16.9	29.4	44.9	50.2
Black	18.2	29.2	46.7	60.3
White	21.6	40.6	55.5	69.6
Hispanic	15.3	30.8	36.1	53.8
Age				
25–34	24.2	33.9	52.8	64.9
35–44	16.5	35.3	52.4	62.8
45–54	18.7	39.6	53.5	69.4
55–64	17.6	41.2	54.5	70.3
65 or older	18.2	40.9	51.7	70.3
Family income				
Less than \$15,000	18.9	36.6	49.4	64.4
\$15,000–29,999	18.3	35.5	49.9	65.5
\$30,000–49,999	19.6	36.8	54.1	68.0
\$50,000–74,999	21.0	40.5	54.5	66.6
\$75,000 or more	26.3	44.9	58.7	68.0
Employment status				
Employed	17.7	37.4	52.5	65.4
Looking for work	12.5!	36.9	53.0	70.5
Not in labor force	20.2	39.3	54.1	71.7
Community type				
Urban	17.8	38.8	55.0	70.2
Suburban	21.8	37.5	52.6	64.3
Rural	15.6	37.0	49.7	67.9
Citizenship				
U.S.-born	19.9	38.9	53.8	69.2
Naturalized U.S. citizen	17.2	28.4	42.7	51.7
Non-U.S. citizen	15.9	33.6	44.0	53.9

! Interpret data with caution (estimates are unstable).

¹ American Indian includes Alaska Native, Black includes African American, Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin unless specified.

NOTE: Literature in this indicator refers to any type of fiction, plays, and poetry that the respondent felt should be included and not just what literary critics might consider literature. See *supplemental note 2* for more information about the Current Population Survey (CPS). See *supplemental note 3* for more information on the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA).

SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

Table S15. Standard errors for the percentage of adults age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by educational attainment: Various years, 1982–2002

Educational attainment	1982	1985	1992	2002
Total	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.5
Less than high school	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.9
High school diploma or equivalent	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Some college	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8

SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 1982 Bureau of the Census National Crime Survey, 1985 and 1992 Bureau of the Census National Crime Victimization Survey, and 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

Table S15-1. Standard errors for the percentage of respondents age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by selected characteristics: Various years, 1982–2002

Characteristic	1982	1985	1992	2002
Total	0.43	0.79	0.50	0.47
Sex				
Male	0.64	0.74	0.76	0.67
Female	0.56	0.65	0.65	0.63
Race/ethnicity				
American Indian	†	11.73	8.33	5.46
Asian/Pacific Islander	†	3.74	3.14	2.35
Black	1.41	1.60	1.66	1.51
White	0.46	0.53	0.55	0.53
Hispanic	1.80	2.19	1.69	1.41
Age				
25–34	0.79	0.94	1.01	1.04
35–44	0.93	1.04	1.00	0.96
45–54	1.03	1.21	1.20	1.02
55–64	1.05	1.28	1.33	1.22
65 or older	1.01	1.13	1.13	1.02
Education				
Less than high school	0.73	0.93	0.97	0.94
High school diploma or equivalent	0.72	0.83	0.84	0.81
Some college	0.90	1.04	1.05	0.91
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.77	0.91	0.89	0.84
Family income				
Less than \$15,000	†	†	1.05	1.26
\$15,000–29,999	†	†	1.00	1.10
\$30,000–49,999	†	†	0.95	1.02
\$50,000–74,999	†	†	1.37	1.12
\$75,000 or more	†	†	1.55	0.98
Employment status				
Employed	0.55	0.63	†	0.59
Looking for work	2.56	3.01	†	2.70
Not in labor force	0.75	0.83	†	0.80
Community type				
Urban	0.83	0.92	0.88	1.00
Suburban	0.66	0.72	0.74	0.72
Rural	0.75	0.95	1.06	0.99
Citizenship				
U.S.-born	†	†	†	0.50
Naturalized U.S. citizen	†	†	†	1.89
Non-U.S. citizen	†	†	†	1.75

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 1982 Bureau of the Census National Crime Survey, 1985 and 1992 Bureau of the Census National Crime Victimization Survey, and 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).

Trends in Adult Literary Reading Habits

Table S15-2. Standard errors for the percentage of respondents age 25 or older who reported reading literature in the past 12 months, by highest educational attainment and selected characteristics: 2002

Characteristic	Less than high school	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college	Bachelor's degree or higher
Total	0.94	0.81	0.91	0.84
Sex				
Male	1.17	1.14	1.37	1.25
Female	1.44	1.10	1.17	1.05
Race/ethnicity				
American Indian	1.88	9.70	7.05	13.48
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.00	4.75	5.81	3.39
Black	2.63	2.46	2.81	3.71
White	1.29	0.92	1.01	0.90
Hispanic	1.74	2.78	3.66	4.37
Age				
25–34	2.55	1.88	1.92	1.80
35–44	2.11	1.70	1.81	1.66
45–54	2.59	1.81	1.90	1.68
55–64	2.47	2.10	2.39	2.12
65 or older	1.45	1.67	2.43	2.28
Family income				
Less than \$15,000	1.62	2.18	3.30	4.78
\$15,000–29,999	1.78	1.73	2.24	3.11
\$30,000–49,999	2.37	1.63	1.85	2.05
\$50,000–74,999	3.86	2.02	1.99	1.85
\$75,000 or more	5.80	2.42	2.01	1.25
Employment status				
Employed	1.48	1.06	1.10	0.97
Looking for work	4.32	4.46	5.18	5.35
Not in labor force	1.27	1.32	1.73	1.69
Community type				
Urban	1.78	1.84	2.00	1.68
Suburban	1.80	1.27	1.41	1.21
Rural	1.59	1.61	1.92	2.30
Citizenship				
U.S.-born	1.10	0.86	0.95	0.88
Naturalized U.S. citizen	3.33	3.42	4.67	3.19
Non-U.S. citizen	2.17	3.87	5.17	3.74

SOURCE: National Endowment for the Arts, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts as part of the 2002 Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, August Supplement, previously unpublished tabulation (February 2005).