23.9% of adults in Alabama have low literacy

Alabama ranks 43 out of 50 in the U.S.

5 in 8 counties in Alabama have populations where 25% or more of the residents have below basic literacy

How does low literacy affect equity and quality of life?

In counties where at least a quarter of the population have below basic literacy, we see that many health, economic, and educational outcomes fall short.

Unemployment
- 9.7%
- 6.7%
- 6.6%

Median Income
- $38,301 low literacy counties
- $48,376 other counties
- $48,486 state

Adults Without a High School Degree
- 20.0%
- 15.1%
- 14.2%

No Access to Healthcare
- 11.7%
- 10.5%
- 10.0%

Residents Below the Poverty Line
- 22.3%
- 16.7%
- 15.3%

Demographics

Households Where Limited English is Spoken
The percentage of households where no adult speaks English "very well."

The percent of 4th graders with below basic reading by race
- White: 30%
- Latinx/Hispanic: 56%
- Black/African American: 60%
- State Average: 42%

Over 60%

Under 10%

Over 30%

Under 5%
**4th Grade Reading Levels**

While literacy can be high or low in a given metro area, when we look at 4th grade testing, we can see that the performance in English/Language Arts is not consistent across race and gender.

**English/Language Arts Test Performance by Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
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<td>6th</td>
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<td>3rd</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Latinx</td>
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<td>1st</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**English/Language Arts Test Performance by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Unemployment**

6.4%

35,540 adults living in Birmingham are unemployed.

**Single Mother Households**

14.6%

64,375 households in Birmingham are single mother households.

**Residents Below the Poverty Line**

13.4%

114,997 residents are living below the poverty line in Birmingham.

**Didn’t Receive a High School Diploma**

11.6%

90,957 adults living in Birmingham did not receive a high school diploma.

**Receives Public Assistance**

26.6%

70,471 residents receive public assistance in Birmingham.

**Racial Distribution**

- White: 63.7%
- Latinx/Hispanic: 4.4%
- Black: 28.6%
- Asian: 1.4%

**Median Household Income**

$54,291

**Income by Race**

- White: $63,976
- Latinx/Hispanic: $41,586
- Black: $37,807
- Asian: $76,176

Data for the Birmingham-Hoover Metro Area

Below basic literacy is defined as scoring level 1 or below on the PIAAC International Adult Literacy Survey. 4th grade reading scores come from the NAEP reading assessment. 4th grade ELA test performance data comes from edopportunity.org. Self-Reported health comes from the Community Health Status Indicators. All other data comes from the American Community Survey. PIAAC data is not available by city. Visit map.barbarabush.org for county-level PIAAC data.