

## What is Life Literacy?

**Life literacy** signals the importance of lifelong and life-wide literacy and learning. It's the literacy skills you need to live your life fully and the new skills you need to acquire throughout your life. Workplace, family and community are important areas in your life where developing your skills can result in a more productive and more successful life experience.

Having adequate literacy skills means being able to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts. It also means being able to participate in society, achieve your goals, and develop your knowledge and potential.

Research shows that adults who have inadequate literacy skills are more likely to have poorer overall health, lower salaries, and lower levels of participation in their community.



## Adult Literacy in Canada

- 48% of adult Canadians have literacy skills that fall below a high school level, which negatively affects their ability to function at work and in their personal lives. (*OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First results from the survey of Adult Skills – OECD, 2013*)
- 17% function at the lowest level, where they may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle. (*OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First results from the survey of Adult Skills – OECD, 2013*)
- Over half (55%) of adult Canadians score in the three lowest skill levels in numeracy, up from 49.8% in 2003. (*Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) – Statistics Canada, 2013*)
- People with lower literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed than those who scored higher. (*Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) – Statistics Canada, 2013*)
- Canada ranked 11th out of the 23 OECD countries evaluated by the PIAAC (The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) on the percentage of adults with suitable literacy skills. (*OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First results from the survey of Adult Skills – OECD, 2013*)
- The assessment found that the percentage of adults with unsuitable literacy skills (48%) has increased notably over the past 10 years. (*OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First results from the survey of Adult Skills – OECD, 2013*)
- Literacy had the most notable effect when measured against other factors that affect differences in pay, followed by education. (*Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey – OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000*)
- A 1% rise in literacy rates would ultimately lead to a 3% rise in GDP. (*Literacy and Growth: New Evidence from PIAAC – DataAngel, 2018*)