**Why literacy rates?**

* 1 in 6 (16.4%, 7.1 million) adults in England have “very poor literacy skills”
  + <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/>
  + “They can understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently, and obtain information from everyday sources, but reading information from unfamiliar sources, or on unfamiliar topics, could cause problems. This is also known as being functionally illiterate.”
* This locks adults out of the job market, and makes it difficult for parents to support their child’s learning
* Books unlocked – work to engage prisoners in reading
  + <https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/books-unlocked/>
  + Been shown to improve emotional wellbeing and confidence
  + Encourage more and wider reading
  + Promote tolerance and empathy
  + Give participants books of their own
* Literacy levels for the world population have risen drastically in the last couple of centuries
  + Today, only 14% of the world population remain illiterate
  + Over the last 65 years, global literacy rate increased by 4% every 5 years
  + The poorest countries in the world still have large segments of the population who are illiterate
  + In many countries, more than 95% have basic literacy skills
  + Globally still large inequalities, notably between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world
  + Historical estimates based on percentage of people who could sign documents – basic definition of literacy often used in historical research on education
  + <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>
* Historically large gender gap in literacy rates
  + Expansion of education led to a reduction in education gender inequality
* Historically large gap in literacy rates between races (especially in the US)
* Today literacy rates for younger generation is high – but this is only *basic* literacy rate – is it worth looking at statistics for above basic? As this is still surprisingly low (think England statistic mentioned at the top of this document)
* Numeracy skills?
* Think methodologies for measuring literacy – a lot of the world self-reported, but Africa largely by literacy test (what does this entail?)
* Five reasons to care about literacy rates: <https://borgenproject.org/five-reasons-to-increase-literacy-rates/>
* Thinking to the future: as more of day to day life becomes digital and automated, how will this impact the illiterate/those with basic skills?
* How literacy improves lives: <https://plan-uk.org/blogs/the-importance-of-education-how-literacy-improves-lives>
* Why businesses should care about the UK’s literacy problem: <https://www.costercontent.co.uk/blog/literacy-trust-literacy-problem>
* How literacy affects us all: <https://readingpartners.org/blog/problem-illiteracy-affects-us/>
* NHS does health literacy matter? <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/jonathan-berry/>