

Literacy and numeracy needs in Ireland today



The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills 2023** found that 1 in 5 adults aged 16 to 65 in Ireland has literacy needs (21%) and 1 in 4 has numeracy needs (25%). Having literacy or numeracy needs means you would score at or below Level 1 (out of 5 levels) in this survey. The survey was run by the **Central Statistics Office (CSO)** in Ireland. This factsheet by the **National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)** presents findings about employment from the survey.

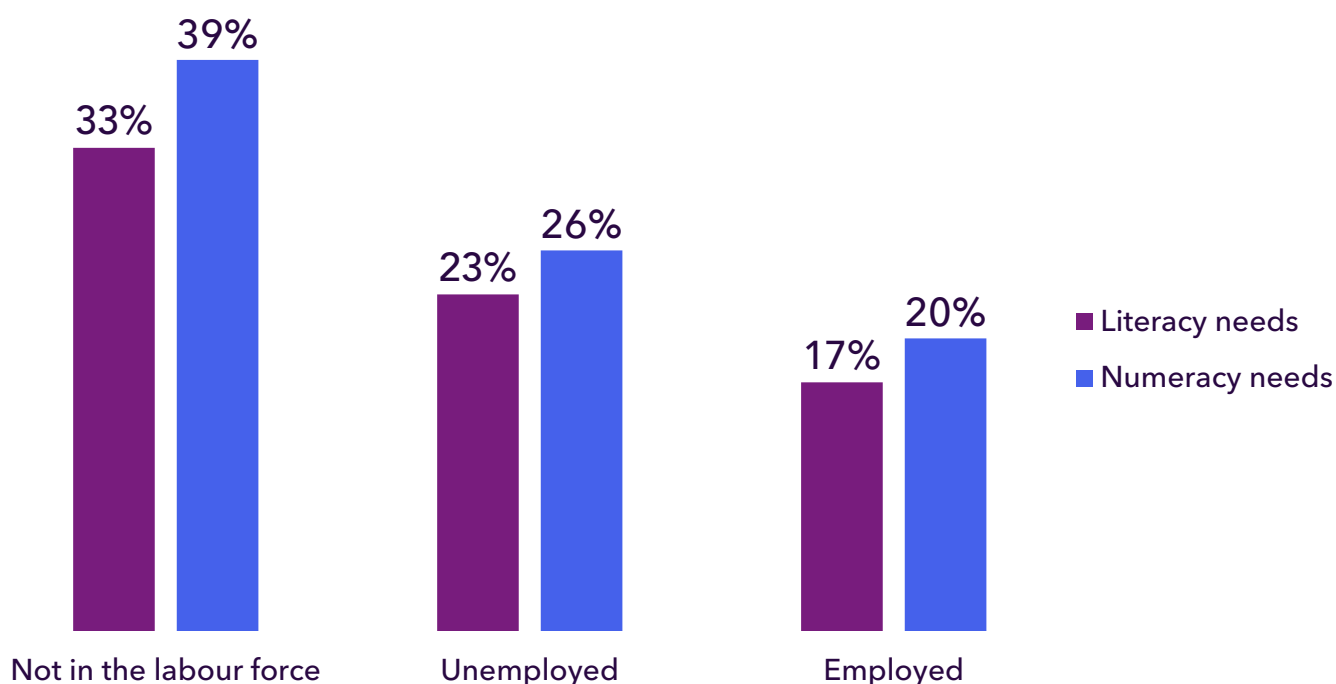
Employment



If you are unemployed or outside the labour force, you are more likely to have literacy or numeracy needs.

Almost 1 in 4 people who are unemployed has literacy needs (23%), compared with around 1 in 6 people who are employed (17%). This is similar for numeracy. Around 1 in 4 unemployed people has numeracy needs (26%), compared with 1 in 5 employed people (20%). People outside the labour force are even more likely to have literacy needs (33%) or numeracy needs (39%). These are people not looking for a job, including students, homemakers and retirees.

Literacy and numeracy needs by employment status





There are a lot of people with literacy and numeracy needs in employment in Ireland.

About 1 in 6 employees has literacy needs (17%) and 1 in 5 has numeracy needs (20%).

The three sectors with the highest levels of literacy needs are:

1. Transportation and Storage (35%)
2. Construction (30%)
3. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (28%)

The three sectors with the highest levels of numeracy needs are:

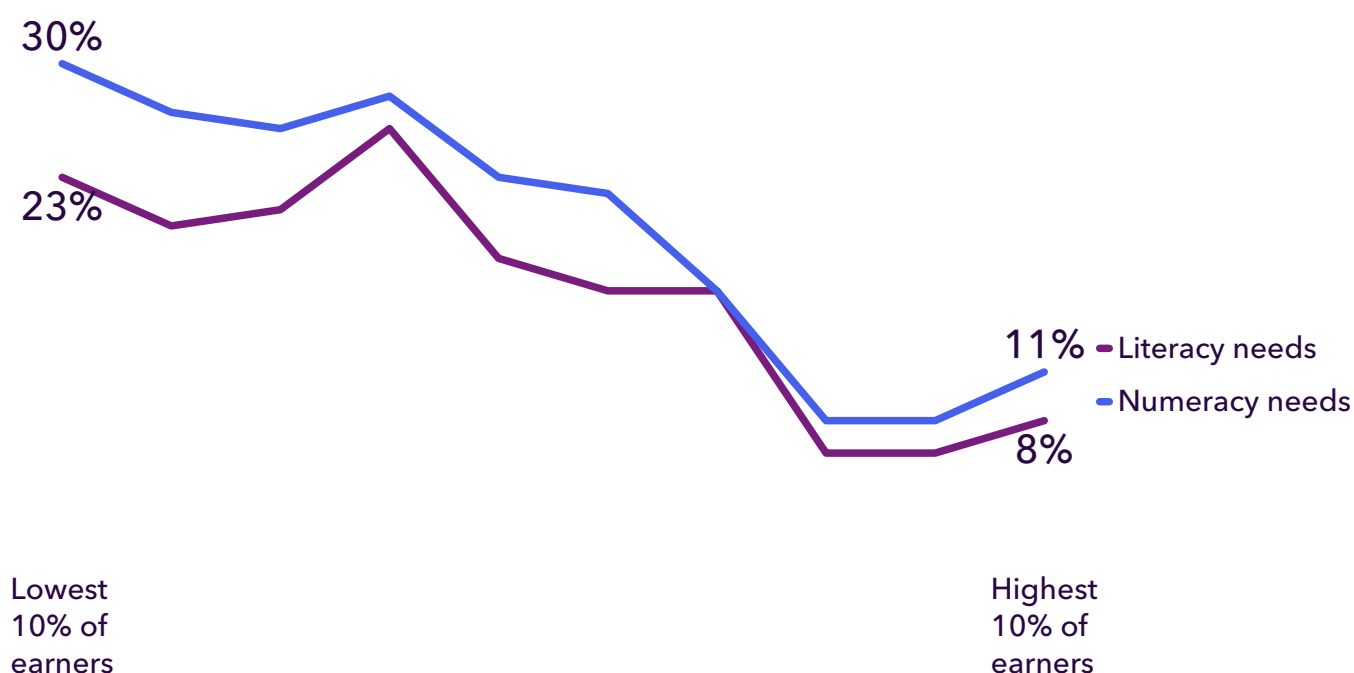
1. Transportation and Storage (34%)
2. Administrative and Support Service Activities (32%)
3. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (31%)



The less you are earning, the more likely you are to have literacy or numeracy needs.

The line in this graph is not perfectly straight but it shows that as a general rule, the less somebody earns, the more likely they are to have literacy or numeracy needs. The lowest 10% of earners in Ireland are around three times more likely to have literacy needs (23%) than the highest 10% of earners (8%). The lowest 10% of earners are also around three times more likely to have numeracy needs (30%) than the highest 10% of earners (11%).

Literacy and numeracy needs by income



Find out more

Visit nala.ie/literacy-and-numeracy-in-ireland to learn more about the OECD Survey of Adult Skills 2023 or contact Aoife at acrawford@nala.ie with any questions about this factsheet.