

Education in Canada

Elementary & Secondary Enrollment

- In 2002/03, there were 4,979,112 students enrolled in elementary or secondary schools across Canada. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, enrollment declined by 0.5% overall.
- Some provinces and territories reported modest increases in elementary and secondary school enrollment. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, Ontario's enrollment rose by 1.1% and Alberta's increased by 0.9%. The largest enrollment gains in were in the territories: Northwest Territories saw an increase of 1.4% and Nunavut reported the largest rise in enrollment, at 3.1%.

**Full-time Enrollment in Elementary and Secondary Schools,
Canada and Provinces/Territories, 2000/ 01 to 2002/ 03**

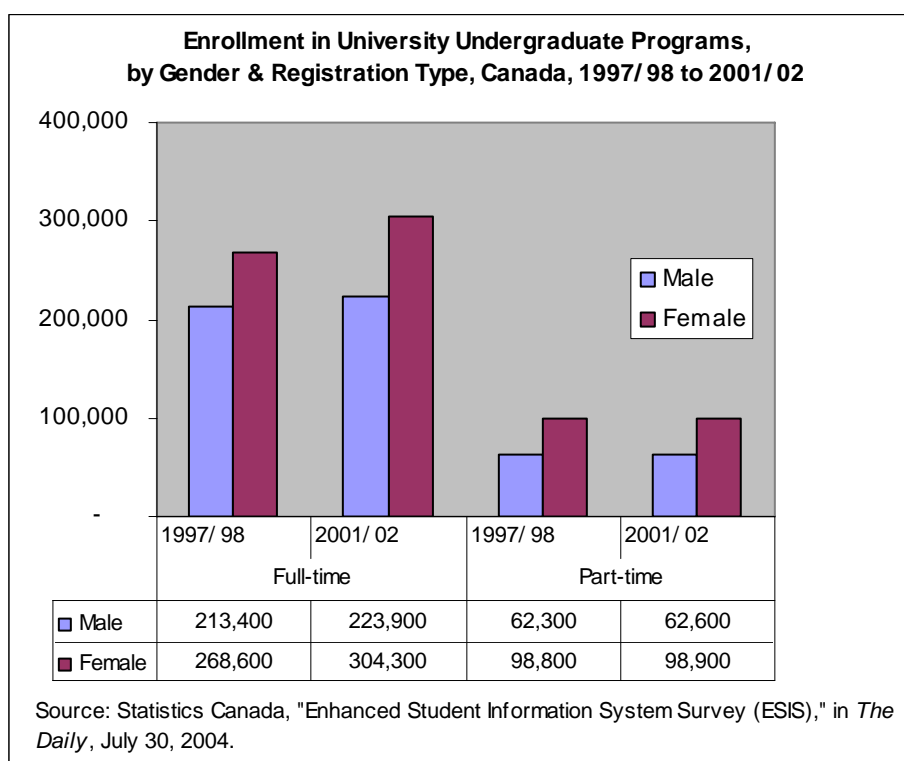
	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	% Change 2000/ 01 to 2002/ 03
Newfoundland & Labrador (NF & LB)	87,438	84,173	81,651	-6.6%
Prince Edward Island (PEI)	23,591	23,355	23,132	-1.9%
Nova Scotia (NS)	155,873	153,450	150,599	-3.4%
New Brunswick (NB)	124,942	122,732	120,600	-3.5%
Quebec (QC)	1,094,333	1,090,435	1,083,427	-1.0%
Ontario (ON)	2,019,835	2,039,013	2,042,392	1.1%
Manitoba (MB)	187,944	181,232	180,895	-3.8%
Saskatchewan (SK)	178,461	175,116	171,674	-3.8%
Alberta (AB)	516,395	518,108	520,956	0.9%
British Columbia (BC)	589,914	587,198	580,407	-1.6%
Yukon (YK)	5,608	5,402	5,414	-3.5%
Northwest Territories (NWT)	9,291	9,366	9,422	1.4%
Nunavut (NV)	8,289	8,412	8,545	3.1%
CANADA	5,001,913	4,998,050	4,979,112	-0.5%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's *Summary of Public School Indicators for the Provinces and Territories, 1996/97 to 2002/03*. Cat. # 81-595-MIE2004022.

Post-secondary Enrollment

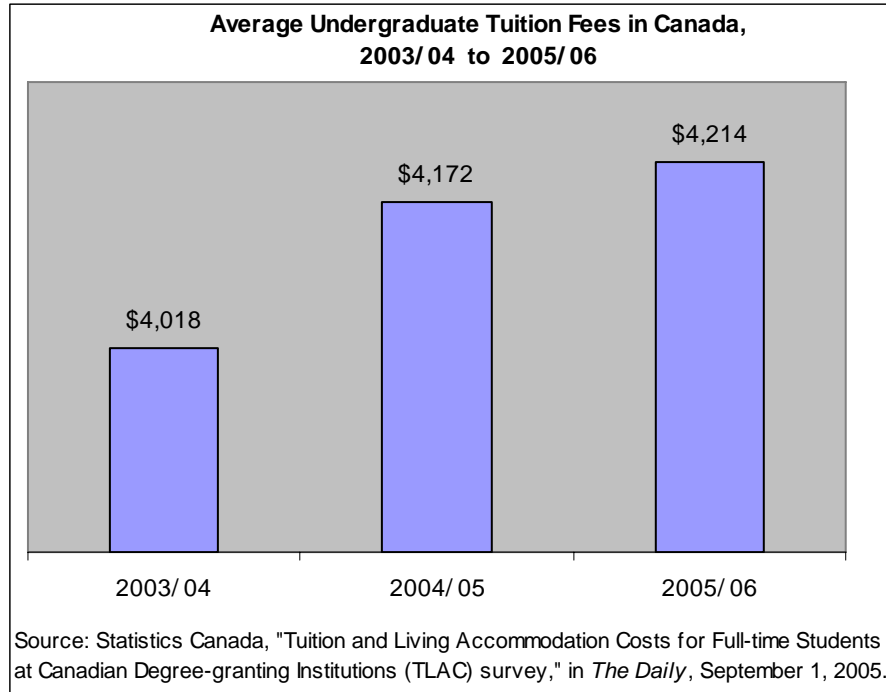
- In 2001/02, there were 689,700 students in Canada enrolled in full-time and part-time undergraduate studies at post-secondary institutions such as universities, colleges, and trade schools. Post-secondary enrollment has been rising. Between 1997/98 and 2001/02, the number of students enrolled in undergraduate programs rose by 8.5%.
- The growth in enrollment over this period was greatest among full-time students. There were 482,100 full-time students in 1997/98, and by 2001/02, that number had climbed to 528,200 – an increase of 9.6%.

- There were significant gender differences in enrollment over this four-year period. The number of female students in full-time undergraduate programs rose by 13.3%, compared to a 4.9% increase among male students.
- Part-time enrollment increased by 5.3% over this period, with the increases more pronounced among male students. Between 1997/98 and 2001/02, the number of men enrolled in part-time undergraduate studies rose by 8.1%, compared to an increase of 3.7% among women, but the number of female part-time students remained considerably higher than for males. Of 161,500 students enrolled in part-time undergraduate courses in 2001/02, 98,900 – or 61.2% – were women and 62,600 (38.7%) were men.

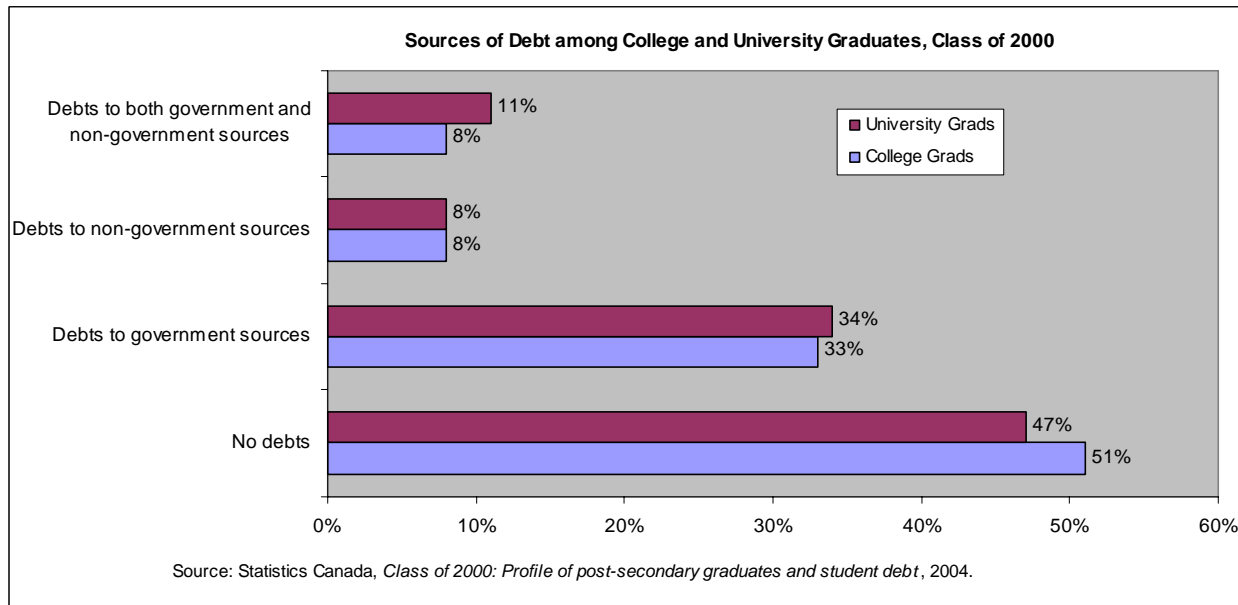


Tuition Fees

- Over the last several years, tuition fees have been rising in Canada. In 2005/06, average undergraduate tuition fees were \$4,214 – up from \$3,328 in 1999/2000, an increase of 26.6%.
- Overall, tuition fees have increased across the country, with the two exceptions being Newfoundland and Manitoba. In Newfoundland, tuition fees dropped by 22.7% between 1999/2000 and 2005/06, while Manitoba reported a decrease of 6.2%. Tuition fees rose the most in British Columbia; in 2005/06, B.C.'s average undergraduate tuition stood at \$4,874, an increase of 89.8% from 1999/00. Both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick reported tuition fee increases of more than 45% over this six-year period.

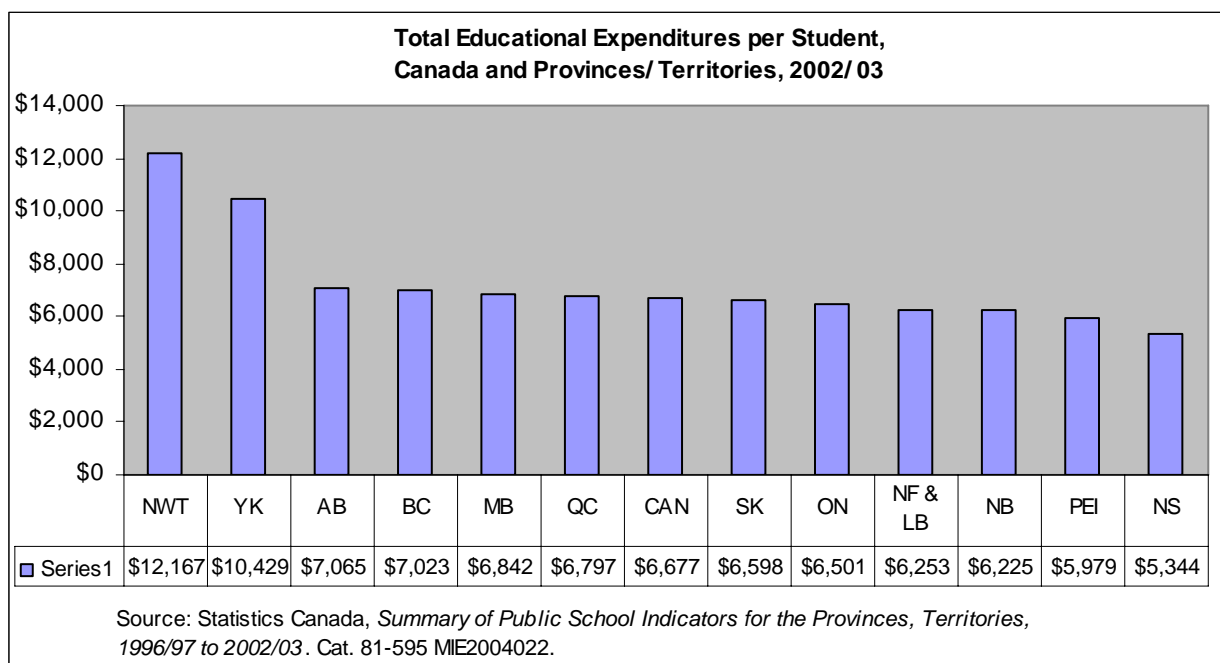


- Many college and university graduates face large debt loads after completing their post-secondary education. Among college and university students who graduated in 2000, 33% of the college grads and 34% of the university grads owed money to government sources, 8% of both groups owed money to non-government sources, and 8-11% owed money to both government and non-government sources. However, 51% of the college students and 47% of the university students owed no money upon graduation.



Educational Expenditures

- In 2002/03, total expenditures on education in Canada amounted to \$6,667 per student. Costs were highest in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon – at over \$10,000 per student – and lowest in the Atlantic Provinces, where average costs per student ranged from a high of \$6,253 in Newfoundland to a low of \$5,344 in Nova Scotia.
- Education costs have been rising. Between 2000/01 and 2002/03, educational expenditures per student rose by 2.8% overall in Canada. New Brunswick was the only province to report a drop in their expenditures per student (-0.7%). The largest increase over this two-year period was in Newfoundland, where the educational costs per student jumped by 14%, followed by those in Saskatchewan which rose by 10.4%.

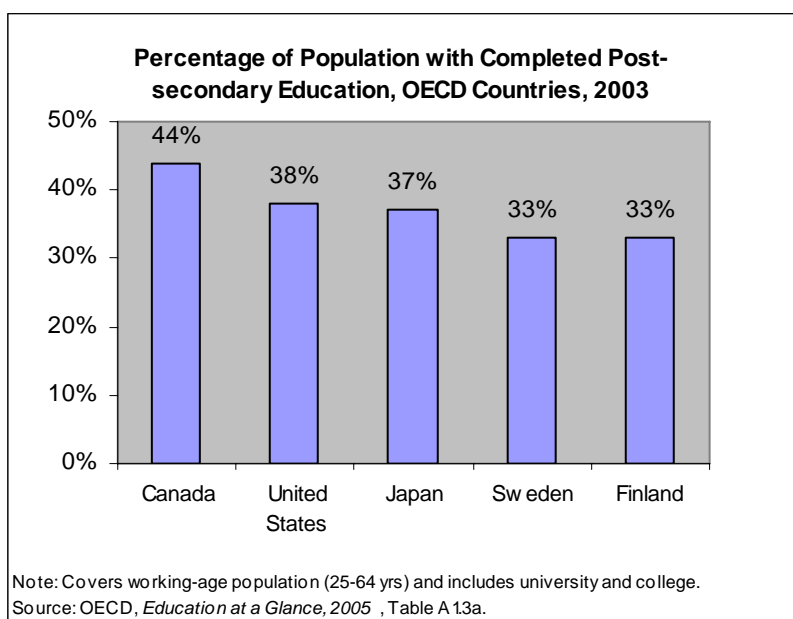


Teachers

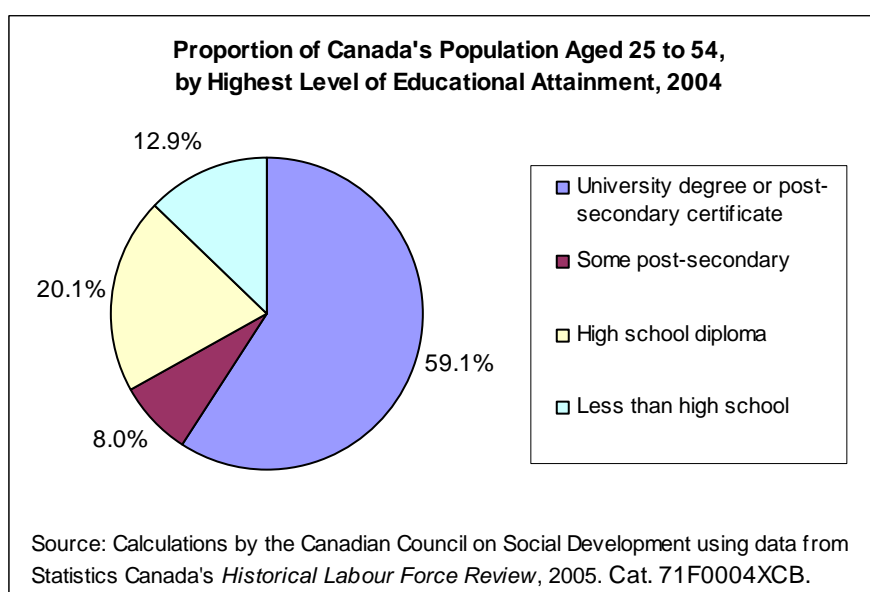
- In 2001/02, there were 309,852 full-time teachers working in elementary and secondary schools across Canada. This was down by 0.4% from the previous year.
- The number of full-time educators was down in most provinces. The exceptions were the Northwest Territories – which reported an increase of 4.3% in its teaching staff – and Alberta, where the number of full-time teachers grew by 3.7%. Saskatchewan also reported a small increase of 1.4%.

Educational Attainment

- In 2003, 44% of Canada's working-age population (those aged 25 to 64) had a college or university degree. This was the highest ranking among all 21 OECD countries. The United States was ranked second, at 38%, and Japan was third with 37%.



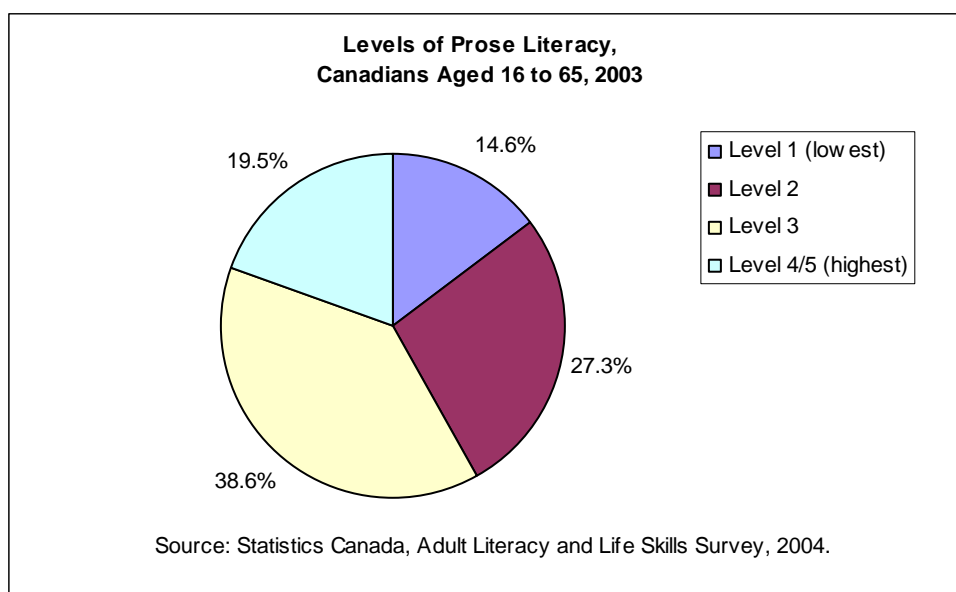
- In 2004, a study by Statistics Canada found that 59.1% of Canadians aged 25 to 54 had a post-secondary certificate or university degree, 8.0% had taken some post-secondary education, 20.1% were high school graduates, and 12.9% had less than a high school education.



- Across Canada, Nova Scotia had the highest proportion of the population (aged 25 to 54) with post-secondary education, at 62%. Quebec and Ontario also reported high levels of post-secondary attainment, at 60.9% and 60.4% respectively. Manitoba had the lowest proportion of post-secondary graduates in Canada (52.5%).

Literacy

- The 2004 Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL) Survey revealed that a considerable number of Canadians have low literacy and numeracy skills. (For a detailed description of this Statistics Canada survey, done in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, see the end of this fact sheet.) Among those aged 16 to 65, literacy skill levels were moderate on all four assessment scales – prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving abilities.
- When Canadians were ranked on their prose skills, the majority (38.6%) scored at Level 3, 19.5% performed at the highest level (Level 4/5), 27.3% were rated at Level 2, and 14.6% scored at the lowest prose literacy level.



- The 14.6% of Canadians who scored at the lowest level of prose literacy in 2003 represents well over three million Canadians who have problems dealing with printed materials and most likely have difficulty reading. This proportion was down slightly from 1994, when 17% of Canadians were rated at this lowest level.

Proportion of Canadian Population Aged 16 to 65, by Literacy Skill Level, 2003

	Level 1 (lowest)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5 (highest)
Prose literacy	14.6%	27.3%	38.6%	19.5%
Document literacy	15.6%	27.0%	36.9%	20.5%
Numeracy literacy	19.5%	30.3%	33.4%	16.9%
Problem solving	29.7%	38.8%	26.2%	5.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2004.

Literacy by Province

- According to data from the ALL survey, proficiency levels were not consistent across the country, with considerable variation in average literacy skills among the provinces and territories. The Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan had significantly higher scores than the national average in all four literacy areas.
- The Yukon had the highest literacy scores in Canada. On the prose scale, 27.3% of respondents from the Yukon scored at the highest level (4/5), while for Canada, the corresponding figure was only 17%.
- Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories had average scores in all four literacy areas that were close to the Canadian average, while Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Nunavut had average scores significantly below the Canadian average in all four literacy areas.

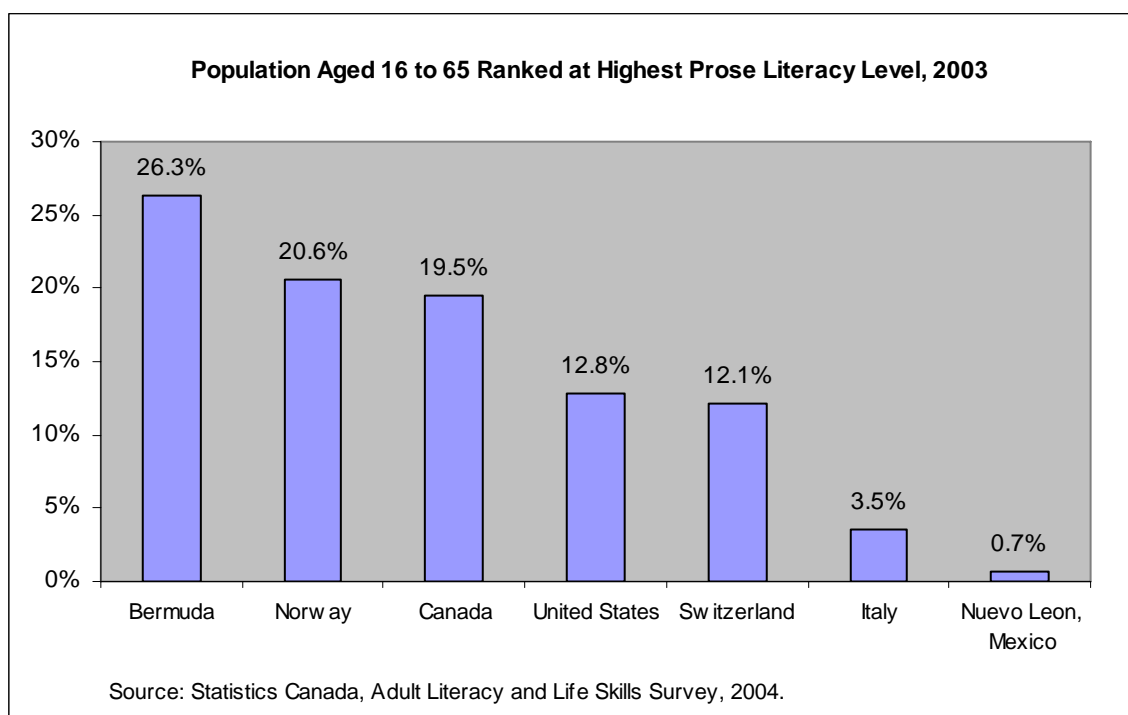
Prose Literacy Skills, by Level and Province/ Territory, 2003

	Average proficiency in prose literacy (%)			
	Level 1 (lowest)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4/5 (highest)
NF & LB	24.0	30.8	32.8	12.4
PEI	19.9	29.6	34.0	16.6
NS	17.3	27.5	38.4	16.8
NB	22.7	33.3	31.6	12.4
QC	22.3	32.3	32.8	12.6
ON	21.3	26.7	35.0	17.0
MB	18.2	28.1	37.2	16.5
SK	13.5	26.6	38.9	21.0
AB	13.6	25.9	39.6	21.0
BC	17.3	22.7	37.2	22.9
YK	10.5	22.9	39.3	27.3
NWT	19.3	25.8	35.1	19.8
NV	47.2	25.8	19.5	7.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2004.

International Perspective

- Internationally, Canada ranked third out of seven countries on the highest level of the prose literacy scale, with 19.5% scoring at Level 4/5. Bermuda was ranked at the top, with 26.3% of its adult population attaining the highest level in prose literacy, and Norway ranked second at 20.6%. (Other countries in the study included Italy, Switzerland, the United States, and the Mexican State of Nuevo Leon.)



- Canada also ranked third on numeracy skills, with 16.9% of the adult population attaining the highest rating (Level 4/5). In this literacy domain, Switzerland ranked at the top (22.9%), followed closely by Norway (18.4%).
- Canada's most impressive score was in document literacy. With 20.5% of Canadians achieving Level 4/5 in this domain, Canada was ranked third of the seven countries. Norway was first with 27.9% and Bermuda second at 21.1%
- In the final area of literacy assessed – problem solving – Canada did not fair as well. Switzerland achieved the highest ranking with 7.3% of its population achieving Level 4/5 in this domain, Norway followed closely behind at 7.2%, and Bermuda was ranked third with 6.5%. Only 5.4% of the Canadian population achieved the highest literacy level in this area.

Population Aged 16 to 65 Achieving Highest Literacy Level, by Domain, 2003

	Prose Literacy	Document Literacy	Numeracy	Problem Solving
Bermuda	26.3%	21.1%	16.0%	6.5%
Norway	20.6%	27.9%	18.4%	7.2%
Canada	19.5%	20.5%	16.9%	5.4%
United States	12.8%	15.0%	12.7%	n/a
Switzerland	12.1%	15.1%	22.9%	7.3%
Italy	3.5%	3.6%	3.0%	1.2%
Nuevo Leon, Mexico	0.7%	1.7%	n/a	n/a

n/a = data not available

Source: Statistics Canada, Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2004.

Notes on the ALL:

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) was conducted by Statistics Canada in 2003, in conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. In Canada, more than 23,000 people aged 16 and older were assessed on their proficiency in four areas of literacy: prose, document, numeracy, and problem solving. People's skills were then rated from lowest (Level 1) to highest (Level 4/5) in each literacy domain.

Literacy Domains:

Prose literacy: The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts, including editorials, news stories, brochures, and instructional manuals.

Document literacy: The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and charts.

Numeracy: The knowledge and skills required to effectively manage the mathematical demands of diverse situations. [This numeracy scale replaces the quantitative scale used in the IALS, where respondents were required to perform one or more arithmetic operations based on information contained in texts, either continuous or non-continuous.]

Problem solving: Involves goal-directed thinking and action in situations for which no routine solution or procedure is available. The problem solver has a more or less well-defined goal, but does not immediately know how to reach it. The understanding of the problem situation and its step-by-step transformation based on planning and reasoning constitutes the process of problem solving.

Literacy Levels:

Level 1: Persons with very poor skills, where the individual may, for example, be unable to determine the correct amount of medicine to give a child using information printed on the package.

Level 2: People can only deal with material that is simple, clearly laid out, and material in which the tasks involved are not too complex. It denotes a weak level of skill, but more hidden than Level 1. It identifies people who can read, but test poorly. They may have developed coping skills to manage everyday literacy demands but their low level of proficiency makes it difficult for them to face novel demands, such as learning new job skills.

Level 3: The minimum skill level suitable for coping with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society. It denotes roughly the skill level required for successful secondary school completion and college entry. Like higher levels, it requires the ability to integrate several sources of information and solve more complex problems.

Level 4/5: People demonstrate a command of higher-order information processing skills.

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