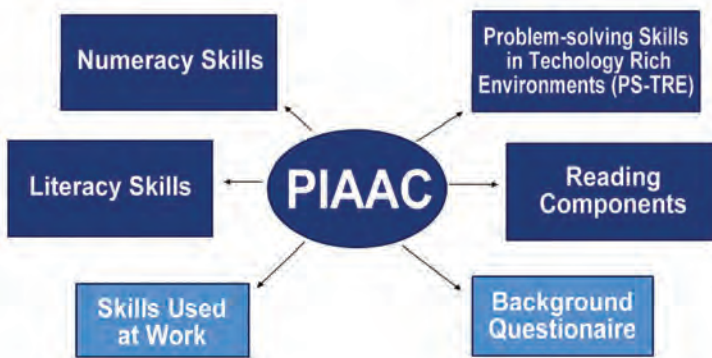


Since 2008, adults aged 16 to 65 from 24 countries around the globe participated in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), an initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The results of the PIAAC survey were released on October 8, 2013.



PIAAC assessed the reading, numeracy and problem-solving skills of adults who live and work in technology-rich environments (PS-TRE). Problem-solving in technology-rich environments is defined as the ability to use digital technology, communication tools and networks to acquire and evaluate information, communicate with others and perform practical tasks. The PIAAC assessment focused on the capability of adults to solve problems for personal, professional and civic purposes by setting up appropriate goals, and by using computers to access and use information.

PIAAC also collected important data on how adults use literacy and essential skills in their daily lives, and how these skills are distributed within populations. Participants were asked about the type of skills required at their job, how often they used different skills, whether skills were used for easier or more difficult tasks, and how well their skills and qualifications matched their job demands. The objective of the survey was not to test individual proficiencies, but to evaluate how the skills of adults relate to their well-being; what skills do adults need to succeed economically and socially? How effectively does our education and training system meet these emerging skill demands?

## Overview of Nova Scotia's PIAAC Results



- 84% of Nova Scotia respondents were able to complete the computer-based assessment (above the OECD average of 74%).
- Nova Scotia ranks at the OECD average in literacy, below the OECD average in numeracy, and above the OECD average in problem-solving in technology-rich environments (PS-TRE).
- Adults aged 16-65 score at the Canadian average in all three domains.
- Scores for Nova Scotians aged 16-24 are below the OECD average in literacy and numeracy and at the OECD average for PS-TRE.
- Literacy scores for 16 to 65 year olds with a bachelor's degree or higher are above the OECD average.
- Nova Scotia has a higher proportion of the population at the lowest proficiency levels in numeracy and PS-TRE when compared to other OECD countries on average.

**In Canada, over 27,000 adults aged 16 to 65 participated in PIAAC.** Youth, official-language minorities, off-reserve Aboriginal populations and immigrants were oversampled to provide reliable information about these groups. Adults with very low literacy skills participated in the reading assessment but not the entire survey.

**PIAAC will help Literacy Nova Scotia determine how best to support adult learners in meeting their learning goals to improve their literacy and essential skills.** We want to ensure that all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to find better employment opportunities and to live fulfilled lives.

## **PIAAC Results by Socioeconomic Characteristics**

### **By Age:**

- Literacy and numeracy skills peak at age 25 to 34, and decline with older age groups.
- Canadian youth (16-24) perform below OECD average in literacy while 55-65 are above the OECD average.
- Younger individuals are more proficient in PS-TRE than older ones, no major difference between ages 16 to 44.

### **By Gender:**

- Men have higher numeracy skills than women, regardless of age; but there are almost no differences in literacy and PS-TRE.

### **By Education:**

- Higher education is associated with greater literacy, numeracy, and PS-TRE skills.
- Skills of individuals with post-secondary education (PSE) – below a bachelor's degree are similar to those with only a high school diploma.
- The impact of age on skills is partly offset by level of education.

**Literacy and essential skills are vital to the social, economic, and health outcomes of our people and our province.** The PIAAC report provides comprehensive information that we can use to take positive steps forward. It gives up-to-date results about foundational skills of working-age adults in Nova Scotia and other key information. It gives us a deeper and more complete look at how skills are used and developed for/at work, and which skills workers and jobseekers have.

**Read more at [www.buildingcanadasskillsadvantage.ca](http://www.buildingcanadasskillsadvantage.ca)**

## ***What is literacy?***

Literacy is the ability to use printed information to function in society, at work and in the family. It is the combination of thinking and social skills we all need to analyze and use information to control our own lives, achieve our goals and develop our knowledge and potential.

## ***What is Literacy Nova Scotia?***

Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) is a not-for-profit organization that has supported the literacy and essential skills field since 1992. **LNS's mission is that all Nova Scotians have equal access to quality literacy, essential skills, and lifelong learning opportunities** and that these opportunities be available wherever and whenever there is a need or interest. LNS supports the adult literacy field in the broadest sense. It supports community sector, college, school board, workplace, and workforce programs. LNS understands that literacy is bigger than reading and writing; it is all the skills needed for accessing and using information.

## ***What do we do?***

Literacy Nova Scotia supports and serves the literacy and essential skills field through:

- **Information sharing** – publication of online newsletter, print newsletter, fact sheets; Literacy Action Week; website and database; and the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy.
- **Research** – Adaptation of existing research and dissemination; research and surveys on current issues such as learners' needs, professional development, and the state of the field; and preparation of briefs to government.
- **Supports to learners** – scholarships and bursaries; PGI grants to organizations; Learn Line; The Learning Beacon online ezine; Adult Learners' Week Workshops, Contest and Celebration; Assistive Technology for Community-based organizations; Computers for Schools; projects directly affecting learner support.
- **Supports to practitioners and organizations** – professional development offerings; Professional Development Fund; Assistive Technology Fund; Practitioner Training and Certification Program.

**Canada**

*Funded by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program*