

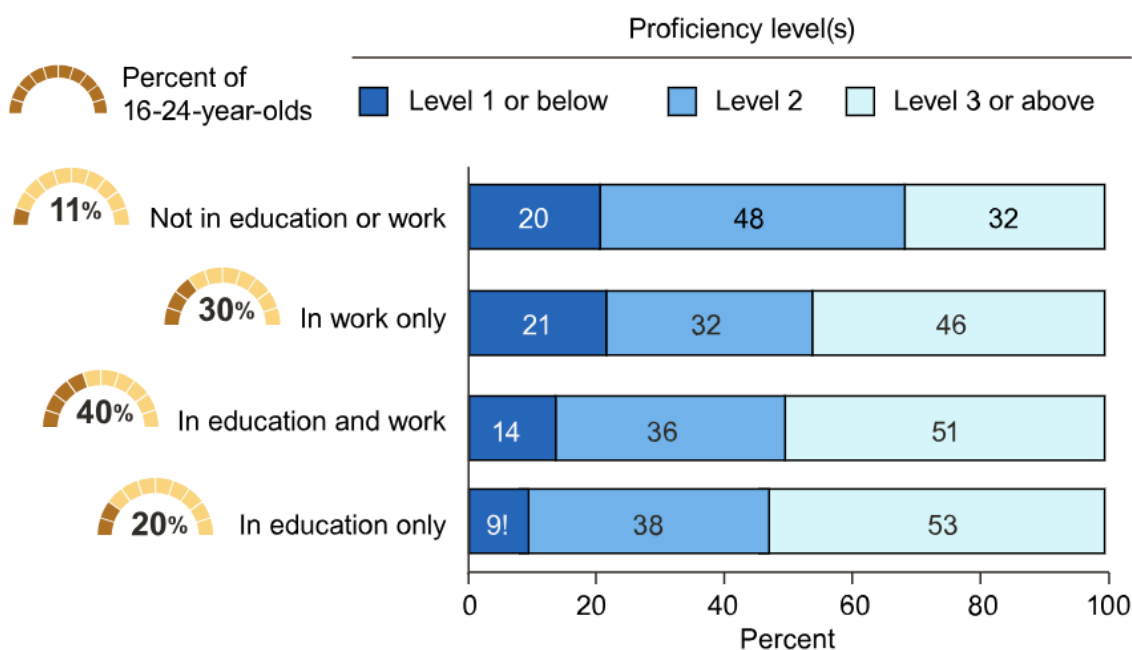
# Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

## LITERACY

### Young adults' proficiency levels on the PIAAC literacy scale by their education and work status: 2017

FIGURE

**Figure 1. Percentage distribution of U.S. adults ages 16 to 24 in the population and at selected proficiency levels on the PIAAC literacy scale, by education and work status: 2017**



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: "Not in education or work" category identifies "disengaged" young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults' Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. Please see the corresponding data table for standard errors ([download Excel file](#)).

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

## TABLES

**Table 1. Percentage distribution of U.S. adults ages 16 to 24 in the population, by education and work status: 2017**

Education or work status	Percent	s.e.
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>†</b>
Not in education or work	10.5	(1.41)
Not in education or work but has participated in education or training in the last 12 months	7.4	(1.10)
Not in education or work and has not participated in education or training in the last 12 months	3.2	(0.65)
In work only	30.1	(2.25)
In education and work	39.6	(2.60)
In education only	19.8	(2.10)

† Not applicable.

NOTE: “Not in education or work” category identifies “disengaged” young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults’ Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Standard error is abbreviated as s.e. Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.

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

**Table 2 (L). Percentage distribution of U.S. adults ages 16 to 24 at selected proficiency levels on the PIAAC literacy scale, by education and work status: 2017**

Education or work status	Total		Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3 or above	
	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Not in education or work	100	†	20	(5.9)	48	(7.5)	32	(6.9)
Not in education or work but participated in education or training in the last 12 months	100	†	19!	(7.7)	43	(9.1)	38	(9.0)
Not in education or work and did not participate in education or training in the last 12 months	100	†	‡	†	59	(16.5)	‡	†
In work only	100	†	21	(4.0)	32	(5.0)	46	(5.7)
In education and work	100	†	14	(3.6)	36	(5.7)	51	(5.6)
In education only	100	†	9!	(3.4)	38	(8.1)	53	(7.8)

† Not applicable.

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‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there were too few cases for a reliable analysis or the coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is greater than 50 percent.

NOTE: “Not in education or work” category identifies “disengaged” young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults’ Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Standard error is abbreviated as s.e. Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.

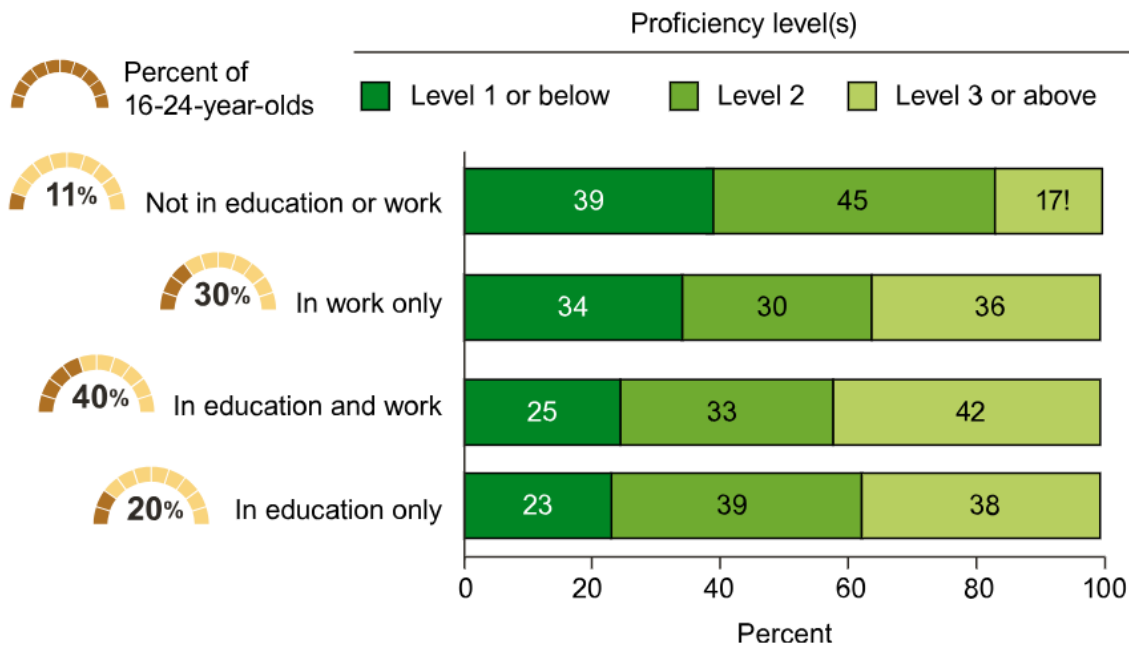
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), U.S. PIAAC 2017.

## NUMERACY

### Young adults' proficiency levels on the PIAAC numeracy scale by their education and work status: 2017

FIGURE

**Figure 2. Percentage distribution of U.S. adults ages 16 to 24 in the population and at selected proficiency levels on the PIAAC numeracy scale, by education and work status: 2017**



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

NOTE: "Not in education or work" category identifies "disengaged" young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults' Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error. Please see the corresponding data table for standard errors ([download Excel file](#)).

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

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<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>†</b>
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Not in education or work but participated in education or training in the last 12 months	7.4	(1.10)
Not in education or work and did not participate in education or training in the last 12 months	3.2	(0.65)
In work only	30.1	(2.25)
In education and work	39.6	(2.60)
In education only	19.8	(2.10)

† Not applicable.

NOTE: “Not in education or work” category identifies “disengaged” young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults’ Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Standard error is abbreviated as s.e. Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.

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

**Table 2 (N). Percentage distribution of U.S. adults ages 16 to 24 at selected proficiency levels on the PIAAC numeracy scale, by education and work status: 2017**

Education or work status	Total		Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3 or above	
	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.	Percent	s.e.
Not in education or work	100	†	39	(7.0)	45	(8.7)	17!	(6.8)
Not in education or work but participated in education or training in the last 12 months	100	†	32	(8.6)	47	(11.2)	20!	(8.5)
Not in education or work and did not participate in education or training in the last 12 months	100	†	53	(15.9)	38!	(16.6)	±	†
In work only	100	†	34	(5.5)	30	(4.9)	36	(5.3)
In education and work	100	†	25	(4.9)	33	(4.7)	42	(5.4)
In education only	100	†	23	(5.1)	39	(7.5)	38	(6.7)

† Not applicable.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

± Reporting standards not met. Either there were too few cases for a reliable analysis or the coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is greater than 50 percent.

NOTE: “Not in education or work” category identifies “disengaged” young adults who presently are neither in education nor employed (see p. 5 of [Analyzing U.S. Young Adults’ Skills by Student and Employment Status: Methodology for a New PIAAC Variable with Initial Results](#) for more discussion). Standard error is abbreviated as s.e. Estimates exclude adults who could not be interviewed due to a language barrier or a cognitive or physical limitation. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not be statistically significant. In NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.

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

### LITERACY LEVELS

**Adults at Level 1 or below** can be considered at risk for difficulties using or comprehending print material. Adults at the upper end of this level are likely to understand the meaning of short texts well enough to perform simple tasks, such as filling out a short form. Adults who are below Level 1 may only be able to understand very basic vocabulary or may be functionally illiterate.

**Adults at Level 2** can be considered nearing proficiency but still struggling to perform tasks with text-based information. Such adults may be able to relate multiple pieces of information within or across a couple of documents, compare and contrast, and draw simple inferences.

**Adults at Level 3 or above** can be considered proficient at working with information and ideas in texts. Their higher literacy skills range from the ability to understand, interpret, and synthesize information across multiple, complex texts to the ability to evaluate the reliability of sources and infer sophisticated meanings and complex ideas from written sources.

### NUMERACY LEVELS

**Adults at Level 1 or below** can be considered at risk for difficulties with numeracy. Adults at the upper end of this level can understand how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide and can perform basic one-step mathematical operations with given values or common spatial representations. Adults who are below Level 1 may only be able to count, sort, and do basic arithmetic operations with simple whole numbers or may be functionally innumerate.

**Adults at Level 2** can be considered nearing proficiency but still struggling to perform numeracy tasks. Such adults can successfully perform tasks requiring two or three steps, calculations with whole numbers and common decimals, percentages, and fractions. They can interpret relatively simple data and statistics in texts, tables, and graphs.

**Adults at Level 3 or above** can be considered proficient at working with mathematical information and ideas. Their higher numeracy skills range from the ability to recognize mathematical relationships and apply proportions to the ability to understand abstract representations of mathematical concepts and engage in complex reasoning about quantities and data.