

Sample Assessment Questions

Respondents who participated in the 2003 assessment were asked to complete prose, document, and quantitative literacy tasks of varying levels of difficulty. The sample questions on the following pages illustrate the types of tasks used to measure the literacy of America's adults. These questions were originally developed for the 1992 survey and were reused in 2003.

Consistent with the design of the assessment, each sample question appears before the text or document needed to answer the question. The percentage of respondents who answered the question correctly is reported, as well as the percentage of correct responses for each of the four literacy assessment levels.

More information about the sample assessment questions can be found on the Web at <http://nces.ed.gov/naal>.

DO MANY BLACK ADULTS DIE FROM THE EFFECTS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

DO YOU KNOW?

More than one out of every four Black adults has high blood pressure, according to a two-year study by Public Health Service in the 1960's. Other studies show as many as one out of three Black adults has high blood pressure. High blood pressure is the most common chronic disease treated by physicians in the Black community. More Black people die as a result of high blood pressure than any other disease.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Have your blood pressure checked regularly. Unfortunately, high blood pressure is a silent killer andcrippler. At least half of the people with high blood pressure are unaware because symptoms are not present. The only way to prevent high blood pressure is to have your blood pressure checked at least once a year, and if (1) you are Black, (2) you are over 35 years old, or (3) you have a family history of high blood pressure.

ASHLAND OIL, INC.
Ashland, Kentucky
41114 (606) 392-3333

ROBERT NELSON
DIVERSITY ROAD
ASHLAND, KY 41114

18609
DATE
2/2/02
CUSTOMER ID
002316

Parents and Teachers Evaluate Parental Involvement at Their School

Do you agree or disagree that...?

	Total	Level of School		
		Elementary	Junior High	High School
Our school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in sports, arts, and other nonsubject areas	77	76	74	79
	77	73	77	85

TOP LOC.	DELIVERY TYPE	DEGREE DAYS	K. FACTOR	PRODUCT
0	AU HO	3247	8.30	

CUSTOMER'S SIGNATURE

TANK TRUCK SALESMAN

Prose Literacy Question

Refer to the article on the next page to answer the following question.

According to the brochure, why is it difficult for people to know if they have high blood pressure?

Correct answer

Any statement such as the following:
Symptoms are not usually present
High blood pressure is silent

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
74	11	70	96	100

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

TOO MANY BLACK ADULTS DIE FROM THE EFFECTS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

DID YOU KNOW?

More than one out of every four Black adults has high blood pressure, according to a two-year survey by Public Health Service in the 1960's. Other studies show as many as one out of three Black adults has high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is the most common chronic disease treated by practitioners in the Black community.

More Black people die as a result of high blood pressure than any other disease.

For every Black person who dies of sickle-cell anemia, at least 100 others die from the effects of high blood pressure.

The rate of death from the effects of high blood pressure for Black people is nearly one and one-half times the rate for White people.

High blood pressure, along with cigarette smoking, contributes greatly to the apparent increased number of heart attacks among Black adults.

If high blood pressure is controlled, strokes, heart attacks and kidney disease can be substantially reduced.

YES, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN BE TREATED... AND CONTROLLED.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Have your blood pressure checked regularly

Unfortunately, high blood pressure is a silent killer and crippler. At least half of the people who have high blood pressure don't know it because symptoms usually are not present. The only way you can be sure is to have the doctor check your blood pressure. You should have your blood pressure checked at least once a year, especially if: (1) you are Black, (2) if you are over 40, (3) if members of your family or close relatives have had high blood pressure or the complications of high blood pressure (stroke, heart attack, or kidney disease), or (4) if you have frequent headaches, dizziness, or other symptoms that may occasionally be related to high blood pressure.

Follow your doctor's instructions

High blood pressure can't be cured, but it can be kept under control. Control means keeping your blood pressure as close to normal as possible. That's very important to you — it can prevent a crippling stroke or other serious illness in the future.

The doctor will find a way to control your blood pressure that's most comfortable for you. Then it will be up to you — to take the medicine and follow the prescribed diet, to follow the instructions carefully and to come back regularly for checkups.

Yes, high blood pressure can be controlled, but only if *you* cooperate fully with your doctor.

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Prose Literacy Question

Refer to the article on the next page to answer the following question.

What is the purpose of the *Se Habla Español* expo?

Correct answer

Any statement such as the following:

- To enable people to better serve and sell to the Hispanic community
- To improve marketing strategies to the Hispanic community
- To enable people to establish contacts to serve the Hispanic community

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
16	#	3	16	60

Rounds to zero.

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

MARKETING

Se Habla Español Hits Chicago

September 25, 26, and 27 are three days that will change your marketing.

"To some advertisers, the Hispanic market's like the weather—you hear a lot about it, but you can't do much about it," says veteran marketer Tony Martinez. "And other companies think Hispanics will buy their products anyway, so they don't need to do anything special.

"Both attitudes are way off base," Mr. Martinez says briskly, "and they'll both make the competition ecstatic. Because there's a lot of money to be made in the Hispanic market. Its spending power will be \$160 billion this year, and that's growing maybe \$1.4 billion a month," he exclaims, peering intensely over his glasses. "For example, we Hispanics buy 9 percent of all new automobiles.

"This is definitely a special market...you do have to have a special understanding of it," Mr. Martinez goes on, "because as one research firm said, it's 'a market with currents that are going in many directions.' But the rewards will be fantastic. Hispanics are very brand conscious and they tend to become brand loyal very quickly."

It's Mr. Martinez's job—his mission in life—to make sure companies learn how they can serve and sell to America's Hispanics. He has been marketing to the community for many years, working with the best in the business, including Coca-Cola and the advertising firm of Castor GS&B. Now his staff is organizing the largest annual Hispanic market trade show in the business—*Se Habla Español*.

The three-day *Se Habla Español* expo, put on by HISPANIC BUSINESS magazine, is in Chicago this year, at the Hyatt Regency. As in the two previous years in New York and Los Angeles, this conference will host a "big top"-like mix of activities.

The show draws thousands of the country's top marketers, media people, advertisers, researchers, and Hispanic contractors—all intent on gathering as much information as possible, and all hoping to explore new business opportunities. As in any really good big-top show, a hundred different things are happening all at once.

More than 60 Hispanic market specialists conduct fact-heavy seminars. Companies promoting everything from cars to demographic information to career opportunities for Hispanic professionals display and discuss their products in 30,000 square feet of exhibit space. Major exhibitors this year include Ford Motor Co., Lincoln-Mercury, Chevrolet, American Airlines, Telemundo, the Bureau of the Census, and many, many more.

"It's all contacts . . . contacts . . . contacts!" Mr. Martinez exclaims in his best marketing ringmaster style.

Each of the major media hosts its own luncheon or reception, playing to sold-out crowds. Leading participants in last year's Print Reception, for example, included *La Opinion* of Los Angeles, *Vista* magazine, *The Miami Herald*, and the *Los Angeles*

Times. Some participants in the 1989 Radio Luncheon included Katz Hispanic Radio and Caballero Spanish Media. "We still have a few events open to corporate sponsors," Mr. Martinez mentions, not without interest. "They'll be able to count on considerable media play both in preliminary press coverage and during the events themselves."

Another opportunity for sponsor visibility is the *Se Habla Español* Scholarship Fund, which will publicly award scholarships to talented Hispanic students in the various communications fields.

A grand finale black tie banquet spotlights the leading figures in America's Hispanic media world, recognizing outstanding work in each medium with the *Se Habla Español* Awards in Communication. In 1989, Mr. Martinez recalls, almost 400 entries were submitted. Publicidad Siboney swept the top honors for "Ad of the Year" and "TV Ad of the Year" with its commercial for Pepsi-Cola.

One problem attendees find is that the conference offers more information than any one person can gather during just three days. "They should know their priorities," Mr. Martinez advises, "to ensure they focus on the events that will be of most value to their employers."

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Document Literacy Question

Seventy-eight percent of what specific group agree that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in educational areas?

Parents and Teachers Evaluate Parental Involvement at Their School

Do you agree or disagree that...?

	Total	Level of School		
		Elementary	Junior High	High School

percent agreeing

Our school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in sports, arts, and other nonsubject areas

Parents	77	76	74	79
Teachers	77	73	77	85

Our school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in educational areas

Parents	73	82	71	64
Teachers	80	84	78	70

Our school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child

Parents	55	46	62	63
Teachers	23	18	22	33

Our school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles

Parents	22	18	22	28
Teachers	8	8	12	7

Source: The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987

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Correct answer

Junior high teachers

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
36	#	4	47	98

Rounds to zero.

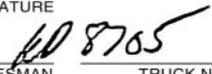
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in households or prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

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

Quantitative Literacy Question

Suppose that you had your oil tank filled with 140.0 gallons of oil, as indicated on the bill, and you wanted to take advantage of the five cents (\$.05) per gallon deduction.

- Figure out how much the deduction would be if you paid the bill within 10 days. Enter the amount of the deduction on the bill in the space provided.

		ASHLAND OIL, INC.		18609			
Ashland, Kentucky		41114 (606) 392-3333		DATE			
ROBERT NELSON		P/R 4TH HOUSE ON LEFT		2/2/02			
DIVERTY ROAD		FILL REAR IN DRIVEWAY		CUSTOMER NO.			
ASHLAND, KY 41114				002316			
TANK SIZE	GALLONS	ZONE	STOP LOC.	DELIVERY TYPE	DEGREE DAYS	K. FACTOR	PRODUCT CODE
275	180	28	0	AU HO	3247	8.30	2
CUSTOMER'S SIGNATURE							
							
TANK TRUCK SALESMAN						TRUCK NO.	
METER READING – BEFORE AND AFTER DELIVERY							
▼							
A A 0 0 3				0 0 1 4 0 ⁰			
A A 0 0 2				0 0 0 0 0 ⁰			
PRODUCT	PRICE	GALLONS	10TH	AMOUNT			
FUEL OIL	97.9	140	0	137 06			
SAVE if no outstanding balance due and you pay within 10 days				DEDUCT \$.05 per gal.			
				NET TOTAL ↓			
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Correct answer

\$7.00

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
52	1	40	92	100

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

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

Document & Quantitative Literacy Questions

This is an example of a task that was scored in three separate parts and treated as three separate questions. The first two questions were included on the document scale and the third question was included on the quantitative scale.

Refer to the form on the next page to answer the following question.

Use the following information to fill in the receipt for certified mail. Then fill in the "TOTAL Postage and Fees" line.

- You are sending a package to Doris Carter.
- Her address is 19 Main Street, Augusta, GA 30901.
- The postage for the package is \$1.86.
- The fee for certified mail is \$0.75.

Correct answer

Question 1 (Document): Enters name and address correctly. No penalty for misspelling.

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
65	8	54	86	97

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

Correct answer

Question 2 (Document): Enters \$1.86 and \$0.75 on the postage and certified fees lines respectively.

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
76	13	73	96	100

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

Correct answer

Question 3 (Quantitative): Either of the following:

Correctly totals postage and fees: \$2.61

Correctly totals incorrect fees entered on form

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Adults	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
78	33	88	96	99

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

What may be Certified?

Only items of no intrinsic value such as letters, files, records, etc., that are sent Priority First-Class Mail may be sent by certified mail. No insurance coverage is provided against loss or damage for this service. (For valuables and irreplaceable items, you should use insured or registered mail.)



How to use Certified Mail.

Simply fill out Form 3800, *Receipt for Certified Mail*, and attach (to the address side of the mail) the numbered label portion and the required postage and fee. You may obtain these forms at post offices or from rural carriers. Many customers find it convenient and a "time-saver" to have the form completed before approaching the window. Certified mail, with proper postage and fees affixed, may be dropped in a mailbox unless an official dated receipt is required.

Restricted Delivery

If you want to restrict the delivery of certified mail, you must endorse the mail "Restricted Delivery." This service is available for a \$1.00 fee and can only be used for items addressed to specific individuals by name. However, the addressee can and often does authorize an agent to receive his or her restricted mail.

Fees

The fee for certified mail is 75 cents (in addition to your postage). For an additional fee, you also may purchase a return receipt which provides you proof of delivery.

P 138 573 931

RECEIPT FOR CERTIFIED MAIL
NO INSURANCE COVERAGE PROVIDED
NOT FOR INTERNATIONAL MAIL

Sent to	
Street and No.	
P.O., State and ZIP Code	
Postage	\$
Certified Fee	
Special Delivery Fee	
Restricted Delivery Fee	
Return Receipt showing to whom and Date Delivered	
Return Receipt showing to whom, Date, and Address of Delivery	
TOTAL Postage and Fees	\$
Postmark or Date	

PS FORM 3800, June 1985

Fold at line over top of envelope to the right of the return address.

CERTIFIED

P 138 573 931

MAIL

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Future NAAL Reports

In addition to providing estimates of the literacy of America's adults, the 2003 assessment collected extensive information about characteristics of the adult population and literacy activities among adults. Future NAAL reports will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Literacy in workplace, family, and community settings, including the use of technology and health literacy
- Fluency and basic reading skills, including the literacy of America's least literate adults
- Literacy of incarcerated adults
- Technical issues associated with the assessment and instructions for using the data file
- Analysis of different dimensions of literacy

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NAAL on the Web: <http://nces.ed.gov/naal>

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy website provides easy access to:

- Overview of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy
- Results from the 2003 and 1992 literacy assessments, including previously published reports
- Technical information about the 2003 assessment, including definitions of reporting groups, sampling and data collection, and methods for estimating literacy scores
- Prose, document, and quantitative literacy estimates (means and percentage in each literacy level) and standard errors for the population groups summarized in this report
- Downloadable fact sheets on the components and new features of the 2003 assessment
- Searchable questions tool featuring released items from the 2003 and 1992 assessments
- Webcast presentations on the 2003 assessment
- Major government, national, and international adult literacy websites
- Public-use data files to facilitate secondary analysis.

Visit the NAAL website to learn more about upcoming reports, news, and events.

This report was prepared by Mark Kutner, Elizabeth Greenberg, and Justin Baer at the American Institutes for Research. For further information, contact Sheida White, NAAL Project Officer, NCES, at sheida.white@ed.gov.

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