

SDG Goal 4

Quality education

SDG Target 4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
SDG Indicator 4.6.1	Youth/adult literacy rate
Time series	Adults with a defined minimum level of functional literacy

1. General information on the time series

- Date of national metadata: January 21, 2026
- National data: <http://sdg-indicators.de/4-6-1/>
- Definition: The time series measures the share of adult population who achieve a minimum level in literacy. The achievement is assessed by the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The minimum level is set to be level 2 of the PIAAC scale.
Functional literacy: The ability to understand, evaluate, use, and apply written texts in order to achieve one's own goals, develop knowledge, and actively participate in social life.
- Disaggregation: age group

2. Comparability with the UN metadata

- Date of UN metadata: July 2025
- UN metadata: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-05-03-02.pdf>
- The time series is partly compliant with the UN metadata. The required age groups are not met exactly: 15 year olds are not surveyed in PIAAC.

3. Data description

- The “Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies” (PIAAC) is an international comparative study of the competencies of the adult population. The study takes place simultaneously in several countries and is repeated at regular intervals. PIAAC is initiated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The study examines key competencies that are necessary to successfully meet everyday and professional challenges. These include reading literacy, everyday mathematical skills and adaptive problem solving.

The PIAAC study is conducted at 10-year intervals. About 40 countries worldwide participated in PIAAC Cycle 1. Data collection took place in 2011/12 for the majority of participating countries. Preparation for the current second cycle of PIAAC began in 2018, with 33 countries participating. The eight-month main study, involving about 5,000 randomly selected adults per participating country aged 16-65 years was conducted in 2022/23. The second cycle is to be carried out for other countries between 2025 and 2029.

4. Access to data source

- Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC, 2012 Results):
<http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?plotter=h5&primaryCountry=DEU&threshold=10&topic=AS>
- Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC, 2023 Results):
https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/do-adults-have-the-skills-they-need-to-thrive-in-a-changing-world_b263dc5d-en.html

5. Metadata on source data

- Technical Report of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC):
<https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/publications/>

6. Timeliness and frequency

- Timeliness: t + 24 months
- Frequency: Every 10 years

7. Calculation method

- Unit of measurement: Percentage
- Calculation:

$$\text{Adults with a defined level of proficiency in functional literacy} = \frac{\text{Adults achieving at least PIAAC level 2 in functional literacy}}{\text{Total adults tested [number]}} \cdot 100 [\%]$$