

Consequences of illiteracy

The consequences of illiteracy are many and harmful in several respects. As well as affecting illiterate individuals themselves in their daily lives and often jeopardizing their future, this scourge has a significant effect on society, both socially and economically.

The consequences of illiteracy on individuals and society include the following:

For individuals

- Limited ability to obtain and understand essential information;
- Unemployment: The unemployment rate is 2–4 times higher among those with little schooling than among those with Bachelor's degrees;
- Lower income;
- Lower-quality jobs;
- Reduced access to lifelong learning and professional development;
- Precarious financial position;
- Little value is given to education and reading within the family, and this often leads to intergenerational transmission of illiteracy;
- Low self-esteem, which can lead to isolation;
- Impact on health: Illiterate individuals have more workplace accidents, take longer to recover and more often misuse medication through ignorance of health care resources and because they have trouble reading and understanding the relevant information (warnings, dosage, contraindications, etc.).

For society

- Since literacy is an essential tool for individuals and states to be competitive in the new global knowledge economy, many positions remain vacant for lack of personnel adequately trained to hold them;
- The higher the proportion of adults with low literacy proficiency is, the slower the overall long-term GDP growth rate is;
- The difficulty understanding societal issues lowers the level of community involvement and civic participation.

Without the basic tools necessary for achieving their goals, individuals without an adequate level of literacy cannot be involved fully and on a completely equal basis in social and political discourse.