

# Nine in Ten (90%) Canadians 'Agree' that Improving Literacy Levels in Canada is Key to Improving the Country's Economy

*Most (95%) 'Agree' that Literacy Training is Critical to  
Improving Job Prospects for Canadians*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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# **Nine in Ten (90%) Canadians 'Agree' that Improving Literacy Levels in Canada is Key to Improving the Country's Economy**

*Most (95%) 'Agree' that Literacy Training is Critical to Improving Job Prospects for Canadians*

**Toronto, ON** - As Canada's economy slowly emerges from the recession and high levels of unemployment, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of ABC Life Literacy Canada finds that nine in ten (90%) 'agree' (50% strongly/40% somewhat) that 'improving the literacy levels of Canadians is key to improving the country's economy'. Perhaps underscoring the relationship between literacy and the economy, most (93%) also 'agree' (60% strongly/34% somewhat) that 'governments need to support improving the literacy levels of Canadians'.

With recent unemployment numbers suggesting that the recovery in the job market is stalling, it is interesting to note that most (95%) Canadians 'agree' (66% strongly/29% somewhat) that 'literacy training is critical to improving job prospects for Canadians.

But improving one's level of literacy is not just for those looking for work. Rather, those who are employed can also take advantage of programs to help them advance their literacy skills, and many do: three quarters (72%) of working Canadians 'agree' (31% strongly/41% somewhat) that they 'initiate upgrading their skills and literacy levels in the workplace'. Still, many aren't taking their own literacy into their own hands, with three in ten (27%)



'disagreeing' (5% strongly/23% somewhat) that they initiate upgrading their skills and literacy levels in the workplace.

The data also reveal marked differences in agreement with this sentiment based on one's level of education, with eight in ten university graduates (78%) and those with some postsecondary education (80%) agreeing that they initiate this type of training in their place of work, while significantly fewer working Canadians with only a high-school diploma (67%) or no diploma (58%) agree that they initiate skills and literacy training in their workplace, suggesting that either something is holding them back, personally, from doing so, or they are not given the opportunity to improve their skills in this manner.

Almost all (94%) Canadians 'agree' (58% strongly/37% somewhat) that 'Canadians' literacy skills are critical to quality of life'. In fact, Canadians spend hours upon hours each week involved in every-day tasks that require literacy skills:

- On average, online Canadians spend 14 hours a week using a computer or emailing at a place of work, and another 13 hours a week using the computer or emailing at home.
- On average, Canadians spend 4 hours a week filling out forms – paper or online – at work or at home
- On average, online Canadians spend 2 hours a week online banking or shopping.
- On average, Canadians spend 7 hours a week leisure reading (e.g. books, newspapers, magazines)

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between August 4 and 9, 2010, on behalf of the ABC Life Literacy Canada. For this survey, a sample of 1,021 adults from Ipsos' Canadian*

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*online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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