

Can illiterate students graduate from high school?

[Education](#), [School](#)



According to a study conducted by the U. S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Literacy, “ 14 percent of American adults can't read, and 19 percent of high school graduates can't read. ” What's more, the number of functionally illiterate adults is increasing by approximately two and one quarter million persons each year. Why does this condition exist? There are four primary reasons students might graduate from high school without knowing how to read.

There could be additional factors such as geographical factors, individual disabilities, gender bias, inadequate facilities and poverty; however, illiteracy continues to have these four main causes: cheating on the exams, social promotion, a kind of special talent and proficiency at memorizing examinations. The first strategy to mention is cheating. As John Corcoran, a former high school and head of a multi-million dollar business but couldn't read due to dyslexia, used to cheat on the examinations, explains, “ I was like a cat burglar, and the jewels were the degree ” (Feeney).

Like Corcoran, students cheat in many ways. Some of them copy from others; some take out their textbooks or reference books to copy; some copy from small pieces of paper on which they had prepared the answer for the exams; still some use the modern communication tools such as an iPhone or iPad. No one likes to fail, neither do illiterate students; therefore, they regard cheating as a short cut to pass their exams to earn a high school diploma.

Another way that illiterate students graduate from high school is thanks to social promotion, the practice of promoting a student to the next grade only at the end of the current school year, regardless of when or whether they

learn the required knowledge. This allows them to keep them with their peers by age, protect their self-esteem and promote the students who are weak in one subject on the basis of strength in the other areas(Cooper).

For instance, we didn't have social promotion before 1992 in China, and the entrance exam was extremely challenging. The students who failed had to be held back. However, educators claimed that retention was not a cost-effective response to poor performance when compared to cheaper or more effective interventions. They also noted that retention had hard financial costs for school systems; requiring a student to repeat a grade was essentially to add one student for a year to the school system, assuming that the student did not drop out.

Some parents worried that older retained students would victimize younger students. As a result, social promotion was established as a solution to help the students get the real knowledge. There was no question that the kids unable to read or write were going to the next grade directly. The third factor that illiterate students but with special talents could win pass through when comes to graduation, like John Corcoran. He learned how to take advantage of his talent for sports to compensate for his disability I mentioned before.

Feeney discusses, in his article " TheTeacherWho Couldn't Read", " At Texas Western College, which he attended on an athleticscholarship, Corcoran conjured up a method to avoid courses requiring reading in class and essay writing. " Typically, an increasing number of students, parents and educators pay more attention to the special talents that they learn nowadays. If you have some talents in sports, music, scienceor machine, you almost win a ticket to the colleges even though you aren't able to read or write.

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The final factor that illiterate students graduate from high school is that these students are good at taking examinations. More specifically, they are skilled in memorizing the exam questions. In “Teenagers in Dreamland,” Robert J. Samuelson points out that increasing adolescent autonomy is resulting in reduced academic skills/ performance of students. Schools have to downgrade the academic standards as well as the entrance exams. Some substandard schools even just focus on preparing for the examinations.

The only job for the student is to memorize all the questions. The teachers help to prepare all of the questions for the students, but we all have a responsibility to support these students to polish their skills, so they can graduate knowing how to read as well as write. According to the analysis above, there are many strategies to graduate from high schools without how to read or write in the list. These students may have a huge disadvantage. These students will be prevented from gaining the information they need to be successful.

Illiterate adults don't have the same advantages in the world. They won't know how to negotiate contracts, interview the jobs, and may not know how to get help when they are in trouble. Therefore, schools as a part of society should do what they can to prevent students from graduating high school as illiterate students. I believe that education uplifts us. It is the only path which can lead us to wisdom and liberation. No matter what kind of obstacles that may lead to students graduating illiterate, the best solution for us all to be sure to prevent this problem.