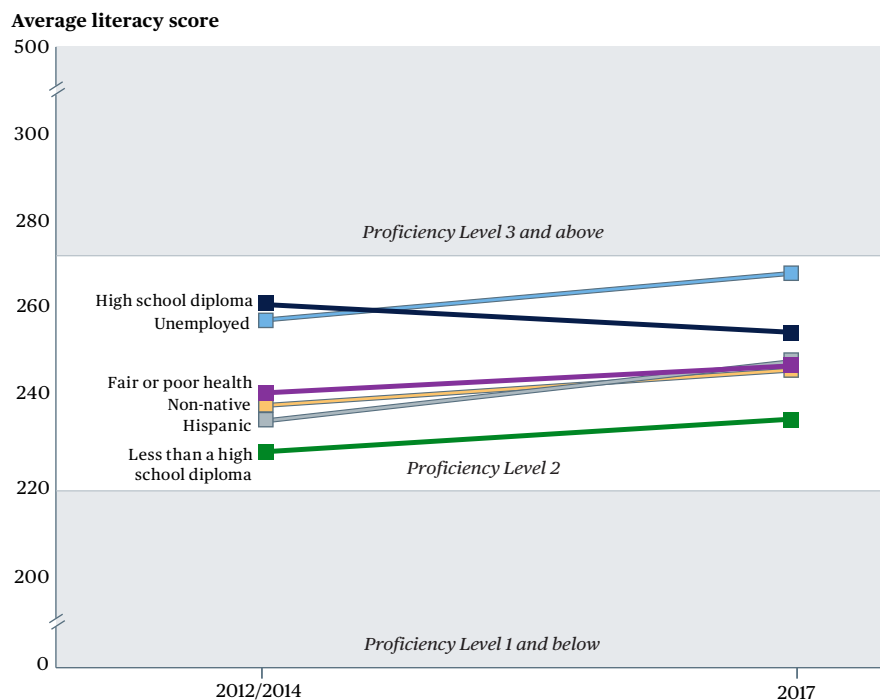


# Latest Literacy Results from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

A Publication of the National Center for Education Statistics at IES

**Literacy** is the ability to understand, use, and respond appropriately to written texts.

**Figure L. Average scores on PIAAC literacy for U.S. adults ages 16 to 65, by selected population groups: 2012/14 and 2017**



NOTE: The PIAAC literacy scale range from 0 to 500. There are six levels of proficiency for literacy (from below Level 1 to Level 5). At literacy proficiency level 2 adults can be considered nearing proficiency but still struggling to perform tasks with text-based information. All differences highlighted in this brochure are average score differences between 2012/2014 and 2017, are based on unrounded estimates, and are statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. Unemployed adults are those who during the reference period were without paid work, were available for work, and actively seeking work. Fair or poor health is a self-reported health status. Non-native refers to adults who were not born in the United States. Less than high school diploma refers to adults who have not attained a high school diploma or credential. High school diploma refers to adults whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma or credential.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), U.S. PIAAC 2017, U.S. PIAAC 2012/2014.

### ↑ Scores increased for:

- **Unemployed** adults from 259 to 271: 12 points
- Adults with **fair or poor health** from 242 to 250: 8 points
- **Non-native-born** adults from 239 to 249: 10 points
- **Hispanic** adults from 236 to 251: 15 points
- Adults with **less than a high school diploma** from 229 to 238: 9 points

### ↓ Scores decreased for:

- Adults with a **high school diploma** from 262 to 258: 4 points

### ↔ No measurable difference for:

- Overall for U.S. adults (ages 16-65), and by sex, age

## Learn More

**PIAAC National Center:**  
[nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac)

**PIAAC International Center:**  
[oecd.org/skills/piaac](https://oecd.org/skills/piaac)

**PIAAC Gateway:** [piaacgateway.com](https://piaacgateway.com)

The **Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)** is an international, large-scale study of adults' skills in literacy, numeracy, and digital problem solving. This publication highlights several key results for U.S. adults ages 16-65 from the U.S. PIAAC 2017 data collection in comparison to the combined U.S. PIAAC 2012/2014 results. For more detailed results, see the **U.S. PIAAC 2017 Web Report:** [nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/national\\_results.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/national_results.asp)