

# **LITERACY FACTS**

## **DEFINITIONS:**

**LITERACY** - is the ability to read, write and comprehend at a capable level. A person is considered to be "literate" if they can read and write at an 8th grade level or above.

**ILLITERACY** - is being unable to read or write.

**In the United States, there is an epidemic of Americans who CANNOT READ!**

## **CHILDREN LITERACY**

### **• 25 MILLION CHILDREN IN THE U.S. CANNOT READ AT THEIR GRADE LEVEL!!!**

1. Reading scores were dropping even before the pandemic.
2. Nearly two-thirds of U.S. students were unable to read at grade level.
3. Scores had been getting worse for several years.
4. Without help, these students will fall further behind and may even drop out of school.

### **• The Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating effect on American schoolchildren.**

1. Math and reading dropped to their lowest levels in 20 years!
2. Black and Latino students in kindergarten through 2nd grade have been affected the most by learning losses.
4. Children with disabilities and those who do not speak English were affected even more.

### **• The first three years of schooling (Kindergarten to 2nd grade) are the most important times to learn basic reading skills.**

1. However, 1/3 of children entering kindergarten lack the basic language skills needed to learn how to read.

### **• There are large gaps in the reading skills of low-income and minority students.**

1. By the time children from low-income minority families enter grade school, their ability to learn reading skills is already lagging behind.
2. Almost half of fourth graders from low-income families read below the basic level.
3. And over half of African American fourth graders scored below the basic level for reading, as did 45% of Latino and 50% of Native American fourth graders.



- **A lack of reading skills is a key reason for students to drop out of high school.**
  1. Over 8,000 students quit high school every day. This fact limits their ability to get a good paying job.
  2. High-school-only graduates earn \$17,500 less per year than those with four-year college degrees.
  3. For those without a high school diploma or equivalent, the earnings gap is even greater.
  4. In fact, the 2020 recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic saw adults with less than a high school diploma suffer the highest unemployment rate compared to all other education levels.

## **ADULT LITERACY**

### **MILLIONS OF AMERICAN ADULTS READ BELOW THE LEVEL NEEDED TO EARN A DECENT PAYCHECK!!!**

- **According to the U.S. Department of Education, over half of all adults are "functionally illiterate." This means that about *130 million people* (16-74 years old) read below a 6th-grade level.**
  1. In fact, 54 million adults cannot read or write at all.
  2. And 43 million adults in the U.S. read at a third-grade level.
- **The literacy crisis has far-reaching implications for society and the workforce**
  1. Low levels of adult literacy could cost the U.S. \$2.2 trillion a year.
  2. Lack of reading skills severely affects several important factors in a person's life such as: personal income, employment level, health, future goals, and retirement options.