

Table 396.—Literacy skills of adults, 16 years old and over, by selected characteristics: 1992

Selected characteristics	Prose literacy ¹						Document literacy ²						Quantitative literacy ³					
	Average score	Percent of adults with proficiency at level					Average score	Percent of adults with proficiency at level					Average score	Percent of adults with proficiency at level				
		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Total	272	21	27	32	17	3	267	23	28	31	15	3	271	22	25	31	17	4
Sex																		
Male	272	22	26	31	18	4	269	23	27	31	17	3	277	21	23	31	20	5
Female	273	20	28	33	17	3	265	23	30	31	14	2	266	23	28	31	15	3
Age																		
16 to 18 years old	271	16	35	38	11	1	274	15	34	38	12	1	268	20	35	33	12	1
19 to 24 years old	280	14	29	37	18	2	280	14	29	37	18	2	277	16	28	37	16	2
25 to 39 years old	284	15	24	34	22	5	282	16	25	35	21	4	283	17	23	33	21	5
40 to 54 years old	286	15	23	34	22	5	278	17	27	33	19	3	286	16	22	33	23	6
55 to 64 years old	260	26	31	30	12	1	249	30	34	26	8	1	261	25	30	30	13	2
65 years old and older	230	44	32	19	5	1	217	53	32	13	2	(⁴)	227	45	26	20	7	2
Race/ethnicity																		
White	286	14	25	36	21	4	280	16	27	34	19	3	287	14	24	35	21	5
Black	237	38	37	21	4	(⁴)	230	43	36	18	3	(⁴)	224	46	34	17	3	(⁴)
Asian or Pacific Islander	242	36	25	25	12	2	245	34	25	28	12	2	256	30	23	27	16	4
American Indian	254	25	39	28	7	1	254	27	37	29	7	(⁴)	250	33	32	28	7	1
Hispanic, Mexican	206	54	25	16	5	(⁴)	205	54	25	16	4	(⁴)	205	54	25	17	4	(⁴)
Hispanic, Cuban	211	53	24	17	6	1	212	48	30	16	4	2	223	46	20	25	6	3
Hispanic, Puerto Rican	218	47	32	17	3	(⁴)	215	49	29	18	3	(⁴)	212	51	28	17	3	1
Hispanic, Central/South American	207	56	22	17	4	(⁴)	206	53	25	16	4	(⁴)	203	53	25	18	4	(⁴)
Hispanic, other	260	25	27	33	13	2	254	28	26	32	12	2	246	31	25	31	11	1
Highest level of education																		
Still in high school	271	16	36	37	11	(⁴)	274	15	35	38	12	1	269	19	35	32	12	1
0 to 8 years, not enrolled	177	75	20	4	(⁴)	(⁴)	170	79	18	3	(⁴)	(⁴)	169	76	18	5	1	(⁴)
9 to 12 years, not enrolled	231	42	38	17	2	(⁴)	227	46	37	15	2	(⁴)	227	45	34	17	3	(⁴)
GED	268	14	39	39	7	(⁴)	264	17	42	34	7	(⁴)	268	16	38	35	10	1
High school diploma	270	16	36	37	10	1	264	20	38	33	9	1	270	18	33	37	12	1
Some college	294	8	23	45	22	3	290	9	27	42	20	2	295	8	23	42	23	4
Associate degree	308	4	19	41	32	4	299	6	23	43	25	3	307	4	19	43	29	5
Bachelor's degree	322	4	11	35	40	10	314	4	15	37	36	8	322	4	12	35	38	12
Graduate studies/degree	336	2	7	28	47	16	326	3	10	34	41	12	334	2	9	30	42	17
Region																		
Northeast	270	22	28	31	16	3	264	24	29	30	14	2	267	24	25	31	16	4
Midwest	279	16	28	35	18	3	274	19	30	33	16	2	280	17	26	34	19	4
South	267	23	28	30	15	3	262	26	29	29	14	2	265	25	27	29	15	4
West	276	20	23	33	21	4	271	22	24	32	18	3	276	20	22	32	20	5
Prison population	246	31	37	26	6	(⁴)	240	33	38	25	4	(⁴)	236	40	32	22	6	1

¹ Prose literacy is the ability to understand and use information contained in various kinds of textual material. A level 1 task rated 0 to 225 requires the reader to locate a single piece of information in a short text. A level 2 task rated 226 to 275 requires the reader to locate a single piece of information in the text with several distractors or to make low-level inferences. A level 3 task rated 276 to 325 requires the reader to make literal or synonymous matches between the text and information given in the task, or to make low-level inferences. A level 4 task rated 326 to 375 requires the reader to perform multiple-feature matches and to integrate or synthesize information from complex passages. A level 5 task rated 376 to 500 requires the reader to search for information in dense text which contains a number of distractors.

² Document literacy reflects the knowledge and skills used to process information from documents. A level 1 task rated 0 to 225 requires the reader to locate pieces of information based on a literal match. A level 2 task rated 226 to 275 requires the reader to match a single piece of information among several distractors. A level 3 task rated 276 to 325 requires the reader to integrate multiple pieces of information from one or more documents. A level 4 task rated 326 to 375 requires the performance of multiple-feature matches, cycling through documents, and integrating informa-

tion. A level 5 task rated 376 to 500 requires the reader to search through complex displays that contain multiple distractors, to make high-level text-based inferences.

³ Quantitative literacy is the ability to perform numerical operations in everyday life. A level 1 task rated 0 to 225 requires the reader to perform a single, relatively simple, arithmetic operation. A level 2 task rated 226 to 275 requires the reader to perform a single operation using numbers that are either stated in the task or easily located in the material. A level 3 task rated 276 to 325 requires the reader to use two or more numbers to solve the problem. A level 4 task rated 326 to 375 requires the reader to perform two or more sequential operations or a single operation in which the quantities are found in different types of displays. A level 5 task rated 376 to 500 requires the reader to perform multiple operations sequentially. They must extract the features of the problem from text or rely on background knowledge to determine the quantities or operations needed.

⁴ Less than .5 percent.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey, *Adult Literacy in America, 1992*, prepared by Educational Testing Service. (This table was prepared February 1994.)