

# The effect of illiteracy

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



EFFECTS OF ILLITERACY ON SOCIETY illiteracy is one of the major problems facing society and the educational system. Recent studies show that there is an increasing rate of illiteracy all over the world. A study conducted by WSI (World Statistics Institute) shows that over 27% of people are illiterate globally. Another study by the same institute shows that the speed at which the illiteracy rate ascends is 32% [32% of what?]. These rates are quite important, as illiteracy has terrible effects on society. The most important effect of illiteracy on society is that it works as an inhibitor. That is to say, the more illiterate people there are in a country, the harder it will be for the country to develop. This fact could be clarified with an example: America (whose illiteracy rate is below 5%) and Canada (illiteracy rate: around 8%) are developed countries, whereas countries like Turkey and Iran (illiteracy rates: 61% and 43% in order [respectively]) are undeveloped countries. Illiteracy has got a kind of "genetic" effect.

The children of illiterate people are more likely to be illiterate than those who aren't [aren't what? - rewrite this sentence to make it clear]. Even if the parents don't want their children to be illiterate, their children, observing the parents, see that they somehow manage to live and adopt the idea that illiteracy isn't actually a bad thing [not very clearly expressed - try a rewrite]. And since people develop most of their character during childhood, they choose to go with illiteracy. Another major effect of illiteracy is that illiterate people believe in the said things easily.

They do not investigate what was said or told to them. When looked [looking] at the pages of history, it can be seen that while most uneducated people

are [were] slaves, guardians and assistants; people who are [were] educated are [were] mostly kings, queens and sultans. They [Who? ] are not slaves because they wanted, but because people superior to them - in terms of education- made them so. All these significant results of illiteracy affect society in a bad way. So, illiteracy rates must be tried to cut down. Try and imagine our society without a common language. This could be quite a hard idea to fathom. Allow me to assist you.

If this hypothetical idea were in fact true, a typical conversation between two individuals would be as follows: one of the two would begin the conversation by making noises representing their language, the other person would not understand these noises and respond with unrecognizable noises to the first individual. As you can well imagine, this would get quite frustrating. Rita Mae Brown describes literacy as, " a social contract, an agreed upon representation of certain symbols" (420). If the symbol's (letters) meanings are not agreed upon by those attempting to communicate, then interpreting one another becomes difficult.

Simply stated, literacy is very important. Society has proven time and time again, it will reward those individuals who are competent and impede those who are not, whether expressed in terms of employment opportunities (job success) or just on a social level. One need look no further than their everyday activities in order to realize how important literary skills are. Without adequate literary skills one may not be able to identify on a label the correct amount of medicine to give a child, or read and interpret a sign giving instructions on what to do in case of a fire.

These two examples bring perspective to literacy's importance. Nevertheless, recent surveys have indicated that, " 4. 5 million Canadians, representing 24 percent of the eighteen-and-over group, can be considered illiterate" (" Adult Illiteracy" 5). Illiteracy is truly a problem within Canada. Although many groups are working to render the problem of illiteracy, much work still lies ahead. As our society moves on into the next century literacy is proving vital to economic performance. Without basic literary skills in one's possession they will become lost in our rapidly changing society.

The modern worker must be able to adapt to the changing job-scene. This often means gathering new skills and knowledge from printed material, whether instruction manuals, computer programs, or classroom training (text books). It is quite commonly the case that highly skilled jobs require a high level of literacy. Therefore, literary skill level is an important factor in predicting an individual's economic success. It will affect an individual's income, their employment stability and whether they even receive employment opportunities. Presently, our world revolves around literacy.

Simply being literate allows one to continuously upgrade one's literary skills to a higher level. It allows one to stay informed of happenings in and around the world through mediums such as newspapers and magazines. Knowing current news about what is going on in this ever changing world of ours is the key to staying ahead. Another thought to ponder is this, we rely on those with high literacy levels to record and document findings and happenings for future generations to reflect on. These writings would most likely be dull and inaccurate or would not exist at all without our current levels of literacy.

When viewed from a social standpoint, literacy remains just as important as when viewed from the economic standpoint. Linda Macleod of the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice, points out that, " 65 percent of people entering Canadian prisons for the first time have trouble reading and writing, low literacy is part of a constellation of problems that can limit choices in life and thus lead people to criminal activity" (20). Somebody in possession of a high level of literacy will most likely be well informed and tend to make wiser decisions.

By obtaining this level of literacy they have also gathered a large vocabulary giving them many words to choose from to express their ideas and feelings. Conversely, many would agree that a conversation with one who has a good grasp of the English language is always more delightful than with one who is less educated. Literacy can act as a window, opening one's view to the world. Presently, we are being bombarded with information, news, trivia and gossip (not that this is always a positive feature in our lives). Without sufficient literary skills one cannot even absorb any of this information.

These people will miss out on many of life's benefits, socially as well as economically. Without sufficient literary skills one would have a tremendously difficult time functioning in our current world. Think about your average day, consider how many times you refer to your literary skills to aid you, could you function without those skills? Finding an address, reading a map, reading a menu, performing a bank transaction, these are just a few common tasks that require your literary skills. Also, when looking at the importance of literacy to our nation, its value is evident. High levels of literacy throughout all sectors of Canada's workforce are necessary, " low

literacy levels of workers' affect Canada's ability to perform in the increasingly competitive international marketplace" (" Literacy" 7). Literary skills become building blocks. First creating a well-educated society, then a highly skilled labour force which can compete and adapt to the changing market. These factors lead to an increase in economic growth within the nation which in turn, results in a higher standard of living for its people. As our society moves forward into the future, a higher level of literacy will become more important to one's level of success.

Where would our society be without our ability to exchange knowledge and information? How many times have you made a purchase that read on the outside - instructions inside? You and I think nothing of this, and in a sense take our gift for granted. For many, deciphering written instructions is a near impossible task, asking for assistance does little more than to further lower their self esteem. Literacy is important. To truly seize the benefits possible in one's life it has to be accepted that literacy is the key. Society will continue to reward skilled individuals and disadvantage those who are not.