



2.12 Education outcomes

	Adult illiteracy rate				Youth illiteracy rate				Expected years of schooling			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Males		Females	
	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	1980	1997	1980	1997
Albania	21	9	46	24	6	2	15	3	..	..	..	..
Algeria	46	24	76	46	24	8	54	18	10	12	7	10
Angola	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8	9	7	7
Argentina	5	3	6	3	3	2	3	1	..	..	..	..
Armenia	2	1	6	3	1	0	1	0	..	..	..	..
Australia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12	17	12	17
Austria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	15	11	14
Azerbaijan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	59	49	83	71	52	40	74	61	5	..	3	..
Belarus	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
Belgium	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	17	13	17
Benin	73	46	90	77	54	25	83	65	..	..	..	..
Bolivia	20	9	42	22	7	2	20	7	..	..	..	..
Bosnia and Herzegovina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Botswana	44	27	41	22	32	17	25	8	7	12	8	12
Brazil	23	16	27	16	14	10	12	6	..	..	..	..
Bulgaria	3	1	7	2	1	0	1	1	11	12	11	12
Burkina Faso	82	68	96	87	73	56	92	79	2	3	1	2
Burundi	57	45	83	63	48	37	71	42	3	5	2	4
Cambodia	61	43	92	80	47	26	86	61	..	..	..	..
Cameroon	41	20	65	33	18	7	33	8	8	..	6	..
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	17	15	17
Central African Republic	64	43	89	68	44	26	76	45	..	..	..	..
Chad	75	51	91	69	58	29	80	45	..	..	..	..
Chile	8	4	9	5	3	2	3	1	..	13	..	13
China	22	9	48	25	4	1	16	5	..	..	..	..
Hong Kong, China	6	4	24	11	3	1	4	0	12	12	11	12
Colombia	15	9	17	9	8	4	7	3	..	..	..	..
Congo, Dem. Rep.	52	29	79	53	31	12	62	28	..	7	..	4
Congo, Rep.	37	14	62	29	12	2	27	4	..	..	..	..
Costa Rica	8	5	9	5	4	2	3	2	10	..	10	..
Côte d'Ivoire	66	47	87	64	51	32	76	44	..	..	..	..
Croatia	2	1	9	3	0	0	1	0	..	11	..	12
Cuba	7	4	8	4	2	0	2	0	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	..	13
Denmark	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	15	13	15
Dominican Republic	25	17	27	17	18	10	17	9	..	11	..	11
Ecuador	15	8	22	11	6	3	9	4	..	..	..	..
Egypt, Arab Rep.	47	35	75	58	36	24	61	40	..	12	..	10
El Salvador	29	19	39	25	19	12	24	13	..	10	..	10
Eritrea	51	34	82	62	37	21	69	41	..	5	..	4
Estonia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12	..	13
Ethiopia	72	58	89	70	59	47	78	50	..	..	..	..
Finland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	..	17
France	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	..	16
Gabon	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gambia, The	79	58	88	73	64	37	79	54	..	6	..	4
Georgia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	..	11
Germany	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16	..	16
Ghana	43	22	70	40	21	7	46	14	..	..	..	..
Greece	4	2	14	5	1	0	1	0	13	14	12	14
Guatemala	39	25	55	40	26	15	43	28	..	..	..	..
Guinea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Guinea-Bissau	67	43	93	83	44	21	87	70
Haiti	66	50	73	54	53	38	57	38
Honduras	37	27	40	27	27	19	27	16



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	Male		Female		Male		Female		Males		Females	
	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	1980	1997	1980	1997
Hungary	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	..	13	..	13
India	45	33	74	57	33	22	58	37	..	..	..	..
Indonesia	21	9	40	20	7	2	15	4	..	10	..	10
Iran, Islamic Rep.	38	18	61	33	16	4	35	10	..	12	..	11
Iraq	53	36	78	57	39	23	64	36	12	..	9	..
Ireland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	14	12	14
Israel	5	2	13	6	1	0	3	1	..	..	..	..
Italy	3	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
Jamaica	28	18	20	10	17	10	8	3	..	11	..	11
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	..	13	..
Jordan	18	6	46	17	4	1	14	1	12	..	12	..
Kazakhstan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kenya	30	12	57	27	13	5	32	7	..	..	..	..
Korea, Dem. Rep.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Korea, Rep.	3	1	11	4	0	0	0	0	12	15	11	14
Kuwait	26	17	39	22	17	9	22	8	12	9	12	9
Kyrgyz Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lao PDR	59	38	90	70	40	19	79	46	..	..	..	..
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	..	12	..	13
Lebanon	17	9	37	21	7	3	18	8	..	..	..	..
Lesotho	42	29	17	7	30	18	5	2	7	9	10	10
Libya	29	10	70	35	5	0	39	8	13	..	11	..
Lithuania	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
Macedonia, FYR	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11	..	11
Madagascar	43	28	61	42	29	18	45	25	..	..	..	..
Malawi	36	27	73	56	29	20	60	41	..	..	..	..
Malaysia	20	9	37	18	7	3	12	3	..	..	..	..
Mali	81	54	92	69	66	31	82	44	..	..	..	..
Mauritania	59	48	79	69	51	40	72	60	..	..	..	..
Mauritius	19	13	33	20	11	7	15	6	..	..	..	..
Mexico	14	7	22	11	6	3	10	4	..	..	..	..
Moldova	2	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
Mongolia	44	28	72	49	30	16	54	28	..	7	..	9
Morocco	58	40	85	66	43	25	72	45	8	..	5	..
Mozambique	62	42	89	73	43	26	80	57	5	4	4	3
Myanmar	15	11	34	21	11	9	19	10	..	..	..	..
Namibia	29	18	38	20	18	11	20	7	..	..	..	..
Nepal	62	43	93	78	48	26	86	61	..	..	..	..
Netherlands	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	16	13	16
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	16	13	17
Nicaragua	39	34	39	31	35	30	32	24	..	9	..	9
Niger	87	78	97	93	82	69	95	88	..	3	..	2
Nigeria	55	30	78	48	32	12	58	19	..	..	..	..
Norway	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	15	13	16
Oman	49	22	84	43	18	1	65	6	5	9	2	9
Pakistan	59	42	86	71	48	25	78	53	..	..	..	..
Panama	14	8	16	9	6	3	8	4	11	..	12	..
Papua New Guinea	41	29	61	45	30	20	47	30	..	..	..	..
Paraguay	11	6	18	9	6	3	7	3	..	10	..	10
Peru	12	6	29	16	4	2	13	5	11	..	10	..
Philippines	10	5	12	5	5	2	5	1	11	..	11	..
Poland	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	13	12	13
Portugal	13	6	23	11	2	0	2	0	..	14	..	15
Puerto Rico	11	7	12	7	6	3	4	2
Romania	2	1	7	3	1	1	1	0	..	12	..	12
Russian Federation	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0



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	Male		Female		Male		Female		Males		Females	
	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15 and over	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	% aged 15-24	1980	1997	1980	1997
Rwanda	48	29	71	43	32	16	51	21	..	..	..	..
Saudi Arabia	33	17	67	36	15	5	40	11	7	10	5	9
Senegal	70	55	88	74	59	42	79	60	..	..	..	..
Sierra Leone	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Singapore	9	4	26	12	2	1	3	0	..	..	..	..
Slovak Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Slovenia	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
South Africa	22	15	25	16	15	9	15	9	..	14	..	14
Spain	3	2	8	4	1	0	1	0	13	..	13	..
Sri Lanka	9	6	21	12	6	3	9	4	..	..	..	..
Sudan	49	32	81	57	34	18	65	32	..	..	..	..
Sweden	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12	14	13	15
Switzerland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	15	12	14
Syrian Arab Republic	28	13	66	42	13	5	47	23	11	10	8	9
Tajikistan	2	1	7	1	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
Tanzania	33	17	66	36	18	7	43	13	10	..	7	..
Thailand	8	3	17	7	3	1	4	2	..	..	..	..
Togo	48	28	81	62	29	14	68	44	..	..	..	..
Trinidad and Tobago	7	5	16	8	4	2	7	3	11	..	11	..
Tunisia	42	21	69	42	14	3	42	13	10	..	7	..
Turkey	17	7	46	25	4	2	20	7	..	11	..	9
Turkmenistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Uganda	39	24	69	46	27	15	53	30	..	..	..	..
Ukraine	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	..	..	..	..
United Arab Emirates	33	27	42	23	26	15	22	6	8	10	7	11
United Kingdom	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	16	13	17
United States	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	16	15	16
Uruguay	6	3	5	2	2	1	1	1	..	..	..	..
Uzbekistan	17	7	33	17	6	2	14	5	..	..	..	..
Venezuela, RB	14	7	18	9	6	3	6	2	..	10	..	11
Vietnam	7	5	19	9	4	3	7	3	..	..	..	..
West Bank and Gaza	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Yemen, Rep.	62	34	95	77	45	18	89	58	..	..	..	..
Yugoslavia, FR (Serb./Mont.)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Zambia	29	16	53	31	18	10	35	16	..	8	..	7
Zimbabwe	22	8	38	17	8	2	20	5	..	..	..	..
World	28 w	18 w	46 w	32 w	17 w	11 w	30 w	19 w				
Low income	35	22	60	41	21	14	39	24				
Excl. China & India	43	29	65	46	31	18	49	30				
Middle income	15	10	22	15	9	5	14	8				
Lower middle income	15	11	22	17	10	6	17	10				
Upper middle income	14	9	21	13	7	4	10	4				
Low & middle income	29	18	48	33	17	11	31	19				
East Asia & Pacific	20	9	43	22	5	2	15	5				
Europe & Central Asia	3	2	8	5	1	1	4	2				
Latin America & Carib.	18	11	23	13	10	7	11	6				
Middle East & N. Africa	44	26	72	48	27	13	53	25				
South Asia	48	35	75	59	36	24	62	42				
Sub-Saharan Africa	51	32	72	49	34	19	56	28				
High income				
Europe EMU				



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About the data

Many governments have recently collected and published statistics that indicate how their education systems are working and developing—statistics on student enrollments and on such efficiency indicators as pupil-teacher ratios, repetition rates, and cohort progression through school. But despite an obvious interest in what education achieves, few systems in high-income or developing countries have until recently systematically collected information on outcomes of education.

Basic student outcomes include achievements in reading and mathematics judged against established standards. In many countries national learning assessments are enabling ministries of education to monitor progress in these outcomes. Internationally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has established literacy as an outcome indicator based on an internationally agreed definition. The illiteracy rate is defined as the percentage of people who cannot, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement about their everyday life. In practice, illiteracy is difficult to measure. To estimate illiteracy using such a definition requires census or survey measurements under controlled conditions. Many countries estimate the number of illiterate people from self-reported data, or by taking people with no schooling as illiterate.

Literacy statistics for most countries cover the population aged 15 and above, by five-year age groups, but some include younger ages or are confined to age ranges that tend to inflate literacy rates. As an alternative, UNESCO has proposed a narrower age range of 15–24, which better captures the ability of participants in the formal education system. The youth illiteracy rate reported in the table measures the accumulated outcomes of primary education over the previous 10 years or so by indicating the proportion of people who have passed through the primary education system (or never entered it) without acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Reasons for this may include difficulties in attending school or dropping out before reaching grade 5 (see *About the data* for table 2.11) and thereby failing to achieve basic learning competencies.

The indicator expected years of schooling is an estimate of the total years of schooling that an average child at the age of school entry will receive, including years spent on repetition, given the current patterns of enrollment across cycles of education. It may also be interpreted as an indicator of the total education resources, measured in school years, that a child will acquire over his or her “lifetime” in school—or as an indicator of an education system’s overall level of development.

Because the calculation of this indicator assumes that the probability of a child’s being enrolled in school at any future age is equal to the current enrollment ratio for that age, it does not account for changes and trends in future enrollment ratios. The expected number of years and the expected number of grades completed are not necessarily consistent, because the first includes years spent in repetition. Comparability across countries and over time may be affected by differences in the length of the school year or changes in policies on automatic promotions and grade repetition.

Definitions

- **Adult illiteracy rate** is the percentage of people aged 15 and over who cannot, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement about their everyday life.
- **Youth illiteracy rate** is the illiteracy rate among people aged 15–24.
- **Expected years of schooling** are the average number of years of formal schooling that a child is expected to receive, including university education and years spent in repetition. They are the sum of the underlying age-specific enrollment ratios for primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Data sources

The data shown in the table were compiled by UNESCO and published in its *World Education Report 1998* and *Statistical Yearbook 1999*. The data on illiteracy are based on the results of UNESCO’s 1999 literacy estimates and projections.