

**Put Canada's social and economic
issues into focus.**

Look through the literacy lens.



JUSTICE

Low literacy is a

HEALTH

pervasive problem,

WORK

affecting many more

POVERTY

Canadian adults than

SENIORS

you might think.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

42%

42% of Canadians, age 16-65, do not have the minimum literacy skills for coping with everyday life and work.

Among that 42%, 15% score the lowest literacy levels and have serious difficulty dealing with *any* printed material.

15%

JUSTICE

3x

Offenders experience literacy problems at a rate 3 times that of the general population.

The **average education level** of newly admitted offenders serving two years or more is Grade 7.

7

HEALTH

Canadians classified among the most healthy have the higher average literacy and numeracy skills, while those among the **least healthy** have the lowest average skills.

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Some direct effects of living with low literacy include **increased hospitalizations** and misinterpreted medication instructions.

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“Because of literacy programs, people have a chance to live,

WORK

2x

People with low literacy skills (42% of adult Canadians) are about **twice as likely to be unemployed** for 6 or more months than those with higher skills.

50% of Canadian adults score low numeracy levels and are **2.5 times more likely to receive social assistance**, compared with those scoring higher levels.

2.5x

SENIORS

80% of Canadians over 65 have low literacy skills and are **unable to cope** with the demands of everyday life and work.



Seniors with low literacy skills are **more likely to have health problems** than seniors with high literacy abilities.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



17% of Aboriginal Peoples, age 15 to 49, have **no formal schooling** or less than Grade 9, compared with 6% of all Canadians.

Between 33% and 50% of people who speak their Aboriginal language **do not read it**, and 25% do not write it.

really live — not in the dregs of just surviving but in the glow of succeeding."

— *Woman learner, age 45*

POVERTY

Between 22% and 50% of adults with lower levels of literacy live in **low-income households**, compared with only 8% of those with high-level literacy skills.



Statistics are staggering but many are working hard to make a difference. **For more information**, please contact one of these organizations:

- ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation
www.abc-canada.org 416-442-2998
- Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français
www.fcaf.net 613-749-5333
- Frontier College
www.frontiercollege.ca 416-923-3591
- Laubach Literacy of Canada
www.laubach.ca 613-759-4949
- Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL)
www.literacy.ca 613-563-2464
- National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)
www.nald.ca 506-457-6900
- National Indigenous Literacy Association
416-250-7428

SOURCES

JUSTICE: Select Committee of Experts on Education in Prison (Council of Europe, 1989); *Correctional Education Year-end Report* (Correctional Service of Canada, 1995). **HEALTH:** *Adult Literacy and Life Skills* survey (Statistics Canada and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2005); Baker, D.W. et al., *Functional Health Literacy and the risk of hospital admission among Medicare managed care enrollees* (2002). **WORK:** *Adult Literacy and Life Skills* survey (Statistics Canada and OECD, 2005). **SENIORS:** *International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) Database* (Statistics Canada and OECD, 1995); Roberts and Fawcett, Canadian Council on Social Development, 1998. **ABORIGINAL PEOPLES:** *Aboriginal People's Survey* (Statistics Canada, 1991). **POVERTY:** *The Value of Words: Literacy and Economic Security in Canada* (Statistics Canada, 1998).



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