

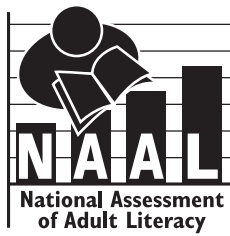
# Literacy Behind Bars

## Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Prison Survey

U.S. Department of Education  
NCES 2007-473







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## Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Prison Survey

May 2007

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**Suggested Citation**

Greenberg, E., Dunleavy, E., and Kutner, M. (2007). *Literacy Behind Bars: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Prison Survey* (NCES 2007-473). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

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# Executive Summary

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) assessed the English literacy of incarcerated adults for the first time since 1992. The assessment was administered to approximately 1,200 inmates (ages 16 and older) in state and federal prisons, as well as to approximately 18,000 adults (ages 16 and older) living in households. The prison sample is representative of the 1,380,000 adults in prison and the household sample is representative of the 221,020,000 adults in households in 2003.<sup>1</sup> The 2003 adult literacy assessment covered the same content as the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, and both assessments used the same definition of literacy:

*Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*

Unlike indirect measures of literacy, which rely on self-reports and other subjective evaluations, the assessment measured literacy directly through tasks completed by adults. These tasks represent a range of literacy activities that adults are likely to face in their daily lives. Prison inmates were asked to complete the same tasks as adults living in households.

<sup>1</sup>Household data collection was conducted from March 2003 through February 2004; prison data collection was conducted from March through July 2004. Following the precedent set with the 1992 adult literacy assessment, for which data collection also extended into a second year and all prison data collection was conducted during the second year (1993), this assessment is referred to as the 2003 NAAL throughout this report.

## Literacy Levels

### Changes in the Prison Population and Prisoners' Literacy Between 1992 and 2003

### Comparing the Prison and Household Populations

### Education and Job Training in Prison

### Work and Literacy Experiences in Prison

### Criminal History and Current Offense

Three types of literacy were measured by the assessment on 0- to 500-point scales:

1. **Prose literacy.** The knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from continuous texts. Prose examples include editorials, news stories, brochures, and instructional materials.
2. **Document literacy.** The knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from noncontinuous texts. Document examples include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and drug or food labels.
3. **Quantitative literacy.** The knowledge and skills needed to identify and perform computations using numbers that are embedded in printed materials. Examples include balancing a checkbook, computing a tip, completing an order form, or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

This report presents the findings from the 2003 prison adult literacy assessment. The report includes analyses that compare the literacy of the U.S. prison population in 2003 with the literacy of the U.S. prison population in 1992. It also includes analyses that compare the literacy of the prison and household populations in 2003. The analyses in this report use standard *t* tests to determine statistical significance. Statistical significance is reported at  $p < .05$ .

## Literacy Levels

The Committee on Performance Levels for Adult Literacy, appointed by the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA), recommended a set of performance levels for the prose, document, and quantitative scales. Drawing on their recommendations, the U.S. Department of Education decided to report the assessment results by using four literacy levels for these scales: *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Proficient*.

*Below Basic* indicates that an adult has no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills. *Basic* indicates that an adult has the skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities. *Intermediate* indicates that an adult has the skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities. *Proficient* indicates that an adult has the skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.

BOTA's Committee on Performance Levels for Adult Literacy also recommended reporting the 2003 results by using a separate category: nonliterate in English. Adults were considered to be nonliterate in English if they were unable to complete a minimum number of simple literacy questions or if they were unable to communicate in English or Spanish.

Adults who were classified as nonliterate in English because they could not complete a minimum number of simple literacy questions were generally able to complete the background questionnaire, which was administered orally in either English or Spanish; for reporting purposes, they were included in the *Below Basic* literacy level. Adults who were classified as nonliterate in English because they were unable to communicate in either English or Spanish could not complete the background questionnaire; they are not included in the analyses in this report, which rely on background data. Adults who could not be tested because of a cognitive or mental disability are also not included in the analyses in this report, but in the absence of any information about their literacy abilities, they are not considered to be nonliterate in English.

## Changes in the Prison Population and Prisoners' Literacy Between 1992 and 2003

The rate of incarceration in federal and state prisons in the United States increased from 332 per 100,000 in 1992 to 487 per 100,000 in 2003. (These figures do not include jails.) The prison population was larger, older, and somewhat better educated in 2003 than in

1992. The parents of prison inmates were also better educated in 2003 than in 1992.

- The average prose and quantitative literacy of the prison population was higher in 2003 than in 1992. In 2003, some 3 percent of the prison population was considered to be nonliterate in English (figure 2-1).<sup>2</sup>
- Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy was higher for Black<sup>3</sup> prison inmates in 2003 than in 1992, and average quantitative literacy increased for Hispanic<sup>4</sup> inmates. In 2003, White inmates had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than Black and Hispanic inmates. Black prison inmates had higher average document literacy than Hispanic inmates (figure 2-3).
- In 2003, prison inmates' average prose and quantitative literacy was higher with each increasing level of education. For example, inmates with less than a high school education had lower average prose and quantitative literacy than inmates with some high school (figure 2-5).
- The average prose and quantitative literacy of incarcerated men increased between 1992 and 2003 (figure 2-7).
- Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003 for prison inmates in the 25 to 39 age group. In 2003, incarcerated adults who were 40 years old or older had lower average prose and document literacy than incarcerated adults who were 25 to 39 years old (figure 2-9).
- Average prose and quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003 for prison

inmates who spoke only English before starting school (figure 2-11).

## Comparing the Prison and Household Populations

In 2003, a higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households were male, Black, and Hispanic, and a higher percentage had been diagnosed with a learning disability. A lower percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households were ages 40 or older, and a lower percentage spoke a language other than English as children.

- Prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-1).
- Incarcerated White adults had lower average prose literacy than White adults living in households. Incarcerated Black and Hispanic adults had higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults in households (figure 3-3).
- Black inmates who had been in prison for a shorter period of time (incarcerated in 2002 or later) had prose literacy that was not statistically significantly different from that of Black adults living in households, whereas Black inmates who had been incarcerated since before 2002 had higher average prose literacy than Black adults living in households (figure 3-3 and table 3-3).<sup>5</sup>
- In general, either prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households with the same level of highest educational attainment or there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. The exception was that among adults without any high school education, prison inmates had higher average

<sup>2</sup> The design of the 1992 assessment did not allow the estimation of the size of the population nonliterate in English.

<sup>3</sup> Black includes African American.

<sup>4</sup> All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Hispanic includes Latino.

<sup>5</sup> The sample size for Hispanic inmates did not allow the separate estimation of literacy by length of incarceration.



literacy on all three scales than adults living in households (figure 3-5).

- Both male and female prison inmates had lower average literacy on all three scales than adults of the same gender living in households (figure 3-9).
- In every age group examined (16 to 24, 25 to 39, and 40 or older), incarcerated adults had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults in the same age group living in households (figure 3-11).
- Among adults who spoke only English before starting school, those who were incarcerated had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those who lived in households (figure 3-13).
- Among adults whose parents were high school graduates or attained postsecondary education, prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those adults who lived in households whose parents had the same level of highest educational attainment (figure 3-15).

### Education and Job Training in Prison

Educational and vocational training programs are an important component of prisons' rehabilitative purpose. In general, inmates who participated in prison education and training programs had higher average literacy than inmates who did not.

- Forty-three percent of prison inmates had obtained a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate before the start of their current incarceration. An additional 19 percent of prison inmates had earned their high school equivalency certificate during their current incarceration, and 5 percent were enrolled in academic classes that might eventually lead to a high school equivalency certificate (figure 4-1).

- Prison inmates with a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates with lower levels of education. Inmates who earned their high school equivalency certificate during their current incarceration had higher average quantitative literacy than prison inmates who entered prison with a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate (figure 4-3).
- Twenty-nine percent of prison inmates had participated in some sort of vocational training. However, more inmates reported being on waiting lists for these programs than were enrolled (figures 4-5 and 4-6).
- Prison inmates who had participated in vocational training had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who had not participated in any sort of vocational training program during their current incarceration (figure 4-9).
- Prison inmates who had received either information technology (IT) certification or some other type of certification recognized by a licensing board or an industry or professional association had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who did not have the same type of certification. However, prison inmates who had received either type of certification had lower average levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults in the household population with similar certifications (figure 4-12).

### Work and Literacy Experiences in Prison

The relationship between literacy and participation in prison activities is complex. Inmates who enter prison with higher literacy may be more likely to engage in some activities, such as using the library and computers, reading, or even getting certain work assignments.



Participating in any of these activities may help inmates improve their literacy. In general, there was a relationship between literacy and participation in activities in prison, such that inmates who participated in activities that required some reading or writing had average literacy that was either higher than or not measurably different from the average literacy of inmates who did not participate in these activities.

- In 2003, some 68 percent of prison inmates had a work assignment. Prison inmates with work assignments had higher average prose and quantitative literacy than inmates who did not have work assignments (figure 5-1).
- A higher percentage of inmates with *Proficient* and *Intermediate* prose literacy than prison inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy had prison work assignments that required writing every day (figure 5-6).
- A higher percentage of inmates with *Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Proficient* prose literacy than with *Below Basic* prose literacy used the library. Moreover, prison inmates who used the prison library had higher average prose literacy than prison inmates who never used the library (figure 5-9).
- Prison inmates who used a computer for word processing or for using a CD-ROM had higher average document and quantitative literacy than inmates who never used a computer for these things (figure 5-10).
- A higher percentage of prison inmates with *Proficient* than with *Below Basic* or *Basic* quantitative literacy used a spreadsheet program (figure 5-13).
- Prison inmates who read newspapers and magazines, books, or letters and notes had higher average prose and document literacy than prison inmates who never read, regardless of the frequency with which they read. Additionally, a

higher percentage of inmates with *Basic* or *Intermediate* than with *Below Basic* prose literacy read newspapers and magazines, books, and letters and notes every day (figures 5-14 and 5-15).

## Criminal History and Current Offense

On average, prison sentences were longer in 2003 than in 1992. In both 1992 and 2003, the commission of a violent crime was the most common reason adults were incarcerated. There was a slight decline between 1992 and 2003 in the percentage of inmates who were imprisoned because of property crimes.

Literacy is perhaps of most concern for inmates who are nearing their expected date of release because they will need to find jobs outside of prison. In 2003, some 62 percent of inmates expected to be released within 2 years.

- Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy was higher in 2003 than in 1992 for prison inmates who expected to be incarcerated for 10 years or longer (figure 6-3).
- In 2003, there were no statistically significant differences in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy between inmates who expected to be released within the next 2 years and inmates with longer amounts of time remaining on their sentences. However, between 1992 and 2003, the percentage of inmates who expected to be released within the next 2 years and had *Below Basic* prose and quantitative literacy did decrease (figures 6-5 and 6-6).
- In 2003, average prose and quantitative literacy was higher among inmates who had previously been sentenced to both probation and incarceration, and average document literacy was higher among inmates who had previously been sentenced to probation only, than for inmates with the same criminal histories in 1992 (figure 6-7).





## Acknowledgments

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) is a complex project whose successful completion is due to the outstanding work of countless individuals from many organizations. We at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) are extremely grateful and appreciative for having the opportunity to work with so many talented and dedicated individuals. We especially want to thank the staff at the National Center for Education Statistics who have supported the project, including Peggy Carr, Sheida White (NAAL project officer), Andrew Kolstad, Steven Gorman, William Tirre, and Arnold Goldstein.

We also appreciate the input we received from report reviewers including Bruce Taylor of the NCES Statistical Standards Program, and members of the Education Statistics Services Institute staff: Yung Chun, Jaleh Soroui, Linda Schaefer, Jing Chen, Matt Adams, Carianne Santagelo, Zeyu Xu, Steve Hocker, and Steve Mistler.

John Linton, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education, and Caroline Harlow, formerly with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, played an important role in the planning, design, and reporting of the NAAL prison study. They also served as reviewers of this report. We are grateful for their guidance and support. We also very much appreciate the support of the prison staff members and inmates who advised us on the design of this study.

and made many suggestions for improving the background questionnaire.

Our colleagues at Westat, Inc.—including Martha Berlin, Michelle Amsbary, Leyla Mohadjer, and Jacquie Hogan—planned, developed, and implemented the sampling and weighting plan and also planned and carried out the data collection.

Many staff members at AIR, in addition to the report authors, made substantial contributions to the prison literacy report. We would especially like to thank

Justin Baer, Eugene Johnson, Stephane Baldi, Ying Jin, Heather Block, Holly Baker, Elizabeth Moore, Rachel Greenberg, and Janan Musa.

Thousands of adults in both households and prisons participated in the assessment. Their willingness to spend time answering the background questions and assessment items was essential to ensuring that meaningful data about the literacy of America's adults could be obtained. This study would not have been possible without their participation.



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## Introduction

The skills and credentials that are acquired through formal education are important tools for navigating everyday life in the United States. Adults with low levels of education and literacy are more likely than adults with high education and literacy levels to be unemployed or to have incomes that put them below the poverty level (Kutner et al. 2007). Adults who have not obtained a high school diploma or any postsecondary education are also more likely to be incarcerated than adults with higher levels of education (Harlow 2003).

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy assessed the English literacy of incarcerated adults in the United States for the first time since 1992. The assessment was administered to approximately 1,200 inmates in state and federal prisons, as well as to approximately 18,000 adults living in households. The original motivation for the prison sample was to ensure the assessment was representative of the entire population of the United States. For the population estimates presented in other reports, the prison and household samples are combined or results are reported for the household population only. This report presents findings separately for the prison adult literacy assessment. The report presents analyses that compare the literacy of the U.S. prison population in 2003 with the literacy of the prison population in 1992. It also presents analyses that compare the literacy of the prison and household populations.

Defining and Measuring  
Literacy

Interpreting Literacy Results

Conducting the Survey

Interpretation of Results

Organization of the Report

## Defining and Measuring Literacy

### Defining Literacy

Unlike indirect measures of literacy—which rely on self-reports and other subjective evaluations of literacy and education—the 1992 and 2003 adult literacy assessments measured literacy directly by tasks representing a range of literacy activities that adults are likely to face in their daily lives.

The literacy tasks in the assessment were drawn from actual texts and documents, which were either used in their original format or reproduced in the assessment booklets. Each question appeared before the materials needed to answer it, thus encouraging respondents to read with purpose.

Respondents could correctly answer many assessment questions by skimming the text or document for the information necessary to perform a given literacy task. All tasks were open-ended.

The 2003 adult literacy assessment covered the same content of the 1992 assessment, and both assessments used the same definition of literacy:

*Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.*

The definition implies that literacy goes beyond simply decoding and comprehending text. A central feature of the definition is that literacy is related to achieving an objective and adults often read for a purpose.

### Measuring Literacy

As in 1992, three literacy scales—prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy—were used in the 2003 assessment:

- *Prose literacy.* The knowledge and skills needed to perform prose tasks (i.e., to search, comprehend,

and use information from continuous texts). Prose examples include editorials, news stories, brochures, and instructional materials. Prose texts can be further broken down as expository, narrative, procedural, or persuasive.

- *Document literacy.* The knowledge and skills needed to perform document tasks (i.e., to search, comprehend, and use information from noncontinuous texts in various formats). Document examples include job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and drug or food labels.
- *Quantitative literacy.* The knowledge and skills required to perform quantitative tasks (i.e., to identify and perform computations, either alone or sequentially, using numbers embedded in printed materials). Examples include balancing a checkbook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form, or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

Table 1-1 shows the correlations among the prose, document, and quantitative scales for the prison population in 2003, and table 1-2 shows the same correlations for the household population in 2003. All the correlations for the prison population are between .78 and .87; all the correlations for the household population are between .86 and .89. In chapter 12 of the *Technical Report and Data File User’s Manual for the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey*, Rock and

**Table 1-1. Correlations among the prose, document, and quantitative scales for the prison population: 2003**

	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Prose	1.0	.83	.78
Document	.83	1.0	.87
Quantitative	.78	.87	1.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table 1-2. Correlations among the prose, document, and quantitative scales for the household population: 2003**

	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Prose	1.0	.86	.88
Document	.86	1.0	.89
Quantitative	.88	.89	1.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Yamamoto (2001) examined the correlations among the three scales and concluded that even though the scales were highly related, there were still group differences across the scales, indicating that the scales did not all measure the same construct.

Additional information on the construction of the literacy scales is presented in Kutner et al. (2007).

### Background Questionnaire

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy prison background questionnaire was used to collect demographic data on inmates and to provide contextual data on their experiences in prison that were related to literacy, including participation in classes, job training, and prison work assignments. A primary goal of the assessment was to measure literacy trends between 1992 and 2003, so many of the questions on the 2003 background questionnaire were identical to questions on the 1992 background questionnaire. The 2003 background questionnaire also included some new questions that were added in response to input from stakeholders and users of the 1992 data.

A separate background questionnaire was developed for the household study. The demographic questions were identical on the prison and household questionnaires.

### Interpreting Literacy Results

The Committee on Performance Levels for Adult Literacy, appointed by National Research Council's

Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA), recommended a set of performance levels for the 2003 assessment (Hauser et al. 2005). Drawing on their recommendations, the U.S. Department of Education decided to report the assessment results using four literacy levels for each scale. Table 1-3 summarizes the knowledge, skills, and capabilities that adults needed to demonstrate to be classified into one of the four levels. Figures 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 show the types of tasks that map the different levels on the prose, document, and quantitative scales. These levels are different from the levels used in 1992. The 1992 data were reanalyzed using the new levels, and those results are included in this report.

BOTA's Committee on Performance Levels for Adult Literacy also recommended reporting the 2003 results by using a separate category: nonliterate in English. Adults were considered to be nonliterate in English if they were unable to complete a minimum number of simple literacy questions or if they were unable to communicate in English or Spanish. Adults who were classified as nonliterate in English because they could not complete a minimum number of simple literacy questions were generally able to complete the background questionnaire, which was administered orally in either English or Spanish; for reporting purposes, they were included in the *Below Basic* literacy level. Adults who were classified as nonliterate in English because they were unable to communicate in either English or Spanish could not complete the background questionnaire; they are not included in the analyses in this report that rely on background data. Adults who could not be tested because of a cognitive or mental disability are also not included in the analyses in this report, but in the absence of any information about their literacy abilities, they are not considered to be nonliterate in English.

## Conducting the Survey<sup>6</sup>

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy included two samples: (1) adults ages 16 and older living in households and (2) inmates ages 16 and older in federal and state prisons. The household sample is representative of the 21,020,000 adults in households, and the prison sample is representative of

the 1,380,000 adults in prison in 2003. The sampling frame for households was based on the 2000 Census and the sampling frame for prisons was a list of all federal and state prisons provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Each sample was weighted to represent its share of the total population of the United States. Household data collection was conducted from March 2003 through February 2004; prison data collection was conducted from March through July 2004. Throughout this report, the 2003–04 survey is referred to as the 2003 survey to simplify the

<sup>6</sup>Nonresponse bias analyses are discussed on page 102 of this report. All percentages in this section are weighted. For unweighted percentages, see tables C-1 and C-2 in appendix C.

**Table 1-3. Overview of the literacy levels**

Level and definition	Key abilities associated with level
<p><b>Below Basic</b> indicates no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills.</p> <p>Score ranges for <i>Below Basic</i>:</p> <p>Prose: 0–209 Document: 0–204 Quantitative: 0–234</p>	<p>Adults at the <i>Below Basic</i> level range from being nonliterate in English to having the abilities listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ locating easily identifiable information in short, commonplace <b>prose</b> texts</li> <li>■ locating easily identifiable information and following written instructions in simple <b>documents</b> (e.g., charts or forms)</li> <li>■ locating numbers and using them to perform simple <b>quantitative</b> operations (primarily addition) when the mathematical information is very concrete and familiar</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basic</b> indicates skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities.</p> <p>Score ranges for <i>Basic</i>:</p> <p>Prose: 210–264 Document: 205–249 Quantitative: 235–289</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reading and understanding information in short, commonplace <b>prose</b> texts</li> <li>■ reading and understanding information in simple <b>documents</b></li> <li>■ locating easily identifiable <b>quantitative</b> information and using it to solve simple, one-step problems when the arithmetic operation is specified or easily inferred</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intermediate</b> indicates skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities.</p> <p>Score ranges for <i>Intermediate</i>:</p> <p>Prose: 265–339 Document: 250–334 Quantitative: 290–349</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reading and understanding moderately dense, less commonplace <b>prose</b> texts as well as summarizing, making simple inferences, determining cause and effect, and recognizing the author's purpose</li> <li>■ locating information in dense, complex <b>documents</b> and making simple inferences about the information</li> <li>■ locating less familiar <b>quantitative</b> information and using it to solve problems when the arithmetic operation is not specified or easily inferred</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proficient</b> indicates skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.</p> <p>Score ranges for <i>Proficient</i>:</p> <p>Prose: 340–500 Document: 335–500 Quantitative: 350–500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reading lengthy, complex, abstract <b>prose</b> texts as well as synthesizing information and making complex inferences</li> <li>■ integrating, synthesizing, and analyzing multiple pieces of information located in complex <b>documents</b></li> <li>■ locating more abstract <b>quantitative</b> information and using it to solve multi-step problems when the arithmetic operations are not easily inferred and the problems are more complex</li> </ul>

NOTE: Although the literacy levels share common names with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) levels, they do not correspond to the NAEP levels.

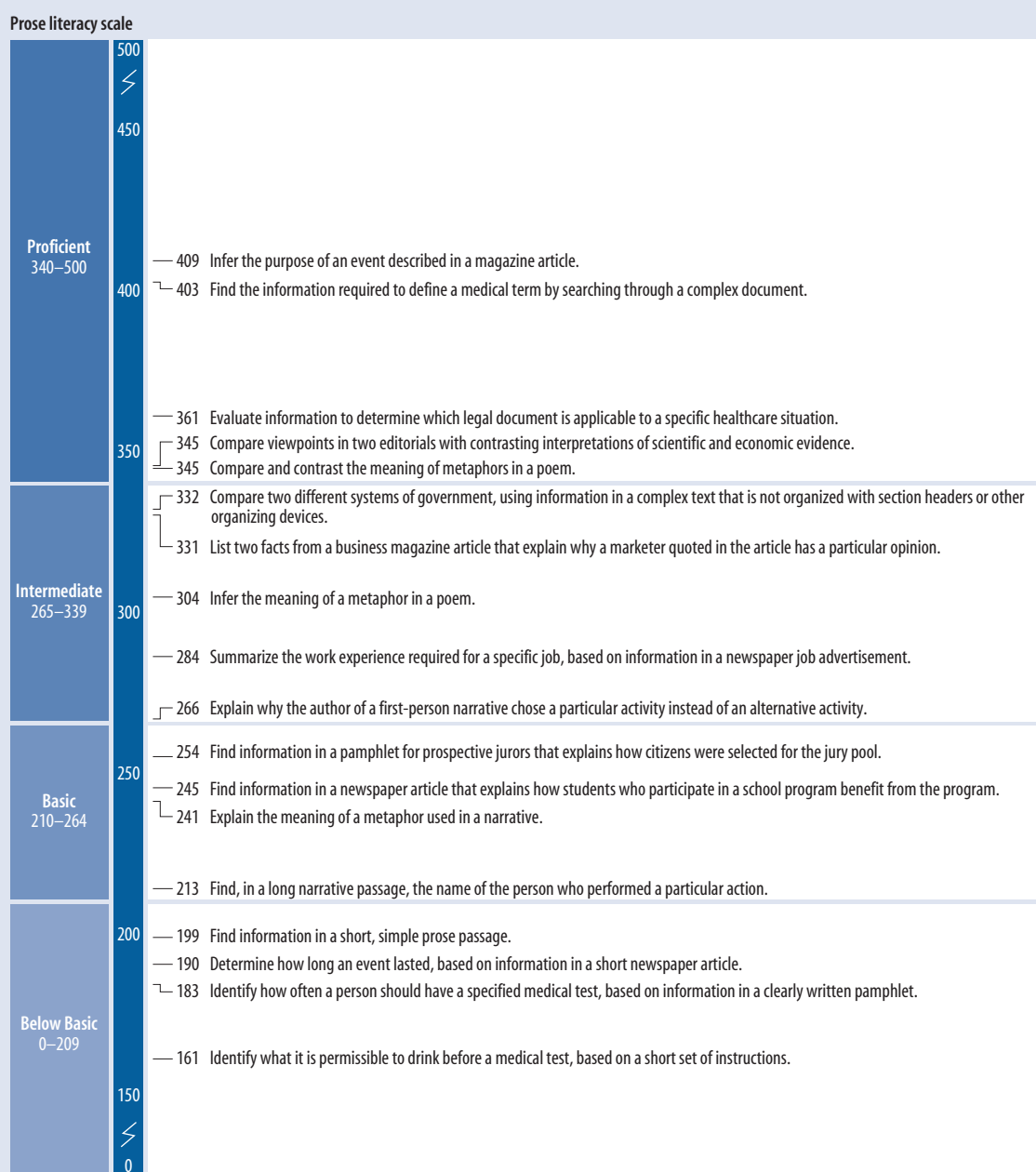
SOURCE: Hauser, R.M., Edley, C.F. Jr., Koenig, J.A., and Elliott, S.W. (Eds.). (2005). *Measuring Literacy: Performance Levels for Adults, Interim Report*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; White, S. and Dillow, S. (2005). *Key Concepts and Features of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy* (NCES 2006-471). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

presentation, and the 1992–93 survey is referred to as the 1992 survey. Literacy changes very slowly among adults, so we would not expect to find significant difference between 2003 and 2004.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The 1992 adult literacy prison data collection took place in 1993, but results for that survey have been reported using the date of 1992.

For the prison sample, 97 percent (weighted) of prisons that were selected for the study agreed to participate, and the background questionnaire response rate among prison inmates was 91 percent (weighted). The final prison sample response rate was 88 percent (weighted). For the household sample, the screener response rate was 82 percent (weighted) and

**Figure 1-1. Difficulty of selected prose literacy tasks: 2003**



NOTE: The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by adults who had a 67 percent probability of successfully answering the question. Only selected questions are presented. Scale score ranges for performance levels are referenced on the figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

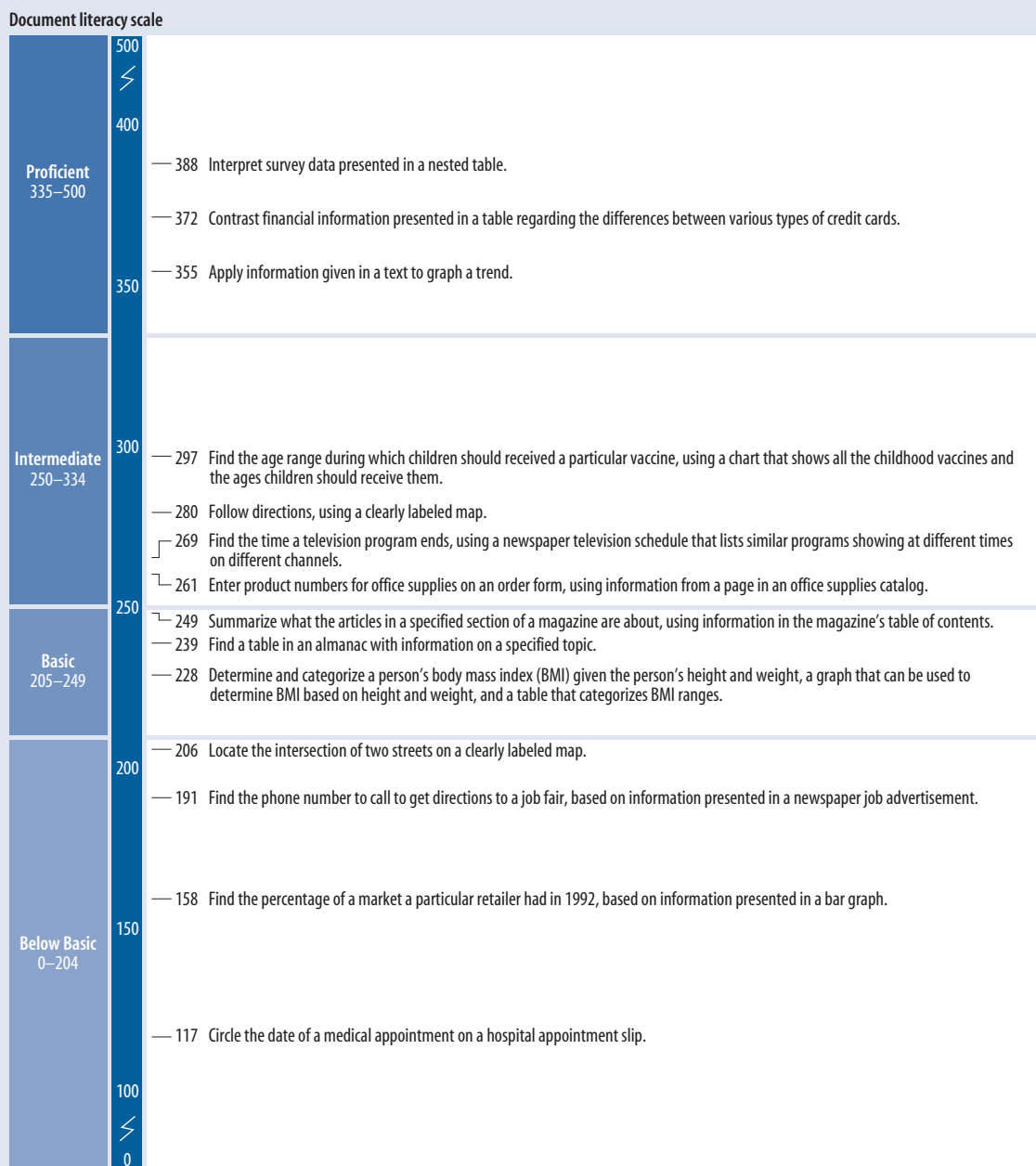


the background questionnaire response rate was 76 percent (weighted). The final household sample response rate was 62 percent (weighted).

Prison interviews usually took place in a classroom or library in the prison; household interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. Whenever possible,

interviewers administered the background questionnaire and assessment in a private setting. Assessments were administered one-on-one using a computer-assisted personal interviewing system (CAPI) programmed into laptop computers. Respondents were encouraged to use whatever aids they normally used

**Figure 1-2. Difficulty of selected document literacy tasks: 2003**



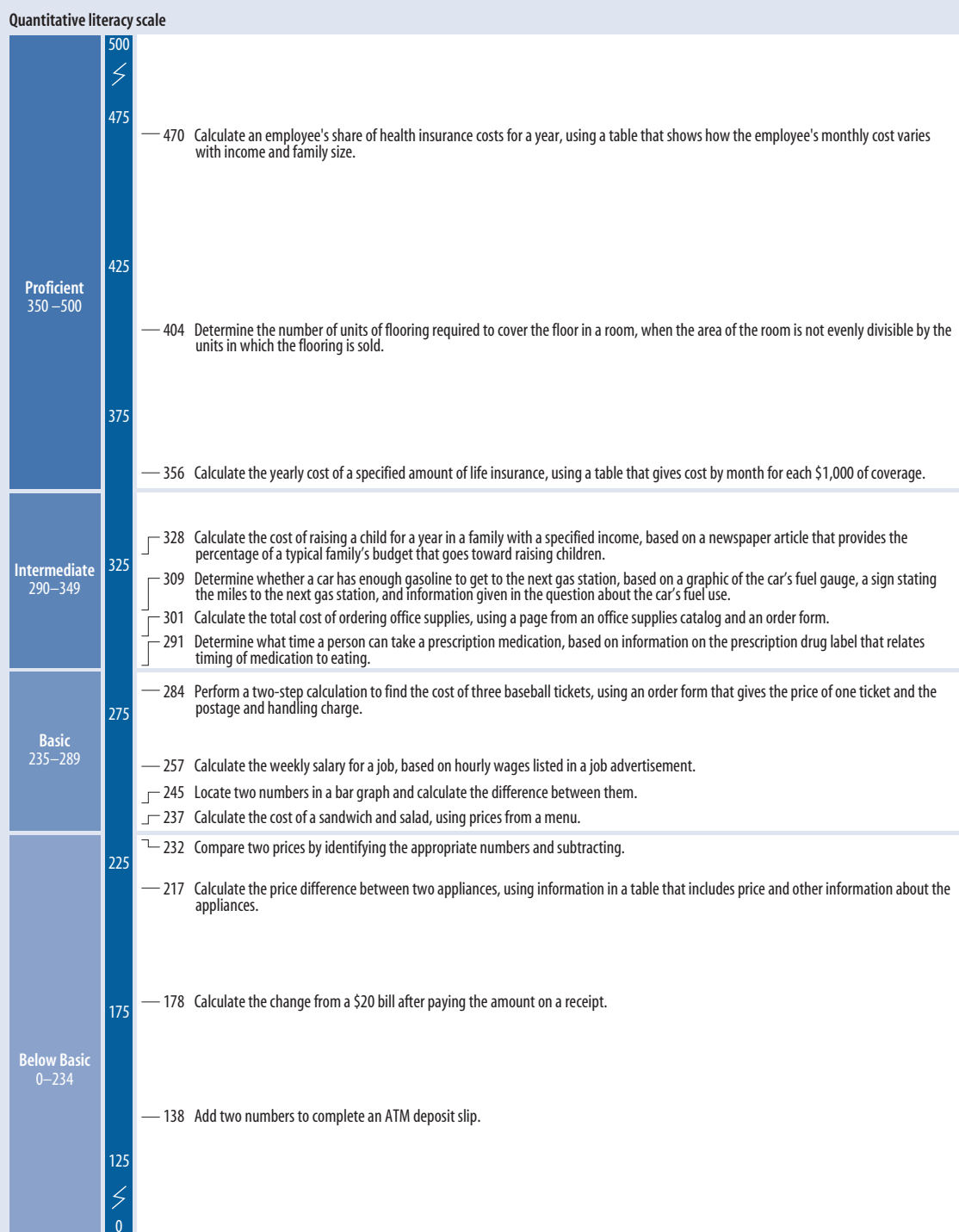
NOTE: The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by adults who had a 67 percent probability of successfully answering the question. Only selected questions are presented. Scale score ranges for performance levels are referenced on the figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

when reading and performing quantitative tasks, including eyeglasses, magnifying glasses, rulers, and calculators.

The interviewers provided calculators to respondents who wanted to use one and did not have their own.

**Figure 1-3. Difficulty of selected quantitative literacy tasks: 2003**



NOTE: The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by adults who had a 67 percent probability of successfully answering the question. Only selected questions are presented. Scale score ranges for performance levels are referenced on the figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

One percent of adults in the prison sample and 3 percent of adults in the household sample were unable to participate in the assessment because they could not communicate in either English or Spanish or because they had a mental disability that prevented them from being tested. Literacy scores for these adults could not be estimated, and they are not included in the results presented in this report.

Additional information on sampling, response rates, and data collection procedures is in appendix C.

### Interpretation of Results

The adult literacy scales make it possible to examine relationships between adults' literacy and various self-reported background factors. However, a relationship that exists between literacy and another variable does not reveal its underlying cause, which may be influenced by a number of other variables. Similarly, the assessment does not reflect the influence of unmeasured variables. The results are most useful when they are considered in combination with other knowledge about the adult population and literacy levels in the United States, such as trends in population demographics and societal demands and expectations. Some of the changes in population demographics are discussed in chapter 2 of this report.

The statistics presented in this report are estimates of performance based on a sample of respondents, rather than the values that could be calculated if every person in the nation answered every question on the assessment. Estimates of performance of the population and groups within the population were calculated by using sampling weights to account for the fact that the probabilities of selection were not identical for all respondents. Information about the uncertainty of each statistic that takes into account the complex sample design was estimated by using Taylor series procedures to estimate standard errors (Binder 1983).

The analyses in this report examine differences related to literacy based on self-reported background characteristics among groups in 2003, as well as changes within groups between 1992 and 2003, by using standard *t* tests to determine statistical significance. Statistical significance is reported at  $p < .05$ . Differences between averages or percentages that are statistically significant are discussed by using comparative terms such as *higher* or *lower*. Differences that are not statistically significant either are not discussed or are referred to as “not statistically significant.”

Because the sample size was small for some groups in the prison population, such as women and Hispanics, standard errors were larger for estimates relating to those groups and differences that look large were not necessarily statistically significant. The fact that a difference was not statistically significant does not necessarily mean there was no difference. Rather, it means we cannot be 95 percent certain that the differences we see in the sample would hold for the population as a whole.

For most of the analyses in this report, results are presented for all three scales: prose, document, and quantitative. However, for some of the analyses for which one or two of the scales were more conceptually related to the background variable being discussed than were others, results are presented for a subset of the scales only.

Detailed tables with estimates and standard errors for all tables and figures in this report are in appendix D. Appendix C includes more information about the weights used for the sample and the procedures used to estimate standard errors and statistical significance.

### Organization of the Report

Chapter 2 of the report presents the prose, document, and quantitative literacy of the prison population of the United States as a whole and discusses how the

literacy of the prison population changed between 1992 and 2003. The chapter also examines how literacy varies across groups of prison inmates with different characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, age, language spoken before starting school, and parents' educational attainment.

Chapter 3 compares the literacy of adults in the prison and household populations in 2003. In addition to comparing the populations as a whole, the chapter examines how literacy differs between adults in the prison and household populations in groups with selected characteristics, including race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, age, language spoken before starting school, and parents' educational attainment.

Chapter 4 examines the relationship between literacy and education and job training, including traditional academic education, vocational education, and skill certification.

Chapter 5 discusses the relationship between literacy and experiences in prison other than education. Topics in chapter 5 are prison work assignments, library use, computer use, and reading frequency.

Chapter 6 looks at the relationship between literacy, criminal history, and current offense. The results presented in chapter 6 compare how the relationship between literacy, type of offense, expected length of incarceration, expected date of release, and previous criminal history has changed since 1992.



## Changes in the Prison Population and Prisoners' Literacy Between 1992 and 2003

Approximately 1.4 million adults were incarcerated in state or federal prisons in 2003, half a million more than were incarcerated in prisons 10 years earlier, an increase of approximately 55 percent (Glaze and Palla 2005; Snell 1995). The incarceration rate per 100,000 population increased from 332 in 1992 to 487 in 2003 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1997; Harrison and Beck 2005). In addition to being larger, the prison population was somewhat older in 2003 than in 1992: in 2003, some 32 percent of prison inmates were age 40 or older, compared with 19 percent in 1992 (table 2-1). A lower percentage of prison inmates ended their education before completing high school in 2003 than in 1992. In 2003, some 9 percent of prison inmates dropped out of school before starting high school and 28 percent started high school but did not obtain a diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) credential/high school equivalency certificate, compared with 13 percent and 36 percent, respectively, in 1992. The parents of prison inmates were also better educated in 2003 than in 1992. In 2003, some 33 percent of prison inmates had parents who had completed at least some postsecondary education, compared with 25 percent in 1992.

Total Prison Population

Race/Ethnicity

Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Gender

Age

Language Spoken Before Starting School

Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Summary

**Table 2-1. Percentage of the adult prison population in selected groups: 1992 and 2003**

Characteristic	1992	2003
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	35	32
Black	45	46
Hispanic	16	18
Other	3	5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94	94
Female	6	6
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	13	9*
Some high school	36	28*
GED/high school equivalency	17	28*
High school graduate	14	13
Postsecondary	20	22
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	23	16*
25–39	58	52*
40+	19	32*
<b>Language spoken before starting school</b>		
English only	85	85
English and other	6	6
Other only	9	9
<b>Parents' highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	19	13*
Some high school	16	13
GED/high school equivalency/ high school graduate	39	41
Postsecondary	25	33*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify “other” as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose “other” as their race. The “Other” category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the “Other” category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose “other” as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

The analyses in this chapter examine how the literacy levels of prison inmates changed between 1992 and 2003. The chapter starts with an examination of the change in literacy between 1992 and 2003 among the entire prison population. Because the 2003 prison population is larger than the prison population in 1992 and is different in terms of age and educational background, just looking at differences in literacy among all prison inmates can obscure important changes within different groups in the prison population. Therefore, the majority of the chapter is focused on analyses that examine the literacy of different groups within the prison population characterized by demographic category, educational attainment, and language background.

When interpreting the results presented in this chapter, it is important to remember that the population of prison inmates changes every year because some people are released after serving their sentences and other people are newly incarcerated. This is not a longitudinal study. Therefore, it is not possible to track the performance of individual prison inmates over time by using the results of this study. If the results presented in this chapter show that average literacy changed between 1992 and 2003 among a particular group of prison inmates, it should not be interpreted as meaning that the literacy of adults who were incarcerated in 1992 changed.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The study design did not permit the separate examination of the literacy of inmates who were incarcerated for the entire 11-year time period between the 1992 and 2003 assessments.



## Total Prison Population

The average prose and quantitative literacy of the prison population was higher in 2003 than in 1992 (figure 2-1). On all three scales, a lower percentage of prison inmates had *Below Basic* literacy and a higher percentage of prison inmates had *Intermediate* literacy in 2003 than in 1992 (figure 2-2). Because of the increase in the size of the prison population, the number of prison inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy was approximately 200,000 in both years,

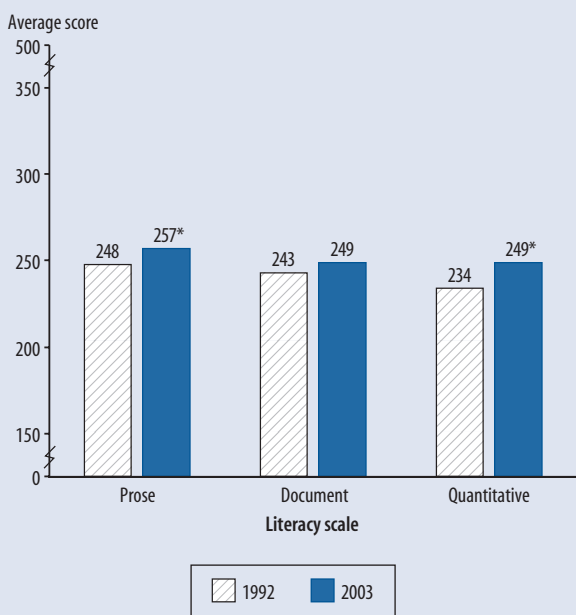
despite the decline in the percentage of incarcerated adults with *Below Basic* prose literacy from 22 to 16 percent.

## Nonliterate in English

In 2003, 3 percent of the prison population (42,000 adults) was considered to be nonliterate in English either because the inmates did poorly on the easiest test questions or because language barriers kept them from taking the test.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The design of the 1992 assessment did not allow the estimation of the size of the nonliterate-in-English population.

**Figure 2-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population: 1992 and 2003**

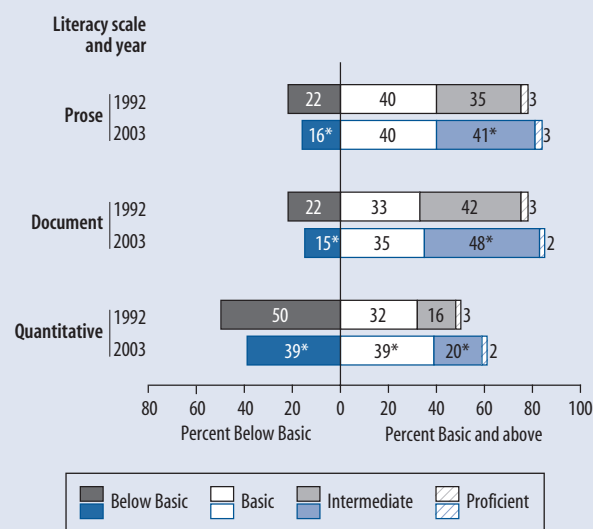


\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-2. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Race/Ethnicity

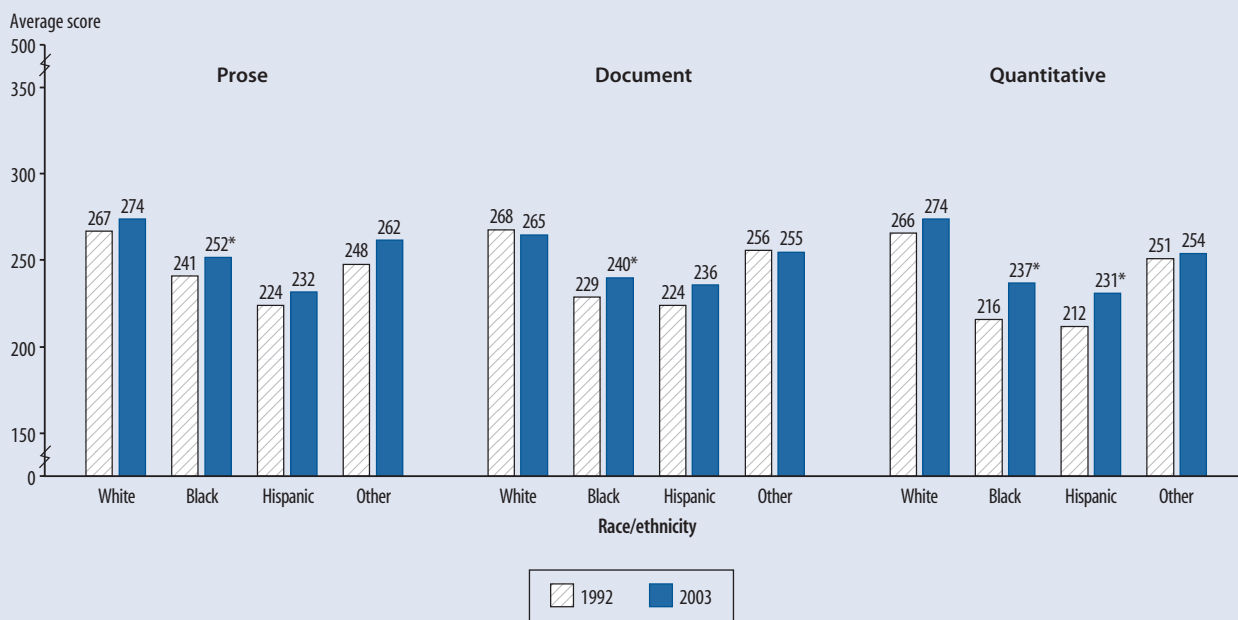
Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy increased for Black prison inmates between 1992 and 2003 (figure 2-3). Average quantitative literacy also increased for Hispanic inmates. There were no statistically significant changes in average literacy on any of the three scales for White prison inmates. The gap in document literacy scores between White and Black inmates was smaller in 2003 than in 1992.

Between 1992 and 2003, the percentage of Black prison inmates with *Below Basic* literacy declined from 25 to 15 percent on the prose scale, from 28 to 19 percent on the document scale, and from 63 to 49 percent on the quantitative scale (figure 2-4). A lower

percentage of Hispanic prison inmates had *Below Basic* document and quantitative literacy in 2003 than in 1992: 36 percent had *Below Basic* document literacy and 64 percent had *Below Basic* quantitative literacy in 1992, compared with 23 percent and 53 percent in 2003, respectively (figure 2-4). Adults with *Below Basic* literacy can do no more than the most simple literacy activities.

A comparison across racial/ethnic groups in 2003 shows that White prison inmates had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than Black and Hispanic inmates (figure 2-3). Black prison inmates had higher average document literacy than Hispanic inmates.

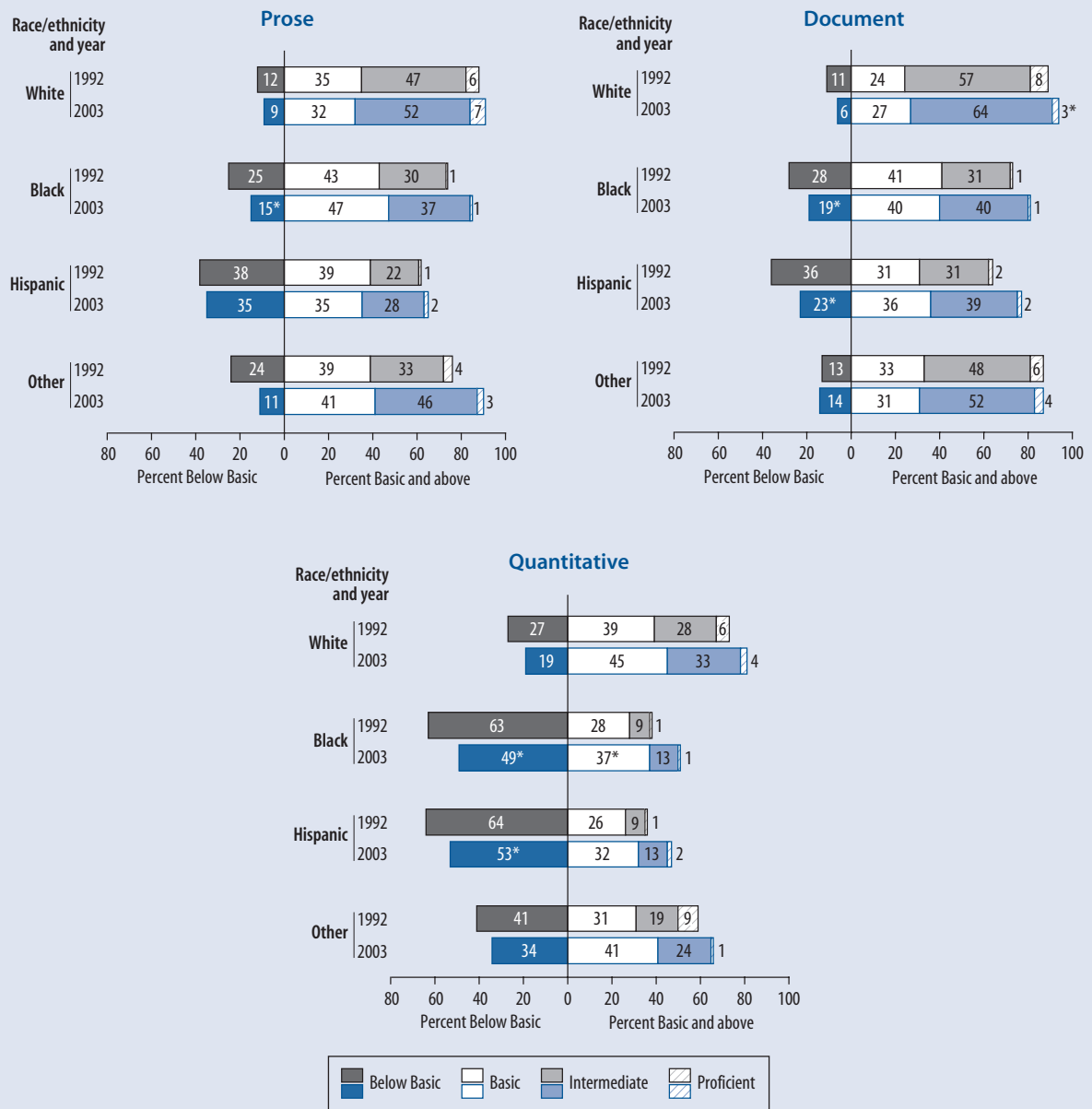
**Figure 2-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by race/ethnicity: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify "other" as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose "other" as their race. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the "Other" category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose "other" as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify "other" as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose "other" as their race. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the "Other" category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose "other" as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

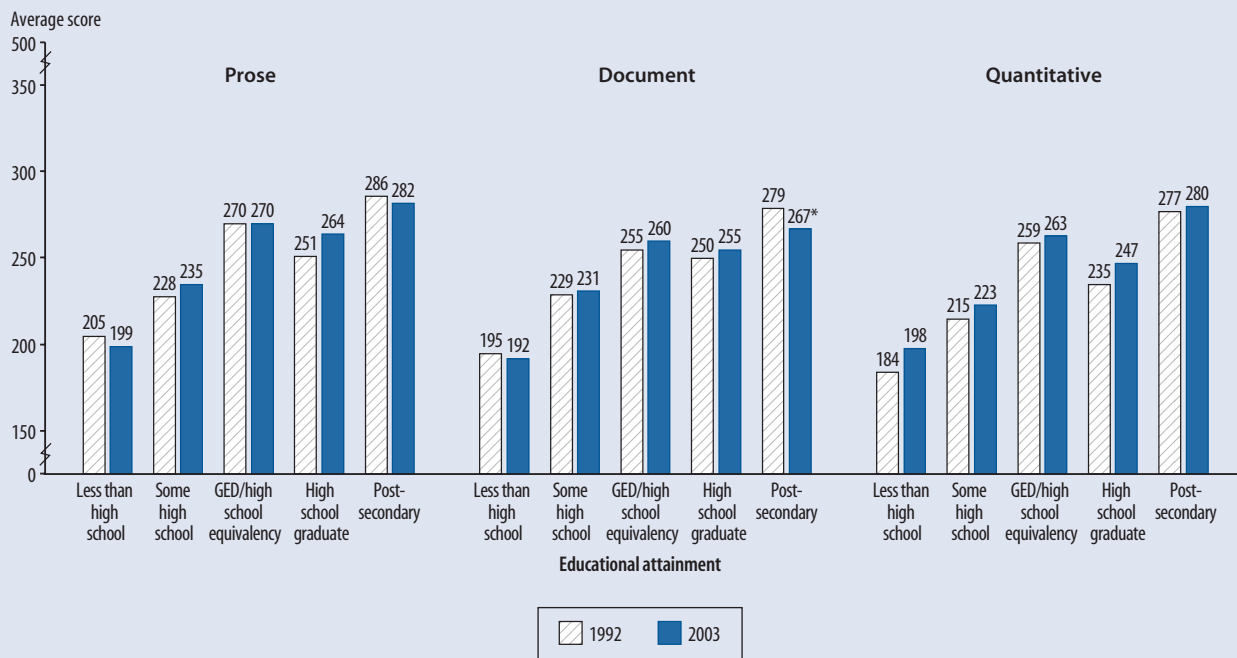
## Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Average document literacy declined between 1992 and 2003 for inmates with postsecondary education (figure 2-5). There were no other statistically significant changes in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy for inmates at any other level of educational attainment. Within educational attainment categories, there were no statistically significant changes in the distribution of prison inmates across the literacy levels on any of the three scales (figure 2-6).

In 2003, inmates with less than a high school education had lower average prose and quantitative literacy than inmates with some high school; inmates with

some high school had lower average prose and quantitative literacy than inmates who had received a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate; and inmates who had received a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate had lower average prose and document literacy than inmates who had postsecondary education (figure 2-5). On the document scale, incarcerated adults' average literacy increased with each increasing level of education up to a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate. On all three scales, prison inmates with a high school diploma had lower average literacy than inmates with a GED/high school equivalency certificate.

**Figure 2-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**

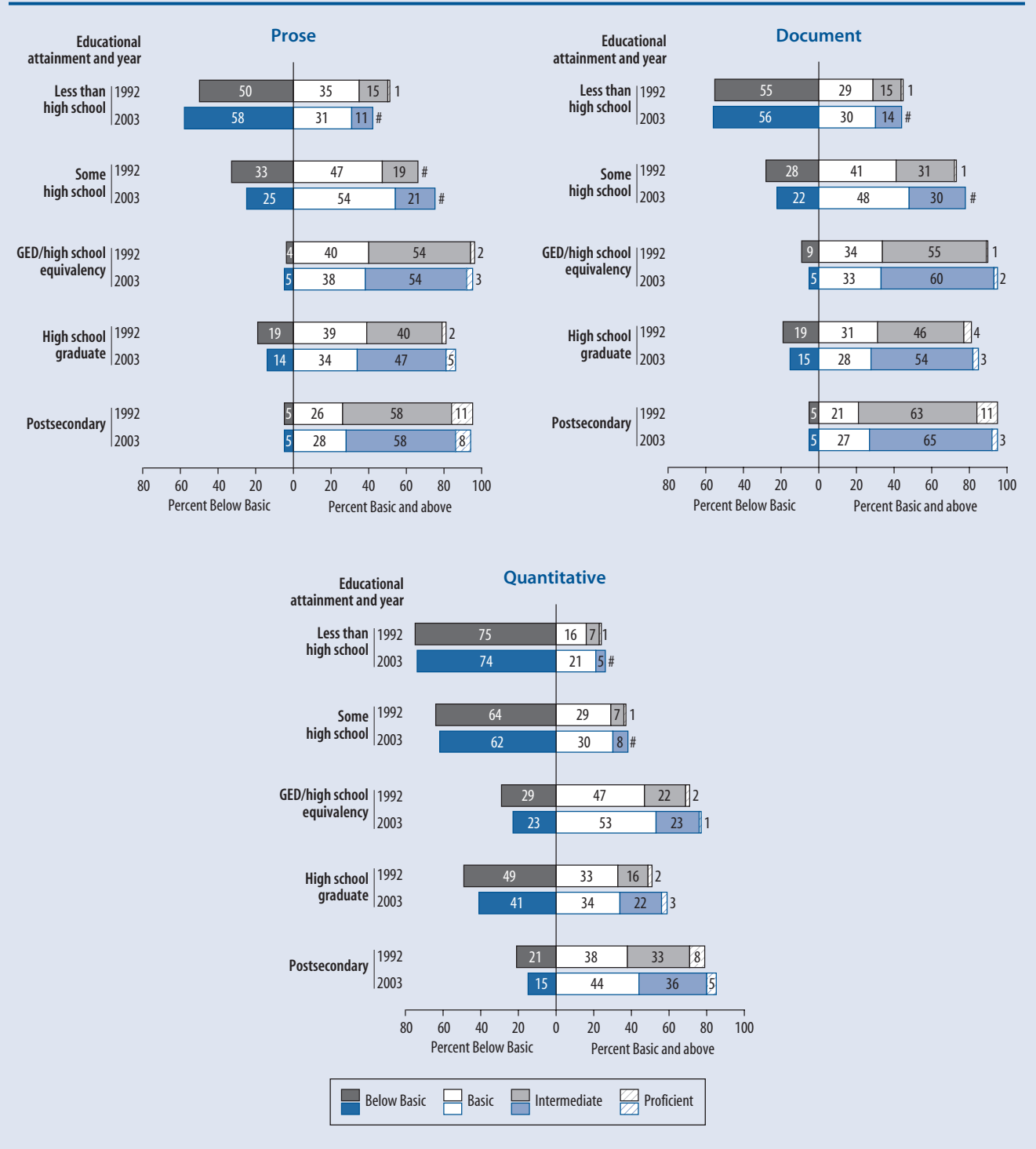


\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-6. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**



## Gender

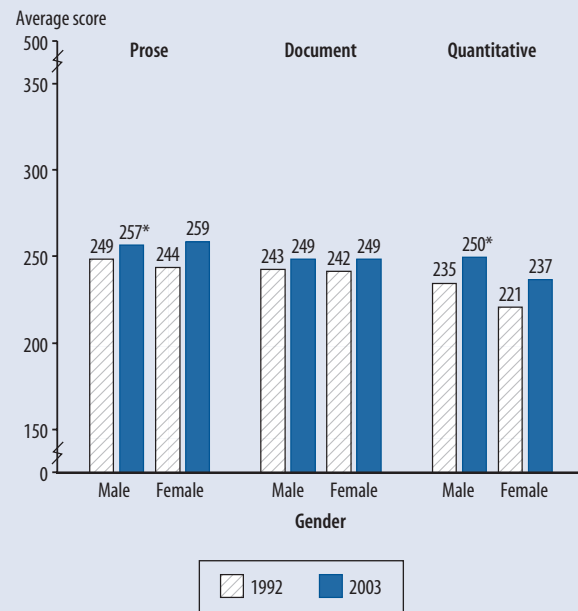
The average prose and quantitative literacy of incarcerated men increased between 1992 and 2003 (figure 2-7). There were no statistically significant changes in the average literacy of incarcerated women on any of the three scales.<sup>10</sup>

Between 1992 and 2003, the percentage of male inmates with *Below Basic* literacy declined from 22 to 17 percent on the prose scale, from 22 to 15 percent on the document scale, and from 49 to 39 percent on the quantitative scale (figure 2-8).

There were no statistically significant differences in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy between male and female prison inmates in 2003 (figure 2-7).

<sup>10</sup> The sample of female prison inmates was smaller than the sample of male prison inmates, reflecting the fact that fewer women than men are incarcerated in state and federal prisons. Because the sample was smaller, standard errors were larger, and differences that look large were not necessarily statistically significant. The fact that a difference is not statistically significant does not necessarily mean that there was no difference in literacy between 1992 and 2003 for female inmates; rather, it means that we cannot be 95 percent certain that the difference we see in the sample would hold for the population of female prison inmates as a whole.

**Figure 2-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by gender: 1992 and 2003**

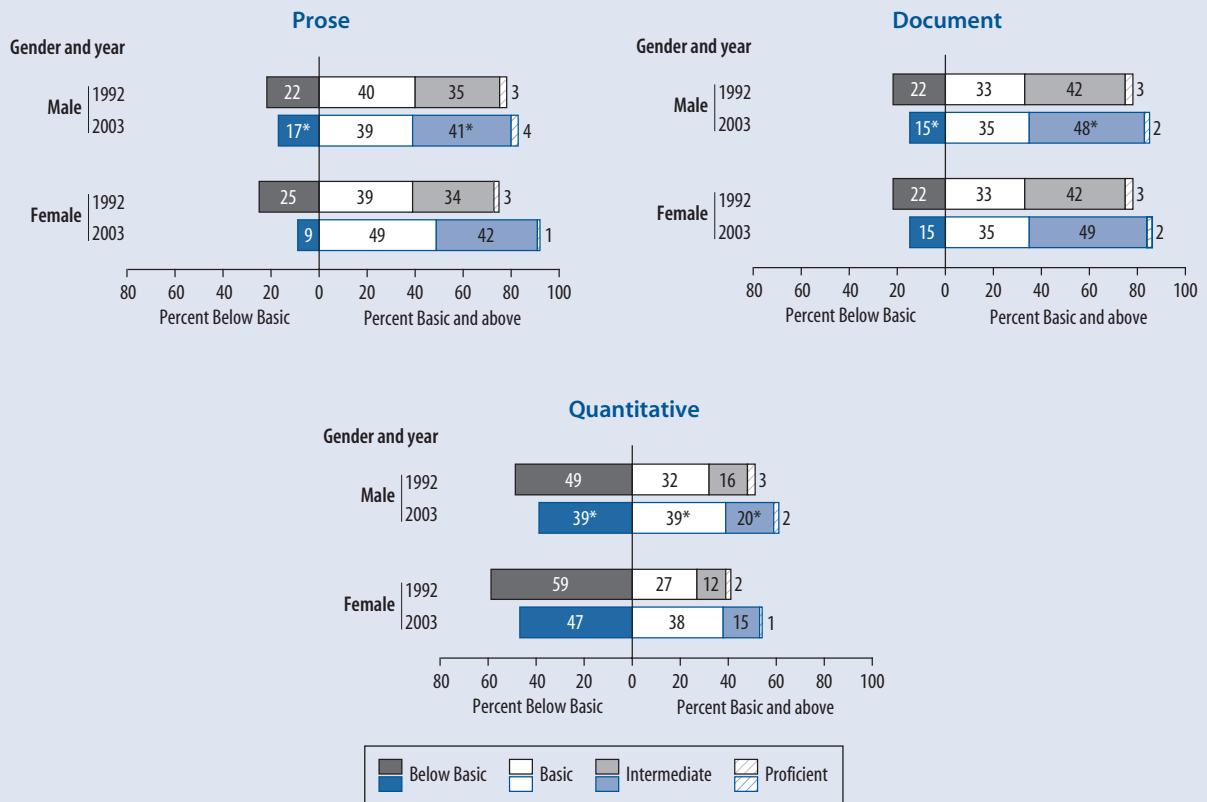


\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-8. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by gender: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

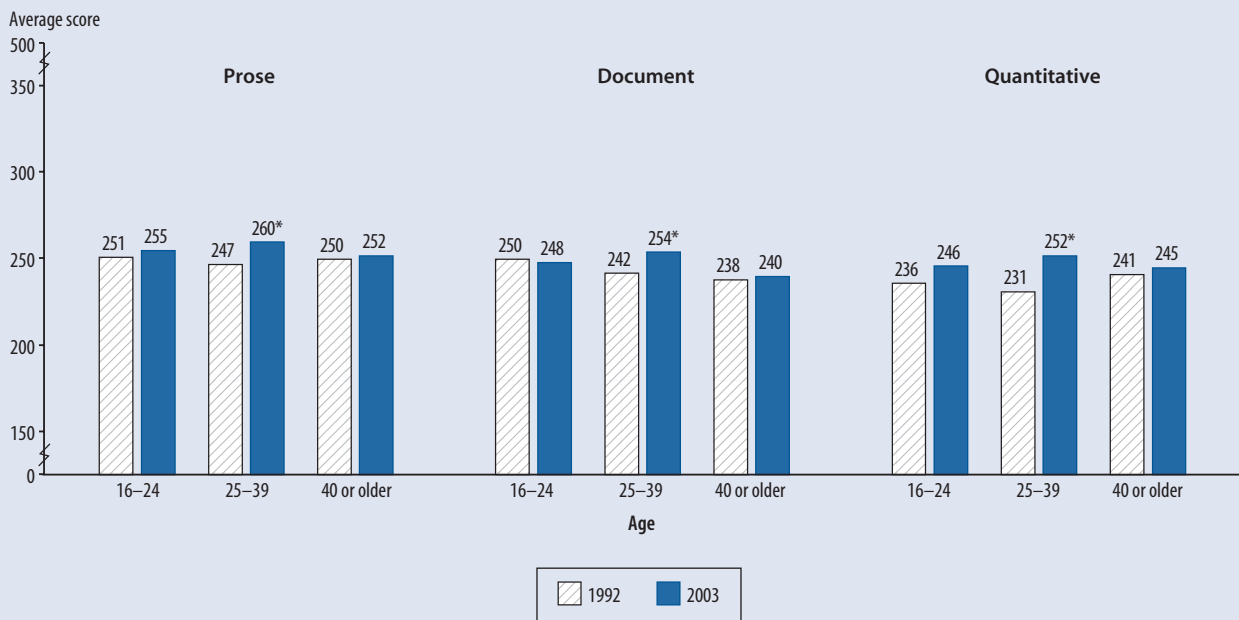
## Age

The average prose, document, and quantitative literacy of prison inmates in the 25 to 39 age group increased between 1992 and 2003 (figure 2-9). The 25 to 38 age group was the largest age group in the prison population in both 1992 and 2003, but the percentage of the incarcerated population in this age group fell from 58 percent in 1992 to 52 percent in 2003 (table 2-1). There were no statistically significant changes in average literacy among inmates in the 16 to 24 or 40 and older age groups.

On all three scales, a lower percentage of prison inmates in the 25 to 39 age group had *Below Basic* literacy and a higher percentage had *Intermediate* literacy in 2003 than in 1992 (figure 2-10).

In 2003, incarcerated adults who were 40 years old or older had lower average prose and document literacy than incarcerated adults who were 25 to 39 years old (figure 2-9).

**Figure 2-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by age: 1992 and 2003**



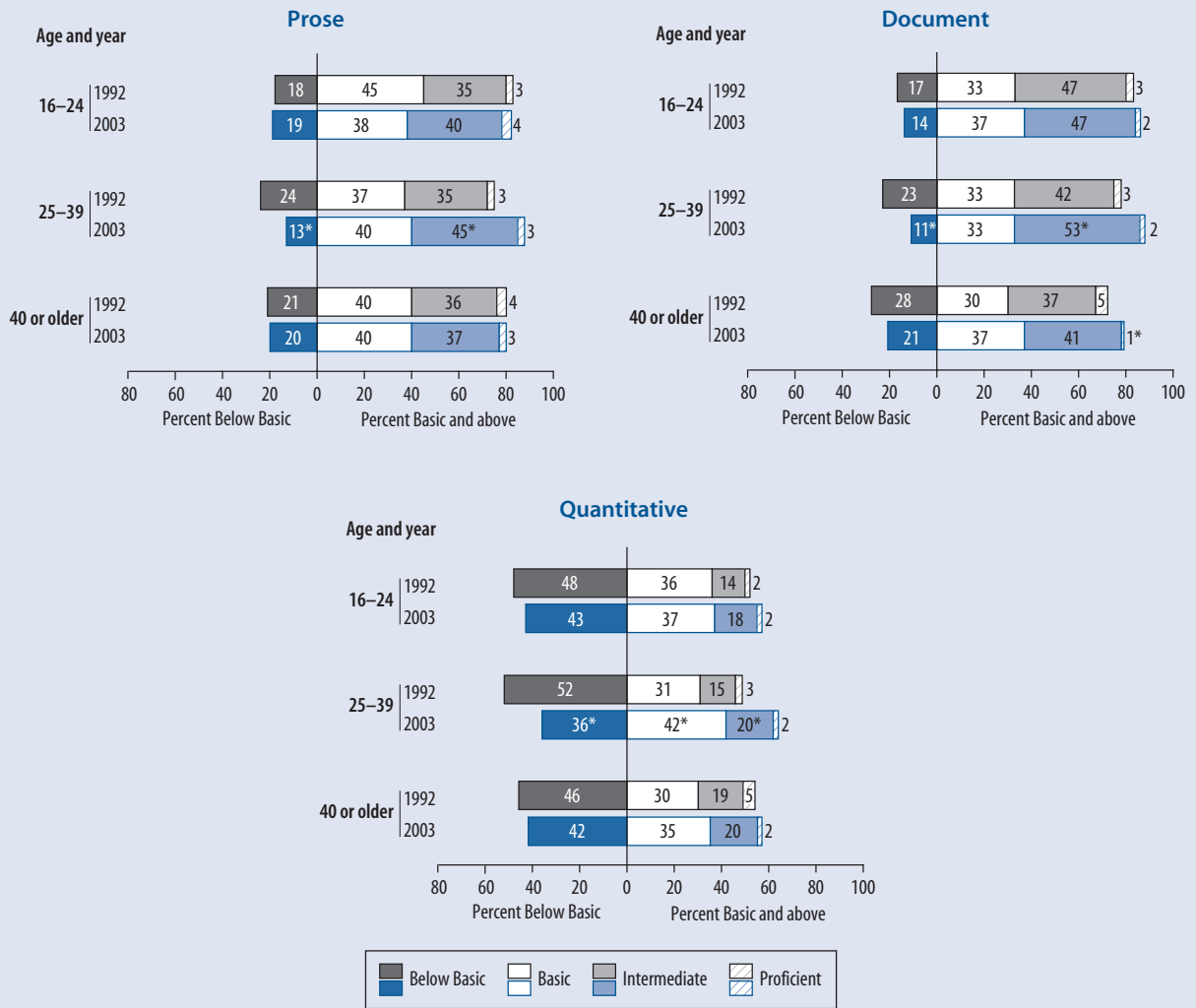
\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Figure 2-10. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by age: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Language Spoken Before Starting School

Average prose and quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003 for prison inmates who spoke only English before starting school (figure 2-11). There were no statistically significant changes in average literacy for inmates who spoke English and another language before starting school or for inmates who spoke only a language other than English.

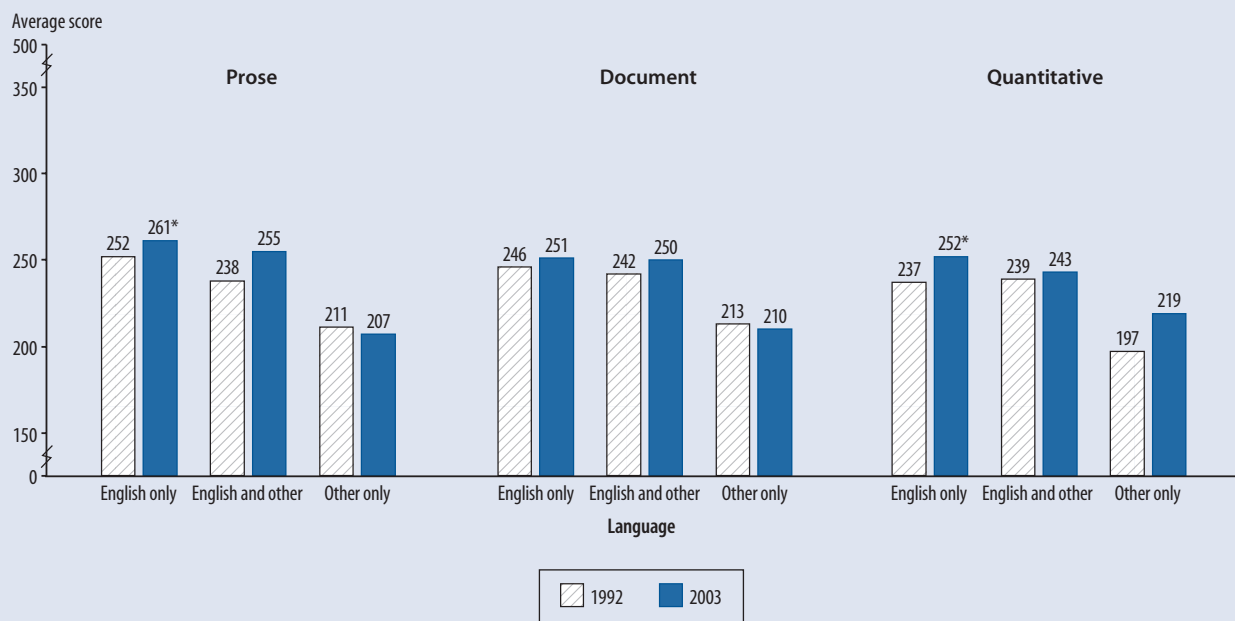
The percentage of prison inmates who spoke only English before starting school and had *Below Basic* literacy decreased from 19 to 13 percent on the prose scale, 21 to 13 percent on the document scale, and 48 to 37 percent on the quantitative scale (figure 2-12). The percentage of prison inmates who spoke only

English before starting school and had *Intermediate* literacy increased from 38 to 44 percent on the prose scale, 44 to 50 percent on the document scale, and 16 to 21 percent on the quantitative scale.

The percentage of prison inmates who spoke English and another language before starting school and had *Below Basic* literacy decreased from 32 to 15 percent on the prose scale (figure 2-12).

In 2003, prison inmates who spoke only English or English and another language before starting school had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who spoke only a language other than English before starting school (figure 2-11).

**Figure 2-11. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by language spoken before starting school: 1992 and 2003**

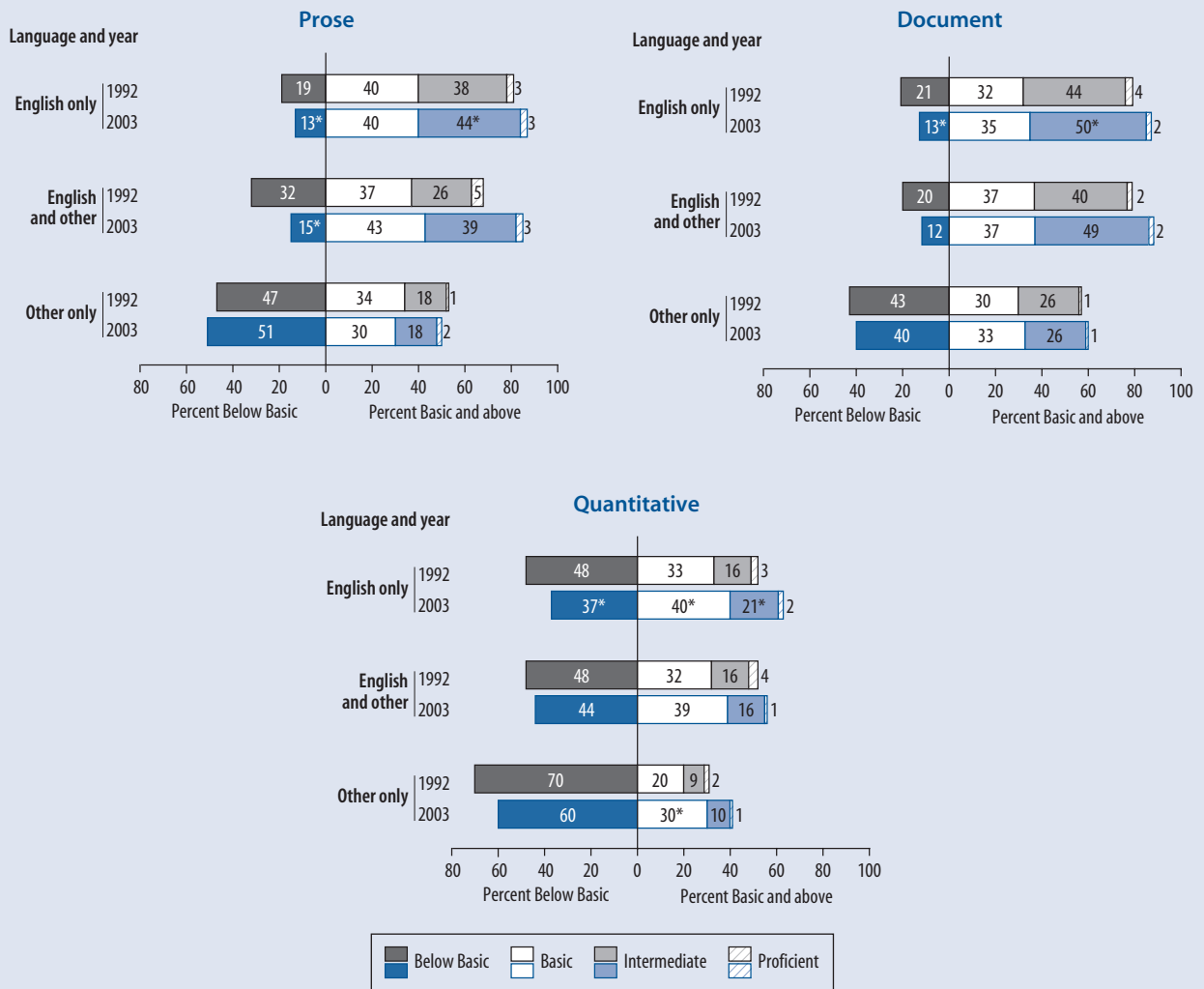


\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-12. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by language spoken before starting school: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

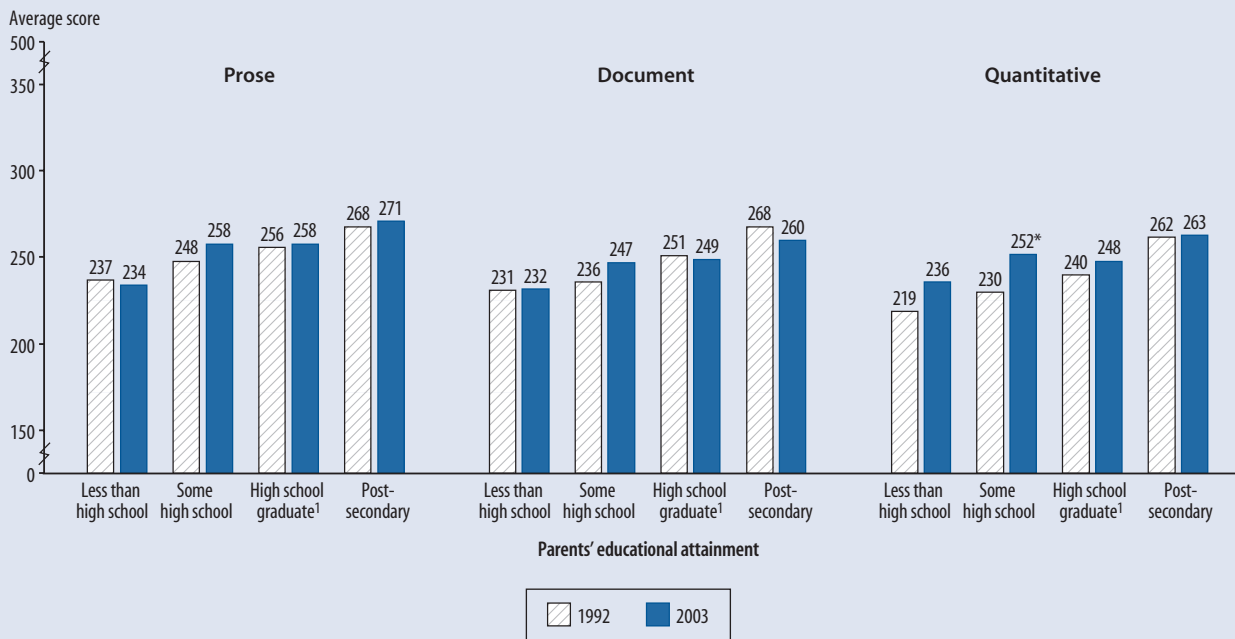
Figure 2-13 shows prison inmates' average levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy by their parents' level of educational attainment. There were no statistically significant changes in the average literacy of inmates in any of the categories of parents' educational attainment except for an increase in quantitative literacy for inmates whose parents had some high school education.

Figure 2-14 shows the distribution of prison inmates by their literacy level and their parents' level of educational attainment. There were no statistically significant differences between 1992 and 2003, except for

a decrease in the percentage of inmates with *Below Basic* quantitative literacy whose parents completed some high school.

In 2003, prison inmates whose parents had attended some high school (but had not received a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate) had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates whose parents had not attended any high school (figure 2-13). Prison inmates whose parents had postsecondary education had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates whose parents ended their education with a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate.

**Figure 2-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by parents' highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**



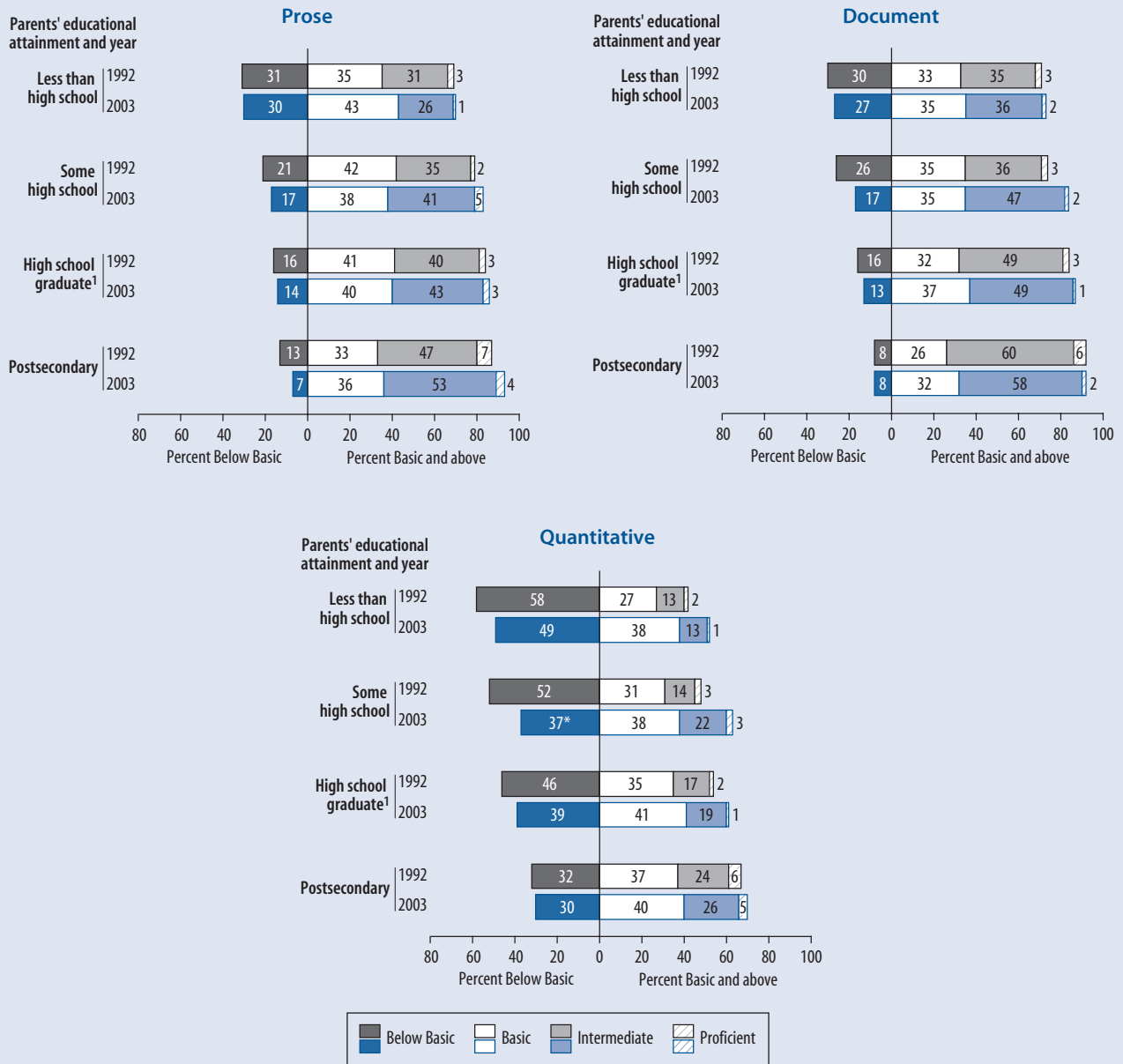
\*Significantly different from 1992.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 2-14. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by parents' highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Summary

The prison population was larger, older, and better educated in 2003 than in 1992. Average prose and quantitative literacy was higher among prison inmates in 2003 than it was among inmates in 1992. More prison inmates had *Intermediate* prose, document, and quantitative literacy in 2003 than in 1992, and fewer had *Below Basic* prose, document, and quantitative literacy.

Between 1992 and 2003, average prose and quantitative literacy levels increased for prison inmates who were Black, male, or in the 25 to 39 age group. Average document literacy increased for inmates who were Black or in the 25 to 39 age group. Average prose and quantitative literacy levels also increased for prison inmates who spoke only English before starting school, and average quantitative literacy levels

increased for Hispanic inmates. Among all the demographic, educational attainment, and language background groups examined in this chapter, there were no decreases in average literacy on any of the three scales between 1992 and 2003.

In 2003, White prison inmates had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than Black and Hispanic prison inmates. Prison inmates who were 40 or older had lower average prose and document literacy than inmates who were 16 to 24 or 25 to 39 years old. Prison inmates who spoke English before starting school had higher average literacy on all three scales than inmates who did not speak any English before starting school. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy increased or did not change significantly among prison inmates with each increasing level of education for them or their parents.

## Comparing the Prison and Household Populations

The 2003 adult prison and household populations differed in many characteristics. A higher percentage of prison inmates were Black or Hispanic and a lower percentage were White than adults living in households (table 3-1). Compared with adults living in households, a higher percentage of prison inmates were male (94 percent versus 48 percent), a lower percentage were age 40 or older (32 percent versus 56 percent), and a lower percentage spoke only a language other than English as children (9 percent versus 13 percent). A lower percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households completed any postsecondary education (22 percent versus 51 percent) and a lower percentage of the parents of prison inmates than the parents of adults living in households completed any education beyond high school (33 percent versus 42 percent). A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households had been diagnosed with a learning disability (17 percent versus 6 percent), but there was no measurable difference between the percentage of adults in prisons and households who reported that their overall health was poor or fair. A lower percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households reported having served in the military (10 percent versus 13 percent) (table 3-1).

Total Prison and Household Populations

Race/Ethnicity

Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Gender

Age

Language Spoken Before Starting School

Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Summary

**Table 3-1. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in selected groups: 2003**

Characteristic	Prison	Household
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	32	71*
Black	46	11*
Hispanic	18	12*
Other	5	6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94	48*
Female	6	52*
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Still in high school	†	3*
Less than high school	9	6*
Some high school	28	10*
GED/high school equivalency	28	5*
High school graduate	13	26*
Postsecondary	22	51*
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	16	17
25–39	52	27*
40+	32	56*
<b>Language spoken before starting school</b>		
English only	85	81*
English and other	6	6
Other only	9	13*
<b>Parents' highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	13	18*
Some high school	13	9*
GED/high school equivalency/ high school graduate	41	31*
Postsecondary	33	42*
<b>Veteran's status</b>		
Veteran	10	13*
Not a veteran	90	87*
<b>Self-reported health</b>		
Poor	4	4
Fair	11	11
Good	22	24*
Very good	35	36
Excellent	28	26
<b>Learning disability diagnosis</b>		
Yes	17	6*
No	84	94*

†Not applicable.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

The analyses in this chapter examine how literacy levels differed in 2003 between adults living in households and prison inmates. The first analyses in the chapter compare average literacy differences among the total population in each group. However, because of the differences in the characteristics of the two groups, it is also meaningful to look at differences in literacy for groups within each population with the same background characteristics (demographics, educational attainment, and language background). The majority of this chapter focuses on those analyses.



## Total Prison and Household Populations

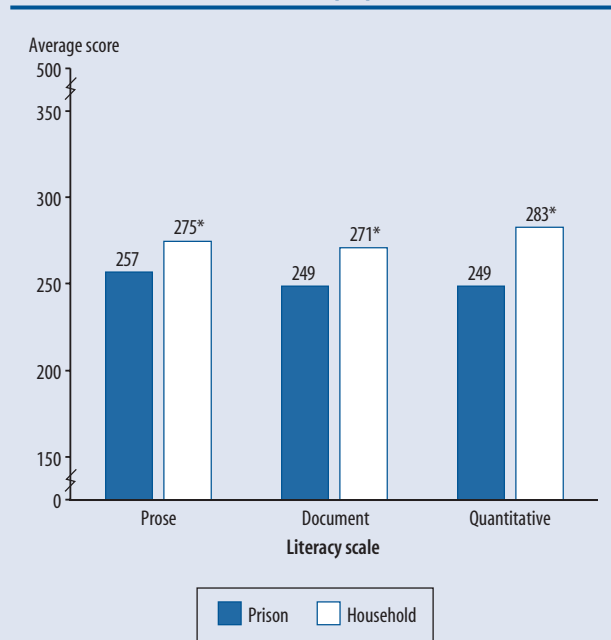
Prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-1).

A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households had *Below Basic* quantitative literacy (39 percent compared with 21 percent), but the differences in the percentage of prison inmates and adults living in households who had *Below Basic*

prose or document literacy were not statistically significant (figure 3-2).

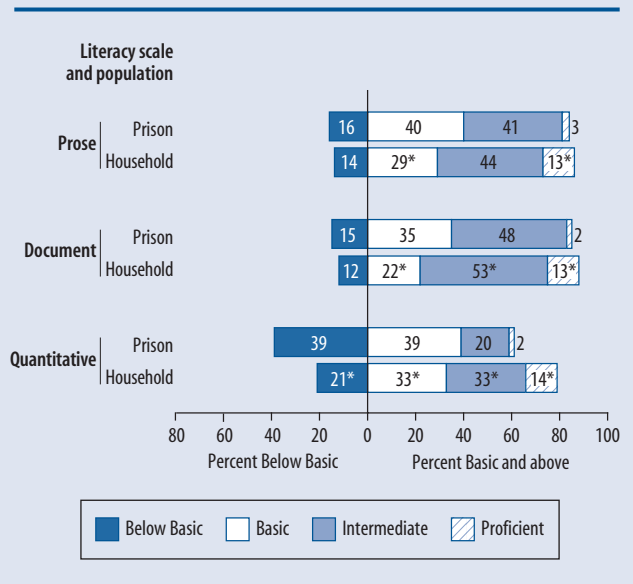
Among prison inmates, 2 to 3 percent had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy compared with 13 to 14 percent of adults living in households. A lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Intermediate* document or quantitative literacy and a higher percentage had *Basic* prose, document, or quantitative literacy.

**Figure 3-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.  
 NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-2. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.  
 NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Race/Ethnicity

Incarcerated White adults had lower average prose literacy than White adults living in households (figure 3-3). This finding was reversed for Blacks and Hispanics: Black and Hispanic prison inmates had higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults living in households.

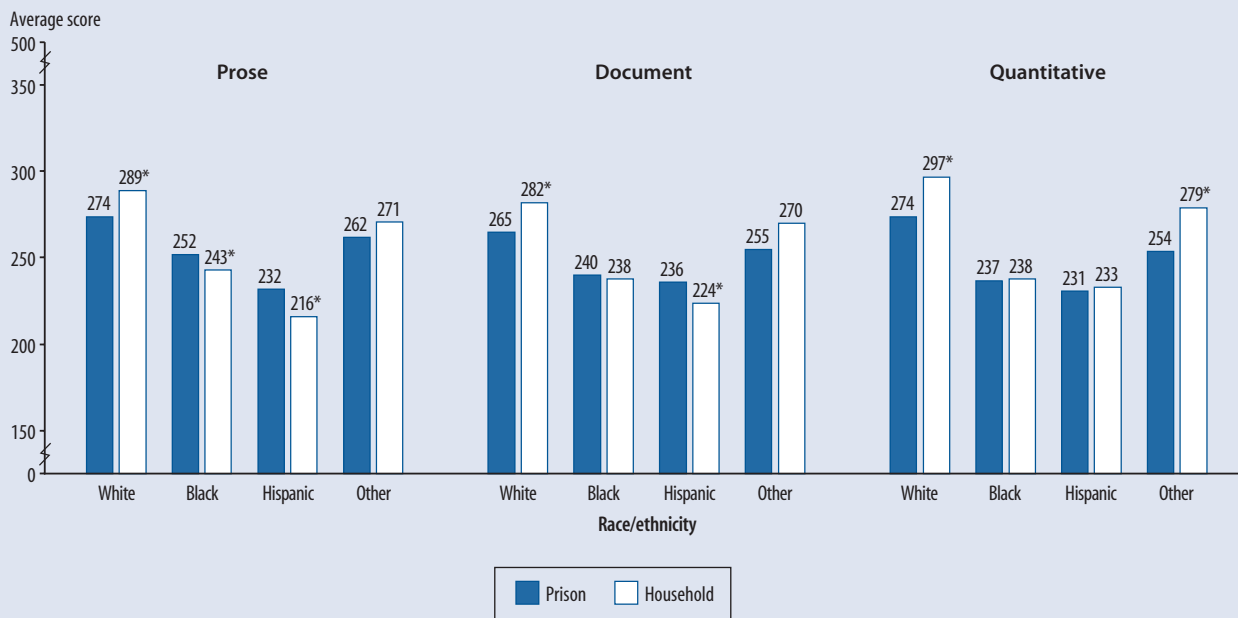
White prison inmates also had lower average document and quantitative literacy than White adults living in households (figure 3-3). Among Black adults, there was no statistically significant difference in document or quantitative literacy between those who were incarcerated and those who lived in households. For Hispanic adults, those who were

incarcerated had higher document literacy than those who lived in households.

Prison inmates are on average younger than adults living in households, and previous studies (Kutner, Greenberg, and Baer 2005) of the 2003 adult literacy data indicated that a relationship exists between age and literacy. Given this finding, analyses were conducted to compare the prose literacy of the prison and household populations by both race/ethnicity and age group.

As shown in table 3-2, within the same age group either White prison inmates had lower average prose literacy than White adults living in households or there was no statistically significant difference

**Figure 3-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

between the two groups. Black prison inmates in the 40 and older age group had higher average prose literacy than Black adults living in households, but the difference between Black prison inmates and Black adults living in households was not statistically significant in the 16 to 24 and 25 to 39 age groups. Among Hispanics, the difference in average prose literacy between incarcerated adults and adults living in households was not statistically significant in the 16 to 24 and 40 and older age groups. In the 25 to 39 age group, Hispanic adults in prison had higher average prose literacy than Hispanic adults in households.

The literacy of prison inmates by date of incarceration and race/ethnicity was also examined. Black inmates who were incarcerated prior to 2002 had higher prose literacy than Black adults living in households, but Black inmates who were incarcerated in 2002 or later had prose literacy that was not statistically significantly different from that of Black adults living in households (table 3-3).

An examination of the distribution by literacy level of prison inmates and adults living in households shows that 3 to 7 percent of White prison inmates had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy, compared with 15 to 17 percent of White adults living in households (figure 3-4). A lower percentage of White adults living in households than White adults in prisons had *Basic* prose and quantitative literacy.

A lower percentage of Black prison inmates than Black adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose literacy (figure 3-4).

A lower percentage of Hispanic prison inmates than Hispanic adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose or document literacy.

**Table 3-2. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and age: 2003**

Race/ethnicity and age	Prison	Household
<b>White</b>		
16–24	285	287
25–39	275	303*
40+	267	283*
<b>Black</b>		
16–24	238	249
25–39	260	253
40+	248	234*
<b>Hispanic</b>		
16–24	260	235
25–39	229	213*
40+	218	205

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table 3-3. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and date incarcerated: 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Incarcerated prior to 2002	Incarcerated 2002 or later	Household
White	275*	273*	289
Black	255*	249	243

\*Significantly different from household population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Because of sample size, these analyses are not reported for the Hispanic population. Black includes African American.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-4. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The 'Other' category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

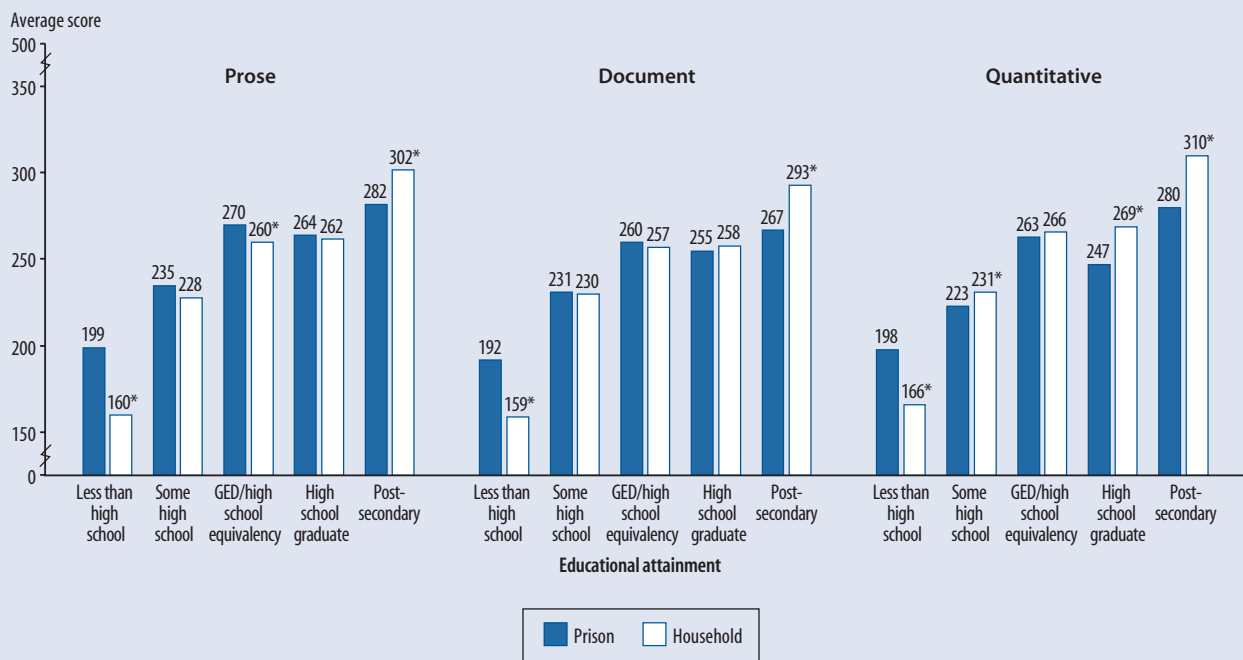
## Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Among adult who ended their education before starting high school (classified as “less than high school” in the figure), prison inmates had higher average literacy on all three scales than adults living in households (figure 3-5). Prison inmates with a GED/high school equivalency certificate had higher average prose literacy than adults living in households with a GED/high school equivalency certificate. For all other levels of educational attainment, either prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households with the same level of educational

attainment or there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups (figure 3-5).

Among adults who ended their education before starting high school, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Below Basic* prose and document literacy (figure 3-6). Among adults with postsecondary education, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults in households had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy and a higher percentage had *Basic* literacy on all three scales and *Below Basic* literacy on the quantitative scale (figure 3-6).

**Figure 3-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

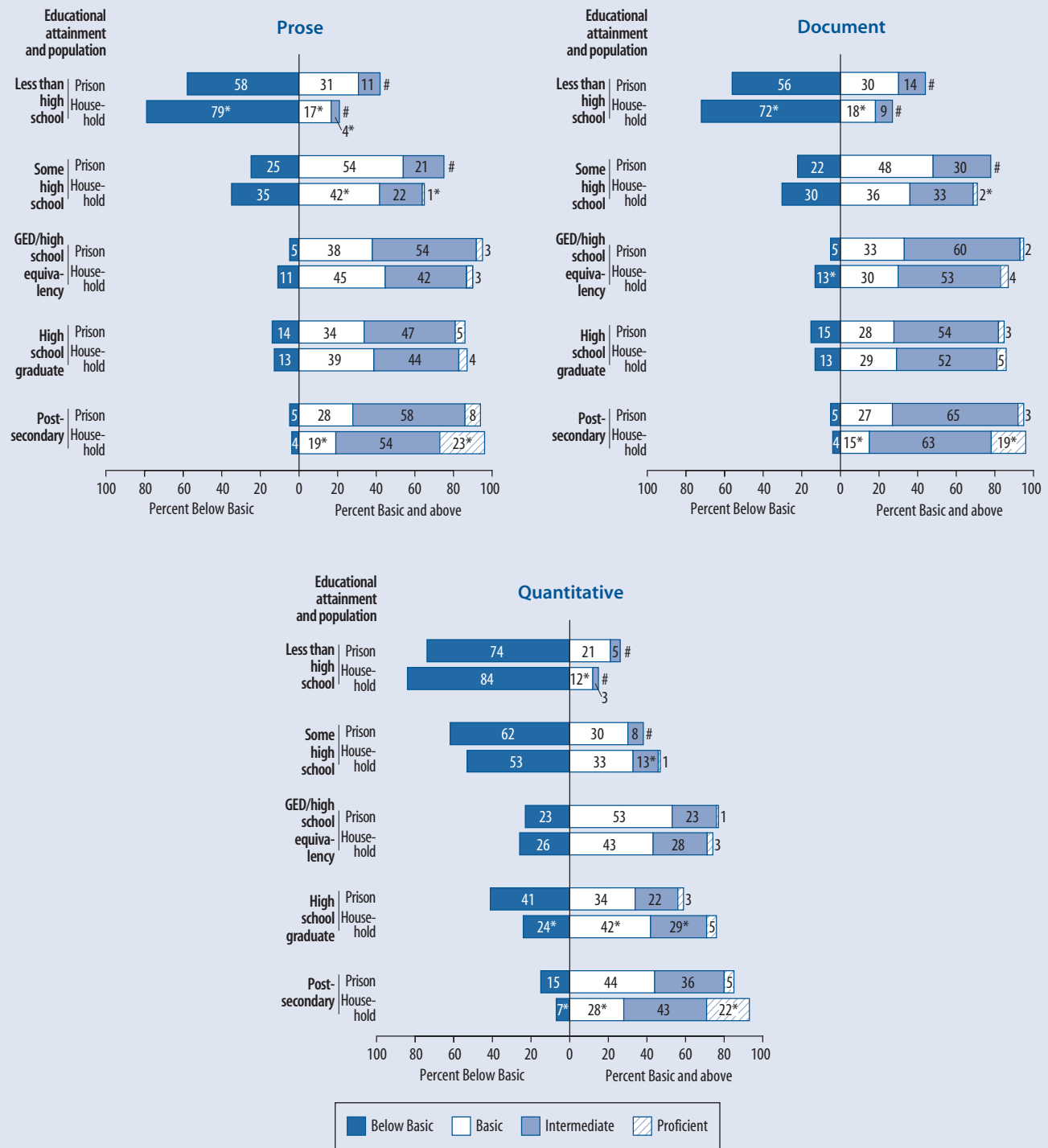


\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Figure 3-6. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003



# Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

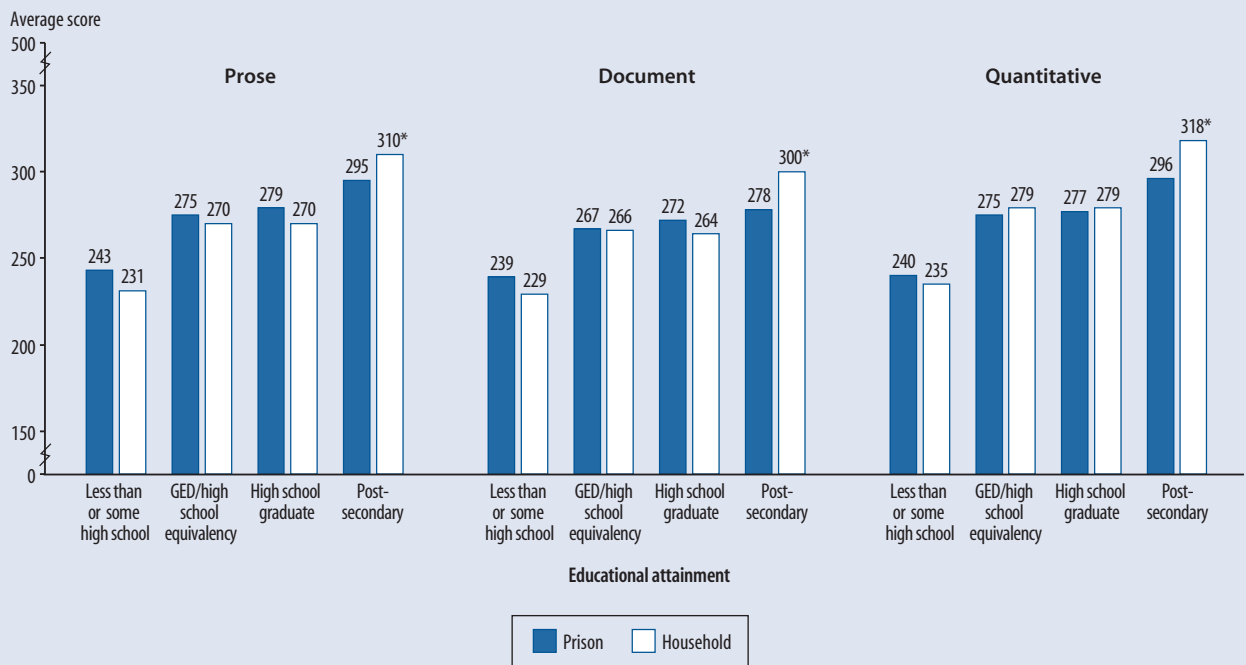
### Highest level of educational attainment and race/ethnicity

In this section, literacy results by highest level of educational attainment are reported separately for Black and White adults. Comparisons are made between adults living in households and prison inmates. Results are not reported separately for Hispanic adults by highest level of educational attainment because there were not enough Hispanic adults in the prison sample to support reporting at this level of detail.

Among White adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma, there was no statistically significant different between the prose, document, and quantitative

literacy of those adults who lived in households and those adults who were incarcerated (figure 3-7). However, among Black adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma, Black prison inmates had higher average prose literacy than Black adults living in households (figure 3-8). Among Black adults who did not graduate from high school or ended their education with a GED/high school equivalency certification, Black prison inmates also had higher document and quantitative literacy than Black adults living in households. A lower percentage of Black adults in prison than Black adults in households had *Below Basic* prose and document literacy (table 3-4).

**Figure 3-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the White adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

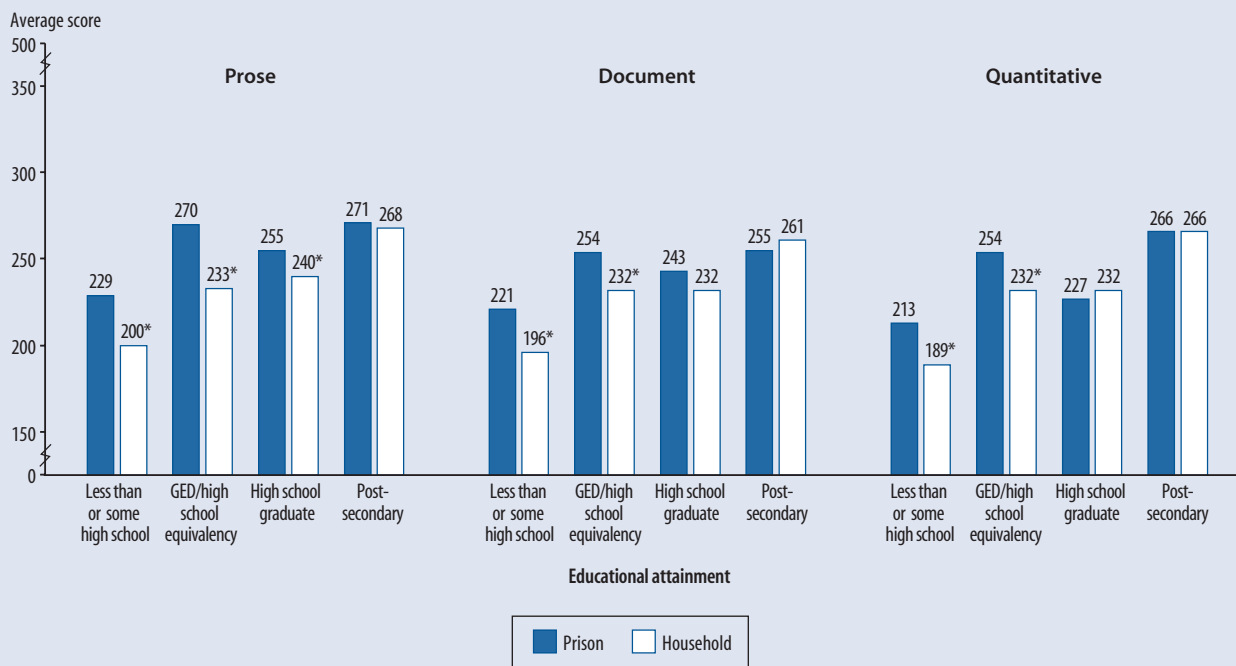
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Among White adults who had at least some education beyond high school, those living in households had higher literacy on all three scales than those who were incarcerated (figure 3-7). Additionally, a higher percentage of White adults who had at least some postsecondary education and lived in households than adults with the same level of education who

lived in prison had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales (table 3-4). Among Black adults who had at least some education beyond high school, there were no differences in average literacy between those who lived in households and those who were incarcerated (figure 3-8).

**Figure 3-8. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the Black adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table 3-4. Percentage of the Black and White adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Population, literacy scale, and educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>White adults</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	20	34	49	40	30	24	1	2
GED/high school equivalency	3	5	35	40	58	52	4	3
High school graduate	11	8	27	37	51	51	12	4
Postsecondary	5	2	19	15	61	56	15	27*
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	18	32	44	32	38	34	#	3
GED/high school equivalency	2	9	27	26	69	60	2	5
High school graduate	9	10	19	27	65	57	7	6
Postsecondary	3	2	18	12	74	63	6	23*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	47	50	37	33	15	15	1	2
GED/high school equivalency	12	15	55	45	32	37	2	4
High school graduate	20	17	39	42	36	35	5	6
Postsecondary	5	4	38	24	49	46	8	26*
<b>Black adults</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	29	54*	55	36	16	10	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	5	23	39	63	53	15*	3	#
High school graduate	14	23	44	49	41	27	1	1
Postsecondary	4	10	40	37	53	49	3	5
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	33	52*	44	31*	23	17	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	9	24	38	44	52	33	1	#
High school graduate	20	24	35	42	43	33	2	#
Postsecondary	7	8	38	30	53	59	1	3
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	70	76	26	20	4	5	#	#
GED/high school equivalency	31	53	51	40	17	7	1	#
High school graduate	54	52	31	37	14	10	1	#
Postsecondary	24	24	47	46	26	27	2	3

# Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

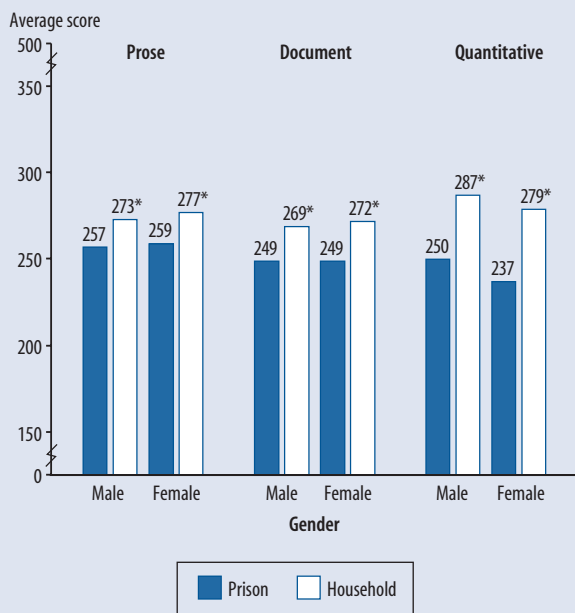
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Gender

Male and female prison inmates had lower average literacy on all three scales than adults of the same gender living in households (figure 3-9). A lower percentage of adult men and women in prisons had *Proficient* prose, document, and quantitative literacy than men and women living in households (figure 3-10). A higher percentage of men and women in prisons than men and women living in households had *Below Basic* quantitative literacy.

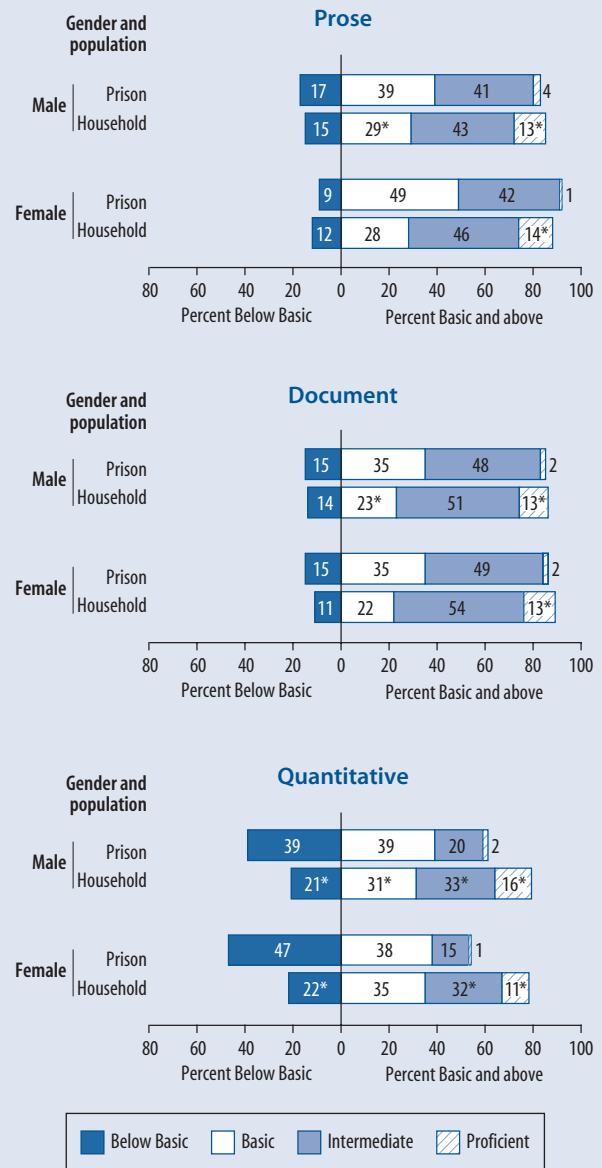
**Figure 3-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by gender: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-10. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by gender: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

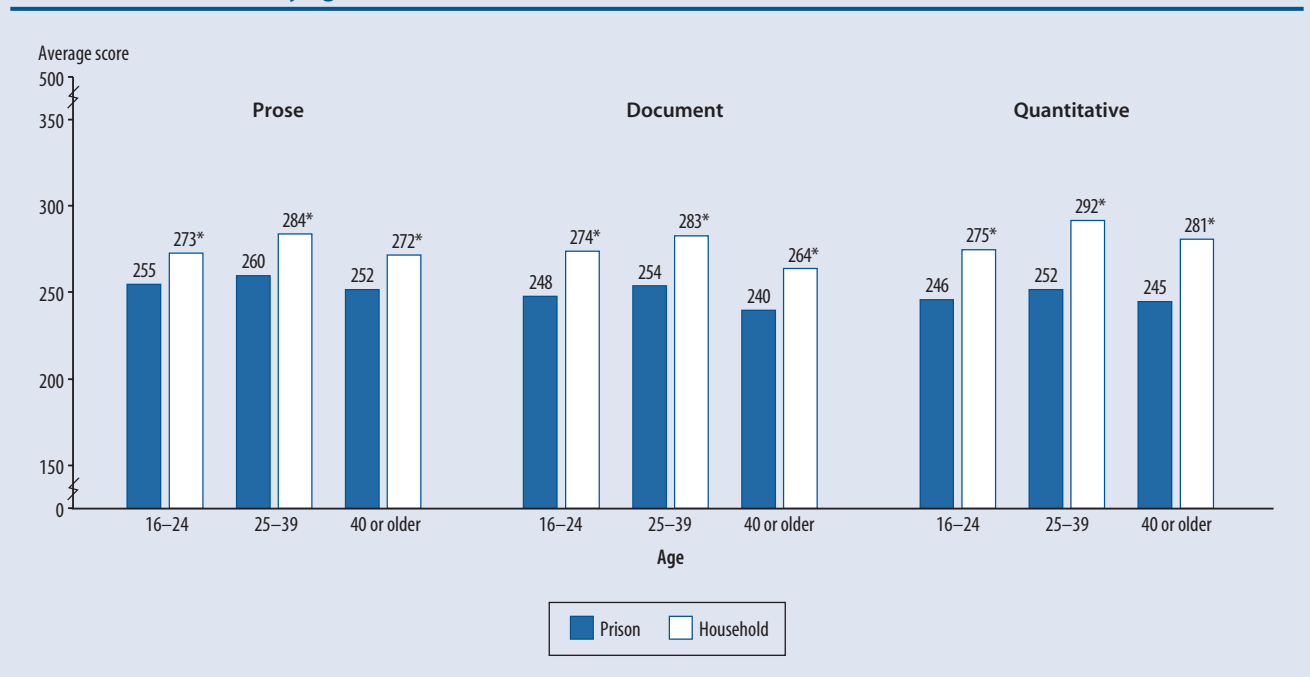
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Age

In every age group, adult prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-11). A lower percentage of adults in prison had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales than adults in the same age group in households (figure 3-12). On the quantitative scale,

a higher percentage of adult prison inmates had *Below Basic* literacy than adults living in households in the same age group (figure 3-11). Among adults who were age 40 and older, 20 percent of adult prison inmates had *Below Basic* prose literacy compared with 15 percent of adults living in households (figure 3-12).

**Figure 3-11. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by age: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-12. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by age: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

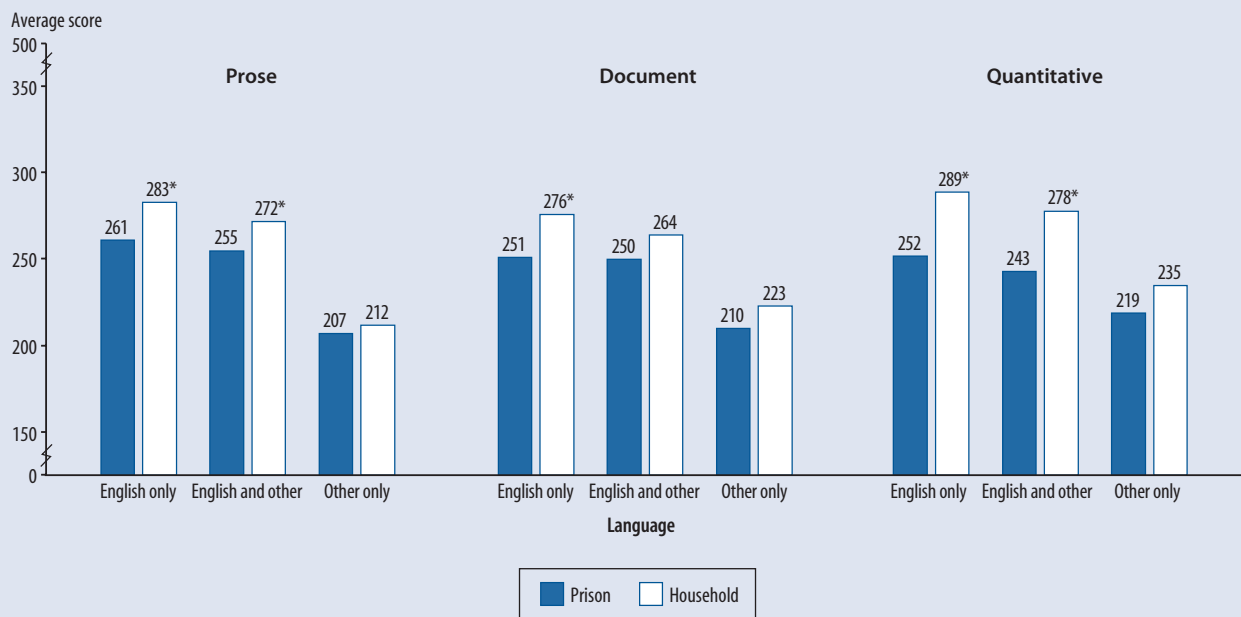
## Language Spoken Before Starting School

Among adults who spoke only English before starting school, those who were in prison had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those who lived in households (figure 3-13). Among adults who spoke English and another language before starting school, those who were in prison had lower average prose and quantitative literacy than those who lived in households. Among adults who spoke no English before starting school (classified as “Other only”), there were no statistically significant differences in average prose, document, and quantita-

tive literacy between prison inmates and adults living in households.

Among prison inmates who spoke only English before starting school, 2 to 3 percent had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales, compared with 14 to 15 percent of adults living in households with the same language background (figure 3-14). A lower percentage of adults in prison who spoke only English before starting school had *Intermediate* prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households with the same language background.

**Figure 3-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**

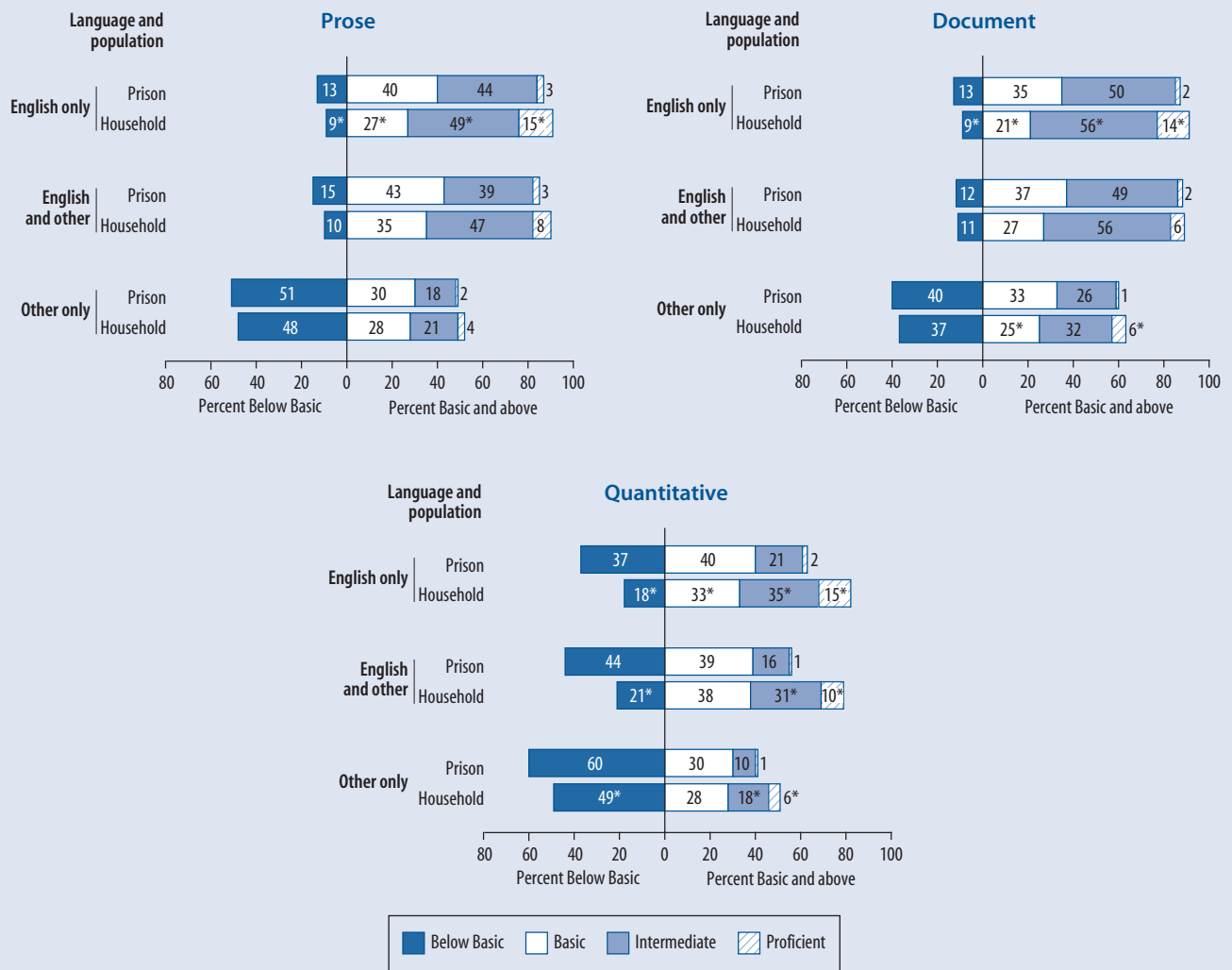


\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

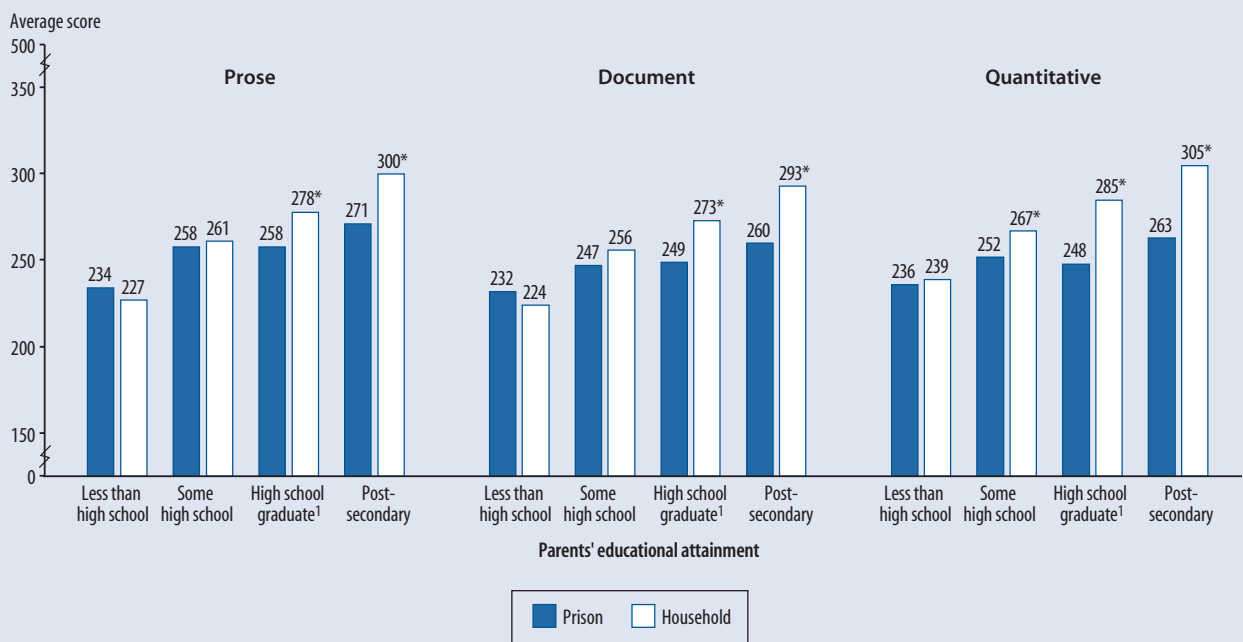
## Parents' Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Figure 3-15 shows the average prose, document, and quantitative literacy of adults living in prisons and households by their parents' level of educational attainment. Among adults whose parents were high school graduates or had attained postsecondary education, prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those adults who lived in households whose parents had the same

level of educational attainment. Prison inmates whose parents had some high school but did not complete high school also had lower average quantitative literacy than adults living in households whose parents had the same level of educational attainment.

Among adults whose parents were high school graduates or had postsecondary education, a lower percentage of adults in prison than adults living in households had *Proficient* literacy on all three scales (figure 3-16).

**Figure 3-15. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**



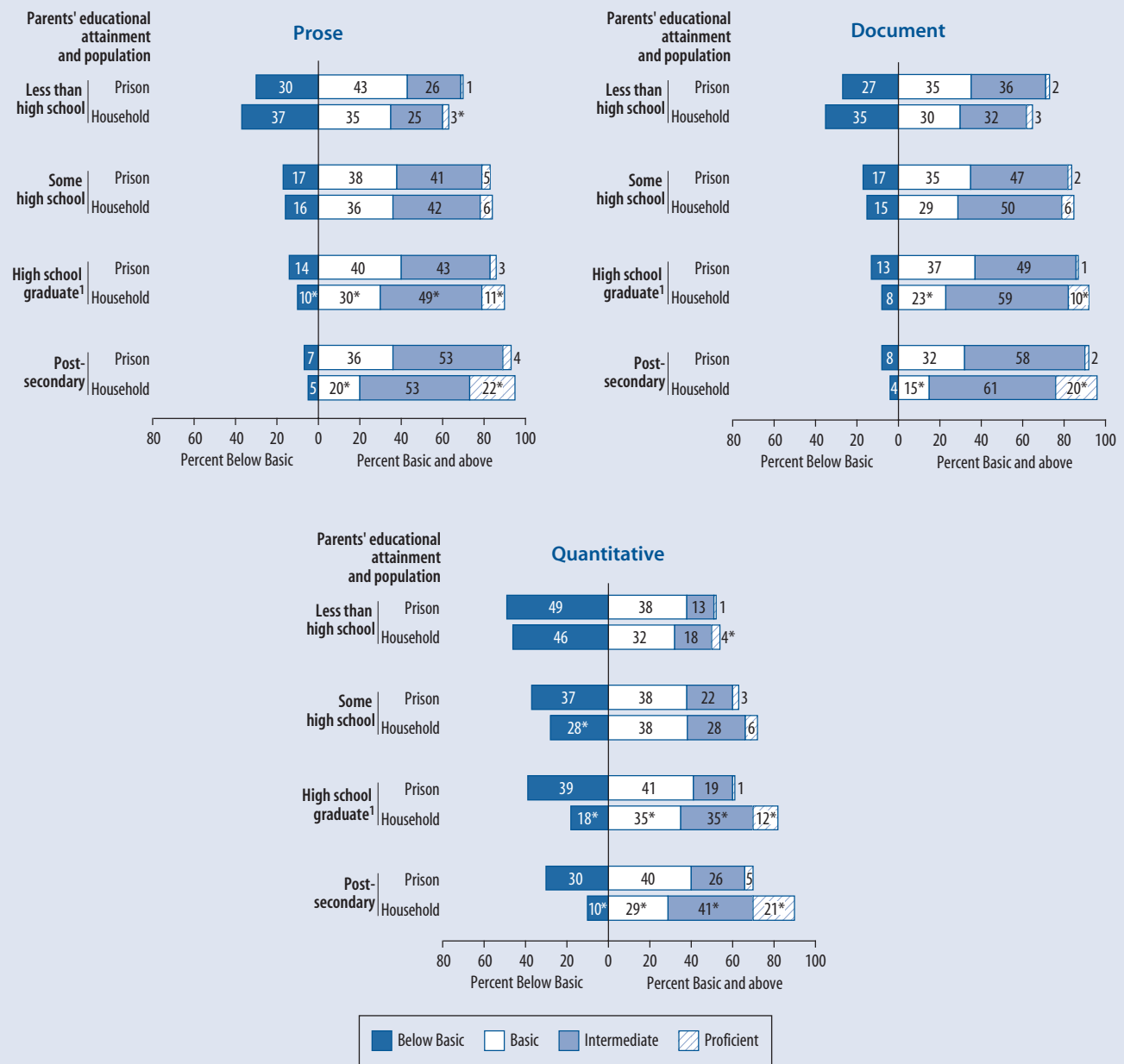
\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 3-16. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



## Summary

In 2003, there were demographic differences between the adult prison and household populations. A higher percentage of prison inmates were Black, Hispanic, male, under age 40, and spoke only English before starting school than adults in households.

On average, incarcerated adults had lower prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households. Across the various demographic, educational attainment, and language background groups examined in this chapter, adults in prison generally had literacy that was either lower than or not statistically

different from the literacy of adults living in households. An exception was the analysis of literacy by race/ethnicity, which showed that incarcerated Black and Hispanic adults had higher average prose literacy than Black and Hispanic adults living in households and that incarcerated Hispanic adults also had higher average document literacy than Hispanic adults living in households. However, there was no statistically significant difference in average prose literacy between the Black and Hispanic prison and household populations in two of the three age groups examined, but differences remained within one age group for each racial/ethnic group.



## Education and Job Training in Prison

Prisons are intended to rehabilitate criminal offenders, as well as to punish and incapacitate them. The education and training systems operating within most prisons are a key component of the rehabilitation mission of prisons. Previous studies have shown a relationship between participation in educational programs and recidivism rates, with inmates who attend education programs less likely to be reincarcerated after their release (Vacca 2004).

There are many reasons why prison inmates may be motivated to participate in education and training programs. Among these may be a realization that they do not have skills that will lead to employment upon their release from prison. As one inmate said, “I’ve never had a career. I’ve had jobs, but never had anything that would take me anywhere. It’s scary to come out of jail and not realize what you’re going to do” (Clayton 2005).

This chapter describes the relationships among literacy, education, and vocational training in prison. The analyses in the chapter discuss both the prevalence of inmate participation in education and training programs and the relationship between literacy levels and program participation.

Academic Education

Vocational Education

Skill Certification

Summary

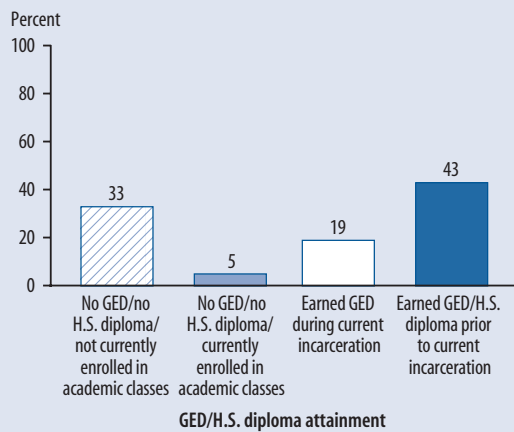
## Academic Education

In both 1992 and 2003, GED classes were available in most prisons. However, because of restrictions in Pell Grants that were implemented in 1994, higher educational opportunities were more limited for prison inmates in 2003 than in 1992 (Welsh 2002).

In 2003, some 43 percent of prison inmates had a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate when they began their current incarceration, so helping inmates complete their high school education is a major aim of many prison academic programs (figure 4-1).<sup>11</sup> Among prison inmates in 2003, some 19 percent had earned their GED/high school equivalency certificate during

<sup>11</sup> The 43 percent of prison inmates who had a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate when they began their current incarceration includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

**Figure 4-1. Percentage of the adult prison population, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**



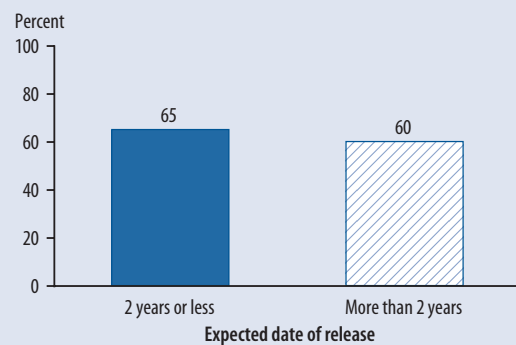
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

their current incarceration, and an additional 5 percent were currently enrolled in academic classes.

Having a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma may be particularly important for inmates who expect to be released soon and will need to find a job outside of prison. However, the difference in the percentage of inmates who expected to be released in 2 years or less and had a GED/high school equivalency certificate or high school diploma, and the percentage of inmates who expected to be released in more than 2 years and had a GED/high school equivalency certificate or high school diploma, was not statistically significant. (figure 4-2)

As discussed in chapter 2, prison inmates' average prose and quantitative literacy increased with each increasing education level, and their document literacy increased with each increasing education level up to a high school diploma or GED/high school equivalency certificate (figure 2-7).

**Figure 4-2. Percentage of the adult prison population with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or high school diploma, by expected date of release: 2003**



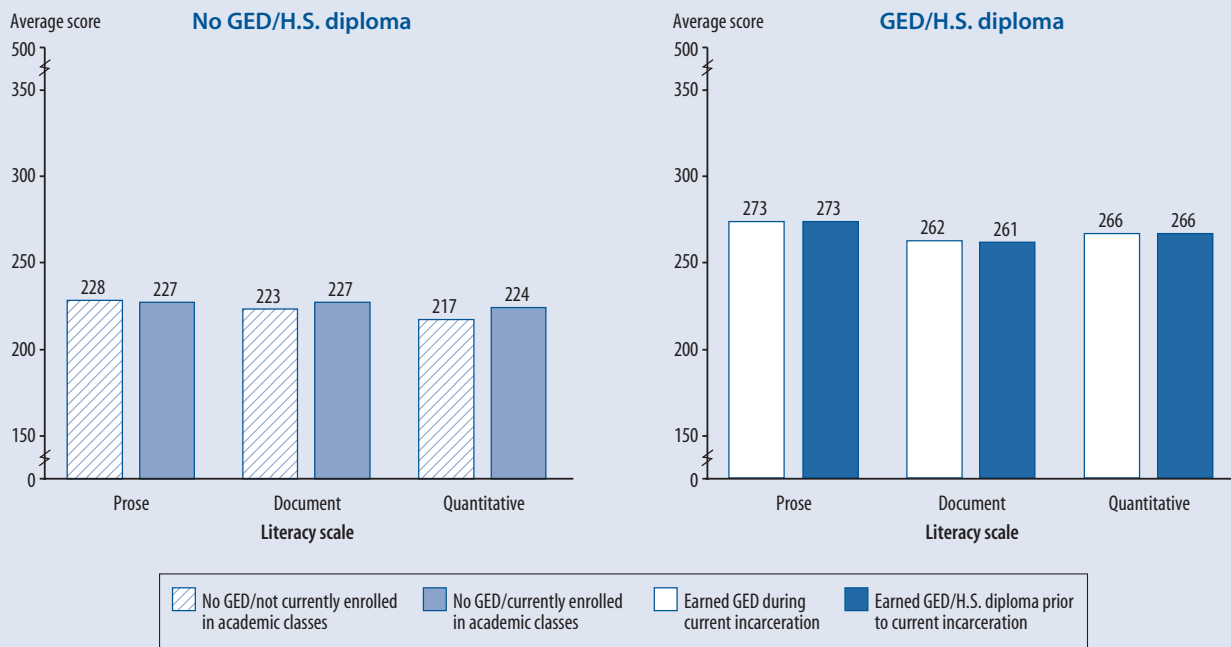
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Prison inmates who had a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate (either earned during their current incarceration or prior to their current incarceration) had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than inmates who were currently enrolled in academic classes in prison but had not yet earned their GED/high school equivalency certificate (figure 4-3). They also had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than inmates who were not enrolled in any academic classes. The differences in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy between inmates who earned their GED/high school equivalency certificate during their current incarceration and inmates who entered prison with a high school diploma or

GED/high school equivalency certificate were not statistically significant.

A lower percentage of prison inmates who had a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate had *Below Basic* prose and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who were currently enrolled in academic classes or did not have a GED/high school equivalency certificate and were not enrolled in classes (figure 4-4). Similar to figure 4-3, there were no statistically significant differences in the percentage of inmates at any of the literacy levels between inmates who earned their high school diploma or GED/high school equivalency certificate prior to their current incarceration and inmates who earned their GED/high school equivalency certificate during their current incarceration.

**Figure 4-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The category “earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration” includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

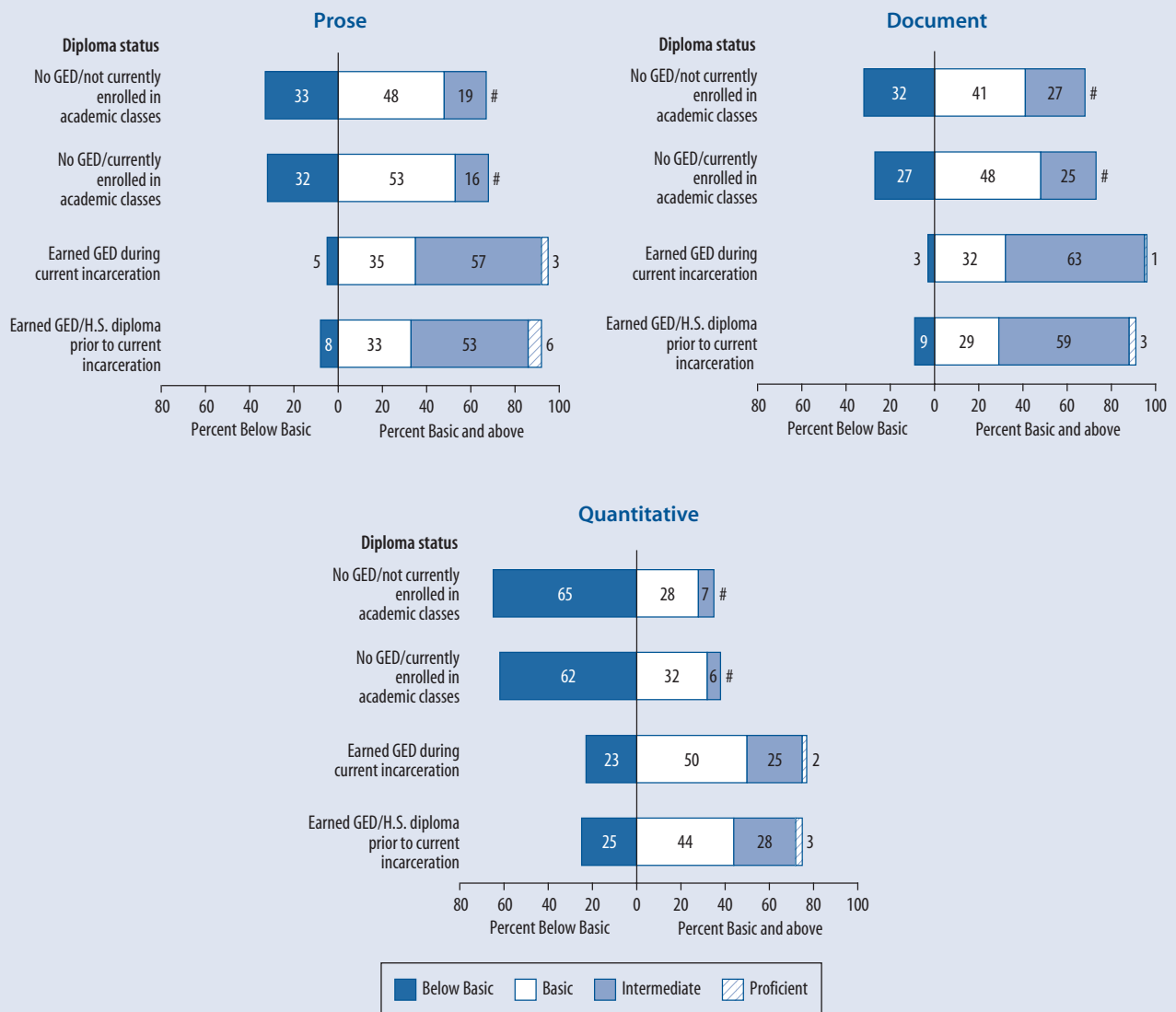
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Vocational Education

Vocational education programs are designed to prepare prison inmates for work after their release from prison. In 2000, some 56% of state prisons and 94% of federal prisons offered vocational training (Harlow

2003). Examples of the types of vocational education programs sometimes offered by prisons are auto mechanics, construction trades, equipment repair, HVAC installation and repair, culinary arts, cosmetology, and desktop publishing. The exact programs

**Figure 4-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**



# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure. The category “earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration” includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

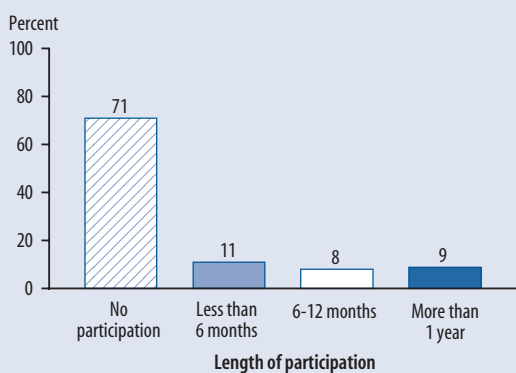
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

offered differ among prisons. As shown in figure 4-5, during their current incarceration, 71 percent of prison inmates had not participated in any vocational training, 11 percent participated in vocational training programs that lasted less than 6 months, 8 percent participated in programs that lasted 6 to 12 months, and 9 percent participated in vocational training programs that lasted more than a year. In 2003, 14 percent of inmates were on a waiting list to participate in a vocational education program, and 10 percent were enrolled in vocational education classes (figure 4-6).

Participation in vocational training may be particularly important for inmates who are getting close to their release date and will need to find a job outside of prison. However, the percentage of incarcerated adults who expected to be released within the next 2 years and participated in vocational training was not statistically significantly different from the percentage

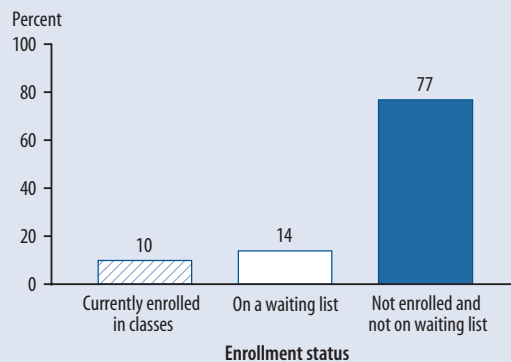
who expected to be released in over 2 years and participated in vocational training (figure 4-7).

**Figure 4-5. Percentage of the adult prison population, by length of participation in vocational training programs: 2003**



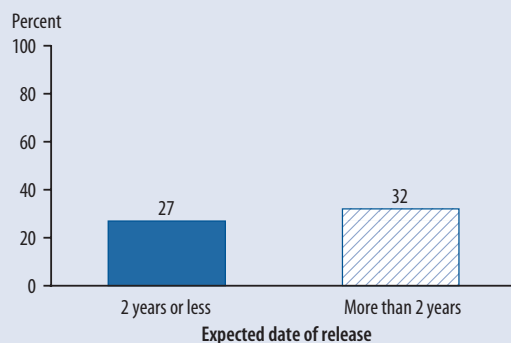
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 4-6. Percentage of the adult prison population, by enrollment in vocational training: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

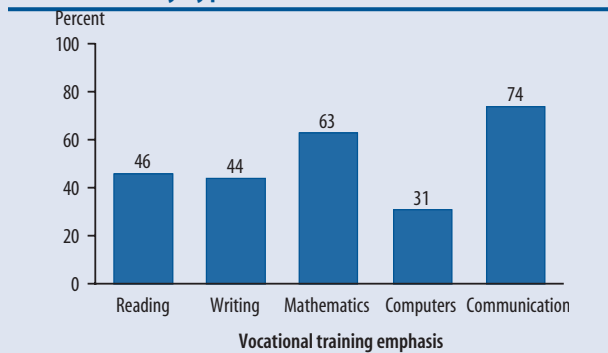
**Figure 4-7. Percentage of the adult prison population who participated in vocational training during their current incarceration, by expected date of release: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Vocational training programs often include academic instruction in the reading, writing, and mathematics skills required for a particular profession, as well as instruction in general work skills such as how to communicate or work with other people. Among those inmates who participated in vocational training programs, 46 percent received some instruction in reading as part of the program, 44 percent received instruction in writing, 63 percent received instruction in mathematics, 31 percent received instruction in computer skills, and 74 percent received instruction in how to communicate or work better with other people (figure 4-8).

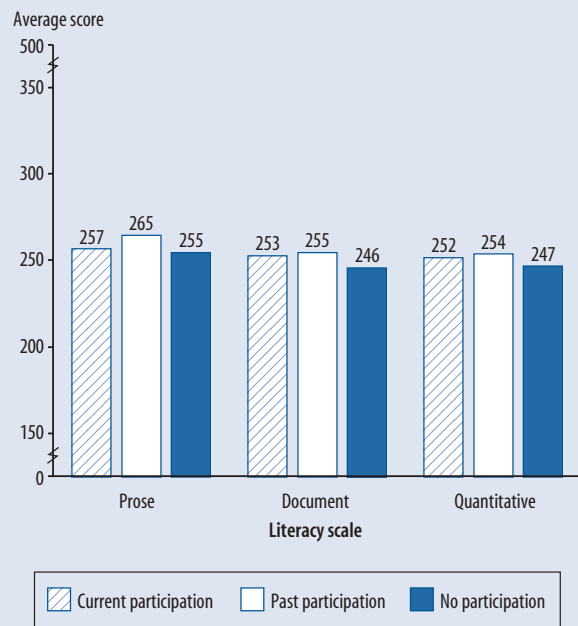
**Figure 4-8. Percentage of the adult prison population participating in vocational training who received selected types of instruction as part of the vocational training, by type of instruction: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Prison inmates who had participated in vocational training in the past had higher average prose and document literacy than inmates who had not participated in any vocational training (figure 4-9). A higher percentage of prison inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy than with *Intermediate* prose literacy had not participated in any vocational training programs (figure 4-10).

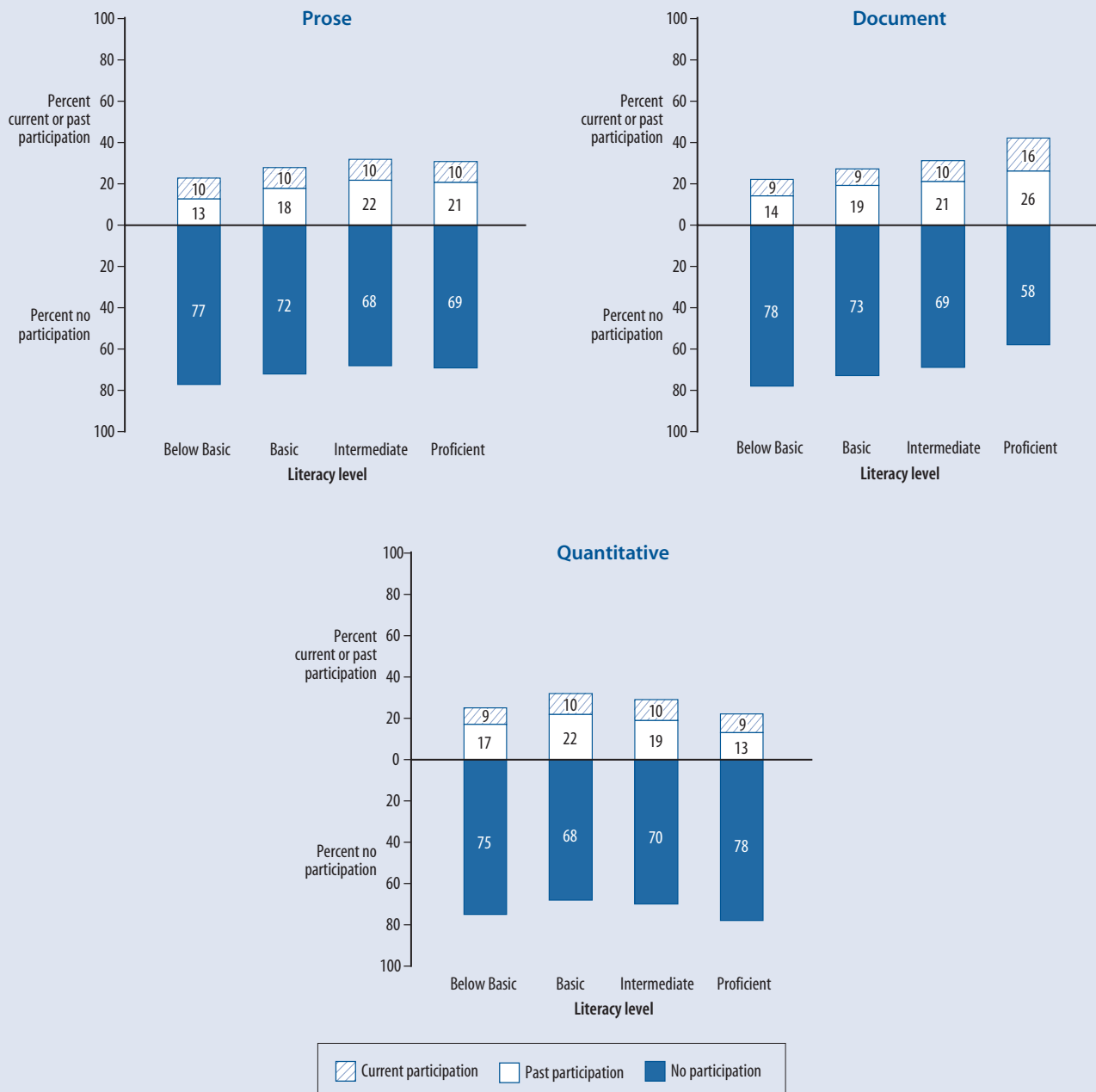
**Figure 4-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by participation in vocational training: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Figure 4-10. Percentage of the adult prison population who participated in vocational training, by prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

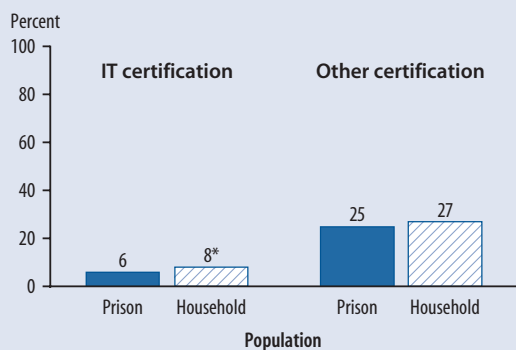
## Skill Certification

Information technology (IT) is a growing area of employment. Certification programs, both within prisons and for the general population, are becoming more commonly available. IT certification is available in a variety of areas, including both basic skills such as word processing and more advanced skills such as computer networking. Other types of job-related skill certification that are recognized by a licensing board or an industry or professional association also provide credentials that are recognized in the job market. Certification programs are sometimes offered by prisons as part of their vocational education program. As shown in figure 4-11, some 6 percent of adults in prisons had some type of IT certification in 2003 (earned either in prison or prior to their current incarceration), compared with 8 percent of adults living in households. The difference in the percentage of adults in prisons and

households who had other types of certification was not statistically significant.

Within both the prison and household populations, adults who had received IT or other certification had higher prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults who had not received any certification (figures 4-12 and 4-13). However, adults in the prison population who had received IT or other certification had lower average literacy on all three scales than adults in the household population who had received the same type of certification.

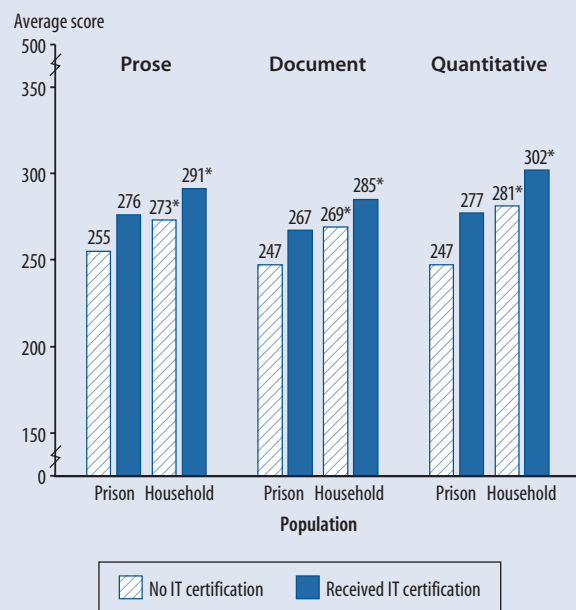
**Figure 4-11. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations who have received skill certification: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 4-12. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by receipt of information technology skill certification: 2003**



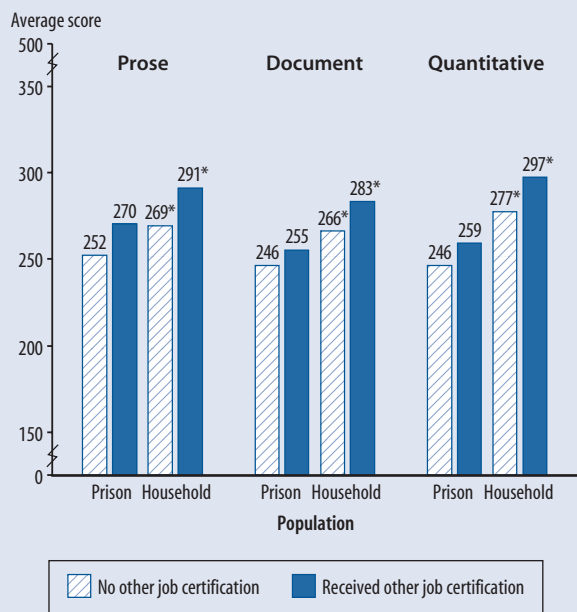
\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

In both the prison and household populations, the differences in the percentage of adults in each quantitative literacy level who had received IT certification were not significant (figure 4-14). Within each quantitative literacy level, the differences in the percentage of the prison and household populations with IT certification were not statistically significant.

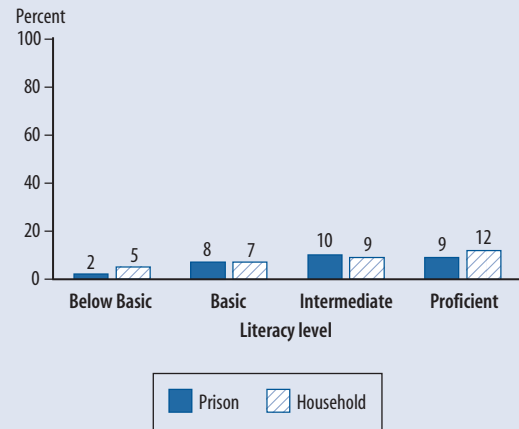
Within both the prison and household populations, adults with *Below Basic* quantitative literacy were less likely to have received certification other than IT than adults with *Basic* or *Intermediate* quantitative literacy (figure 4-15).

**Figure 4-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by receipt of other job-related skill certification: 2003**



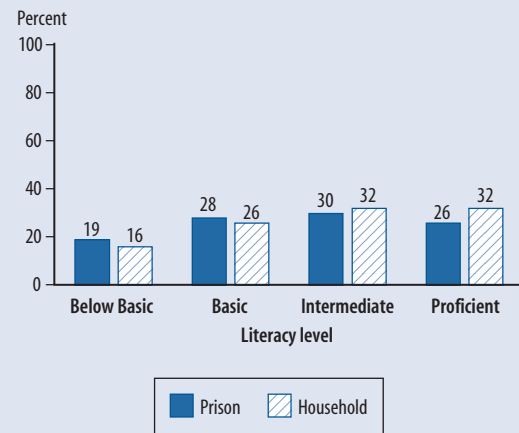
\*Significantly different from prison population.  
 NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 4-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each quantitative literacy level, by receipt of information technology skill certification: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 4-15. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each quantitative literacy level, by receipt of other job-related skill certification: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Summary

Forty-three percent of prison inmates entered prison with a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate. An additional 4 percent of prison inmates had earned their GED/high school equivalency certificate since entering prison, and 5 percent were enrolled in academic classes that might eventually lead to a GED/high school equivalency certificate. Prison inmates with a high school diploma or a GED/high school equivalency certificate had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates with lower levels of educational attainment.

Many prisons offer vocational training as well as academic classes, and 29 percent of prison inmates had participated in some sort of vocational training. However, more inmates reported being on waiting lists for these programs than were enrolled. Prison

inmates who had participated in vocational training in the past had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who had not participated in any sort of vocational training program.

Certification programs are sometimes offered as part of the vocational training provided in prisons. Prison inmates who had received either information technology certification or some other type of certification recognized by a licensing board or an industry or professional association had higher average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than prison inmates who did not have the same type of certification. However, prison inmates who had received either type of certification had lower average levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults in the household population with similar certifications.

## Work and Literacy Experiences in Prison

Chapter 4 discussed the relationship between literacy and education and job training experiences in prison. This chapter discusses the relationship between literacy and other experiences in prison, including work assignments, library access and use, computer use, and reading. The relationship between literacy and these other prison experiences is complex. Although inmates who enter prison with higher literacy may be more likely to use the library and computers, read, and even get certain work assignments, participating in any of these activities may help inmates improve their literacy.

### Prison Work Assignments

In 2003, some 68 percent of prison inmates had a work assignment. Prison inmates who had a work assignment had higher average prose and quantitative literacy than those who had no work assignment (figure 5-1). Seventy-two percent of incarcerated adults with *Intermediate* prose literacy had a work assignment, compared with 66 percent of prison inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy (figure 5-2).

A variety of jobs are available in prisons. Some jobs involve little or no reading and writing, such as working in the prison laundry or on the groundskeeping crew. Other jobs involve large amounts of reading and writing, such as working in a prison office. As part of their work assignments,

Prison Work Assignments

Library Use

Computer Use

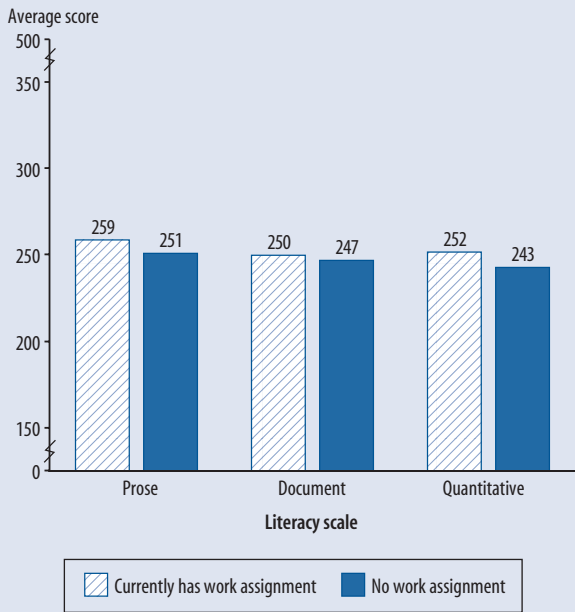
Reading Frequency

Summary

inmates may encounter both prose texts and documents. Prison inmates who read every day as part of their work assignment had higher average document literacy than those prison inmates who never read as

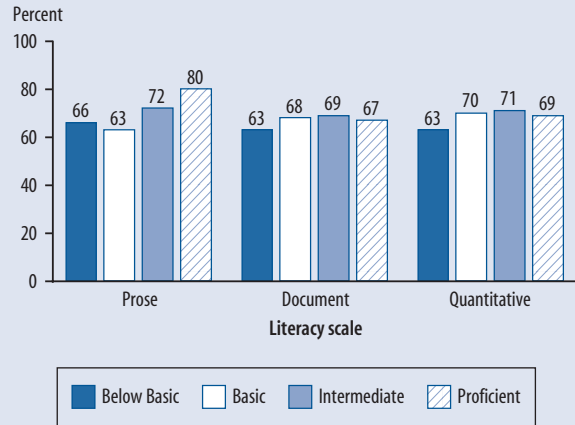
part of their work assignment, but the differences in prose literacy were not statistically significant (figure 5-3). Prison inmates who wrote every day as part of their work assignment had higher average prose,

**Figure 5-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by current prison work assignment: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-2. Percentage of the adult prison population who had a current prison work assignment, by prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**

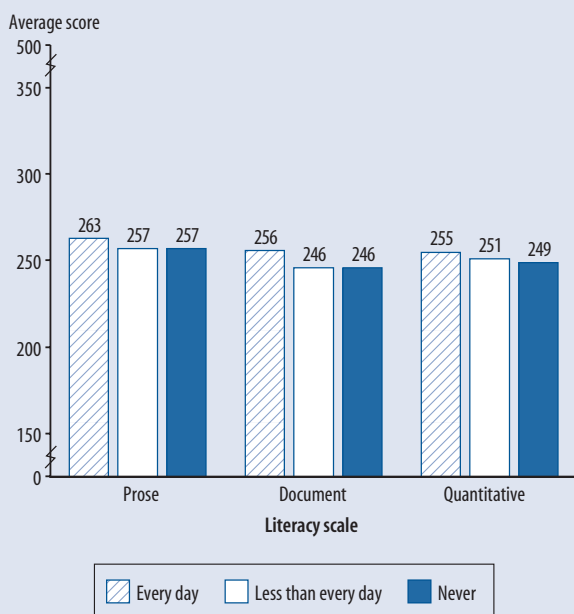


NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

document, and quantitative literacy than those who never wrote or those who wrote less than every day as part of their work assignment (figure 5-4). Moreover, prison inmates who wrote less than every

day as part of their work assignment had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than those inmates who never wrote as part of their work assignment.

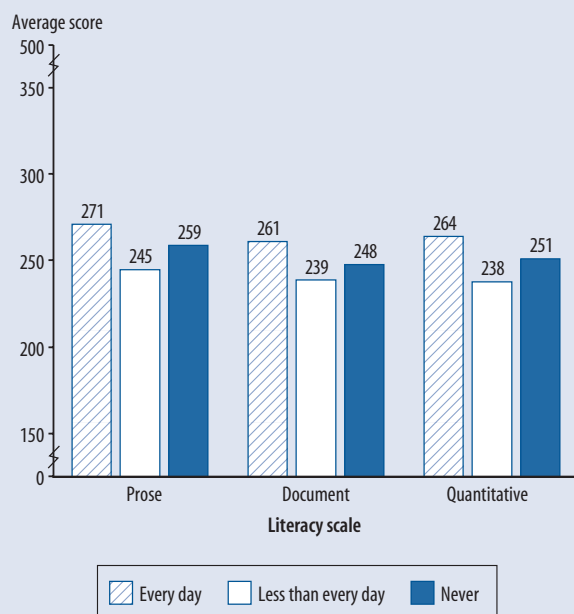
**Figure 5-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of reading as part of current prison work assignment: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-4. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of writing as part of current prison work assignment: 2003**



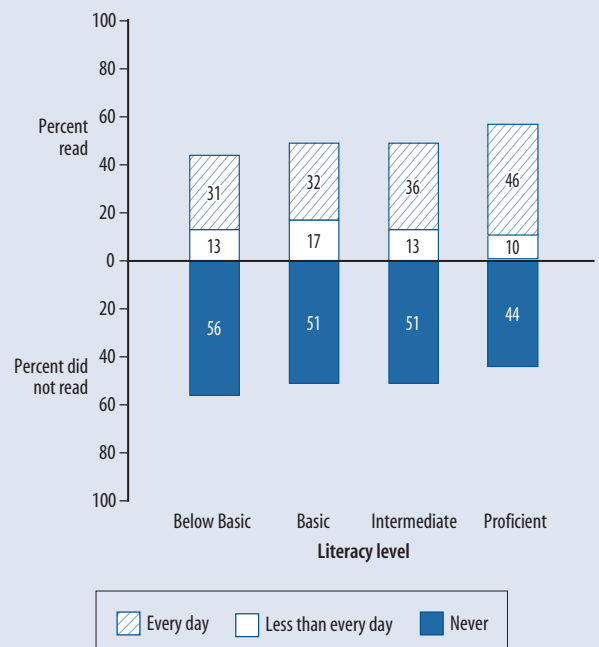
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Although reading and writing on a regular basis as part of a work assignment may lead to improvement in an inmate’s literacy, it is also possible that inmates who already have more-advanced reading and writing skills are more likely to be given work assignments that require more-frequent reading and writing. Figure 5-5 shows the percentage of incarcerated adults at each prose literacy level who had a work assignment that either did or did not require reading. None of the differences across the literacy levels was statistically significant.

However, there were significant differences in the percentages of inmates in each literacy level who had jobs that required writing regularly (figure 5-6). Forty percent of inmates with *Proficient* prose literacy and 29 percent of inmates with *Intermediate* prose literacy wrote every day, compared with 17 percent of inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy. Thirty-one percent of inmates with *Intermediate* document literacy wrote every day, compared with 13 percent of inmates with *Below Basic* document literacy.

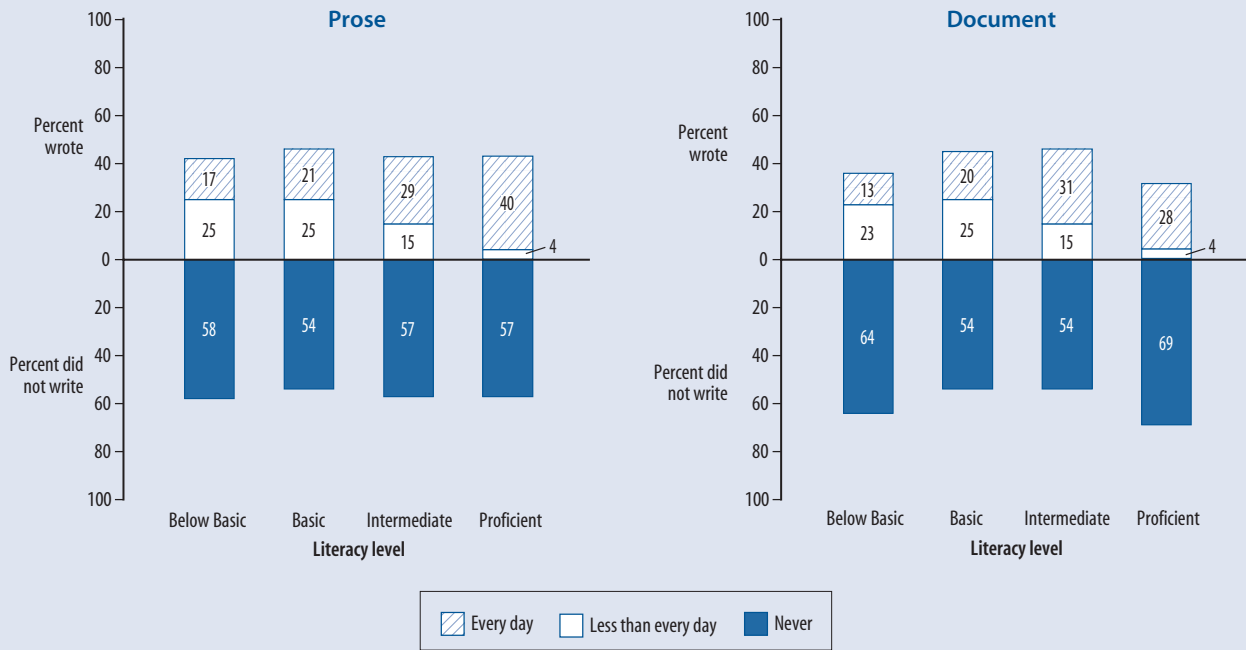
**Figure 5-5. Percentage of the adult prison population who read as part of current prison work assignment, by prose literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Figure 5-6. Percentage of the adult prison population who wrote as part of current prison work assignment, by prose and document literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Library Use

Many prisons have a library that is available to inmates, although the hours that the library is open, the procedures that inmates must go through to request a visit to the library or delivery of books from the library, and the extent and variety of reading material available vary.<sup>12</sup> Prisoner inmates do not always have easy access to a library, but 75 percent of inmates reported that they used the prison library at least once or twice a year. Although 59 percent of prisoners were usually able to access the library within 2 days of wanting to do so, 22 percent had to wait

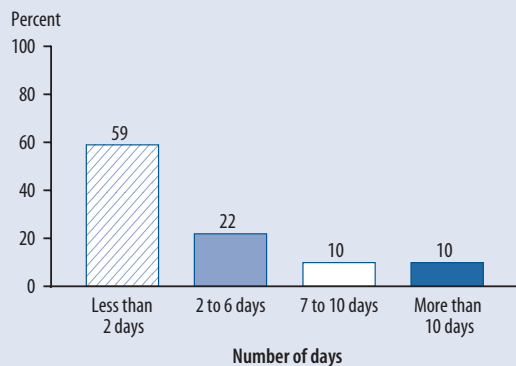
2 to 6 days, 10 percent had to wait 7 to 10 days, and an additional 10 percent had to wait 10 days or more (figure 5-7).

Library use can be related to literacy in two ways: adults who have higher literacy levels may be more likely to want to access the library and find things to read, and adults who use the library and read more frequently may improve their literacy levels.

As shown in figure 5-8, prison inmates who used the library weekly or monthly had higher average prose

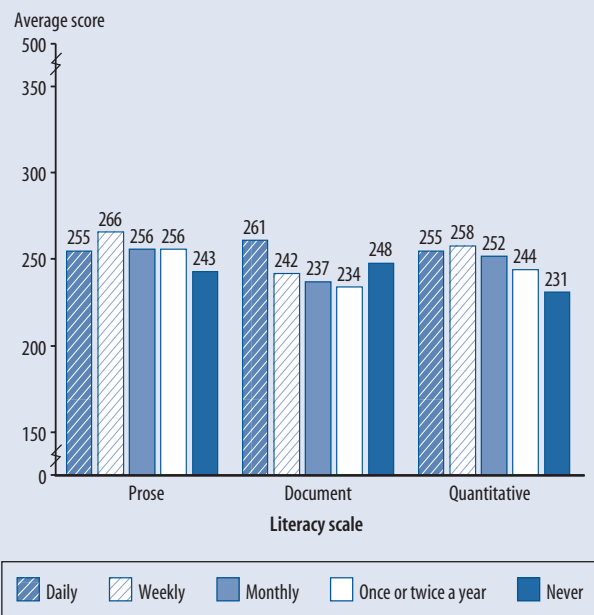
<sup>12</sup> The *Directory of State Prison Librarians 2002* lists 826 state prisons that have a librarian (Maryland Correctional Education Libraries 2002). In 2000, the most recent year for which data are available, there were 1,320 state correctional facilities in the United States (Stephan and Karlberg 2003).

**Figure 5-7. Percentage of the adult prison population who attempted to use the prison library, by number of days it took to obtain access: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-8. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of library use: 2003**

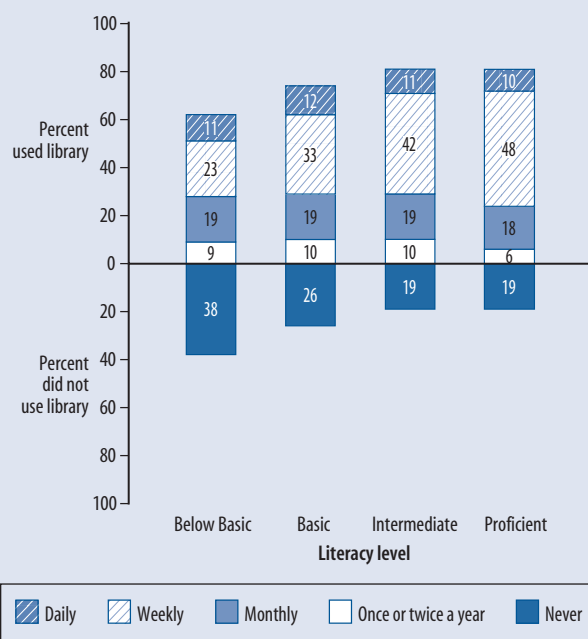


NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

literacy than prison inmates who never used the library. Prison inmates who used the library daily had higher average document literacy than prison inmates who used the library less frequently (weekly, monthly, once or twice a year, or never). Prison inmates who used the library daily, weekly, or monthly had higher average quantitative literacy than prison inmates who never used the library, and prison inmates who used the library weekly had higher average quantitative literacy than prison inmates who used the library once or twice a year.

Thirty-eight percent of prison inmates with *Below Basic* prose literacy never used the library, compared with 26 percent of prison inmates with *Basic* prose literacy, 19 percent with *Intermediate* prose literacy, and 19 percent with *Proficient* prose literacy (figure 5-9).

**Figure 5-9. Percentage of the adult prison population who used the library, by prose literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

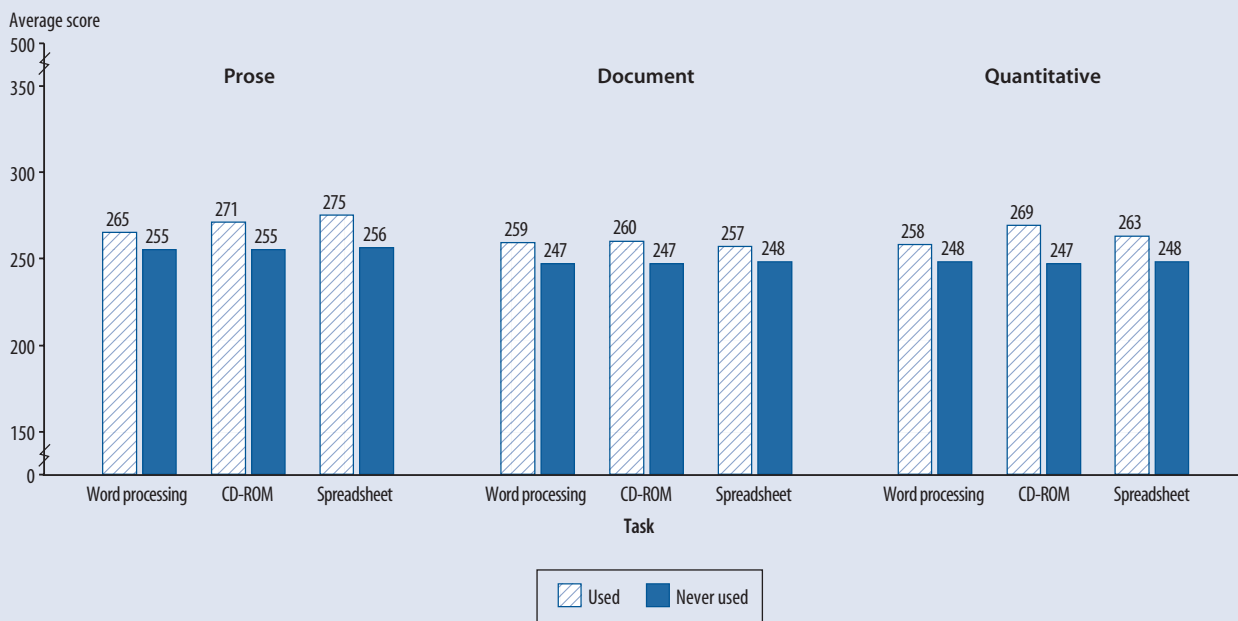
## Computer Use

Although access to the Internet is typically prohibited within prisons, incarcerated adults may have opportunities to use other computer programs and features through academic classes, job training, work assignments, or the prison library. As with library use, the relationship between literacy and computer use is probably a two-way process: inmates with higher levels of literacy may be more likely to use a

computer, and inmates who use a computer regularly, particularly for tasks that involve reading and writing, may improve their literacy.

Incarcerated adults who used a computer for word processing or for using a CD-ROM had higher average document and quantitative literacy than those who never used a computer for these tasks (figure 5-10). Inmates who used a spreadsheet had higher average prose literacy than inmates who did not.

**Figure 5-10. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by computer use for various tasks: 2003**

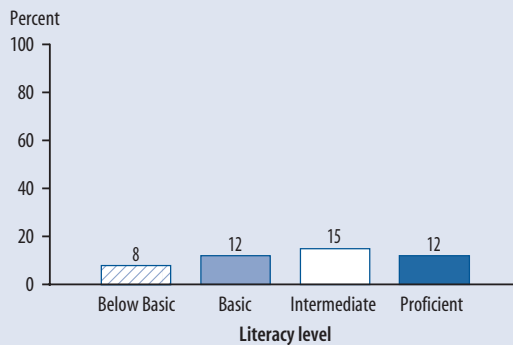


NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

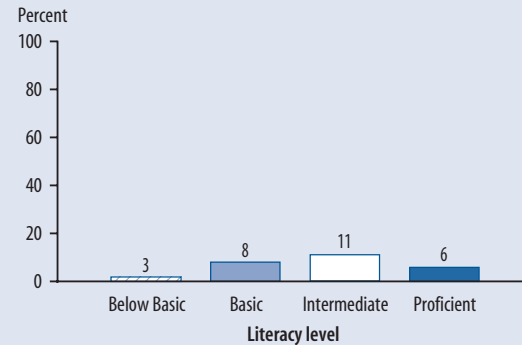
There were no statistically significant differences in the percentage of inmates with *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Intermediate*, or *Proficient* prose literacy who wrote using a word processing program (figure 5-11). There were also no statistically significant differences in the percentage of inmates with *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Intermediate*, or *Proficient* document literacy who looked up information on a computer CD-ROM (figure 5-12). A higher percentage of inmates with *Proficient* than with *Below Basic* or *Basic* quantitative literacy used a spreadsheet program (figure 5-13).

**Figure 5-11. Percentage of the adult prison population who wrote using a word processing program, by prose literacy level: 2003**



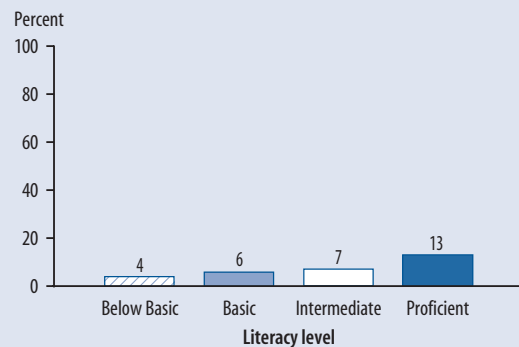
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-12. Percentage of the adult prison population who looked up information on a computer CD-ROM, by document literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-13. Percentage of the adult prison population who used a computer spreadsheet program, by quantitative literacy level: 2003**



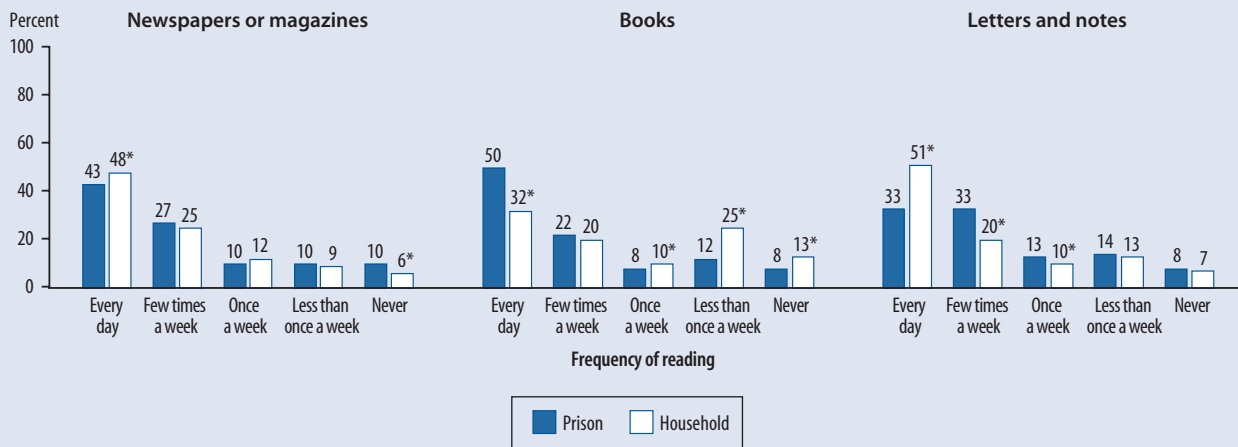
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Reading Frequency

Incarcerated adults often have time they need to fill up, and reading is one activity that fills time. Forty-three percent of prison inmates reported reading newspapers and magazines every day, 50 percent read books every day, and 33 percent read letters and notes every day (figure 5-14). Only 10 percent of prison inmates never read newspapers and magazines, and 8 percent never read books or letters and

notes. A higher percentage of prison inmates than adults living in households read books every day (50 percent versus 32 percent), but adults living in households were more likely than incarcerated adults to read newspapers and magazines or letters and notes every day. Among adults in prisons and households, 97 percent and 96 percent, respectively, reported reading one of these three types of reading material at least occasionally.

**Figure 5-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations who read each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes, by frequency of reading: 2003**



\*Significantly different from prison population.

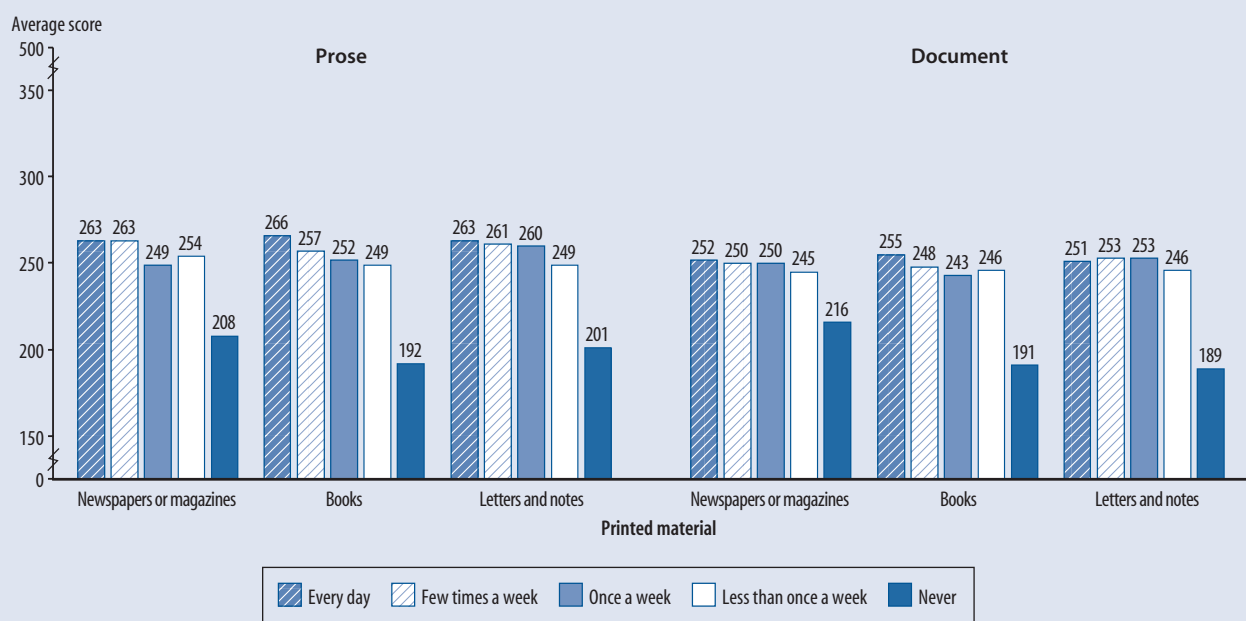
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Prison inmates who read newspapers and magazines, books, or letters and notes had higher average prose and document literacy than prison inmates who never read at all, regardless of the frequency with which they read (figure 5-15). Looked at another way, a higher percentage of inmates with *Below Basic*

prose literacy never read newspapers and magazines, books, or letters and notes than inmates with higher levels of prose literacy (figure 5-16). Compared with inmates who had *Below Basic* prose literacy, a higher percentage of inmates with *Basic* or *Intermediate* prose literacy read these materials every day.

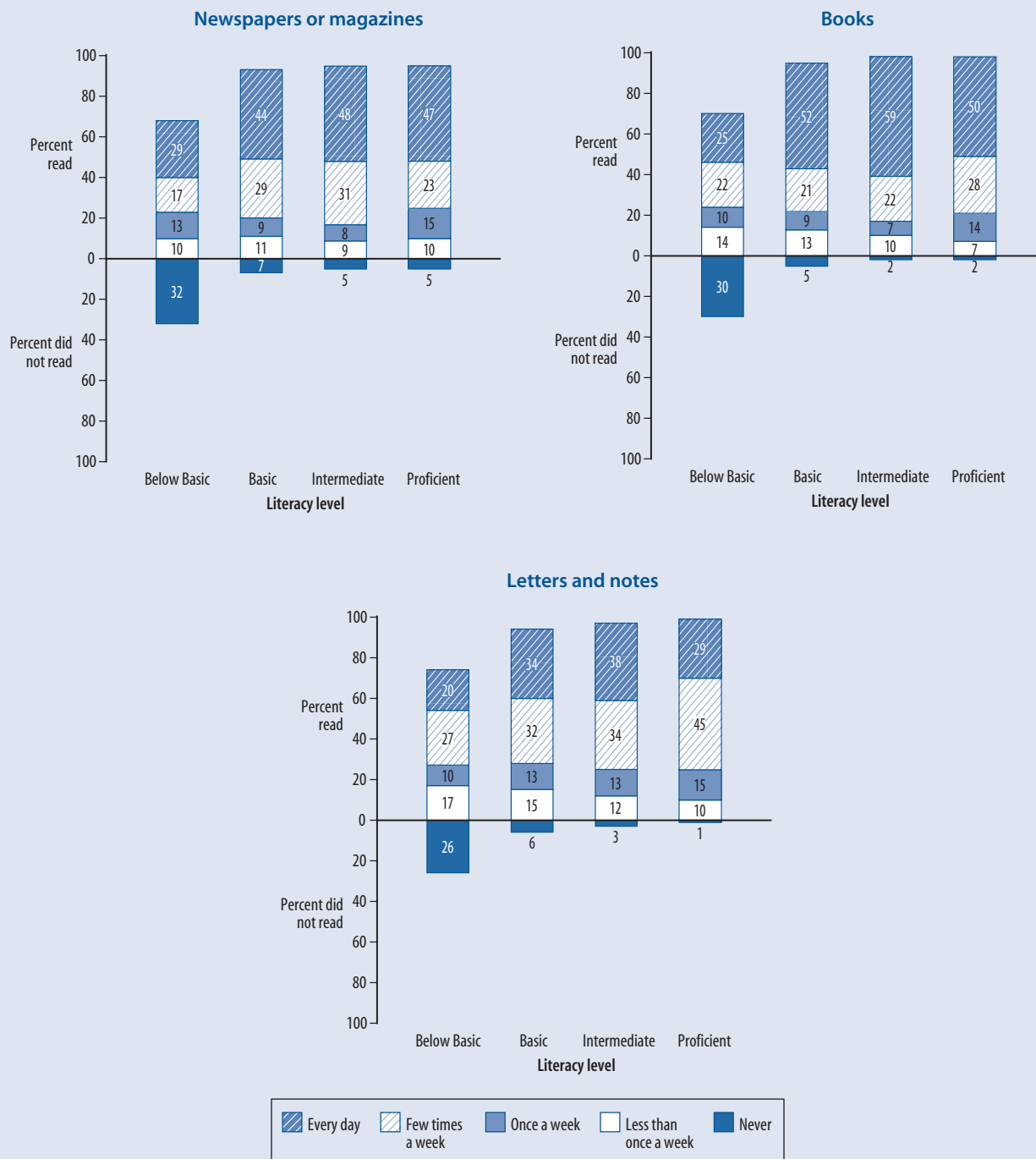
**Figure 5-15. Average prose and document literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of reading each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes: 2003**



NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Figure 5-16. Percentage of the adult prison population who read each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes, by prose literacy level: 2003**



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



## Summary

In general, inmates who participated in activities that required some reading or writing had average literacy either the same as or higher than the average literacy of inmates who did not participate in these activities.

Prison inmates who had work assignments had higher average prose and quantitative literacy than inmates who did not have work assignments. Prison inmates who used the prison library weekly or monthly had higher average prose literacy than prison inmates who never used the library. Prison inmates who used a computer for word processing or for using a CD-ROM had higher average document and quantitative literacy than inmates who never used a computer for these things. Finally, prison inmates who read newspapers and magazines, books, or letters and notes had higher average prose and document literacy than prison inmates who never read, regardless of the frequency with which they read.

A higher percentage of inmates with *Proficient* and *Intermediate* prose literacy than with *Below Basic* prose literacy had prison work assignments that required writing every day. A higher percentage of inmates with *Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Proficient* prose literacy than with *Below Basic* prose literacy used the library. A higher percentage of prison inmates with *Proficient* than with *Below Basic* or *Basic* quantitative literacy used a spreadsheet program. Moreover, a higher percentage of inmates with *Basic* or *Intermediate* than with *Below Basic* prose literacy read newspapers and magazines, books, and letters and notes every day.

Although engaging in any of the activities discussed above may improve an inmate's literacy, it is also possible that inmates who already have higher levels of literacy are more likely to participate in these activities. Readers are cautioned not to draw causal inferences based solely on the results presented here. As discussed in chapter 1, many of the variables discussed here are related to one another, and complex interactions and relationships have not been explored here.



## Criminal History and Current Offense

As discussed in chapter 2, the adult prison population was over 50 percent larger in 2003 than 10 years previously. The 2003 prison population was also somewhat older and better educated than in 1992 (table 2-1). As discussed in this chapter, there were also some changes in the reasons adults were incarcerated, their length of incarceration, and their previous criminal history. Information presented in this chapter related to type of offense, length of incarceration, expected date of release, and criminal record are based on prison inmates' self-reports, not prison records.

In both 1992 and 2003, the commission of a violent crime was the most common reason adults were incarcerated (table 6-1).<sup>13</sup> In 1992, some 44 percent of prison inmates were incarcerated because they had committed a violent crime; in 2003, some 47 percent of prison inmates had committed a violent crime. There was a slight decline between 1992 and 2003 in the percentage of inmates who were imprisoned because of property crimes. The percentage of inmates who had previously been sentenced to both probation and incarceration rose from 48 percent in 1992 to 64 percent in 2003.

On average, prison sentences were longer in 2003 than in 1992 (table 6-1). The percentage of inmates who expected to be incarcerated for a total of over 10 years (121 months or more) increased from 16 percent in 1992 to 28 percent in 2003, and the

Type of Offense

Expected Length of  
Incarceration

Expected Date of Release

Previous Criminal History

Summary

<sup>13</sup> See appendix B for a discussion of how different crimes were classified.

**Table 6-1. Percentage of the adult prison population in selected groups: 1992 and 2003**

Characteristic	1992	2003
<b>Type of offense</b>		
Violent	44	47
Property	18	15*
Drug	25	23
Public order	13	15
<b>Expected length of incarceration</b>		
0–60 months	64	52*
61–120 months	20	21
121+ months	16	28*
<b>Expected date of release</b>		
2 years or less	66	62
More than 2 years	34	38
<b>Previous criminal history</b>		
None	21	16*
Probation only	14	11
Incarceration only	16	10*
Probation and incarceration	48	64*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Results are based on inmates self report, not prison records.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

percentage who expected to be incarcerated for 5 years or less declined from 64 percent to 52 percent. Despite these changes in expected total length of incarceration, there were no statistically significant changes between 1992 and 2003 in the percentage of prison inmates who expected to be released within the next 2 years—a population of particular interest because they will need to find employment after their release from prison. In 2003, some 62 percent of prison inmates expected to be released within 2 years.

### Type of Offense

Prison inmates are often sentenced for more than one crime. For example, a drug dealer may shoot another drug dealer and receive a sentence for both drug dealing and murder. In this discussion of type of offense, inmates are categorized by the offense for which they received the longest sentence. In the example just given, in which a drug dealer shoots another drug dealer, if the crime for which the inmate received the longest sentence was the murder, that inmate’s offense would be categorized as violent. If the drug dealing resulted in a longer sentence, the inmate’s offense would be categorized as a drug crime. More information on how offenses were classified is included in appendix B.

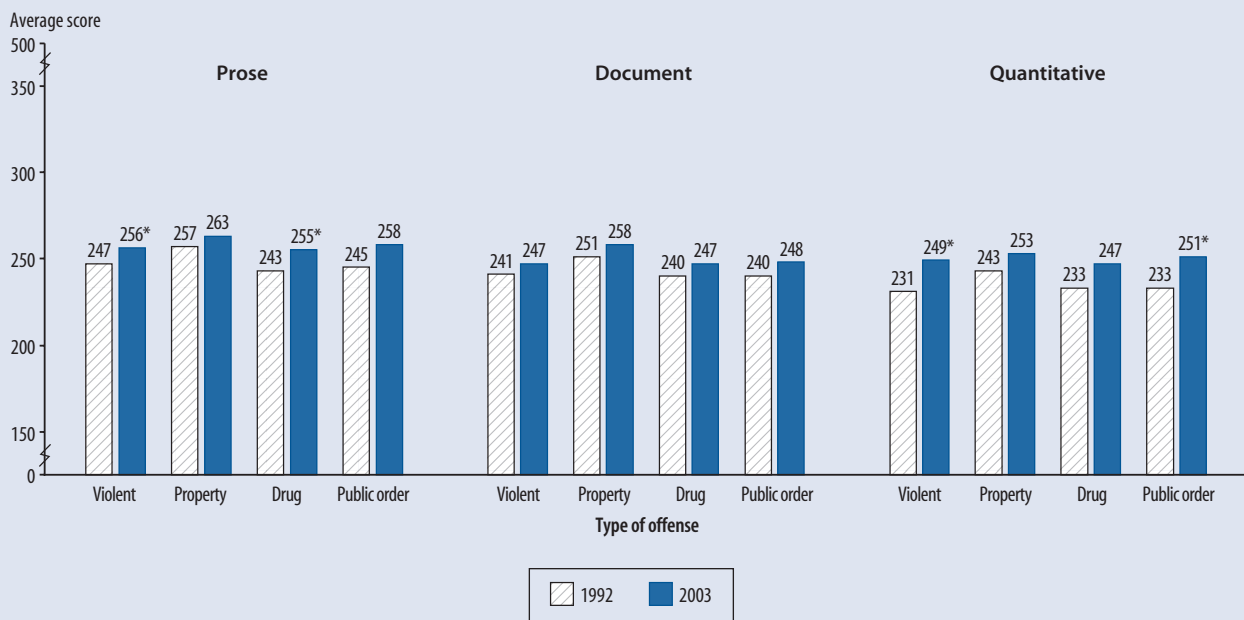
In 2003, inmates who were incarcerated because of a property crime had higher average document literacy than inmates who were incarcerated for other types of offenses (figure 6-1). There were no statistically significant differences in prose or quantitative scores based on the type of offense that led to incarceration.

As discussed in chapter 2, among the total adult prison population, average prose and quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003, but there were no statistically significant changes in document literacy (figure 2-1). Average prose scores and quantitative literacy also increased among inmates imprisoned for a violent crime (figure 6-1). Average prose

literacy increased among inmates who had committed a drug offense, and average quantitative literacy increased among inmates imprisoned for a public order offense. Reflecting the lack of significant change in document literacy between 1992 and 2003 for the prison population as a whole, there were no statistically significant changes in average document literacy for any of the four types of offenses examined in figure 6-1.

Among inmates who had committed a violent crime, the percentage with *Below Basic* literacy declined from 23 percent to 17 percent on the prose scale, 24 percent to 14 percent on the document scale, and 52 percent to 39 percent on the quantitative scale

**Figure 6-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by type of offense: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

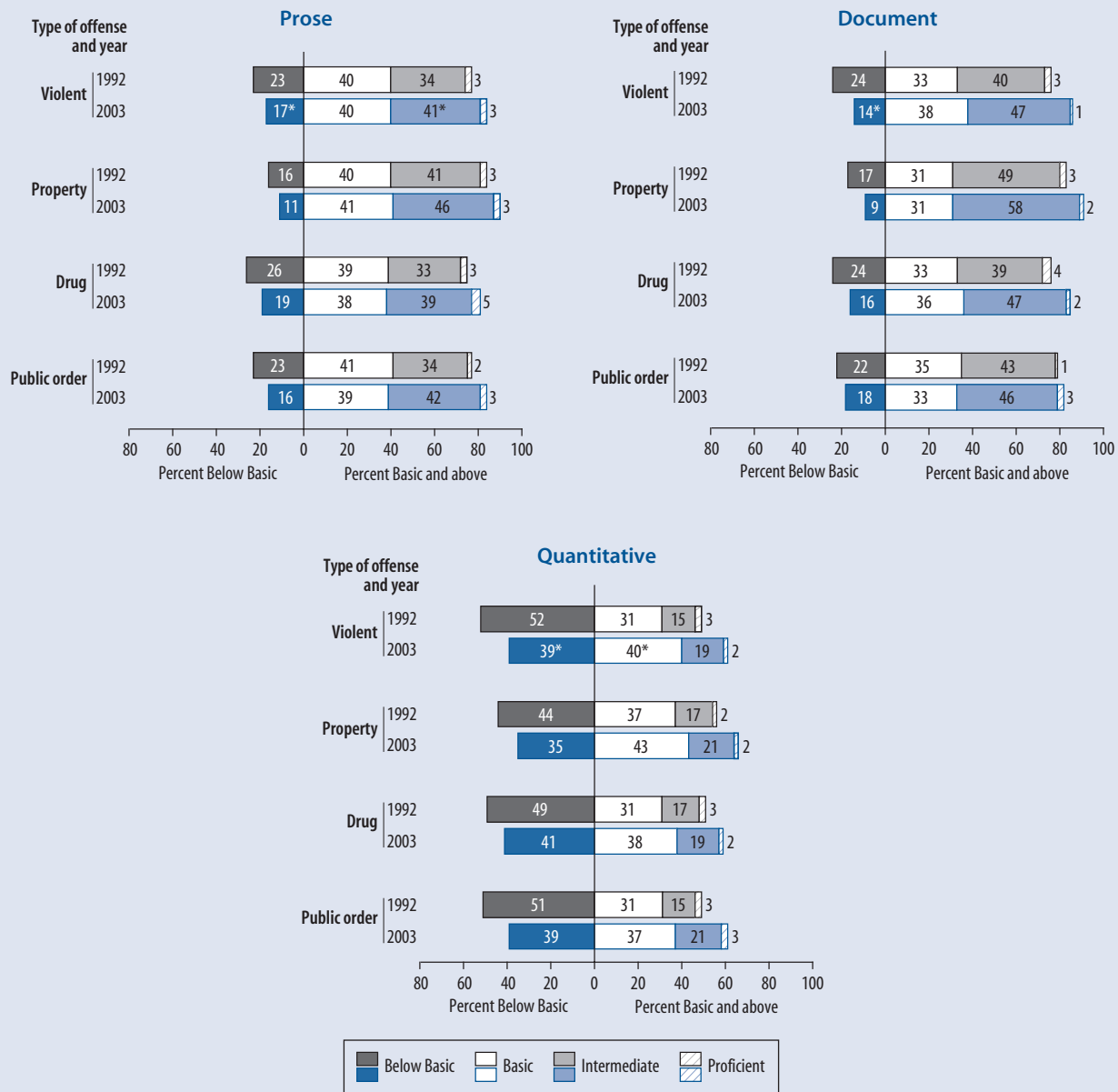
NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

(figure 6-2). The percentage of inmates who had committed violent crimes and had *Intermediate* prose literacy rose from 34 percent to 41 percent, and the percentage of inmates who had committed violent crimes and had *Basic* quantitative literacy rose from 31

percent to 40 percent. Among inmates who had committed property, drug, or public order crimes, there were no statistically significant changes in the percentage in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level.

**Figure 6-2. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by type of offense: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Expected Length of Incarceration

Expected length of incarceration was calculated from the time inmates entered prison to the time they expected to be released. The number represents their total expected length of incarceration, not the number of months they had remaining on their sentence. In 2003, there were no statistically significant differences in average prose, document, or quantitative literacy among inmates based on their expected length of incarceration (figure 6-3).

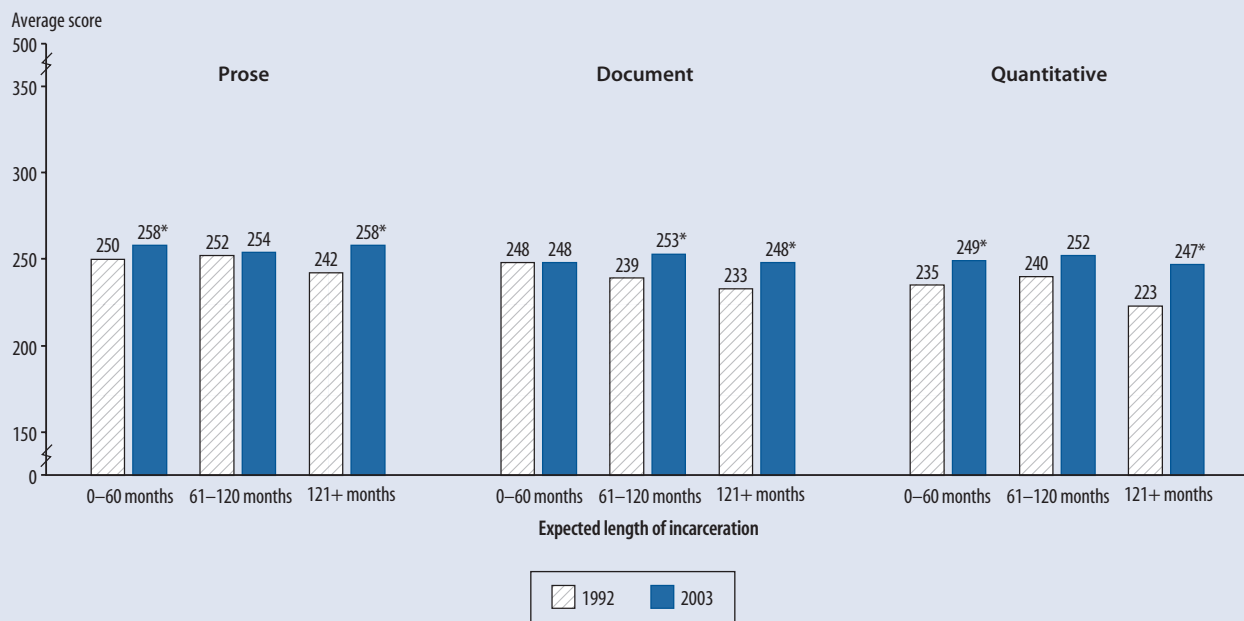
Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003 for inmates who expected to be incarcerated for over 10 years (121 or more months), starting from when they were first incarcerated (figure 6-3). Average prose and quantitative literacy also increased for inmates who expected to be incarcerated for a total of 5 years or less (0 to

60 months). Average document literacy increased for inmates who expected to be incarcerated for over 5 years but not more than 10 years (61 to 120 months).

Among prison inmates who expected to be imprisoned for 5 years or less (0 to 60 months), between 1992 and 2003 the percentage with *Below Basic* prose literacy declined from 21 percent to 15 percent and the percentage with *Below Basic* quantitative literacy declined from 49 percent to 40 percent (figure 6-4). The percentage with *Intermediate* quantitative literacy increased from 16 percent to 21 percent.

Among prison inmates who expected to be imprisoned for over 5 years but not more than 10 years (61 to 120 months), between 1992 and 2003 the percentage with *Below Basic* document literacy decreased from 27 percent to 14 percent and the percentage with *Intermediate* document literacy increased from

**Figure 6-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by expected length of incarceration: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

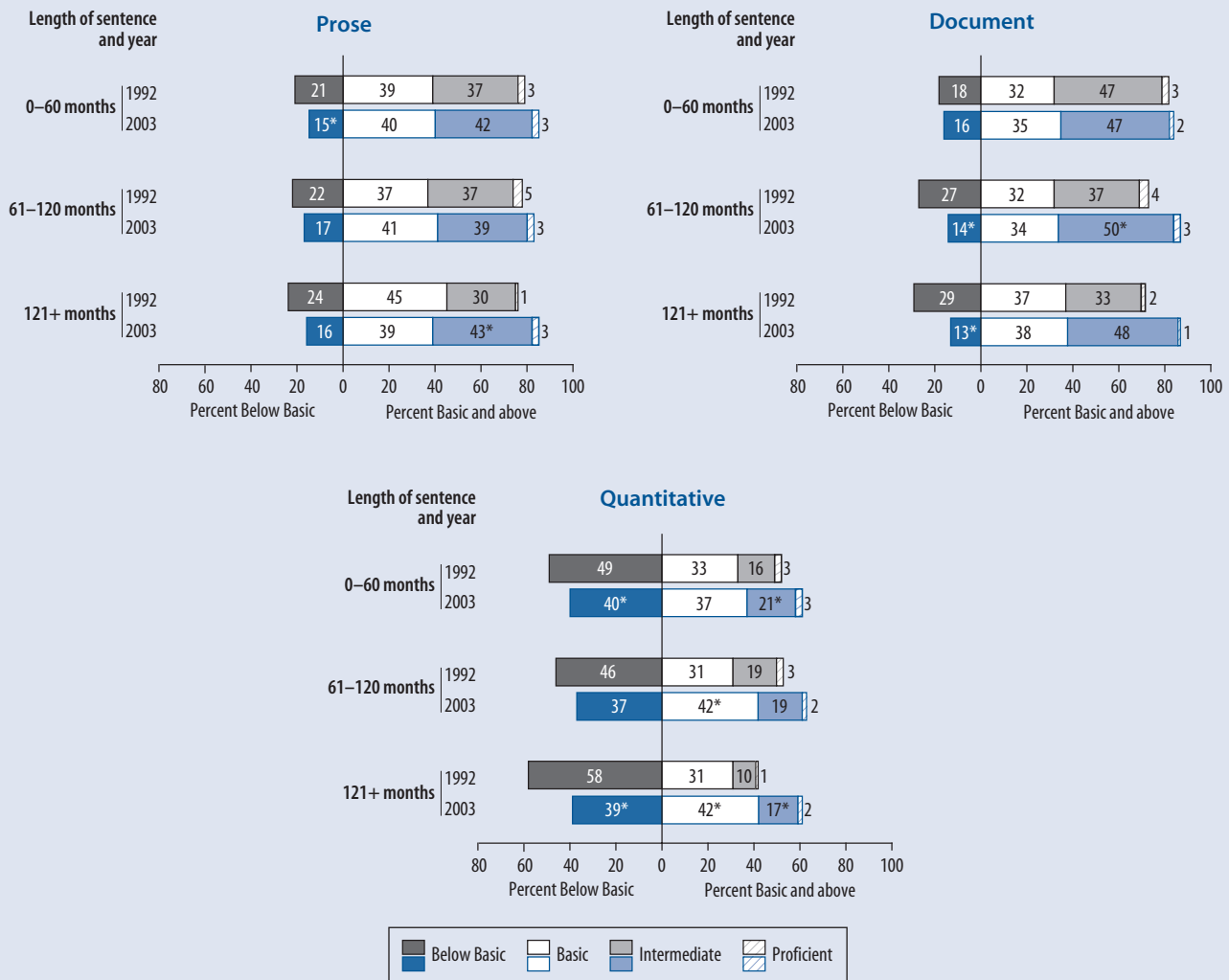
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

37 percent to 50 percent. The percentage with *Basic* quantitative literacy increased from 31 percent to 42 percent.

Among prison inmates who expected to be imprisoned for over 10 years (121 months or more), the percentage with *Below Basic* quantitative literacy decreased from 58 percent to 39 percent, the per-

centage with *Basic* quantitative literacy increased from 31 percent to 42 percent, and the percentage with *Intermediate* quantitative literacy increased from 10 percent to 17 percent. The percentage with *Below Basic* document literacy decreased from 29 percent to 13 percent and the percentage with *Intermediate* prose literacy increased from 30 percent to 43 percent.

**Figure 6-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by expected length of incarceration: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



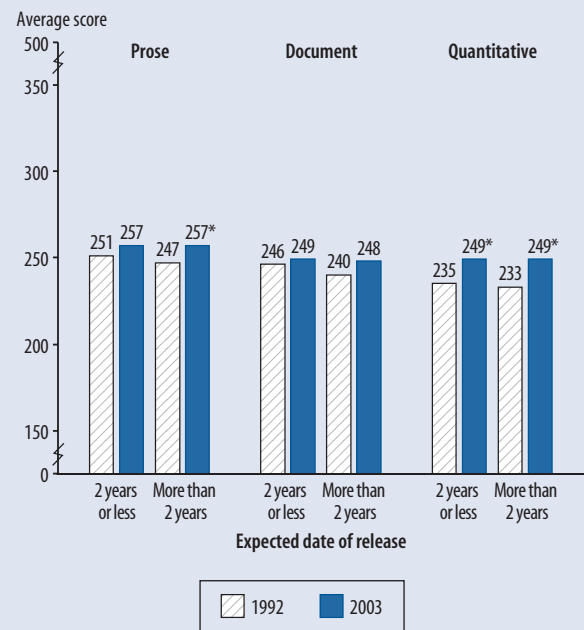
## Expected Date of Release

The literacy of inmates who are near their expected date of release may be of particular concern because they will soon need to do such things as rejoin their families and find a job. As shown in table 6-1, 74 percent of inmates had been incarcerated previously (64 percent had been sentenced to both incarceration and probation and an additional 10 percent had been sentenced to incarceration alone). Without adequate literacy skills, adjusting to life outside of prison could be even more difficult for released inmates.

As was discussed in chapter 3, prison inmates had lower average prose, document, and quantitative literacy than adults living in households (figure 3-1). This would be of somewhat less concern if prison inmates who expected to be released within 2 years had higher literacy than inmates with more time left to serve on their sentences, but that was not the case. In 2003, there was no difference in average prose, document, and quantitative literacy between prison inmates with 2 years or less remaining on their sentence and inmates who did not expect to be released within 2 years (figure 6-5).

Among inmates with 2 years or less remaining on their sentences, average quantitative literacy increased between 1992 and 2003, but the changes in average prose and document literacy were not statistically significant (figure 6-5). Among inmates who did not expect to be released within 2 years, both average prose and average quantitative scores increased.

**Figure 6-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by expected date of release: 1992 and 2003**



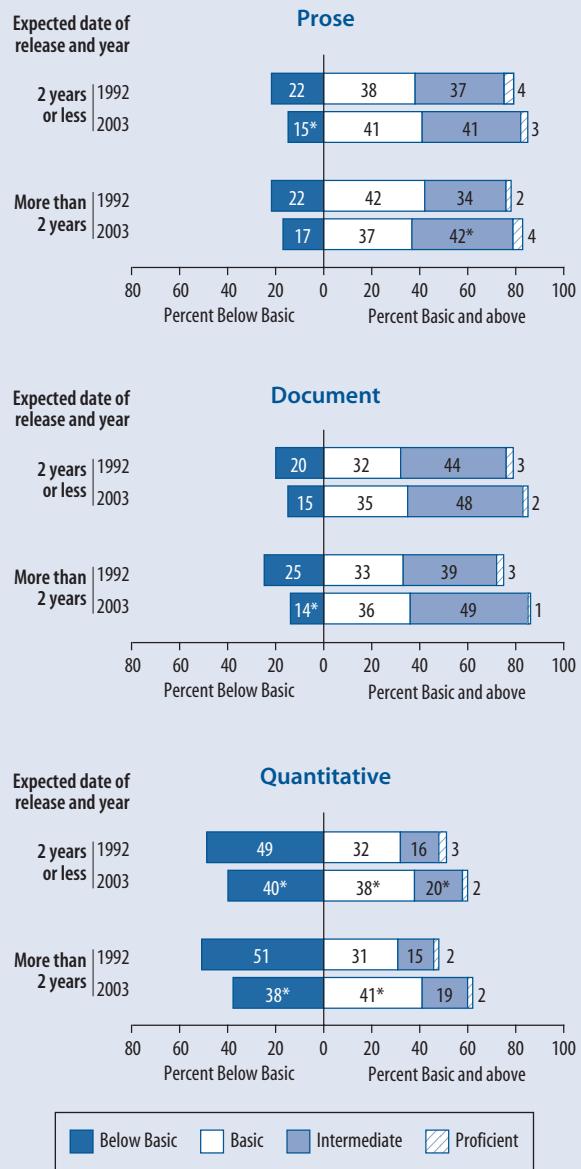
\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

Among prison inmates who expected to be released in 2 years or less, the percentage with the lowest literacy, *Below Basic*, did decrease from 22 percent to 15 percent on the prose scale and from 49 percent to 40 percent on the quantitative scale (figure 6-6). However, although the percentages of inmates who had *Below Basic* prose literacy and expected to be released within 2 years decreased, because of the increase in the size of the prison population, the number of inmates in this category was approximately 130,000 in both years. The percentage with *Basic* and *Intermediate* quantitative literacy increased. Among inmates who expected to serve additional time of more than 2 years, the percentage with *Below Basic* document and quantitative literacy decreased, the percentage with *Intermediate* prose literacy increased, and the percentage with *Basic* quantitative literacy increased.

**Figure 6-6. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by expected date of release: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

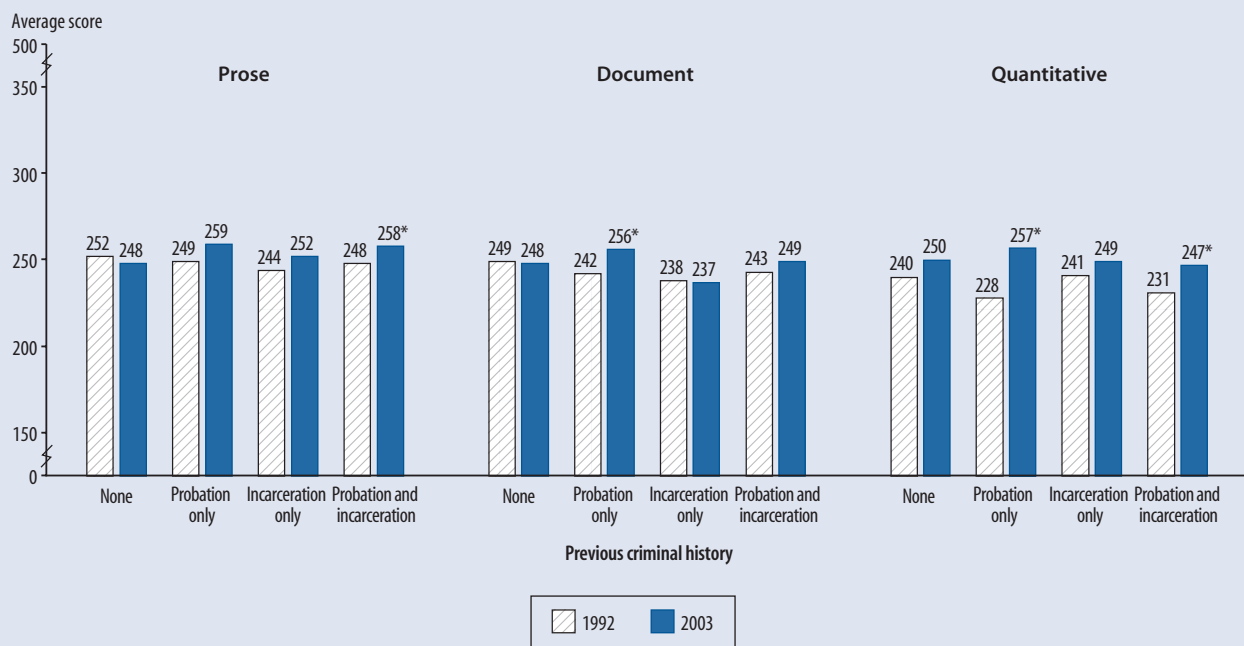
## Previous Criminal History

In 2003, 16 percent of prison inmates had never previously been incarcerated or on probation, 11 percent had been on probation only, 10 percent had been incarcerated only, and 64 percent had been both incarcerated and on probation (table 6-1). In 2003, inmates who had previously been incarcerated only had lower average document literacy than inmates who had previously been on probation only or been both on probation and incarcerated (figure

6-7). There were no other statistically significant differences based on criminal history.

Between 1992 and 2003, average prose and quantitative literacy increased among inmates who had previously been sentenced to both probation and incarceration, and average document literacy increased among inmates who had previously been sentenced to probation only (figure 6-7). The only changes in the distribution of inmates across the literacy levels were that a lower percentage of inmates

**Figure 6-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by previous criminal history: 1992 and 2003**



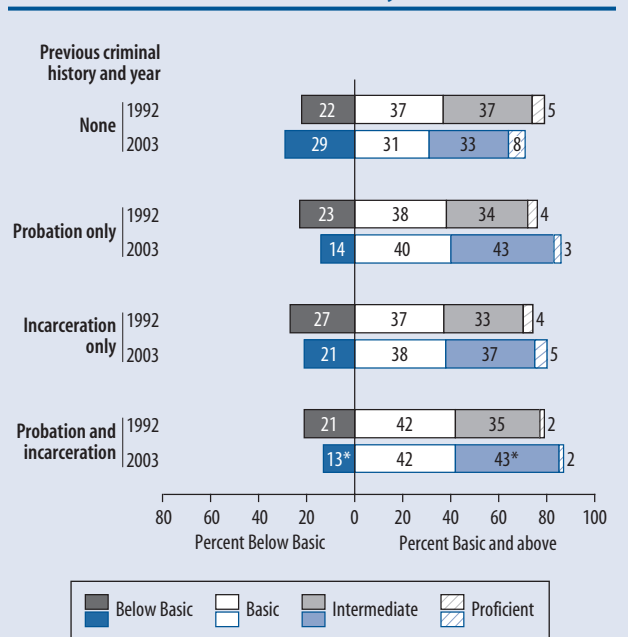
\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

who had previously been sentenced to both incarceration and probation had *Below Basic* prose literacy in 2003 than in 1992 (13 percent versus 21 percent) and a higher percentage had *Intermediate* prose literacy in 2003 than in 1992 (43 percent versus 35 percent) (figure 6-8).

**Figure 6-8. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose literacy level, by previous criminal history: 1992 and 2003**



\*Significantly different from 1992.  
 NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this figure.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Summary <sup>14</sup>

When compared with the prison population in 1992, the prison population in 2003 included a higher percentage of inmates who expected to be incarcerated for more than 10 years (16 percent versus 28 percent). Among these inmates who expected to be incarcerated for more than 10 years, average prose, document, and quantitative literacy was higher in 2003 than in 1992.

The 2003 prison population also included a higher percentage of inmates who had previously been sentenced to both incarceration and probation (48 percent versus 64 percent). Between 1992 and 2003, average prose and quantitative literacy increased among inmates who had previously been sentenced to both probation and incarceration and average document literacy increased among inmates who had been sentenced to probation only.

The most common reason for incarceration in both 1992 and 2003 was the commission of a violent crime. Between 1992 and 2003, average prose and quantitative literacy increased among inmates who were imprisoned because of a violent crime. On all three scales, the percentage of inmates who had been convicted of a violent crime and had *Below Basic* literacy declined.

Inmates who expect to be released within the next 2 years are of particular interest because they will need to find jobs and rejoin their families and communities. There were no statistically significant changes between 1992 and 2003 in the percentage of inmates with 2 years or less left to serve on their sentences. Among inmates with 2 years or less remaining on their sentences, average quantitative literacy increased, but the changes in average prose and document literacy were not significant.

<sup>14</sup> Information presented in this chapter related to type of offense, length of incarceration, expected date of release, and criminal record are based on prison inmates' self-reports, not prison records.



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## Sample Assessment Questions

Respondents who participated in the 2003 assessment were asked to complete prose, document, and quantitative literacy tasks of varying levels of difficulty. The sample questions on the following pages illustrate the types of tasks used to measure the literacy of America's adults. These questions were originally developed for the 1992 survey and reused in 2003. The same literacy tasks were used for the household and prison samples.

Consistent with the design of the assessment, each sample question appears before the text or document needed to answer the question. The percentage of respondents who answered the question correctly is reported separately for the household and prison samples. The percentage of respondents at each literacy level who answered each question correctly is reported for the combined household and prison sample only.<sup>1</sup>

More information about the sample assessment questions can be found on the Internet at <http://nces.ed.gov/naal>.

<sup>1</sup> As discussed in appendix C, each respondent was presented with 3 of the 12 blocks of questions. Therefore, the number of respondents for each question was smaller than the total sample size. Because of this, and because of the small number of prison inmates in some of the literacy levels, the sample size does not permit reporting percent correct separately for the prison population by literacy level.

## Prose Literacy Question

Refer to the article on the next page to answer the following question.

According to the brochure, why is it difficult for people to know if they have high blood pressure?

---



---

### Correct answer

Any statement such as the following:  
 Symptoms are not usually present  
 High blood pressure is silent

### Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
69	74	11	70	96	100

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



## TOO MANY BLACK ADULTS DIE FROM THE EFFECTS OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

### DID YOU KNOW?

More than one out of every four Black adults has high blood pressure, according to a two-year survey by Public Health Service in the 1960's. Other studies show as many as one out of three Black adults has high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is the most common chronic disease treated by practitioners in the Black community.

More Black people die as a result of high blood pressure than any other disease.

For every Black person who dies of sickle-cell anemia, at least 100 others die from the effects of high blood pressure.

The rate of death from the effects of high blood pressure for Black people is nearly one and one-half times the rate for White people.

High blood pressure, along with cigarette smoking, contributes greatly to the apparent increased number of heart attacks among Black adults.

If high blood pressure is controlled, strokes, heart attacks and kidney disease can be substantially reduced.

**YES, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN BE TREATED... AND CONTROLLED.**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

#### Have your blood pressure checked regularly

Unfortunately, high blood pressure is a silent killer and crippler. At least half of the people who have high blood pressure don't know it because symptoms usually are not present. The only way you can be sure is to have the doctor check your blood pressure. You should have your blood pressure checked at least once a year, especially if: (1) you are Black, (2) if you are over 40, (3) if members of your family or close relatives have had high blood pressure or the complications of high blood pressure (stroke, heart attack, or kidney disease), or (4) if you have frequent headaches, dizziness, or other symptoms that may occasionally be related to high blood pressure.

#### Follow your doctor's instructions

High blood pressure can't be cured, but it can be kept under control. Control means keeping your blood pressure as close to normal as possible. That's very important to you — it can prevent a crippling stroke or other serious illness in the future.

The doctor will find a way to control your blood pressure that's most comfortable for you. Then it will be up to you — to take the medicine and follow the prescribed diet, to follow the instructions carefully and to come back regularly for checkups.

Yes, high blood pressure can be controlled, but only if *you* cooperate fully with your doctor.

## Prose Literacy Question

Refer to the article on the next page to answer the following question.

What is the purpose of the *Se Habla Español* expo?

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### Correct answer

Any statement such as the following:

- To enable people to better serve and sell to the Hispanic community
- To improve marketing strategies to the Hispanic community
- To enable people to establish contacts to serve the Hispanic community

### Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
12	16	#	3	16	60

# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## MARKETING

# Se Habla Español Hits Chicago

*September 25, 26, and 27 are three days that will change your marketing.*

"To some advertisers, the Hispanic market's like the weather—you hear a lot about it, but you can't do much about it," says veteran marketer Tony Martinez. "And other companies think Hispanics will buy their products anyway, so they don't need to do anything special.

"Both attitudes are way off base," Mr. Martinez says briskly, "and they'll both make the competition ecstatic. Because there's a lot of money to be made in the Hispanic market. Its spending power will be \$160 billion this year, and that's growing maybe \$1.4 billion a month," he exclaims, peering intensely over his glasses. "For example, we Hispanics buy 9 percent of all new automobiles.

"This is definitely a special market...you do have to have a special understanding of it," Mr. Martinez goes on, "because as one research firm said, it's 'a market with currents that are going in many directions.' But the rewards will be fantastic. Hispanics are very brand conscious and they tend to become brand loyal very quickly."

It's Mr. Martinez's job—his mission in life—to make sure companies learn how they can serve and sell to America's Hispanics. He has been marketing to the community for many years, working with the best in the business, including Coca-Cola and the advertising firm of Castor GS&B. Now his staff is organizing the largest annual Hispanic market trade show in the business—*Se Habla Español*.

The three-day *Se Habla Español* expo, put on by HISPANIC BUSINESS magazine, is in Chicago this year, at the Hyatt Regency. As in the two previous years in New York and Los Angeles, this conference will host a "big top"-like mix of activities.

The show draws thousands of the country's top marketers, media people, advertisers, researchers, and Hispanic contractors—all intent on gathering as much information as possible, and all hoping to explore new business opportunities. As in any really good big-top show, a hundred different things are happening all at once.

More than 60 Hispanic market specialists conduct fact-heavy seminars. Companies promoting everything from cars to demographic information to career opportunities for Hispanic professionals display and discuss their products in 30,000 square feet of exhibit space. Major exhibitors this year include Ford Motor Co., Lincoln-Mercury, Chevrolet, American Airlines, Telemundo, the Bureau of the Census, and many, many more.

"It's all contacts . . . contacts . . . contacts!" Mr. Martinez exclaims in his best marketing ringmaster style.

Each of the major media hosts its own luncheon or reception, playing to sold-out crowds. Leading participants in last year's Print Reception, for example, included *La Opinion* of Los Angeles, *Vista* magazine, *The Miami Herald*, and the *Los Angeles*

*Times*. Some participants in the 1989 Radio Luncheon included Katz Hispanic Radio and Caballero Spanish Media. "We still have a few events open to corporate sponsors," Mr. Martinez mentions, not without interest. "They'll be able to count on considerable media play both in preliminary press coverage and during the events themselves."

Another opportunity for sponsor visibility is the *Se Habla Español* Scholarship Fund, which will publicly award scholarships to talented Hispanic students in the various communications fields.

A grand finale black tie banquet spotlights the leading figures in America's Hispanic media world, recognizing outstanding work in each medium with the *Se Habla Español Awards in Communication*. In 1989, Mr. Martinez recalls, almost 400 entries were submitted. Publicidad Siboney swept the top honors for "Ad of the Year" and "TV Ad of the Year" with its commercial for Pepsi-Cola.

One problem attendees find is that the conference offers more information than any one person can gather during just three days. "They should know their priorities," Mr. Martinez advises, "to ensure they focus on the events that will be of most value to their employers."

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## Document Literacy Question

Seventy-eight percent of what specific group agree that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in educational areas?

**Parents and Teachers Evaluate Parental Involvement at Their School**

*Do you agree or disagree that...?*

	Total	Level of School		
		Elementary	Junior High	High School
<i>percent agreeing</i>				
Our school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in sports, arts, and other nonsubject areas				
Parents	77	76	74	79
Teachers	77	73	77	85
Our school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in educational areas				
Parents	73	82	71	64
Teachers	80	84	78	70
Our school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child				
Parents	55	46	62	63
Teachers	23	18	22	33
Our school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles				
Parents	22	18	22	28
Teachers	8	8	12	7

Source: The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987

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### Correct answer

Junior high teachers

### Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
18	36	#	4	47	98

# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Quantitative Literacy Question

Suppose that you had your oil tank filled with 140.0 gallons of oil, as indicated on the bill, and you wanted to take advantage of the five cents (\$.05) per gallon deduction.

- Figure out how much the deduction would be if you paid the bill within 10 days. Enter the amount of the deduction on the bill in the space provided.

		<b>ASHLAND OIL, INC.</b> Ashland, Kentucky 41114 (800) 392-3333		18009		DATE	
						2/2/02	
						CUSTOMER NO.	
						00216	
ROBERT NELSON DIVERSITY ROAD ASHLAND, KY 41114 P/R 4TH HOUSE ON LEFT FILL REAR IN DRIVEWAY							
TANK SIZE	GALLONS	ZONE	STOP LOC.	DELIVERY TYPE	DEGREE DAYS	% FACTOR	PRODUCT CODE
275	180	28	0	AU HO	3247	8.30	2
CUSTOMER'S SIGNATURE							
							
TANK TRUCK SALESMAN TRUCK NO.							
METER READING - BEFORE AND AFTER DELIVERY							
A A 0 0 3				0 0 1 4 0 <sup>0</sup>			
A A 0 0 2				0 0 0 0 0 <sup>0</sup>			
PRODUCT	PRICE	GALLONS	10TH	AMOUNT			
FUEL OIL	97.9	140	0	137 06			
SAVE if no outstanding balance due and you pay within 10 days				DEDUCT \$.05 per gal.			
				NET TOTAL ■			

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### Correct answer

\$7.00

### Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
38	52	1	40	92	100

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



## Document and Quantitative Literacy Questions

This is an example of a task that was scored in three separate parts and treated as three separate questions. The first two questions were included on the document scale and the third question was included on the quantitative scale.

Refer to the form on the next page to answer the following question.

Use the following information to fill in the receipt for certified mail. Then fill in the "TOTAL Postage and Fees" line.

- You are sending a package to Doris Carter.
- Her address is 19 Main Street, Augusta, GA 30901.
- The postage for the package is \$1.86.
- The fee for certified mail is \$0.75.

### Correct answer

**Question 1 (Document): Enters name and address correctly. No penalty for misspelling.**

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
66	65	8	54	86	97

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

### Correct answer

**Question 2 (Document): Enters \$1.86 and \$0.75 on the postage and certified fee lines, respectively.**

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
68	76	13	73	96	100

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

### Correct answer

**Question 3 (Quantitative): Either of the following:**

**Correctly totals postage and fees: \$2.61**

**Correctly totals incorrect fees entered on form**

Percentage of adults who answered the question correctly, 2003

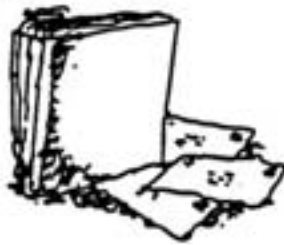
All Prison Inmates	All Adults in Households	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
72	78	33	88	96	99

NOTE: Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 2003) are excluded from these data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## What may be Certified?

Only items of no intrinsic value such as letters, files, records, etc., that are sent Priority First-Class Mail may be sent by certified mail. No insurance coverage is provided against loss or damage for this service. (For valuables and irreplaceable items, you should use insured or registered mail.)



## How to use Certified Mail.

Simply fill out Form 3800, *Receipt for Certified Mail*, and attach (to the address side of the mail) the numbered label portion and the required postage and fee. You may obtain these forms at post offices or from rural carriers. Many customers find it convenient and a "time-saver" to have the form completed before approaching the window. Certified mail, with proper postage and fees affixed, may be dropped in a mailbox unless an official dated receipt is required.

## Restricted Delivery

If you want to restrict the delivery of certified mail, you must endorse the mail "Restricted Delivery." This service is available for a \$1.00 fee and can only be used for items addressed to specific individuals by name. However, the addressee can and often does authorize an agent to receive his or her restricted mail.

## Fees

The fee for certified mail is 75 cents (in addition to your postage). For an additional fee, you also may purchase a return receipt which provides you proof of delivery.

P 138 573 931	
<b>RECEIPT FOR CERTIFIED MAIL</b> NO INSURANCE COVERAGE PROVIDED NOT FOR INTERNATIONAL MAIL	
Sent to	
Street and No.	
P.O., State and ZIP Code	
Postage	\$
Certified Fee	
Special Delivery Fee	
Restricted Delivery Fee	
Return Receipt showing to whom and Date Delivered	
Return Receipt showing to whom, Date, and Address of Delivery	
TOTAL Postage and Fees	\$
Postmark or Date	
<i>Fold at line over top of envelope to the right of the return address.</i>	
<b>CERTIFIED</b>	
P 138 573 931	
<b>MAIL</b>	

PS FORM 3800, June 1985





## Definitions of All Subpopulations and Background Variables Reported

Some background variables were included in the analyses in more than one chapter. Those variables are listed under the chapter where they first appeared. For the exact wording of background questions, see <http://nces.ed.gov/naal>.

### Chapter 2

#### Prison Population

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy included a nationally representative probability sample of inmates age 16 and older in federal and state prisons. Prison data collection was conducted from March through July of 2004.

#### Household Population

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy included a nationally representative probability sample of adults age 16 and older living in households. The household sample also included adults in six states that chose to participate in a concurrent State Assessment of Adult Literacy: Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oklahoma, and New York. Each sample was weighted to represent its share of the total population of the United States. Household data collection was conducted from March 2003 through February 2004.

## Race and Ethnicity

In 2003, all respondents were asked two or three questions about their race and ethnicity. The first question asked them to indicate whether they were Hispanic or Latino.

If a respondent answered that he or she was Hispanic or Latino, the respondent was asked to choose one or more of the following groups to describe his or her Hispanic origin:

- Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano
- Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American
- Cuban or Cuban American
- Central or South American
- Other Hispanic or Latino background

Respondents who identified more than one of the groups to describe their Hispanic origin, were classified as “Other Hispanic or Latino background.”

Then, all respondents, including those who indicated they were Hispanic or Latino, were asked to choose one or more of the following groups to describe themselves:

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Individuals who responded yes to the first question were coded as Hispanic, regardless of their answer to the second question. Individuals who identified more than one group on the second question were coded as Multiracial. Respondents of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander origin were grouped with those of Asian origin. The White, Black, and Hispanic groups are reported separately. The interviewer recorded the race/ethnicity of respondents who refused to answer the question.

In 1992, the race and ethnicity questions were somewhat different. Respondents were first asked to choose one race from among the following:

- White
- Black (African American)
- American Indian
- Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Other

They were then asked if they were of Spanish or Hispanic origin or descent. If they indicated they were, they were asked to choose from among the same groups as on the 2003 survey to describe their Hispanic ethnicity.

Because respondents in 2003 were not offered an “other” category to describe their race and respondents in 1992 were limited to choosing one race, caution should be exercised when comparing 1992 and 2003 results.

## Gender

Interviewers recorded the gender of each respondent.

## Highest Educational Attainment

Respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education they had completed. The following options were provided:

- Still in high school (asked in household survey only; not applicable to prison population)
- Less than high school (0-8 years)
- Some high school (9-12 years but did not graduate)
- GED or high school equivalency
- High school graduate
- Vocational, trade, or business school after high school

- College: less than 2 years
- College: Associate’s degree (A.A.)
- College: 2 or more years, no degree
- College graduate (B.A. or B.S.)
- Postgraduate, no degree
- Postgraduate degree (M.S., M.A., Ph.D., M.D., etc.)

Respondents who reported less than high school or some high school were asked how many years of education they had completed. Because of the small number of inmates with education beyond a GED/high school equivalency certificate or a high school diploma, respondents who indicated that they had any education beyond high school were grouped in a single category labeled “postsecondary.”

### Age

All respondents were asked to report their birthdates, and this information was used to calculate their age. Age was collapsed into the following categories: 16 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 and older.

### Language Spoken Before Starting School

All respondents were asked what language or languages they learned to speak before starting school. Their responses were then used to divide respondents into three groups: English only, English and other language (including Spanish), Other only (including Spanish).

### Parents’ Educational Background

All respondents were asked about the highest level of education completed by their mother and father. The response options provided were the same as the response options for the respondent educational attainment question. Parents’ educational background was coded on the basis of whichever parent had the higher level of educational attainment.

Because of the small number of inmates whose parents had education beyond high school, all responses that indicated postsecondary education were grouped into a single category.

## Chapter 3

### Veteran’s Status

Respondents were asked whether they had ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

### Overall Health

Respondents were asked how, in general, they would rate their overall health. They were given the following response options: excellent, very good, good, fair, poor.

### Learning Disability

Respondents were asked whether they had ever been diagnosed or identified as having a learning disability.

### Date Incarcerated

Respondents were asked the date they were admitted to prison most recently.

## Chapter 4

### Completion of Any Additional Education in Prison

Inmates were asked whether they had completed any additional education since their most recent admission to prison.

### Expected Date of Release

Inmates were asked whether they had a definite date on which they expected to be released, in what month and year they would be released, or whether they expected to ever be released from prison. Expected date of release was categorized as 2 years or less or

more than 2 years from the date of the interview. The sample size did not support reporting separately on inmates who did not expect to be released, so they were included in the “more than 2 years” category.

### **GED Earned While in Prison**

Inmates were asked to indicate the highest level of education they had completed prior to their most recent admission to prison and after their admission to prison. They were also asked whether they were currently enrolled in any academic classes and how long ago they last took a class to improve their basic skills. Inmates were placed in the following categories: GED or high school diploma earned prior to prison; GED or high school diploma earned in prison; currently enrolled in academic or basic skill classes; no GED or high school diploma earned and not currently enrolled academic or basic skill classes.

### **Inmates on a Waiting List for Academic Classes**

Inmates were asked whether they were currently enrolled in classes and how many hours they spent in any class as a student during the past week. If inmates indicated they were not currently enrolled in classes, they were asked whether they were on a waiting list for academic classes.

### **Length of Time in Prison Vocational Training**

Inmates were asked whether since their most recent admission to prison they had been a student in a vocational training program, excluding prison work assignments, and how long they had spent altogether in vocational training. Inmates were grouped according to the length of time in prison vocational training: no participation, less than 6 months, 6 to 12 months, 1 year or more.

### **Participation in Reading-, Writing-, Mathematics-, Computer-, and Communication-Related Job Training**

Inmates were asked in separate questions whether during the past year they had participated in any training or education, including courses, workshops, formal on-the-job training, or apprenticeships, intended to improve their English reading skills, writing skills, arithmetic or mathematics skills, computer skills, or communication skills.

### **Vocational Training Participation**

Inmates were asked whether since their most recent admission to prison they had been a student in a vocational training program, excluding prison work assignments, and whether they were currently students in a vocational training program. Inmates were identified as no participation, past participation, or current participation in vocation training in prison.

### **Inmates on a Waiting List for Vocational Training**

Inmates were asked whether they were currently enrolled in a vocational training program and whether they were on a waiting list for any vocational training programs.

### **Information Technology (IT) Certification**

All respondents were asked whether they had received any type of information technology skill certification sponsored by a hardware or software manufacturer or an industry or professional association and whether they had passed a test to get the certification. Those who answered yes to both questions were counted as receiving IT certification. Inmates who answered yes to the question asking whether they had prepared for the test with a class offered in prison, jail, or other correctional facility were categorized as having obtained the certification while incarcerated.

## Other Job Certification

All respondents were asked whether they had ever received any type of job-related skill certification recognized by a licensing board or an industry or professional association other than information technology and whether they had passed a test to get the certification. Those who answered yes to both questions were counted as receiving other job certification. Inmates who answered yes to the question asking whether they had prepared for the test with a class offered in prison, jail, or other correctional facility were categorized as having obtained the certification while incarcerated.

## Chapter 5

### Work Assignment

Inmates were asked whether they currently had a prison work assignment.

### Reading as Part of Prison Work Assignment

Inmates were asked to indicate how often they read as part of their current jobs in prison. They were given the following options: every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, never.

### Writing as Part of Prison Work Assignment

Inmates were asked to indicate how often they wrote as part of their current jobs in prison. They were given the following options: every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, never.

### Library Access

Inmates were asked to indicate how often they used the services of a library for any reason. They were given the following options: every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, never.

## Computer Usage

Respondents were asked whether they ever used a computer. If they did, in separate questions they were asked to indicate how often they used a word processing program to write, used a spreadsheet program, or looked up information on a CD-ROM. They were given the following options: never, less than once a week, once a week, a few times a week, every day.

## Literacy Practices

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they read newspapers or magazines in English, books in English, and letters and notes in English in separate questions. They were given the following options: never, less than once a week, once a week, a few times a week, every day.

## Chapter 6<sup>2</sup>

### Type of Offense

Inmates were asked to indicate for which offenses they were currently in prison. If they indicated more than one, they were asked for which of these offenses they had received the longest sentence. The coding of this variable was based on the offense for which the inmate received the longest sentence. Offenses were coded as follows:

**Violent:** murder, negligent manslaughter, kidnapping, rape, robbery, assault, other violent crime

**Property:** burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, fraud, stolen property, other property crime

<sup>2</sup> The variable coding in chapter 6 follows the conventions used by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. For example, see Cohen and Reaves (2006).

**Drug:** possession of drugs, trafficking drugs, other drugs

**Public order:** escape from custody, flight to avoid prosecution, weapon offense, parole violation, probation violation, rioting, habitual offender, contempt of court, offenses against courts, legislatures, and commissions, traffic offenses, driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, family-related offenses, drunkenness/vagrancy/disorderly conduct, morals/decency, immigration violations, obstruction of law enforcement, invasion of privacy, commercialized vice, contribution to the delinquency of a minor, liquor law violations, other public order offenses, bribery and conflict of interest, regulatory offenses (federal only), tax law (federal only), racketeering/extortion (federal only)

### Previous Criminal History

Inmates were asked whether they had ever served time in prison, jail, or some other correctional facility

as a juvenile or an adult before their most recent admission to prison and whether they had ever been placed on probation, either as a juvenile or as an adult. Responses were coded into the following categories: none, probation only, previous incarceration only, probation and previous incarceration.

### Length of Incarceration

Inmates were asked to indicate in what month and year they were admitted to prison most recently and whether they had a definite date on which they expected to be released. If they answered yes to having a definite date to be released, they were asked in what month and year they would be released. Those who did not have a definite date to be released were asked the month and year of their earliest possible release date. Their responses to these questions were used to calculate the length of their incarceration: 0-60 months, 61-120 months, 121 or more months/do not expect to be released. Because of the sample size, the last two categories were collapsed for reporting.



## Technical Notes

This appendix describes the sampling, data collection, weighting and variance estimation, scaling, and statistical testing procedures used to collect and analyze the data for the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). Household data collection was conducted from March 2003 through February 2004; prison data collection was conducted from March through July 2004.

### Sampling

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy included two samples: (1) adults ages 16 and older living in households (99 percent of the sample weighted) and (2) inmates ages 16 and older in federal and state prisons (1 percent of the sample weighted). Each sample was weighted to represent its share of the total population of the United States, and the samples were combined for reporting.

### Household Sample

The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy household sample included a nationally representative probability sample of 35,365 households. The household sample was selected on the basis of a four-stage, stratified area sample: (1) primary sampling units (PSUs) consisting of counties or groups of contiguous counties; (2) secondary sampling units (referred to as segments) consisting of area blocks; (3) housing units containing households; and (4) eligible persons within households. Person-level data were collected through a screener,



a background questionnaire, the literacy assessment, and the oral module. Of the 35,365 sampled households, 4,671 were either vacant or not a dwelling unit, resulting in a sample of 30,694 households.<sup>3</sup> A total of 25,123 households completed the screener, which was used to select survey respondents. The final screener response rate was 81.2 percent weighted.

On the basis of the screener data, 23,732 respondents ages 16 and older were selected to complete the background questionnaire and the assessment; 18,186 actually completed the background questionnaire. Of the 5,546 respondents who did not complete the background questionnaire, 355 were unable to do so because of a literacy-related barrier, either the inability to communicate in English or Spanish (the two languages in which the background questionnaire was administered) or a mental disability.

The final response rate for the background questionnaire, which included respondents who completed the background questionnaire and respondents who were unable to complete the background questionnaire because of language problems or a mental disability, was 76.6 percent weighted. Of the 18,186 adults ages 16 and older who completed the background questionnaire, 17,178 completed at least one question on each of the three scales—prose, document, and quantitative—measured in the adult literacy assessment. An additional 149 were unable to answer at least one question on each of the three scales for literacy-related reasons.<sup>4</sup> The final response rate for the literacy assessment, which included

respondents who answered at least one question on each scale plus the 149 respondents who were unable to do so because of language problems or a mental disability, was 96.6 percent weighted.

Cases were considered complete if the respondent completed the background questionnaire and at least one question on each of the three scales or if the respondent was unable to answer any questions because of language issues (an inability to communicate in English or Spanish) or a mental disability. All other cases that did not include a complete screener, a background questionnaire, and responses to at least one question on each of the three literacy scales were considered incomplete or missing. Before imputation, the overall response rate for the household sample was 60.1 percent weighted.

For respondents who did not complete any literacy tasks on any scale, no information is available about their performance on the literacy scale they were missing. Completely omitting these individuals from the analyses would have resulted in unknown biases in estimates of the literacy skills of the national population because refusals cannot be assumed to have occurred randomly. For 859 respondents<sup>5</sup> who answered the background questionnaire but refused to complete the assessment for reasons other than language issues or a mental disability, regression-based imputation procedures were applied to impute responses to one assessment item on each scale by using the NAAL background data on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, country of birth, census region, and metropolitan statistical area status.

On the prose and quantitative scales, a response was imputed for the easiest task on each scale. On the

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<sup>3</sup> To increase the number of Black and Hispanic adults in the NAAL sample, segments with moderate to high concentrations of Black and Hispanic adults were given a higher selection probability. Segments in which Blacks or Hispanics accounted for 25 percent or more of the population were oversampled at a rate up to three times that of the remainder of the segments.

<sup>4</sup> Of the 149 respondents who were unable to answer at least one question on each of the three scales for literacy-related reasons, 65 respondents answered at least one question on one scale. The remaining 84 respondents did not answer any questions on any scale.

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<sup>5</sup> Of the 18,186 household respondents who completed the background questionnaire, 17,178 completed at least one question on each of the three scales and 149 were unable to answer at least one question on one or more of the scales for literacy-related reasons. The remaining 859 respondents completed the background questionnaire but refused to complete the assessment.



document scale, a response was imputed for the second easiest task because that task was also included on the health literacy scale. In each of the logistic regression models, the estimated regression coefficients were used to predict missing values of the item to be imputed. For each nonrespondent, the probability of answering the item correctly was computed and then compared with a randomly generated number between 0 and 1. If the probability of getting a correct answer was greater than the random number, the imputed value for the item was 1 (correct). Otherwise it was 0 (wrong). In addition, a wrong response on each scale was imputed for 65 respondents who started to answer the assessment but were unable to answer at least one question on each scale because of language issues or a mental disability.<sup>6</sup>

The final household reporting sample—including the imputed cases—consisted of 18,102 respondents. These 18,102 respondents are the 17,178 respondents who completed the background questionnaire and the assessment, plus the 859 respondents who completed the background questionnaire but refused to do the assessment for non-literacy-related reasons and have imputed responses to one item on each scale, plus the 65 respondents who started to answer the assessment items but were unable to answer at least one question on each scale because of language issues or a mental disability. After including the cases for which responses to the assessment questions were imputed, the weighted response rate for the household sample was 62.1 percent (18,102 cases with complete or imputed data and an additional 439 cases that had no assessment data because of language issues or a mental disability).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion of imputation see Little and Rubin (2002).

<sup>7</sup> The 439 cases that had no assessment data because of language issues or a mental disability include the 355 respondents who were unable to complete the background questionnaire for one of these reasons, plus the 84 respondents who did not answer any questions on any scale because of language issues or a mental disability.

The household sample was subject to unit nonresponse from the screener, background questionnaire, literacy assessment, and oral module and to item nonresponse to background questionnaire items. Although all background questionnaire items had response rates of more than 85 percent, two stages of data collection—the screener and the background questionnaire—had unit response rates below 85 percent and thus required an analysis of the potential for nonresponse bias.

Table C-1 presents a summary of the household response rate.

**Table C-1. Weighted and unweighted household response rate, by survey component: 2003**

Survey component	Weighted Response rate (percent)	Unweighted Response rate (percent)
Screener	81.2	81.8
Background questionnaire	76.6	78.1
Literacy assessment	96.6	97.2
Overall response rate before imputation	60.1	62.1
Overall response rate after imputation	62.1	63.9

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

## Prison Sample

The 2003 assessment also included a nationally representative probability sample of inmates in federal and state prisons. A total of 114 prisons were selected to participate in the adult literacy assessment. Of these 114 prisons, 107 agreed to participate, 3 refused, and 4 were ineligible. The final prison response rate was 97.3 percent weighted. From among the inmates in those prisons, 1,298 inmates ages 16 and older were randomly selected to complete the background questionnaire and assessment. Of those 1,298 selected inmates, 1,161 completed the background questionnaire. Of the 137 who did not complete the background questionnaire, 12 were unable to do so because of a literacy-related barrier, either the inability

ity to communicate in English or Spanish (the two languages in which the background questionnaire was administered) or a mental disability.

The final response rate for the prison background questionnaire, which included respondents who completed the background questionnaire and respondents who were unable to complete the background questionnaire because of language problems or a mental disability, was 90.6 percent weighted. Of the 1,161 inmates who completed the background questionnaire, 1,125 completed at least one question on each of the three scales—prose, document, and quantitative—measured in the adult literacy assessment. An additional eight were unable to answer at least one question on each of the three scales for literacy-related reasons. The final response rate for the literacy assessment, which included respondents who answered at least one question on each scale or were unable to do so because of language problems or a mental disability, was 98.9 percent weighted.

The same definition of a complete case used for the household sample was also used for the prison sample, and the same rules were followed for imputation. Before imputation, the final response rate for the prison sample was 87.2 percent weighted.

One response on each scale was imputed on the basis of background characteristics for 28 inmates who completed the background questionnaire but had incomplete or missing assessments for reasons that were not literacy related. The statistical imputation procedures were the same as for the household sample. The background characteristics used for the missing data imputation for the prison sample were prison security level, region of country/prison type, age, gender, educational attainment, country of birth, race/ethnicity, and marital status. A wrong response on each scale was imputed for the three inmates who started to answer the assessment but were unable to answer at least one question on each scale because of

language issues or a mental disability. The final prison reporting sample—including the imputed cases—consisted of 1,156 respondents. After the cases for which responses to the assessment questions were imputed were included, the weighted response rate for the prison sample was 88.3 percent (1,156 cases with complete or imputed data and an additional 17 cases that had no assessment data because of language issues or a mental disability).

Table C-2 presents a summary of the prison response rate.

**Table C-2. Weighted and unweighted prison response rate, by survey component: 2003**

Survey component	Weighted Response rate (percent)	Unweighted Response rate (percent)
Prison	97.3	97.3
Background questionnaire	90.6	90.4
Literacy assessment	98.9	98.8
Overall response rate before imputation	87.2	86.8
Overall response rate after imputation	88.3	87.9

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

### Nonresponse Bias

NCES statistical standards require a nonresponse bias analysis when the unit response rate for a sample is less than 85 percent. The nonresponse bias analysis of the household sample revealed differences in the background characteristics of respondents who participated in the assessment compared with those who refused.

In bivariate unit-level analyses at the screener and background questionnaire stages, estimated percentages for respondents were compared with those for the total eligible sample to identify any potential bias owing to nonresponse. Although some statistically significant differences existed, the potential for bias was small because the absolute difference between estimated percentages was less than 2 percent for all domains considered. Multivariate analyses were con-

ducted to further explore the potential for nonresponse bias by identifying the domains with the most differential response rates. These analyses revealed that the lowest response rates for the screener were among dwelling units in segments with high median income, small average household size, and a large proportion of renters. The lowest response rates for the background questionnaire were among males ages 30 and older in segments with high median income. However, the variables used to define these areas and other pockets with low response rates were used in weighting adjustments. The analysis showed that weighting adjustments were highly effective in reducing the bias. The general conclusion was that the potential amount of nonresponse bias attributable to unit nonresponse at the screener and background questionnaire stages was likely to be negligible.

## Data Collection

Household interviews took place in respondents' homes; prison interviews generally took place in a classroom or library in the prison. Whenever possible, interviewers administered the background questionnaire and assessment in a private setting. Unless there were security concerns, a guard was not present in the room when inmates were interviewed.

Interviewers used a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) system programmed into laptop computers. The interviewers read the background questions from the computer screen and entered all responses directly into the computer. Skip patterns and follow-up probes for contradictory or out-of-range responses were programmed into the computer.

After completing the background questionnaire, respondents were handed a booklet with the assessment questions. The interviewers followed a script that introduced the assessment booklet and guided the respondent through the assessment.

Each assessment booklet began with the same seven questions. After the respondent completed those questions, the interviewer asked the respondent for the book and used an algorithm to determine on the basis of the responses to the first seven questions whether the respondent should continue in the main assessment or be placed in the Adult Literacy Supplemental Assessment (ALSA). Three percent of adults weighted (5 percent unweighted) were placed in the ALSA.

ALSA was a performance-based assessment that allowed adults with marginal literacy to demonstrate what they could and could not do when asked to make sense of various forms of print. The ALSA started with simple identification tasks and sight words and moved to connected text, using authentic, highly contextualized material commonly found at home or in the community. Respondents placed in the ALSA are included in the NAAL sample based on their responses to the seven questions. Because the ALSA respondents got most or all of the seven questions at the beginning of the assessment wrong, they would have been classified into the *Below Basic* level on the prose, document, and quantitative scales.

A respondent who continued in the main assessment was given back the assessment booklet, and the interviewer asked the respondent to complete the tasks in the booklet and guided the respondent through the tasks. The main assessment consisted of 12 blocks of tasks with approximately 11 questions in each block, but each assessment booklet included only 3 blocks of questions. The blocks were spiraled so that across the 26 different configurations of the assessment booklet, each block was paired with every other block and each block appeared in each of the three positions (first, middle, last) in a booklet.

For ALSA interviews, the interviewer read the ALSA script from a printed booklet and classified the

respondent's answers into the response categories in the printed booklet. ALSA respondents were handed the materials they were asked to read

Following the main assessment or ALSA, all respondents were administered the oral fluency assessment (not discussed in this report). Respondents were handed a booklet with passages, number lists, letter lists, word lists, and pseudoword lists to read orally. Respondents read into a microphone that recorded their responses on the laptop computer.

### Weighting and Variance Estimation

A complex sample design was used to select assessment respondents. The properties of a sample selected through a complex design could be very different from those of a simple random sample in which every individual in the target population has an equal chance of selection and in which the observations from different sampled individuals can be considered to be statistically independent of one another. Therefore, the properties of the sample for the complex data collection design were taken into account during the analysis of the data. Standard errors calculated as though the data had been collected from a simple random sample would generally underestimate sampling errors. One way of addressing the properties of the sample design was by using sampling weights to account for the fact that the probabilities of selection were not identical for all respondents. All population and subpopulation characteristics based on the NAAL data used sampling weights in their estimation.

The statistics presented in this report are estimates of group and subgroup performance based on a sample of respondents, rather than the values that could be calculated if every person in the nation answered every question on the instrument. It is therefore important to have measures of the degree of uncertainty of the estimates. Accordingly, in addition to

providing estimates of percentages of respondents and their average scale score, this report provides information about the uncertainty of each statistic.

Because the assessment used clustered sampling, conventional formulas for estimating sampling variability that assume simple random sampling and hence independence of observations are inappropriate. For this reason, the NAAL assessment uses a Taylor series procedure based on the *sandwich estimator* to estimate standard errors (Binder 1983).

### Scaling

As discussed above, each respondent to the NAAL received a booklet that included 3 of the 13 assessments blocks. Because each respondent did not answer all of the NAAL items, item response theory (IRT) methods were used to estimate average scores on the health, prose, document, and quantitative literacy scales (health literacy results are not included in this report); a simple average percent correct would not allow for reporting results that are comparable for all respondents. IRT models the probability of answering a question correctly as a mathematical function of proficiency or skill. The main purpose of IRT analysis is to provide a common scale on which performance on some latent trait can be compared across groups, such as those defined by sex, race/ethnicity, or place of birth (Hambleton and Swaminathan 1985).

IRT models assume that an examinee's performance on each item reflects characteristics of the item and characteristics of the examinee. All models assume that all items on a scale measure a common latent ability or proficiency dimension (e.g., prose literacy) and that the probability of a correct response on an item is uncorrelated with the probability of a correct response on another item given fixed values of the latent trait. Items are measured in terms of their

difficulty as well as their ability to discriminate among examinees of varying ability.

The assessment used two types of IRT models to estimate scale scores. The two-parameter logistic (2PL) model, which was used for dichotomous items (that is, items that are scored either right or wrong) takes the form

$$P(x_{ij}=1 | \theta_j, a_i, b_i) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-1.7a_i(\theta_j - b_i)}}$$

where  $x_{ij}$  is the response of person  $j$  to item  $i$ ,  $\theta_j$  is the proficiency of person  $j$ ,  $a_i$  is the *slope* or *discrimination* parameter for item  $i$ , and  $b_i$  is the *location* or *difficulty* parameter for item  $i$ .

For the partial credit items, the graded response logistic (GRL) model was used. This model follows the 2PL model for the probability of a score of 1 (at least partially correct):

$$P(x_{ij} \geq 1 | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i1}) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-1.7a_i(\theta_j - b_{i1})}}$$

It also follows the 2PL model for the probability of a score of 2 (completely correct):

$$P(x_{ij}=2 | \theta_j, a_i, b_{i2}) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-1.7a_i(\theta_j - b_{i2})}}$$

In the equations above,  $b_{i1}$  and  $b_{i2}$  are the step parameters corresponding to the response categories of partially or fully correct.

The scale indeterminacy was solved by setting an origin and unit size to the reported scale means and

standard deviations from the 1992 assessment.<sup>8</sup> Linear transformation was performed to transform the original scale metric to the final reporting metric.

Levels were set and items were mapped to scales based on the scores corresponding to a 67 percent success rate on the tasks.

## Statistical Testing

The statistical comparisons in this report were based on the  $t$  statistic. Statistical significance was determined by calculating a  $t$  value for the difference between a pair of means, or proportions, and comparing this value with published tables of values at a certain level of significance, called alpha level. The alpha level is an a priori statement of the probability of inferring that a difference exists when, in fact, it does not. The alpha level used in this report is .05, based on a two-tailed test. The formula used to compute the  $t$  statistic was as follows:

$$t = \frac{(P_1 - P_2)}{\sqrt{(SE_1^2 + SE_2^2)}}$$

where  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  are the estimates to be compared and  $SE_1$  and  $SE_2$  are their corresponding standard errors.

<sup>8</sup> The means for the 1992 assessment were 276 for prose, 271 for document, and 275 for quantitative. The standard deviations for the 1992 assessment were 61 for prose, 61 for document, and 66 for quantitative. The standard deviations for the 2003 assessment were 59 for prose, 57 for document, and 61 for quantitative.



## Estimates and Standard Errors for Tables and Figures

**Table D2-1. Estimates and standard errors for Table 2-1. Percentage of the adult prison population in selected groups: 1992 and 2003**

Characteristic	1992	2003
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	35 (2.3)	32 (1.8)
Black	45 (1.9)	46 (1.7)
Hispanic	16 (1.8)	18 (1.4)
Other	3 (0.5)	5 (0.7)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94 (1.5)	94 (2.2)
Female	6 (1.5)	6 (2.2)
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	13 (1.1)	9 (1.1)*
Some high school	36 (1.5)	28 (1.4)*
GED/high school equivalency	17 (1.2)	28 (1.8)*
High school graduate	14 (1.1)	13 (1.1)
Postsecondary	20 (1.2)	22 (1.4)
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	23 (2.2)	16 (1.7)*
25–39	58 (1.6)	52 (1.4)*
40+	19 (1.5)	32 (1.5)*
<b>Language spoken before starting school</b>		
English only	85 (1.7)	85 (1.4)
English and other	6 (1.0)	6 (0.7)
Other only	9 (1.2)	9 (1.2)
<b>Parents' highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	19 (1.7)	13 (1.2)*
Some high school	16 (1.4)	13 (1.2)
GED/high school equivalency/high school graduate	39 (1.6)	41 (1.9)
Postsecondary	25 (1.5)	33 (1.5)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify "other" as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose "other" as their race. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the "Other" category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose "other" as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table D2-2. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale	1992	2003
Prose	248 (2.0)	257 (1.9)*
Document	243 (2.6)	249 (1.5)
Quantitative	234 (3.4)	249 (1.9)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-3. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-2. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
Prose	22 (1.5)	16 (1.6)*	40 (1.4)	40 (1.7)	35 (1.6)	41 (1.8)*	3 (0.6)	3 (0.7)
Document	22 (1.7)	15 (1.6)*	33 (1.5)	35 (1.8)	42 (2.0)	48 (2.1)*	3 (0.8)	2 (0.6)
Quantitative	50 (2.1)	39 (1.7)*	32 (1.3)	39 (1.5)*	16 (1.3)	20 (1.2)*	3 (0.7)	2 (0.5)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-4. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by race/ethnicity: 1992 and 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
White	267 (3.3)	274 (3.7)	268 (3.9)	265 (2.4)	266 (4.3)	274 (2.9)
Black	241 (2.4)	252 (2.6)*	229 (2.9)	240 (2.1)*	216 (4.3)	237 (2.6)*
Hispanic	224 (5.6)	232 (5.4)	224 (5.2)	236 (4.7)	212 (5.9)	231 (3.8)*
Other	248 (8.2)	262 (8.5)	256 (10.4)	255 (8.5)	251 (11.7)	254 (8.9)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify "other" as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose "other" as their race. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the "Other" category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose "other" as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-5. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and race/ethnicity	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
White	12 (2.1)	9 (2.0)	35 (2.6)	32 (3.1)	47 (2.9)	52 (3.6)	6 (1.7)	7 (2.1)
Black	25 (2.2)	15 (2.9)*	43 (2.2)	47 (3.7)	30 (2.2)	37 (3.8)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.9)
Hispanic	38 (4.4)	35 (3.6)	39 (3.3)	35 (3.0)	22 (3.5)	28 (2.8)	1 (0.6)	2 (0.9)
Other	24 (5.9)	11 (7.0)	39 (5.8)	41 (10.4)	33 (6.0)	46 (10.9)	4 (2.8)	3 (3.9)
<b>Document</b>								
White	11 (1.9)	6 (2.2)	24 (2.1)	27 (4.2)	57 (2.9)	64 (4.6)	8 (2.1)	3 (1.8)*
Black	28 (3.2)	19 (2.8)*	41 (3.1)	40 (2.9)	31 (3.4)	40 (3.3)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.6)
Hispanic	36 (3.6)	23 (3.8)*	31 (2.4)	36 (3.0)	31 (3.2)	39 (4.2)	2 (0.9)	2 (1.1)
Other	13 (5.4)	14 (5.6)	33 (6.4)	31 (7.3)	48 (7.6)	52 (8.6)	6 (4.0)	4 (3.9)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
White	27 (3.2)	19 (3.5)	39 (2.9)	45 (3.9)	28 (2.7)	33 (3.6)	6 (1.8)	4 (1.7)
Black	63 (3.1)	49 (2.9)*	28 (2.2)	37 (2.5)*	9 (1.7)	13 (1.7)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.5)
Hispanic	64 (3.7)	53 (2.8)*	26 (2.5)	32 (2.3)	9 (2.0)	13 (1.7)	1 (0.6)	2 (0.8)
Other	41 (5.9)	34 (8.3)	31 (5.0)	41 (7.4)	19 (3.9)	24 (6.7)	9 (3.8)	1 (1.8)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. In 1992, respondents were allowed to identify only one race but could identify "other" as their race. In 2003, respondents were allowed to identify multiple races but could not choose "other" as their race. The "Other" category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. In 2003, the "Other" category also includes adults who said they were multi-racial; in 1992, it also includes adults who chose "other" as their race. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-6. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**

Educational attainment	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
Less than high school	205 (7.6)	199 (7.3)	195 (6.1)	192 (7.6)	184 (9.4)	198 (7.5)
Some high school	228 (2.7)	235 (3.1)	229 (2.6)	231 (3.1)	215 (3.4)	223 (3.5)
GED/high school equivalency	270 (3.9)	270 (3.1)	255 (3.7)	260 (2.3)	259 (4.4)	263 (2.6)
High school graduate	251 (5.5)	264 (4.7)	250 (5.4)	255 (5.4)	235 (6.2)	247 (5.9)
Postsecondary	286 (3.9)	282 (3.2)	279 (3.7)	267 (3.3)*	277 (4.8)	280 (3.1)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-7. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-6. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than high school	50 (4.8)	58 (5.6)	35 (3.1)	31 (4.4)	15 (3.1)	11 (3.0)	1 (0.5)	# (†)
Some high school	33 (3.8)	25 (4.9)	47 (3.4)	54 (5.4)	19 (3.0)	21 (4.8)	# (†)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	4 (4.9)	5 (2.7)	40 (11.5)	38 (6.8)	54 (12.1)	54 (7.1)	2 (3.5)	3 (2.4)
High school graduate	19 (4.6)	14 (3.1)	39 (4.7)	34 (3.6)	40 (5.3)	47 (3.8)	2 (1.5)	5 (2.0)
Postsecondary	5 (1.8)	5 (1.5)	26 (3.9)	28 (3.4)	58 (4.4)	58 (3.8)	11 (3.4)	8 (2.5)
<b>Document</b>								
Less than high school	55 (4.4)	56 (5.8)	29 (2.8)	30 (3.6)	15 (2.8)	14 (3.5)	1 (0.5)	# (†)
Some high school	28 (2.8)	22 (7.2)	41 (2.8)	48 (7.4)	31 (3.2)	30 (8.1)	1 (0.5)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	9 (4.0)	5 (2.6)	34 (6.9)	33 (5.4)	55 (7.6)	60 (5.9)	1 (1.7)	2 (1.7)
High school graduate	19 (3.9)	15 (3.9)	31 (3.3)	28 (4.5)	46 (4.2)	54 (5.5)	4 (2.0)	3 (2.4)
Postsecondary	5 (1.5)	5 (2.9)	21 (2.9)	27 (6.0)	63 (4.0)	65 (6.6)	11 (3.1)	3 (3.0)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than high school	75 (4.4)	74 (5.1)	16 (2.3)	21 (3.7)	7 (2.4)	5 (2.0)	1 (0.8)	# (†)
Some high school	64 (3.1)	62 (4.6)	29 (2.4)	30 (3.9)	7 (1.5)	8 (2.1)	1 (0.5)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	29 (7.5)	23 (5.3)	47 (6.7)	53 (5.6)	22 (6.1)	23 (4.8)	2 (1.9)	1 (1.2)
High school graduate	49 (4.2)	41 (4.2)	33 (3.3)	34 (3.2)	16 (2.5)	22 (2.7)	2 (1.2)	3 (1.1)
Postsecondary	21 (3.7)	15 (3.3)	38 (3.6)	44 (4.3)	33 (3.5)	36 (4.0)	8 (2.7)	5 (2.3)

†Not applicable.

#Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-8. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by gender: 1992 and 2003**

Gender	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
Male	249 (2.0)	257 (2.0)*	243 (2.6)	249 (1.6)	235 (3.4)	250 (1.9)*
Female	244 (8.4)	259 (5.6)	242 (11.0)	249 (8.6)	221 (12.1)	237 (9.0)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-9. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-8. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by gender: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and gender	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
Male	22 (1.5)	17 (1.6)*	40 (1.5)	39 (1.7)	35 (1.6)	41 (1.9)*	3 (0.6)	4 (0.7)
Female	25 (5.6)	9 (6.9)	39 (4.9)	49 (11.8)	34 (5.4)	42 (12.3)	3 (1.9)	1 (3.0)
<b>Document</b>								
Male	22 (1.7)	15 (1.7)*	33 (1.5)	35 (1.8)	42 (2.0)	48 (2.2)*	3 (0.8)	2 (0.6)
Female	22 (5.9)	15 (9.3)	33 (6.9)	35 (10.9)	42 (8.3)	49 (12.6)	3 (2.7)	2 (3.2)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Male	49 (2.2)	39 (1.7)*	32 (1.3)	39 (1.5)*	16 (1.3)	20 (1.2)*	3 (0.7)	2 (0.5)
Female	59 (7.3)	47 (8.0)	27 (4.6)	38 (6.6)	12 (5.6)	15 (5.2)	2 (2.0)	1 (1.4)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-10. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by age: 1992 and 2003**

Age	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
16–24	251 (4.3)	255 (4.8)	250 (3.9)	248 (4.2)	236 (5.1)	246 (4.8)
25–39	247 (2.3)	260 (2.3)*	242 (2.7)	254 (2.0)*	231 (3.7)	252 (2.1)*
40+	250 (4.8)	252 (3.1)	238 (6.7)	240 (2.8)	241 (7.2)	245 (4.0)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-11. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-10. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by age: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and age	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
16–24	18 (4.1)	19 (3.8)	45 (4.5)	38 (3.6)	35 (4.9)	40 (4.3)	3 (1.7)	4 (1.7)
25–39	24 (1.5)	13 (2.1)*	37 (1.5)	40 (2.5)	35 (1.6)	45 (2.7)*	3 (0.6)	3 (1.0)
40+	21 (3.6)	20 (2.2)	40 (3.4)	40 (2.3)	36 (3.8)	37 (2.3)	4 (1.6)	3 (1.0)
<b>Document</b>								
16–24	17 (2.6)	14 (4.2)	33 (3.0)	37 (5.1)	47 (3.6)	47 (6.0)	3 (1.5)	2 (1.7)
25–39	23 (1.8)	11 (2.0)*	33 (1.6)	33 (2.6)	42 (2.3)	53 (3.1)*	3 (0.7)	2 (1.0)
40+	28 (4.2)	21 (3.1)	30 (2.6)	37 (3.1)	37 (3.8)	41 (3.6)	5 (1.7)	1 (0.8)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
16–24	48 (4.1)	43 (4.4)	36 (2.9)	37 (3.8)	14 (2.5)	18 (2.8)	2 (1.1)	2 (1.3)
25–39	52 (2.3)	36 (2.3)*	31 (1.5)	42 (2.2)*	15 (1.3)	20 (1.7)*	3 (0.7)	2 (0.7)
40+	46 (4.0)	42 (2.9)	30 (2.5)	35 (2.2)	19 (2.5)	20 (2.1)	5 (1.4)	2 (0.8)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-12. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-11. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by language spoken before starting school: 1992 and 2003**

Language spoken before starting school	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
English only	252 (2.1)	261 (1.9)*	246 (2.7)	251 (1.4)	237 (3.4)	252 (2.0)*
English and other	238 (8.5)	255 (7.5)	242 (5.3)	250 (7.5)	239 (10.3)	243 (6.0)
Other only	211 (8.6)	207 (10.3)	213 (7.8)	210 (9.3)	197 (9.3)	219 (7.2)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-13. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-12. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by language spoken before starting school: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and language spoken before starting school	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
English only	19 (1.6)	13 (1.5)*	40 (1.7)	40 (2.0)	38 (1.8)	44 (2.2)*	3 (0.7)	3 (0.9)
English and other	32 (4.9)	15 (5.4)*	37 (4.0)	43 (7.3)	26 (3.7)	39 (8.0)	5 (2.3)	3 (3.1)
Other only	47 (6.0)	51 (6.0)	34 (3.9)	30 (3.8)	18 (3.8)	18 (3.7)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.0)
<b>Document</b>								
English only	21 (1.7)	13 (1.5)*	32 (1.7)	35 (1.9)	44 (2.1)	50 (2.1)*	4 (0.9)	2 (0.6)
English and other	20 (4.3)	12 (8.7)	37 (4.8)	37 (12.0)	40 (5.6)	49 (14.3)	2 (1.9)	2 (3.5)
Other only	43 (5.7)	40 (5.5)	30 (3.5)	33 (3.3)	26 (4.7)	26 (4.3)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
English only	48 (2.3)	37 (1.8)*	33 (1.5)	40 (1.6)*	16 (1.4)	21 (1.4)*	3 (0.8)	2 (0.6)
English and other	48 (6.2)	44 (7.0)	32 (4.3)	39 (6.2)	16 (3.7)	16 (4.7)	4 (2.6)	1 (1.4)
Other only	70 (4.4)	60 (5.3)	20 (2.6)	30 (3.9)*	9 (2.4)	10 (2.6)	2 (0.9)	1 (1.0)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-14. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by parents' highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**

Parents' educational attainment	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
Less than high school	237 (6.6)	234 (5.0)	231 (5.2)	232 (5.7)	219 (8.4)	236 (5.2)
Some high school	248 (5.3)	258 (4.6)	236 (5.3)	247 (4.4)	230 (7.6)	252 (5.5)*
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	256 (2.9)	258 (2.6)	251 (3.4)	249 (2.8)	240 (4.0)	248 (3.4)
Postsecondary	268 (4.7)	271 (3.1)	268 (4.0)	260 (2.2)	262 (4.9)	263 (3.5)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GRE and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D2-15. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 2-14. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by parents' highest educational attainment: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and parents' educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than high school	31 (4.1)	30 (4.7)	35 (2.8)	43 (4.2)	31 (3.6)	26 (3.6)	3 (1.1)	1 (0.8)
Some high school	21 (4.8)	17 (3.1)	42 (5.0)	38 (3.9)	35 (5.5)	41 (3.7)	2 (1.5)	5 (1.8)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	16 (2.4)	14 (2.1)	41 (2.8)	40 (2.8)	40 (3.1)	43 (2.9)	3 (1.2)	3 (1.1)
Postsecondary	13 (2.7)	7 (2.2)	33 (3.3)	36 (4.1)	47 (3.4)	53 (4.3)	7 (2.3)	4 (2.1)
<b>Document</b>								
Less than high school	30 (4.2)	27 (4.6)	33 (3.3)	35 (3.7)	35 (3.6)	36 (4.5)	3 (1.1)	2 (1.2)
Some high school	26 (4.1)	17 (4.2)	35 (3.7)	35 (4.6)	36 (4.5)	47 (5.5)	3 (1.6)	2 (1.7)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	16 (2.5)	13 (3.5)	32 (2.7)	37 (4.5)	49 (3.3)	49 (5.2)	3 (1.3)	1 (1.2)
Postsecondary	8 (2.4)	8 (2.3)	26 (3.5)	32 (3.8)	60 (4.4)	58 (4.1)	6 (2.6)	2 (1.4)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than high school	58 (4.5)	49 (6.4)	27 (2.6)	38 (5.1)	13 (2.5)	13 (3.6)	2 (1.1)	1 (1.0)
Some high school	52 (4.7)	37 (4.4)*	31 (3.1)	38 (3.8)	14 (2.9)	22 (3.4)	3 (1.4)	3 (1.5)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	46 (3.1)	39 (3.5)	35 (2.4)	41 (2.9)	17 (1.8)	19 (2.4)	2 (0.9)	1 (0.8)
Postsecondary	32 (3.7)	30 (3.0)	37 (3.0)	40 (2.8)	24 (2.8)	26 (2.5)	6 (2.0)	5 (1.4)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GRE and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-1. Estimates and standard errors for Table 3-1. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in selected groups: 2003**

Characteristic	Prison	Household
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	32 (1.8)	71 (1.3)*
Black	46 (1.7)	11 (0.8)*
Hispanic	18 (1.4)	12 (1.2)*
Other	5 (0.7)	6 (0.6)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	94 (2.2)	48 (0.5)*
Female	6 (2.2)	52 (0.5)*
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Still in high school	† (†)	3 (0.2)*
Less than high school	9 (1.1)	6 (0.3)*
Some high school	28 (1.4)	10 (0.4)*
GED/high school equivalency	28 (1.8)	5 (0.3)*
High school graduate	13 (1.1)	26 (0.6)*
Postsecondary	22 (1.4)	51 (1.0)*
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	16 (1.7)	17 (0.5)
25–39	52 (1.4)	27 (0.5)*
40+	32 (1.5)	56 (0.6)*
<b>Language spoken before starting school</b>		
English only	85 (1.4)	81 (1.1)*
English and other	6 (0.7)	6 (0.4)
Other only	9 (1.2)	13 (0.9)*
<b>Parents' highest educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	13 (1.2)	18 (0.7)*
Some high school	13 (1.2)	9 (0.4)*
GED/high school equivalency/high school graduate	41 (1.9)	31 (0.6)*
Postsecondary	33 (1.5)	42 (0.7)*
<b>Veteran's status</b>		
Veteran	10 (0.9)	13 (0.5)*
Not a veteran	90 (0.9)	87 (0.5)*
<b>Self-reported health</b>		
Poor	4 (0.5)	4 (0.2)
Fair	11 (0.9)	11 (0.4)
Good	22 (1.2)	24 (0.5)*
Very good	35 (1.8)	36 (0.5)
Excellent	28 (1.7)	26 (0.6)
<b>Learning disability diagnosis</b>		
Yes	17 (1.1)	6 (0.3)*
No	84 (1.1)	94 (0.3)*

†Not applicable.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. The 'Other' category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table D3-2. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations: 2003**

Literacy scale	Prison	Household
Prose	257 (1.9)	275 (1.3)*
Document	249 (1.5)	271 (1.2)*
Quantitative	249 (1.9)	283 (1.2)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-3. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-2. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
Prose	16 (1.6)	14 (0.6)	40 (1.7)	29 (0.6)*	41 (1.8)	44 (0.7)	3 (0.7)	13 (0.5)*
Document	15 (1.6)	12 (0.5)	35 (1.8)	22 (0.5)*	48 (2.1)	53 (0.7)*	2 (0.6)	13 (0.6)*
Quantitative	39 (1.7)	21 (0.6)*	39 (1.5)	33 (0.5)*	20 (1.2)	33 (0.5)*	2 (0.5)	14 (0.5)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-4. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity: 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
White	274 (3.7)	289 (1.5)*	265 (2.4)	282 (1.5)*	274 (2.9)	297 (1.3)*
Black	252 (2.6)	243 (1.8)*	240 (2.1)	238 (2.2)	237 (2.6)	238 (2.2)
Hispanic	232 (5.4)	216 (3.6)*	236 (4.7)	224 (3.6)*	231 (3.8)	233 (3.2)
Other	262 (8.5)	271 (3.5)	255 (8.5)	270 (3.7)	254 (8.9)	279 (3.9)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. The 'Other' category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-5. Estimates and standard errors for Table 3-2. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and age: 2003**

Race/ethnicity and age	Prison	Household
<b>White</b>		
16–24	285 (6.2)	287 (2.4)
25–39	275 (4.1)	303 (2.1)*
40+	267 (6.1)	283 (1.7)*
<b>Black</b>		
16–24	238 (7.6)	249 (2.7)
25–39	260 (2.9)	253 (2.8)
40+	248 (3.3)	234 (2.6)*
<b>Hispanic</b>		
16–24	260 (11.8)	235 (4.4)
25–39	229 (6.1)	213 (4.6)*
40+	218 (10.6)	205 (5.4)

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-6. Estimates and standard errors for Table 3-3. Average prose literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by race/ethnicity and date incarcerated: 2003**

Race/ethnicity	Incarcerated prior to 2002	Incarcerated 2002 or later	Household
White	275 (5.4)*	273 (3.9)*	289 (1.5)
Black	255 (2.8)*	249 (4.0)	243 (1.8)

\*Significantly different from household population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Because of sample size, these analyses are not reported for the Hispanic population. Black includes African American.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-7. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-4. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by race/ethnicity: 2003**

Literacy scale and race/ethnicity	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
White	9 (2.0)	7 (0.5)	32 (3.1)	25 (0.8)*	52 (3.6)	51 (0.9)	7 (2.1)	17 (0.9)*
Black	15 (2.9)	24 (1.4)*	47 (3.7)	43 (1.2)	37 (3.8)	31 (1.4)	1 (0.9)	2 (0.5)
Hispanic	35 (3.6)	45 (1.8)*	35 (3.0)	29 (1.0)	28 (2.8)	22 (1.1)	2 (0.9)	4 (0.5)
Other	11 (7.0)	13 (1.7)	41 (10.4)	32 (2.0)	46 (10.9)	45 (2.1)	3 (3.9)	10 (1.6)
<b>Document</b>								
White	6 (2.2)	8 (0.5)	27 (4.2)	19 (0.7)	64 (4.6)	58 (1.0)	3 (1.8)	15 (1.0)*
Black	19 (2.8)	24 (1.8)	40 (2.9)	35 (1.4)	40 (3.3)	40 (1.9)	1 (0.6)	2 (0.5)
Hispanic	23 (3.8)	36 (1.7)*	36 (3.0)	26 (0.8)*	39 (4.2)	33 (1.2)	2 (1.1)	5 (0.5)*
Other	14 (5.6)	11 (1.6)	31 (7.3)	24 (1.9)	52 (8.6)	54 (2.5)	4 (3.9)	11 (1.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
White	19 (3.5)	13 (0.7)	45 (3.9)	32 (0.8)*	33 (3.6)	39 (0.8)	4 (1.7)	17 (0.8)*
Black	49 (2.9)	47 (1.8)	37 (2.5)	36 (1.3)	13 (1.7)	15 (1.1)	1 (0.5)	2 (0.4)
Hispanic	53 (2.8)	50 (1.7)	32 (2.3)	29 (1.0)	13 (1.7)	17 (0.9)*	2 (0.8)	4 (0.5)
Other	34 (8.3)	23 (2.4)	41 (7.4)	35 (2.0)	24 (6.7)	32 (2.0)	1 (1.8)	11 (1.6)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. The 'Other' category includes Asians, Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and multi-racial adults. All adults of Hispanic origin are classified as Hispanic, regardless of race. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-8. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Educational attainment	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
Less than high school	199 (7.3)	160 (4.1)*	192 (7.6)	159 (4.5)*	198 (7.5)	166 (4.5)*
Some high school	235 (3.1)	228 (2.0)	231 (3.1)	230 (1.9)	223 (3.5)	231 (1.8)*
GED/high school equivalency	270 (3.1)	260 (2.2)*	260 (2.3)	257 (2.6)	263 (2.6)	266 (3.2)
High school graduate	264 (4.7)	262 (1.3)	255 (5.4)	258 (1.5)	247 (5.9)	269 (1.6)*
Postsecondary	282 (3.2)	302 (1.2)*	267 (3.3)	293 (0.9)*	280 (3.1)	310 (0.9)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-9. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-6. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than high school	58 (5.6)	79 (2.0)*	31 (4.4)	17 (1.6)*	11 (3.0)	4 (0.8)*	# (†)	# (†)
Some high school	25 (4.9)	35 (1.6)	54 (5.4)	42 (1.3)*	21 (4.8)	22 (1.3)	# (†)	1 (0.4)*
GED/high school equivalency	5 (2.7)	11 (1.9)	38 (6.8)	45 (2.9)	54 (7.1)	42 (3.0)	3 (2.4)	3 (1.1)
High school graduate	14 (3.1)	13 (1.0)	34 (3.6)	39 (1.2)	47 (3.8)	44 (1.3)	5 (2.0)	4 (0.6)
Postsecondary	5 (1.5)	4 (0.3)	28 (3.4)	19 (0.7)*	58 (3.8)	54 (0.9)	8 (2.5)	23 (0.9)*
<b>Document</b>								
Less than high school	56 (5.8)	72 (2.0)*	30 (3.6)	18 (1.2)*	14 (3.5)	9 (1.1)	# (†)	# (†)
Some high school	22 (7.2)	30 (1.6)	48 (7.4)	36 (1.2)	30 (8.1)	33 (1.6)	# (†)	2 (0.4)*
GED/high school equivalency	5 (2.6)	13 (2.0)*	33 (5.4)	30 (2.4)	60 (5.9)	53 (2.9)	2 (1.7)	4 (1.3)
High school graduate	15 (3.9)	13 (1.0)	28 (4.5)	29 (1.1)	54 (5.5)	52 (1.4)	3 (2.4)	5 (0.7)
Postsecondary	5 (2.9)	4 (0.3)	27 (6.0)	15 (0.5)*	65 (6.6)	63 (0.9)	3 (3.0)	19 (0.9)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than high school	74 (5.1)	84 (1.7)	21 (3.7)	12 (1.2)*	5 (2.0)	3 (0.6)	# (†)	# (†)
Some high school	62 (4.6)	53 (1.6)	30 (3.9)	33 (1.2)	8 (2.1)	13 (1.0)*	# (†)	1 (0.3)
GED/high school equivalency	23 (5.3)	26 (3.2)	53 (5.6)	43 (3.1)	23 (4.8)	28 (3.0)	1 (1.2)	3 (1.3)
High school graduate	41 (4.2)	24 (1.4)*	34 (3.2)	42 (1.3)*	22 (2.7)	29 (1.4)*	3 (1.1)	5 (0.7)
Postsecondary	15 (3.3)	7 (0.4)*	44 (4.3)	28 (0.7)*	36 (4.0)	43 (0.8)	5 (2.3)	22 (0.9)*

†Not applicable.

#Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-10. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the White adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and educational attainment	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>		
Less than or some high school	243 (6.4)	231 (2.9)
GED/high school equivalency	275 (4.9)	270 (2.3)
High school graduate	279 (9.6)	270 (1.4)
Postsecondary	295 (4.9)	310 (1.2)*
<b>Document</b>		
Less than or some high school	239 (5.1)	229 (3.5)
GED/high school equivalency	267 (3.4)	266 (3.3)
High school graduate	272 (8.2)	264 (1.9)
Postsecondary	278 (4.6)	300 (1.1)*
<b>Quantitative</b>		
Less than or some high school	240 (5.2)	235 (3.1)
GED/high school equivalency	275 (4.0)	279 (3.8)
High school graduate	277 (9.0)	279 (1.7)
Postsecondary	296 (4.4)	318 (0.9)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-11. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-8. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the Black adult prison and household populations, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and educational attainment	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>		
Less than or some high school	229 (4.4)	200 (3.5)*
GED/high school equivalency	270 (3.8)	233 (3.0)*
High school graduate	255 (4.8)	240 (2.6)*
Postsecondary	271 (4.6)	268 (1.9)
<b>Document</b>		
Less than or some high school	221 (3.9)	196 (4.1)*
GED/high school equivalency	254 (3.7)	232 (5.0)*
High school graduate	243 (7.3)	232 (3.0)
Postsecondary	255 (4.9)	261 (2.1)
<b>Quantitative</b>		
Less than or some high school	213 (4.6)	189 (4.4)*
GED/high school equivalency	254 (4.1)	232 (5.5)*
High school graduate	227 (10.0)	232 (2.7)
Postsecondary	266 (5.2)	266 (2.1)

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-12. Estimates and standard errors for Table 3-4. Percentage of the Black and White adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by highest educational attainment: 2003**

Population, literacy scale, and educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Whites</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	20 (6.8)	34 (2.4)	49 (8.2)	40 (1.9)	30 (7.9)	24 (1.9)	1 (1.5)	2 (0.5)
GED/high school equivalency	3 (4.6)	5 (1.9)	35 (12.0)	40 (4.3)	58 (12.7)	52 (4.5)	4 (5.3)	3 (1.8)
High school graduate	11 (4.3)	8 (1.0)	27 (5.3)	37 (1.7)	51 (6.4)	51 (1.8)	12 (4.6)	4 (0.8)
Postsecondary	5 (1.9)	2 (0.3)	19 (3.8)	15 (0.7)	61 (4.8)	56 (1.1)	15 (4.0)	27 (1.1)*
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	18 (11.6)	32 (2.3)	44 (12.8)	32 (1.4)	38 (14.1)	34 (2.2)	# (†)	3 (0.7)
GED/high school equivalency	2 (3.6)	9 (2.3)	27 (12.0)	26 (3.2)	69 (13.0)	60 (3.9)	2 (4.1)	5 (2.2)
High school graduate	9 (4.7)	10 (1.2)	19 (7.3)	27 (1.6)	65 (8.4)	57 (2.0)	7 (5.9)	6 (1.2)
Postsecondary	3 (3.3)	2 (0.3)	18 (7.8)	12 (0.6)	74 (9.0)	63 (1.2)	6 (6.2)	23 (1.2)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	47 (6.4)	50 (2.5)	37 (5.5)	33 (1.7)	15 (4.3)	15 (1.5)	1 (0.6)	2 (0.5)
GED/high school equivalency	12 (11.0)	15 (4.5)	55 (14.7)	45 (5.7)	32 (14.2)	37 (5.5)	2 (3.8)	4 (2.6)
High school graduate	20 (8.5)	17 (1.7)	39 (9.1)	42 (1.9)	36 (8.4)	35 (2.0)	5 (4.9)	6 (1.1)
Postsecondary	5 (5.1)	4 (0.4)	38 (10.2)	24 (0.8)	49 (10.2)	46 (1.0)	8 (6.9)	26 (1.1)*
<b>Blacks</b>								
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than or some high school	29 (8.9)	54 (2.8)*	55 (9.4)	36 (2.3)	16 (7.7)	10 (1.3)	# (†)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	5 (3.2)	23 (8.6)	39 (8.7)	63 (9.8)	53 (9.0)	15 (7.7)*	3 (3.1)	# (†)
High school graduate	14 (6.0)	23 (3.0)	44 (7.5)	49 (3.2)	41 (7.3)	27 (3.2)	1 (1.5)	1 (0.7)
Postsecondary	4 (4.4)	10 (1.2)	40 (10.3)	37 (2.0)	53 (10.7)	49 (2.1)	3 (3.9)	5 (1.0)
<b>Document</b>								
Less than or some high school	33 (6.9)	52 (2.7)*	44 (5.9)	31 (1.9)*	23 (6.2)	17 (1.9)	# (†)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	9 (5.1)	24 (7.6)	38 (7.6)	44 (8.1)	52 (8.4)	33 (8.7)	1 (2.2)	# (†)
High school graduate	20 (7.2)	24 (4.3)	35 (7.2)	42 (4.2)	43 (8.6)	33 (4.9)	2 (2.6)	# (†)
Postsecondary	7 (8.0)	8 (1.7)	38 (13.9)	30 (2.9)	53 (15.5)	59 (3.3)	1 (3.5)	3 (1.3)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than or some high school	70 (6.6)	76 (2.1)	26 (5.8)	20 (1.6)	4 (2.1)	5 (0.8)	# (†)	# (†)
GED/high school equivalency	31 (9.1)	53 (11.9)	51 (9.1)	40 (10.7)	17 (6.5)	7 (5.5)	1 (1.6)	# (†)
High school graduate	54 (6.7)	52 (3.5)	31 (5.0)	37 (2.9)	14 (4.0)	10 (1.9)	1 (1.2)	# (†)
Postsecondary	24 (7.3)	24 (2.6)	47 (7.6)	46 (2.5)	26 (6.5)	27 (2.4)	2 (2.7)	3 (1.0)

†Not applicable.

#Rounds to zero.

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-13. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by gender: 2003**

Gender	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
Male	257 (2.0)	273 (1.6)*	249 (1.6)	269 (1.5)*	250 (1.9)	287 (1.3)*
Female	259 (5.6)	277 (1.4)*	249 (8.6)	272 (1.2)*	237 (9.0)	279 (1.3)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-14. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-10. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by gender: 2003**

Literacy scale and gender	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
Male	17 (1.6)	15 (0.6)	39 (1.7)	29 (0.7)*	41 (1.9)	43 (0.7)	4 (0.7)	13 (0.6)*
Female	9 (6.9)	12 (0.6)	49 (11.8)	28 (0.6)	42 (12.3)	46 (0.8)	1 (3.0)	14 (0.6)*
<b>Document</b>								
Male	15 (1.7)	14 (0.6)	35 (1.8)	23 (0.5)*	48 (2.2)	51 (0.8)	2 (0.6)	13 (0.6)*
Female	15 (9.3)	11 (0.6)	35 (10.9)	22 (0.6)	49 (12.6)	54 (0.8)	2 (3.2)	13 (0.6)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Male	39 (1.7)	21 (0.6)*	39 (1.5)	31 (0.5)*	20 (1.2)	33 (0.5)*	2 (0.5)	16 (0.6)*
Female	47 (8.0)	22 (0.8)*	38 (6.6)	35 (0.7)	15 (5.2)	32 (0.7)*	1 (1.4)	11 (0.6)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-15. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-11. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by age: 2003**

Age	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
16–24	255 (4.8)	273 (2.1)*	248 (4.2)	274 (1.8)*	246 (4.8)	275 (2.0)*
25–39	260 (2.3)	284 (1.7)*	254 (2.0)	283 (1.8)*	252 (2.1)	292 (1.8)*
40+	252 (3.1)	272 (1.5)*	240 (2.8)	264 (1.3)*	245 (4.0)	281 (1.3)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-16. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-12. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by age: 2003**

Literacy scale and age	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
16–24	19 (3.8)	11 (1.0)	38 (3.6)	32 (1.3)	40 (4.3)	48 (1.5)	4 (1.7)	9 (1.0)*
25–39	13 (2.1)	12 (0.6)	40 (2.5)	25 (0.7)*	45 (2.7)	45 (0.8)	3 (1.0)	18 (0.8)*
40+	20 (2.2)	15 (0.7)*	40 (2.3)	30 (0.6)*	37 (2.3)	43 (0.8)*	3 (1.0)	12 (0.6)*
<b>Document</b>								
16–24	14 (4.2)	10 (0.9)	37 (5.1)	22 (1.0)*	47 (6.0)	57 (1.4)	2 (1.7)	12 (1.0)*
25–39	11 (2.0)	8 (0.7)	33 (2.6)	19 (0.7)*	53 (3.1)	56 (1.1)	2 (1.0)	17 (1.1)*
40+	21 (3.1)	15 (0.6)	37 (3.1)	24 (0.5)*	41 (3.6)	50 (0.7)*	1 (0.8)	11 (0.5)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
16–24	43 (4.4)	23 (1.3)*	37 (3.8)	37 (1.2)	18 (2.8)	31 (1.3)*	2 (1.3)	9 (0.9)*
25–39	36 (2.3)	17 (0.8)*	42 (2.2)	31 (0.8)*	20 (1.7)	35 (0.8)*	2 (0.7)	17 (1.0)*
40+	42 (2.9)	23 (0.7)*	35 (2.2)	32 (0.5)	20 (2.1)	32 (0.6)*	2 (0.8)	13 (0.5)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-17. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**

Language spoken before starting school	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
English only	261 (1.9)	283 (1.4)*	251 (1.4)	276 (1.3)*	252 (2.0)	289 (1.2)*
English and other	255 (7.5)	272 (2.2)*	250 (7.5)	264 (2.4)	243 (6.0)	278 (3.1)*
Other only	207 (10.3)	212 (3.5)	210 (9.3)	223 (3.9)	219 (7.2)	235 (4.0)

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table D3-18. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by language spoken before starting school: 2003**

Literacy scale and language spoken before starting school	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
English only	13 (1.5)	9 (0.5)*	40 (2.0)	27 (0.7)*	44 (2.2)	49 (0.8)*	3 (0.9)	15 (0.7)*
English and other	15 (5.4)	10 (1.2)	43 (7.3)	35 (1.9)	39 (8.0)	47 (2.0)	3 (3.1)	8 (1.2)
Other only	51 (6.0)	48 (1.7)	30 (3.8)	28 (1.1)	18 (3.7)	21 (1.1)	2 (1.0)	4 (0.5)
<b>Document</b>								
English only	13 (1.5)	9 (0.5)*	35 (1.9)	21 (0.6)*	50 (2.1)	56 (0.8)*	2 (0.6)	14 (0.7)*
English and other	12 (8.7)	11 (1.6)	37 (12.0)	27 (1.8)	49 (14.3)	56 (2.4)	2 (3.5)	6 (1.4)
Other only	40 (5.5)	37 (1.7)	33 (3.3)	25 (0.8)*	26 (4.3)	32 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	6 (0.6)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
English only	37 (1.8)	8 (0.6)*	40 (1.6)	33 (0.6)*	21 (1.4)	35 (0.6)*	2 (0.6)	15 (0.6)*
English and other	44 (7.0)	21 (2.1)*	39 (6.2)	38 (1.9)	16 (4.7)	31 (2.0)*	1 (1.4)	10 (1.6)*
Other only	60 (5.3)	49 (1.8)*	30 (3.9)	28 (0.9)	10 (2.6)	18 (1.1)*	1 (1.0)	6 (0.7)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-19. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-15. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**

Parents' educational attainment	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
Less than high school	234 (5.0)	227 (2.6)	232 (5.7)	224 (2.6)	236 (5.2)	239 (2.4)
Some high school	258 (4.6)	261 (2.3)	247 (4.4)	256 (2.1)	252 (5.5)	267 (2.2)*
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	258 (2.6)	278 (1.5)*	249 (2.8)	273 (1.5)*	248 (3.4)	285 (1.5)*
Postsecondary	271 (3.1)	300 (1.5)*	260 (2.2)	293 (1.5)*	263 (3.5)	305 (1.3)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D3-20. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 3-16. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by parents' highest educational attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and parents' educational attainment	Below Basic		Basic		Intermediate		Proficient	
	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household	Prison	Household
<b>Prose</b>								
Less than high school	30 (4.7)	37 (1.6)	43 (4.2)	35 (1.1)	26 (3.6)	25 (1.1)	1 (0.8)	3 (0.4)*
Some high school	17 (3.1)	16 (1.3)	38 (3.9)	36 (1.6)	41 (3.7)	42 (1.7)	5 (1.8)	6 (0.9)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	14 (2.1)	10 (0.7)*	40 (2.8)	30 (1.0)*	43 (2.9)	49 (1.2)*	3 (1.1)	11 (0.8)*
Postsecondary	7 (2.2)	5 (0.4)	36 (4.1)	20 (0.8)*	53 (4.3)	53 (1.0)	4 (2.1)	22 (1.1)*
<b>Document</b>								
Less than high school	27 (4.6)	35 (1.5)	35 (3.7)	30 (0.8)	36 (4.5)	32 (1.3)	2 (1.2)	3 (0.4)
Some high school	17 (4.2)	15 (1.3)	35 (4.6)	29 (1.3)	47 (5.5)	50 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	6 (0.9)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	13 (3.5)	8 (0.8)	37 (4.5)	23 (0.9)*	49 (5.2)	59 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	10 (1.0)*
Postsecondary	8 (2.3)	4 (0.5)	32 (3.8)	15 (0.8)*	58 (4.1)	61 (1.3)	2 (1.4)	20 (1.3)*
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Less than high school	49 (6.4)	46 (1.4)	38 (5.1)	32 (0.9)	13 (3.6)	18 (0.8)	1 (1.0)	4 (0.4)*
Some high school	37 (4.4)	28 (1.6)*	38 (3.8)	38 (1.5)	22 (3.4)	28 (1.5)	3 (1.5)	6 (0.9)
High school graduate <sup>1</sup>	39 (3.5)	18 (0.9)*	41 (2.9)	35 (0.8)*	19 (2.4)	35 (0.9)*	1 (0.8)	12 (0.8)*
Postsecondary	30 (3.0)	10 (0.6)*	40 (2.8)	29 (0.8)*	26 (2.5)	41 (0.9)*	5 (1.4)	21 (1.0)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

<sup>1</sup>High school graduate category includes GED and high school equivalency.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table. Postsecondary includes any education beyond high school.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-1. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-1. Percentage of the adult prison population, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**

Population	No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes in prison	Earned GED during current incarceration	Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration
All prisoners	33 (1.6)	5 (0.8)	19 (1.4)	43 (1.7)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-2. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-2. Percentage of the adult prison population with a GED/high school equivalency certificate or high school diploma, by expected date of release: 2003**

Expected date of release	Percent
2 years or less	65 (2.0)
More than 2 years	60 (2.5)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-3. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and GED/high school diploma attainment	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	228 (3.5)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	227 (7.1)
Earned GED during current incarceration	273 (4.0)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	273 (2.4)
<b>Document</b>	
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	223 (3.7)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	227 (6.5)
Earned GED during current incarceration	262 (2.8)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	261 (2.0)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	217 (3.9)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	224 (7.0)
Earned GED during current incarceration	266 (3.5)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	266 (2.6)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-4. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by GED/high school diploma attainment: 2003**

Literacy scale and GED/high school diploma attainment	Below Basic	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
<b>Prose</b>				
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	33 (4.3)	48 (4.1)	19 (3.4)	# (†)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	32 (9.8)	53 (10.3)	16 (9.2)	# (†)
Earned GED during current incarceration	5 (2.9)	35 (8.2)	57 (8.4)	3 (3.2)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	8 (1.6)	33 (2.6)	53 (2.8)	6 (1.6)
<b>Document</b>				
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	32 (5.1)	41 (3.9)	27 (4.6)	# (†)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	27 (19.8)	48 (19.3)	25 (20.1)	# (†)
Earned GED during current incarceration	3 (3.4)	32 (9.0)	63 (9.9)	1 (2.5)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	9 (1.7)	29 (2.7)	59 (3.0)	3 (1.3)
<b>Quantitative</b>				
No GED/not currently enrolled in academic classes	65 (3.9)	28 (3.1)	7 (1.7)	# (†)
No GED/currently enrolled in academic classes	62 (13.2)	32 (11.2)	6 (5.7)	# (†)
Earned GED during current incarceration	23 (5.2)	50 (5.6)	25 (4.9)	2 (1.9)
Earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration	25 (2.7)	44 (2.7)	28 (2.4)	3 (1.1)

†Not applicable.

#Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. The category "earned GED/H.S. diploma prior to current incarceration" includes prison inmates who had higher levels of educational attainment (postsecondary education) prior to their current incarceration.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-5. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-5. Percentage of the adult prison population, by length of participation in vocational training programs: 2003**

Population	No participation	Less than 6 months	6-12 months	More than 1 year
All prisoners	71 (1.7)	11 (1.1)	8 (0.9)	9 (1.1)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-6. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-6. Percentage of the adult prison population, by enrollment in vocational training: 2003**

Population	Currently enrolled in classes	On a waiting list	Not enrolled and not on waiting list
All prisoners	10 (1.1)	14 (1.1)	77 (1.6)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-7. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-7. Percentage of the adult prison population who participated in vocational training during current incarceration, by expected date of release: 2003**

Expected date of release	Percent
2 years or less	27 (2.1)
More than 2 years	32 (2.5)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-8. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-8. Percentage of the adult prison population participating in vocational training who received selected types of instruction as part of the vocational training, by type of instruction: 2003**

Vocational training emphasis	Percent
Reading	46 (3.1)
Writing	44 (2.9)
Mathematics	63 (3.2)
Computers	31 (2.9)
Communication	74 (2.7)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-9. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-9. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by participation in vocational training: 2003**

Literacy scale and participation in vocational training	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Current participation	257 (5.3)
Past participation	265 (3.8)
No participation	255 (2.4)
<b>Document</b>	
Current participation	253 (6.1)
Past participation	255 (3.7)
No participation	246 (1.9)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Current participation	252 (5.2)
Past participation	254 (3.9)
No participation	247 (2.3)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-10. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-10. Percentage of the adult prison population who participated in vocational training, by prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Current participation	Past participation	No participation
<b>Prose</b>			
Below Basic	10 (2.7)	13 (3.2)	77 (4.0)
Basic	10 (1.6)	18 (2.2)	72 (2.5)
Intermediate	10 (1.6)	22 (2.4)	68 (2.6)
Proficient	10 (5.8)	21 (9.6)	69 (10.4)
<b>Document</b>			
Below Basic	9 (3.0)	14 (4.5)	78 (5.0)
Basic	9 (1.8)	19 (2.7)	73 (3.0)
Intermediate	10 (1.8)	21 (2.6)	69 (2.8)
Proficient	16 (13.5)	26 (17.6)	58 (18.6)
<b>Quantitative</b>			
Below Basic	9 (1.6)	17 (2.6)	75 (2.8)
Basic	10 (1.6)	22 (2.5)	68 (2.6)
Intermediate	10 (2.2)	19 (3.5)	70 (3.7)
Proficient	9 (6.2)	13 (10.3)	78 (11.0)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-11. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-11. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations who have received skill certification: 2003**

Skill certification and population	Percent
<b>IT certification</b>	
Prison	6 (0.8)
Household	8 (0.4)*
<b>Other certification</b>	
Prison	25 (1.5)
Household	27 (0.6)

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-12. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-12. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by receipt of information technology skill certification: 2003**

Literacy scale, population, and skill certification	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Prison	
No IT certification	255 (2.0)
Received IT certification	276 (4.9)
Household	
No IT certification	273 (1.4)*
Received IT certification	291 (2.0)*
<b>Document</b>	
Prison	
No IT certification	247 (1.5)
Received IT certification	267 (5.8)
Household	
No IT certification	269 (1.3)*
Received IT certification	285 (2.7)*
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Prison	
No IT certification	247 (1.8)
Received IT certification	277 (7.0)
Household	
No IT certification	281 (1.2)*
Received IT certification	302 (2.4)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D4-13. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 4-13. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison and household populations, by receipt of other job-related skill certification: 2003**

Literacy scale, population, and skill certification	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Prison	
No other job certification	252 (2.3)
Received other job certification	270 (3.0)
Household	
No other job certification	269 (1.4)*
Received other job certification	291 (1.6)*
<b>Document</b>	
Prison	
No other job certification	246 (1.9)
Received other job certification	255 (2.4)
Household	
No other job certification	266 (1.4)*
Received other job certification	283 (1.5)*
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Prison	
No other job certification	246 (2.3)
Received other job certification	259 (3.2)
Household	
No other job certification	277 (1.4)*
Received other job certification	297 (1.4)*

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table D4-14. Estimates and standard errors for Figures 4-14. and 4-15. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by receipt of information technology skill certification or other job-related skill certification: 2003**

Literacy scale, population, and literacy level	IT certification		Other job-related skill certification	
	Received IT certification	No IT certification	Received other job certification	No other job certification
<b>Prose</b>				
Prison				
Below Basic	1 (1.4)	100 (1.4)	10 (3.3)	90 (3.3)
Basic	6 (2.4)	94 (2.4)	23 (3.0)	77 (3.0)
Intermediate	8 (2.6)	92 (2.6)	32 (2.9)	68 (2.9)
Proficient	7 (12.2)	93 (12.2)	24 (13.3)	76 (13.3)
Household				
Below Basic	3 (0.5)	97 (0.5)	12 (1.1)	88 (1.1)
Basic	6 (0.5)	94 (0.5)	23 (1.0)	77 (1.0)
Intermediate	10 (0.6)	90 (0.6)	31 (0.9)	69 (0.9)
Proficient	9 (1.0)	91 (1.0)	35 (1.8)	65 (1.8)
<b>Document</b>				
Prison				
Below Basic	2 (2.7)	98 (2.7)	16 (3.9)	84 (3.9)
Basic	5 (2.7)	95 (2.7)	24 (2.7)	76 (2.7)
Intermediate	8 (2.4)	92 (2.4)	28 (2.5)	72 (2.5)
Proficient	10 (22.3)	90 (22.3)	26 (15.8)	74 (15.8)
Household				
Below Basic	3 (0.7)	97 (0.7)	13 (1.1)	87 (1.1)
Basic	6 (0.7)	94 (0.7)	23 (1.0)	78 (1.0)
Intermediate	10 (0.6)	90 (0.6)	31 (0.9)	70 (0.9)
Proficient	9 (1.5)	91 (1.5)	31 (2.1)	69 (2.1)
<b>Quantitative</b>				
Prison				
Below Basic	2 (2.0)	98 (2.0)	19 (2.2)	81 (2.2)
Basic	8 (2.6)	93 (2.6)	28 (2.4)	72 (2.4)
Intermediate	10 (4.6)	90 (4.6)	30 (3.4)	70 (3.4)
Proficient	9 (18.3)	91 (18.3)	26 (11.0)	74 (11.0)
Household				
Below Basic	5 (0.5)	95 (0.5)	16 (0.9)	84 (0.9)
Basic	7 (0.5)	93 (0.5)	26 (0.9)	74 (0.9)
Intermediate	9 (0.6)	91 (0.6)	32 (1.0)	68 (1.0)
Proficient	12 (1.1)	88 (1.1)	32 (1.7)	68 (1.7)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons or households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-1. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by current prison work assignment: 2003**

Literacy scale and work assignment	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Currently has work assignment	259 (2.2)
No work assignment	251 (3.1)
<b>Document</b>	
Currently has work assignment	250 (1.6)
No work assignment	247 (3.1)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Currently has work assignment	252 (2.1)
No work assignment	243 (3.3)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-2. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-2. Percentage of the adult prison population who had a current prison work assignment, by prose, document, and quantitative literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Percent
<b>Prose</b>	
Below Basic	66 (5.2)
Basic	63 (3.3)
Intermediate	72 (3.1)
Proficient	80 (9.4)
<b>Document</b>	
Below Basic	63 (5.6)
Basic	68 (3.4)
Intermediate	69 (3.2)
Proficient	67 (16.3)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Below Basic	63 (3.2)
Basic	70 (2.8)
Intermediate	71 (3.5)
Proficient	69 (9.9)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-3. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of reading as part of current prison work assignment: 2003**

Literacy scale and frequency	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Every day	263 (4.0)
Less than every day	257 (5.7)
Never	257 (3.1)
<b>Document</b>	
Every day	256 (2.7)
Less than every day	246 (4.2)
Never	246 (2.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Every day	255 (3.6)
Less than every day	251 (4.8)
Never	249 (2.9)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-4. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-4. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of writing as part of current prison work assignment: 2003**

Literacy scale and frequency	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Every day	271 (4.8)
Less than every day	245 (4.5)
Never	259 (3.0)
<b>Document</b>	
Every day	261 (4.0)
Less than every day	239 (3.4)
Never	248 (2.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Every day	264 (4.0)
Less than every day	238 (5.4)
Never	251 (3.3)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-5. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-5. Percentage of the adult prison population who read as part of current prison work assignment, by prose literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Never	Less than every day	Every day
<b>Prose</b>			
Below Basic	56 (5.5)	13 (3.8)	31 (5.0)
Basic	51 (3.2)	17 (2.5)	32 (2.9)
Intermediate	51 (3.1)	13 (2.2)	36 (2.9)
Proficient	44 (10.8)	10 (8.3)	46 (11.0)
<b>Document</b>			
Below Basic	61 (7.1)	13 (5.5)	26 (5.9)
Basic	52 (3.8)	16 (3.2)	31 (3.4)
Intermediate	48 (3.4)	13 (2.7)	39 (3.2)
Proficient	52 (20.4)	7 (13.5)	41 (19.6)
<b>Quantitative</b>			
Below Basic	54 (3.7)	14 (3.5)	32 (3.1)
Basic	51 (3.3)	17 (3.0)	32 (2.7)
Intermediate	49 (4.6)	12 (4.4)	40 (4.1)
Proficient	43 (12.8)	3 (7.5)	54 (12.8)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Document and quantitative literacy results are also included in this table for reference.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-6. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-6. Percentage of the adult prison population who wrote as part of current prison work assignment, by prose and document literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Never	Less than every day	Every day
<b>Prose</b>			
Below Basic	58 (5.7)	25 (5.4)	17 (4.0)
Basic	54 (3.4)	25 (3.1)	21 (2.8)
Intermediate	57 (3.3)	15 (2.5)	29 (3.1)
Proficient	57 (11.2)	4 (4.9)	40 (11.1)
<b>Document</b>			
Below Basic	64 (8.2)	23 (7.7)	13 (5.8)
Basic	54 (4.4)	25 (3.9)	20 (4.0)
Intermediate	54 (4.0)	15 (3.3)	31 (3.7)
Proficient	69 (23.6)	4 (9.3)	28 (23.4)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-7. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-7. Percentage of the adult prison population who attempted to use the prison library, by number of days it took to obtain access: 2003**

Number of days	Percent
Less than 2 days	59 (3.5)
2 to 6 days	22 (2.4)
7 to 10 days	10 (1.3)
More than 10 days	10 (1.8)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-8. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-8. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of library use: 2003**

Literacy scale and frequency	Average
<b>Prose</b>	
Daily	255 (5.7)
Weekly	266 (2.8)
Monthly	256 (5.0)
Once or twice a year	256 (5.7)
Never	243 (3.6)
<b>Document</b>	
Daily	261 (4.0)
Weekly	242 (4.1)
Monthly	237 (8.1)
Once or twice a year	234 (7.4)
Never	248 (2.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Daily	255 (6.7)
Weekly	258 (2.9)
Monthly	252 (4.7)
Once or twice a year	244 (6.5)
Never	231 (4.1)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-9. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-9. Percentage of the adult prison population who used the library, by prose literacy level: 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Never	Once or twice a year	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
<b>Prose</b>					
Below Basic	38 (4.5)	9 (3.0)	19 (3.9)	23 (4.0)	11 (3.5)
Basic	26 (2.4)	10 (1.7)	19 (2.3)	33 (2.8)	12 (2.0)
Intermediate	19 (2.2)	10 (1.6)	19 (2.4)	42 (2.9)	11 (2.0)
Proficient	19 (7.0)	6 (5.7)	18 (9.4)	48 (11.7)	10 (7.6)
<b>Document</b>					
Below Basic	39 (5.6)	11 (3.5)	14 (5.7)	24 (4.7)	12 (3.5)
Basic	26 (2.8)	9 (1.7)	20 (3.6)	35 (3.3)	10 (2.0)
Intermediate	20 (2.4)	9 (1.5)	20 (3.1)	39 (3.0)	12 (1.9)
Proficient	15 (10.4)	14 (11.8)	15 (19.1)	37 (18.5)	19 (14.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>					
Below Basic	34 (3.0)	10 (1.4)	18 (2.7)	28 (2.9)	10 (2.2)
Basic	20 (2.2)	9 (1.2)	20 (2.6)	39 (2.9)	12 (2.1)
Intermediate	17 (2.8)	9 (1.6)	19 (3.7)	42 (4.2)	13 (3.3)
Proficient	18 (8.0)	16 (7.2)	18 (12.4)	36 (13.4)	11 (10.2)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Document and quantitative literacy results are also included in this table for reference.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-10. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-10. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by computer use for various tasks: 2003**

Literacy scale and computer use	Word processing	CD ROM	Spreadsheet
<b>Prose</b>			
Used	265 (5.1)	271 (5.2)	275 (7.7)
Never used	255 (2.0)	255 (2.0)	256 (1.9)
<b>Document</b>			
Used	259 (3.7)	260 (4.1)	257 (6.8)
Never used	247 (1.7)	247 (1.7)	248 (1.6)
<b>Quantitative</b>			
Used	258 (4.8)	269 (5.2)	263 (8.1)
Never used	248 (2.0)	247 (2.0)	248 (2.0)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-11. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-11. Percentage of the adult prison population who wrote using a word processing program, by prose literacy level: 2003**

Literacy level	Percent
Below Basic	8 (2.9)
Basic	12 (2.0)
Intermediate	15 (2.1)
Proficient	12 (9.9)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-12. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-12. Percentage of the adult prison population who looked up information on a computer CD-ROM, by document literacy level: 2003**

Literacy level	Percent
Below Basic	3 (5.0)
Basic	8 (4.8)
Intermediate	11 (3.9)
Proficient	6 (22.6)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-13. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-13. Percentage of the adult prison population who used a computer spreadsheet program, by quantitative literacy level: 2003**

Literacy level	Percent
Below Basic	4 (1.1)
Basic	6 (1.1)
Intermediate	7 (1.8)
Proficient	13 (8.2)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-14. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-14. Percentage of the adult prison and household populations who read each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes, by frequency of reading: 2003**

Printed material and population	Every day	A few times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Never
<b>Newspapers or magazines</b>					
Prison	43 (1.5)	27 (1.5)	10 (1.0)	10 (0.9)	10 (1.1)
Household	48 (0.7)*	25 (0.5)	12 (0.4)	9 (0.3)	6 (0.4)*
<b>Books</b>					
Prison	50 (1.7)	22 (1.4)	8 (0.9)	12 (0.9)	8 (1.0)
Household	32 (0.6)*	20 (0.4)	10 (0.3)*	25 (0.5)*	13 (0.6)*
<b>Letters and notes</b>					
Prison	33 (1.7)	33 (1.4)	13 (1.1)	14 (1.1)	8 (1.0)
Household	51 (0.8)*	20 (0.5)*	10 (0.3)*	13 (0.4)	7 (0.4)

\*Significantly different from prison population.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons and households. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent of the prison sample and 3 percent of the household sample in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D5-15. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-15. Average prose and document literacy scores of the adult prison population, by frequency of reading each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes: 2003**

Literacy scale and printed material	Every day	A few times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Never
<b>Prose</b>					
Newspapers or magazines	263 (2.5)	263 (2.6)	249 (5.5)	254 (5.3)	208 (8.2)
Books	266 (2.0)	257 (4.5)	252 (6.2)	249 (4.7)	192 (10.5)
Letters and notes	263 (2.5)	261 (2.7)	260 (5.8)	249 (4.1)	201 (8.1)
<b>Document</b>					
Newspapers or magazines	252 (2.1)	250 (2.2)	250 (6.6)	245 (4.2)	216 (9.0)
Books	255 (1.9)	248 (3.4)	243 (6.7)	246 (5.2)	191 (11.0)
Letters and notes	251 (2.5)	253 (2.6)	253 (4.6)	246 (4.9)	189 (10.1)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.



**Table D5-16. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 5-16. Percentage of the adult prison population who read each of the following printed materials in English: newspapers or magazines, books, letters and notes, by prose literacy level: 2003**

Printed material, literacy scale and literacy level	Every day	A few times a week	Once a week	Less than once a week	Never
<b>Newspapers and magazines</b>					
Prose					
Below Basic	29 (4.1)	17 (3.5)	13 (2.5)	10 (2.4)	32 (4.0)
Basic	44 (2.7)	29 (2.6)	9 (1.3)	11 (1.5)	7 (1.2)
Intermediate	48 (2.7)	31 (2.6)	8 (1.2)	9 (1.4)	5 (1.0)
Proficient	47 (11.9)	23 (10.7)	15 (5.9)	10 (7.0)	5 (2.9)
Document					
Below Basic	33 (4.7)	20 (4.4)	12 (2.8)	9 (3.7)	26 (4.0)
Basic	43 (3.1)	30 (3.0)	8 (1.4)	11 (2.4)	8 (1.2)
Intermediate	46 (2.7)	28 (2.6)	10 (1.4)	10 (1.9)	6 (1.0)
Proficient	42 (16.1)	18 (13.2)	21 (11.5)	3 (6.4)	16 (7.7)
<b>Books</b>					
Prose					
Below Basic	25 (4.1)	22 (3.8)	10 (2.3)	14 (2.9)	30 (4.1)
Basic	52 (2.8)	21 (2.3)	9 (1.3)	13 (1.6)	5 (1.2)
Intermediate	59 (2.7)	22 (2.3)	7 (1.2)	10 (1.5)	2 (0.7)
Proficient	50 (12.8)	28 (11.0)	14 (6.3)	7 (4.8)	2 (2.1)
Document					
Below Basic	32 (5.2)	16 (6.0)	11 (2.8)	14 (3.3)	28 (4.6)
Basic	50 (3.7)	25 (4.0)	8 (1.4)	11 (1.8)	6 (1.2)
Intermediate	57 (3.2)	22 (3.3)	7 (1.2)	11 (1.6)	3 (0.8)
Proficient	56 (17.8)	7 (13.1)	21 (12.1)	14 (10.8)	2 (2.6)
<b>Letters and notes</b>					
Prose					
Below Basic	20 (3.9)	27 (3.6)	10 (3.1)	17 (2.9)	26 (3.7)
Basic	34 (2.7)	32 (2.3)	13 (2.0)	15 (1.7)	6 (1.2)
Intermediate	38 (2.7)	34 (2.3)	13 (2.0)	12 (1.5)	3 (0.7)
Proficient	29 (11.2)	45 (10.9)	15 (9.7)	10 (5.4)	1 (0.8)
Document					
Below Basic	24 (5.4)	23 (5.1)	9 (4.5)	18 (3.5)	27 (4.3)
Basic	36 (3.7)	33 (3.4)	13 (3.2)	13 (1.9)	6 (1.1)
Intermediate	35 (3.1)	35 (2.9)	14 (2.7)	13 (1.7)	3 (0.7)
Proficient	27 (19.9)	35 (20.7)	8 (15.0)	26 (15.1)	4 (3.5)

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Document literacy results are also included in this table for reference.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-1. Estimates and standard errors for Table 6-1. Percentage of the adult prison population in selected groups: 1992 and 2003**

Characteristic	1992	2003
<b>Type of offense</b>		
Violent	44 (2.0)	47 (2.1)
Property	18 (1.3)	15 (1.1)*
Drug	25 (1.6)	23 (1.9)
Public order	13 (1.2)	15 (1.4)
<b>Expected length of incarceration</b>		
0–60 months	64 (2.2)	52 (2.4)*
61–120 months	20 (1.6)	21 (1.3)
121+ months	16 (1.3)	28 (2.3)*
<b>Expected date of release</b>		
2 years or less	66 (2.3)	62 (2.3)
More than 2 years	34 (2.3)	38 (2.3)
<b>Previous criminal history</b>		
None	21 (1.4)	16 (1.4)*
Probation only	14 (1.3)	11 (1.1)
Incarceration only	16 (1.4)	10 (0.9)*
Probation and incarceration	48 (1.8)	64 (1.7)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table. Results are based on inmates self report, not prison records.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-2. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-1. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by type of offense: 1992 and 2003**

Type of offense	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
Violent	247 (2.8)	256 (2.7)*	241 (3.8)	247 (2.2)	231 (4.4)	249 (2.6)*
Property	257 (4.3)	263 (4.2)	251 (3.5)	258 (3.6)	243 (5.3)	253 (4.7)
Drug	243 (4.4)	255 (4.2)*	240 (4.8)	247 (3.5)	233 (6.8)	247 (4.0)
Public order	245 (5.2)	258 (3.6)	240 (5.2)	248 (4.1)	233 (7.0)	251 (4.4)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-3. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-2. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by type of offense: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	Violent		Property		Drug		Public order	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
Below basic	23 (2.0)	17 (2.2)*	16 (3.5)	11 (3.0)	26 (3.3)	19 (2.7)	23 (3.8)	16 (3.2)
Basic	40 (1.9)	40 (2.5)	40 (4.0)	41 (5.2)	39 (2.6)	38 (2.9)	41 (3.8)	39 (3.7)
Intermediate	34 (2.1)	41 (2.6)*	41 (4.5)	46 (5.5)	33 (3.0)	39 (3.0)	34 (4.3)	42 (3.8)
Proficient	3 (0.9)	3 (1.0)	3 (1.7)	3 (2.1)	3 (1.1)	5 (1.5)	2 (1.3)	3 (1.4)
<b>Document</b>								
Below basic	24 (2.7)	14 (2.6)*	17 (2.6)	9 (3.3)	24 (3.2)	16 (3.5)	22 (4.5)	18 (3.5)
Basic	33 (2.3)	38 (3.1)	31 (2.6)	31 (5.4)	33 (2.3)	36 (3.8)	35 (4.6)	33 (3.6)
Intermediate	40 (3.0)	47 (3.6)	49 (3.5)	58 (5.9)	39 (3.3)	47 (4.6)	43 (5.4)	46 (4.3)
Proficient	3 (1.1)	1 (0.8)	3 (1.2)	2 (2.2)	4 (1.3)	2 (1.3)	1 (1.1)	3 (1.6)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Below basic	52 (2.6)	39 (2.5)*	44 (4.8)	35 (4.9)	49 (3.8)	41 (3.8)	51 (4.8)	39 (3.9)
Basic	31 (1.7)	40 (2.1)*	37 (3.8)	43 (4.4)	31 (2.4)	38 (3.1)	31 (3.3)	37 (3.4)
Intermediate	15 (1.5)	19 (1.7)	17 (3.3)	21 (3.6)	17 (2.3)	19 (2.7)	15 (2.8)	21 (2.8)
Proficient	3 (0.8)	2 (0.7)	2 (1.3)	2 (1.4)	3 (1.3)	2 (0.9)	3 (1.3)	3 (1.4)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-4. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-3. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by expected length of incarceration: 1992 and 2003**

Expected length of incarceration	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
0–60 months	250 (2.6)	258 (2.4)*	248 (2.7)	248 (2.4)	235 (3.7)	249 (2.4)*
61–120 months	252 (5.1)	254 (3.9)	239 (5.0)	253 (3.1)*	240 (7.1)	252 (3.9)
121+ months	242 (4.1)	258 (2.7)*	233 (6.9)	248 (2.4)*	223 (6.5)	247 (2.9)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-5. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-4. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by expected length of incarceration: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	0–60 months		61–120 months		121+ months	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>						
Below basic	21 (1.9)	15 (2.0)*	22 (3.3)	17 (3.2)	24 (4.2)	16 (2.1)
Basic	39 (1.9)	40 (2.2)	37 (3.2)	41 (3.5)	45 (4.0)	39 (2.7)
Intermediate	37 (2.2)	42 (2.3)	37 (3.6)	39 (3.7)	30 (4.1)	43 (2.6)*
Proficient	3 (0.8)	3 (1.0)	5 (1.6)	3 (1.5)	1 (1.1)	3 (1.0)
<b>Document</b>						
Below basic	18 (1.8)	16 (2.3)	27 (3.5)	14 (2.8)*	29 (6.3)	13 (3.2)*
Basic	32 (1.8)	35 (2.5)	32 (2.7)	34 (3.5)	37 (5.1)	38 (4.2)
Intermediate	47 (2.3)	47 (2.9)	37 (3.7)	50 (4.1)*	33 (6.7)	48 (4.8)
Proficient	3 (0.9)	2 (0.9)	4 (1.4)	3 (1.5)	2 (2.0)	1 (1.0)
<b>Quantitative</b>						
Below basic	49 (2.4)	40 (1.9)*	46 (4.3)	37 (5.0)	58 (5.2)	39 (3.1)*
Basic	33 (1.7)	37 (1.7)	31 (2.6)	42 (4.3)*	31 (3.9)	42 (2.6)*
Intermediate	16 (1.4)	21 (1.4)*	19 (2.8)	19 (3.6)	10 (2.6)	17 (2.2)*
Proficient	3 (0.8)	3 (0.6)	3 (1.3)	2 (1.3)	1 (0.9)	2 (0.7)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-6. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-5. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by expected date of release: 1992 and 2003**

Expected date of release	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
2 years or less	251 (2.7)	257 (2.3)	246 (2.9)	249 (2.1)	235 (3.8)	249 (2.3)*
More than 2 years	247 (3.0)	257 (2.9)*	240 (4.2)	248 (2.3)	233 (4.5)	249 (2.7)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-7. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-6. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by expected date of release: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	2 years or less		More than 2 years	
	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>				
Below basic	22 (1.9)	15 (2.0)*	22 (2.7)	17 (2.2)
Basic	38 (1.8)	41 (2.3)	42 (2.6)	37 (2.2)
Intermediate	37 (2.1)	41 (2.3)	34 (2.7)	42 (2.4)*
Proficient	4 (0.9)	3 (0.9)	2 (0.8)	4 (1.0)
<b>Document</b>				
Below basic	20 (1.9)	15 (2.0)	25 (2.9)	14 (2.8)*
Basic	32 (1.8)	35 (2.3)	33 (2.4)	36 (3.3)
Intermediate	44 (2.4)	48 (2.6)	39 (3.3)	49 (4.0)
Proficient	3 (1.0)	2 (0.9)	3 (1.2)	1 (0.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>				
Below basic	49 (2.5)	40 (2.0)*	51 (3.0)	38 (3.0)*
Basic	32 (1.7)	38 (1.8)*	31 (2.0)	41 (2.3)*
Intermediate	16 (1.5)	20 (1.4)*	15 (1.8)	19 (2.0)
Proficient	3 (0.8)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.9)	2 (0.8)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-8. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-7. Average prose, document, and quantitative literacy scores of the adult prison population, by previous criminal history: 1992 and 2003**

Previous criminal history	Prose		Document		Quantitative	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
None	252 (5.8)	248 (6.6)	249 (5.3)	248 (5.9)	240 (6.1)	250 (5.5)
Probation only	249 (4.7)	259 (5.7)	242 (5.0)	256 (4.4)*	228 (7.4)	257 (5.9)*
Incarceration only	244 (4.2)	252 (6.8)	238 (4.3)	237 (3.7)	241 (5.3)	249 (5.1)
Probation and incarceration	248 (2.3)	258 (2.2)*	243 (3.2)	249 (2.0)	231 (4.3)	247 (2.5)*

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

**Table D6-9. Estimates and standard errors for Figure 6-8. Percentage of the adult prison population in each prose, document, and quantitative literacy level, by previous criminal history: 1992 and 2003**

Literacy scale and literacy level	None		Probation only		Incarceration only		Probation and incarceration	
	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003	1992	2003
<b>Prose</b>								
Below basic	22 (3.6)	29 (3.6)	23 (3.1)	14 (4.7)	27 (2.9)	21 (3.5)	21 (2.1)	13 (1.9)*
Basic	37 (3.0)	31 (2.3)	38 (3.2)	40 (5.4)	37 (2.8)	38 (4.1)	42 (2.1)	42 (2.8)
Intermediate	37 (3.7)	33 (3.0)	34 (3.2)	43 (5.7)	33 (2.8)	37 (4.4)	35 (2.3)	43 (2.9)*
Proficient	5 (1.8)	8 (1.7)	4 (1.6)	3 (2.4)	4 (1.1)	5 (2.2)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.9)
<b>Document</b>								
Below basic	21 (3.4)	21 (3.5)	23 (3.8)	7 (8.0)	25 (3.7)	20 (6.1)	22 (2.1)	14 (2.1)*
Basic	30 (2.7)	30 (2.6)	33 (3.1)	35 (12.6)	34 (3.1)	42 (6.7)	33 (1.9)	36 (2.6)
Intermediate	45 (3.9)	43 (3.4)	40 (4.3)	57 (13.9)	40 (3.7)	37 (7.3)	42 (2.4)	49 (3.0)
Proficient	5 (1.7)	6 (1.8)	3 (1.4)	1 (2.5)	2 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	3 (1.0)	2 (0.8)
<b>Quantitative</b>								
Below basic	47 (3.4)	38 (4.0)	54 (4.5)	32 (6.7)*	44 (4.1)	38 (4.4)	52 (2.9)	41 (2.5)*
Basic	30 (2.1)	37 (2.9)*	28 (2.8)	42 (5.9)*	38 (3.2)	39 (4.0)	32 (2.0)	39 (2.0)*
Intermediate	19 (2.2)	21 (2.6)	15 (2.6)	23 (4.8)	16 (2.6)	20 (3.3)	14 (1.7)	18 (1.7)
Proficient	5 (1.4)	4 (1.4)	3 (1.2)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.1)	2 (1.4)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)

\*Significantly different from 1992.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Standard errors are in parentheses. Adults are defined as people 16 years of age and older living in prisons. Adults who could not be interviewed due to language spoken or cognitive or mental disabilities (3 percent in 1992 and 1 percent in 2003) are excluded from this table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey and 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy.