

Questions and Facts

1. What percentage of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 do not have the minimum literacy skills for coping with everyday life? Is it 28%, 38%, or 42%?

Answer: 42% – Among that 42%, 15% score the lowest literacy levels. They have serious reading difficulties.

Adaptation Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005

2. What percentage of adult Canadians score poor numeracy levels? Is it 40%, 50%, or 60%?

Answer: 50% – This group is 2.5 times more likely to receive social assistance than those scoring higher levels.

Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005

3. In Canada, what percentage of adults with lower levels of literacy live in low-income households? Is it 10 to 40%, 22 to 50%, or 50 to 66%?

Answer: 22 to 50% – Among adults with high-level literacy skills, that percentage is 8%.

Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005

4. How many adult Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 suffer from problems of low literacy? Is it 2 out of 10, 3 out of 10, or 4 out of 10?

Answer: 4 out of 10 – That represents 9 million Canadians.

Adaptation Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005

5. What percentage of young persons between the ages of 16 and 25 do not have the necessary skills to cope with the demands of everyday life and work? Is it 5 to 15%, 18 to 38%, or 30 to 50%?

Answer: 18 to 38% of young persons.

Adaptation Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005

6. What percentage of Canadians enrol in literacy programs? Is it 10%, 20%, or 30%?

Answer: Fewer than 10% – Research indicates that barriers such as job or money problems, lack of childcare, and lack of transportation prevent people from enrolling.

Adaptation Source: Who Wants to Learn? ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation, 2001

7. Within the next 10 years, what percentage of new and existing jobs will require post-secondary education? Is it 25%, 40%, or 70%?

Answer: 70% – Today, only 45% of Canadians possess post-secondary credentials.

Adaptation Source: Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the Issue of Employability, March 2007

8. How many Canadians lack the literacy skills needed in modern society? Is it 3 million, 6 million, or 9 million?

Answer: 9 million – This hampers their ability to get good jobs and may undermine their health and quality of life.

Adaptation Source: Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the Issue of Employability, March 2007

9. How many Canadians have unmet job-related adult education and training needs? Is it half a million, one and a half million, or two million?

Answer: one and a half million

Source: Presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development, and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the Issue of Employability, March 2007

10. What is one of the top concerns of Canadian managers? Is it climate change, skill shortages, or lack of money?

Answer: Skill shortages – More than half of all private-sector managers anticipate occupational shortages within the next two years.

Adaptation Source: "Education and Training Are the Keys to Success," Canadian Council on Learning, March 2007

11. Almost all countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development have increased their investments in literacy, numeracy, and other adult skills. In the United States, 44% of adults have received job-related education and training. In Canada, in 2002, how many workers took part in job-related education and training? Is it fewer than 30%, fewer than 40%, or fewer than 50%?

Answer: Fewer than 30%.

Adaptation Source: "Education and Training Are the Keys to Success," Canadian Council on Learning, March 2007

12. Participation in training is more frequent among older workers. True or false.

Answer: False – According to the Canadian Council on Learning, young people participate more often in training. In 2002, the workers who received training were:

- 25 to 44 years old – 42%
- 45 to 54 years old – 34%
- 55 to 64 years old – 23%

Adaptation Source: "Canada's Biggest Economic Challenge: Improving Workplace Learning," Canadian Council on Learning, March 2007