**Numeracy** is the ability to use basic mathematical and computational skills.

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

**Scores increased for:**
- Unemployed adults from 238 to 252: 14 points
- Adults with fair or poor health from 226 to 233: 7 points

**Scores decreased for:**
- Males from 265 to 259: 6 points
- Adults with a high school diploma from 246 to 240: 6 points

**No measurable difference for:**
- Overall for U.S. adults (ages 16–65), and by age, race/ethnicity, and nativity

Note: The PIAAC numeracy scales range from 0 to 500. There are six levels of proficiency for numeracy (from below Level 1 to Level 5). At numeracy proficiency level 2 adults can be considered nearing proficiency but still struggling to perform tasks involving numeric 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 that 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. High school refers to adults who have attained a high school diploma or credential but have not yet earned an associate's degree.


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

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- PIAAC International Center: oecd.org/skills/piaac
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