

International Survey of Adult Skills 2017

Understanding Adult Skills in the 21st Century



ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR
EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

ISAS
International Survey of Adult Skills
United States Survey

■ Why is this study important?

The results of this study will provide a snapshot of U.S. adults' skills and help us as a country develop the educational and training programs to help prepare our workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century. For example, this study is the first national study in the United States to give us an accurate picture of how often and how effectively U.S. adults use computers in their work and daily lives. Such information is important for policymakers, educators, and researchers trying to develop educational and training policies and programs to improve adults' skills in the United States.

■ How was I chosen?

Contacting every adult in the United States is very expensive and difficult. Thus, the National Center for Education Statistics uses statistical methods to randomly select several thousand individual adults who can represent the entire nation.



■ What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to respond to a questionnaire read to you by a field representative who comes to your home. The questionnaire asks you about your education, work experiences, use of computers, and other information. After the questionnaire, you will be asked to complete a series of tasks that represent common everyday activities, such as figuring out the expiration date on a food product, using a

map to give directions, following instructions on a prescription label, using a bus schedule, or interpreting a chart in a newspaper article. You will be asked to complete these tasks with a computer or with paper and pencil.

■ How much time will it take?

The study takes around two hours to complete.

■ Why should I participate?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and is a service to your community and the nation. You represent thousands of other adults throughout the country. And, because of the statistical methods used to select you, we cannot substitute anyone else for you if you do not participate. If you do participate, you will help us get an accurate picture of the variety and range of adult skills in the United States. In addition, you will receive \$50.00 as a thank you for completing the study.

■ I haven't been in school in years, and I don't work. I don't think I can help.

Yes, you can! The success of this study depends on having an accurate representation of U.S. adults between the ages of 16 and 74.

Thus, we need information from:

- adults who are retired or work at home; as well as those currently in the workforce or looking for work;
- adults who attended school many years ago; as well as those currently in school, and
- adults who went to school for only a few years; as well as those who have gone to school for many years.



■ I don't use a computer in my day-to-day life. I don't think I can participate in this study.

Yes, you can! Not everyone uses a computer in his or her daily life. One of the purposes of this study is to find out how often people actually use computers. If you do not use a computer on a regular basis or are not comfortable using one, you can receive a printed version of the tasks.

■ How do I know my answers will be kept confidential?

Under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C., § 9543), which authorized the National Center for Education Statistics to conduct this study, any information you provide may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Individuals are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the



United States as a whole or to national subgroups. In addition, everyone working on the study has signed a confidentiality agreement pledging to protect all information provided by respondents. As soon as the survey is completed, all personal information that links data to respondents is removed.

■ What is the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies?

It is an international study designed to measure a range of skills among the adult population in the more than 30 countries that are participating worldwide. Specifically, this study looks at adults' reading and math skills as well as how they use computers and the Internet in their daily lives to locate information and solve problems. This study also collects information from participants about their background, work, and educational experiences.

In the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics, a part of U.S. Department of Education, is conducting this international study.

■ How will I recognize the field representative?

The field representative who contacts you will be carrying a study photo identification issued by the National Center for Education Statistics.

■ What if I have more questions?

The field representative who visits your home will be able to answer questions you may have about this

U.S. Department of Education

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study. You may also call the study toll-free number or visit the study web site below.

Thank you in advance for participating in this important study.

1-855-286-9240 ■ <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/isas>