

**Table 390.—Literacy skills of adults, 16 years old and over, by selected characteristics: 1992**

Selected characteristics	Prose literacy <sup>1</sup>						Document literacy <sup>2</sup>						Quantitative literacy <sup>3</sup>					
	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
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>272</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sex</b>																		
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
<b>Age</b>																		
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	( <sup>4</sup> )	227	45	26	20	7	2
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>																		
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	( <sup>4</sup> )	230	43	36	18	3	( <sup>4</sup> )	224	46	34	17	3	( <sup>4</sup> )
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	( <sup>4</sup> )	250	33	32	28	7	1
Hispanic, Mexican .....	206	54	25	16	5	( <sup>4</sup> )	205	54	25	16	4	( <sup>4</sup> )	205	54	25	17	4	( <sup>4</sup> )
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	( <sup>4</sup> )	215	49	29	18	3	( <sup>4</sup> )	212	51	28	17	3	1
Hispanic, Central/South American .....	207	56	22	17	4	( <sup>4</sup> )	206	53	25	16	4	( <sup>4</sup> )	203	53	25	18	4	( <sup>4</sup> )
Hispanic, other .....	260	25	27	33	13	2	254	28	26	32	12	2	246	31	25	31	11	1
<b>Highest level of education</b>																		
Still in high school .....	271	16	36	37	11	( <sup>4</sup> )	274	15	35	38	12	1	269	19	35	32	12	1
0 to 8 years, not enrolled .....	177	75	20	4	( <sup>4</sup> )	( <sup>4</sup> )	170	79	18	3	( <sup>4</sup> )	( <sup>4</sup> )	169	76	18	5	1	( <sup>4</sup> )
9 to 12 years, not enrolled .....	231	42	38	17	2	( <sup>4</sup> )	227	46	37	15	2	( <sup>4</sup> )	227	45	34	17	3	( <sup>4</sup> )
GED .....	268	14	39	39	7	( <sup>4</sup> )	264	17	42	34	7	( <sup>4</sup> )	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
<b>Region</b>																		
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
<b>Prison population</b> .....	<b>246</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(<sup>4</sup>)</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(<sup>4</sup>)</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.)