
Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey 2006

Key Facts: ALL 2006	
When:	Data collection ran from May 2006 to March 2007. Results were available from December 2007.
Who:	About 7,000 New Zealanders aged 16-65.
What:	Skills of literacy, numeracy and problem solving measured through face-to-face interviews in each respondent's home.
Where:	Seven countries have already published ALL results, and another five, including New Zealand will publish results in 2007 and 2008.

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) is an international study involving some 12 countries. It builds on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) which was undertaken in 24 countries, including New Zealand in 1996. ALL is a joint project of several agencies including the OECD, Statistics Canada, the National Center for Education Statistics of the US Department of Education, and the Educational Testing Service which is a US-based private education research organisation.

ALL produced internationally comparable statistics on adult skill levels in prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem solving:

- **prose literacy** – the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction
- **document literacy** – the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats such as tables, forms, graphs and diagrams
- **numeracy** – the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage the mathematical demands of diverse situations
- **problem solving** – the ability to solve problems by clarifying the nature of the problem and developing and applying appropriate solution strategies.

In addition, ALL collected data on a range of socio-economic, health, and demographic variables, including use of information and communication technology (ICT) and participation in spells of adult education and training.

The findings provided new information on the relationships between skill levels and the labour market, economic growth, and education systems and services. ALL results also provided comparative information for New Zealand and other OECD countries. ALL provided information on the impact that ICT use has on economic outcomes and the extent to which ICT use depends on high levels of literacy and numeracy.

The Ministry contracted the National Research Bureau (NRB), the well-known Auckland based research company, to undertake the New Zealand data collection for ALL. NRB interviewers worked on ALL from May 2006 to March 2007.

ALL had a nationally representative sample of adults aged 16-65 with over 7000 achieved interviews. Interviews lasted an average of about 90 minutes.

In ALL, interviews consisted of the following elements:

1. a background questionnaire: This sought information on socio-demographics including work, education and training, languages spoken, literacy, numeracy and information communication technology practices and attitudes;
2. a short 'core' assessment: The interviewer checked the respondent's answers to the core and if 3 or more of the 6 questions are correct then the interviewer administered a test booklet, otherwise the interview closed; and

3. a test booklet: The respondent answered only one of the 28 available test booklets.

Each test booklet contained a selection of the ALL tasks. Tasks appear in more than one booklet enabling linkages to be made between the booklets. This means that a score can be calculated for each of the domains as if the respondent had responded to all of the ALL tasks.

Publications

The Ministry of Education has published a number of research reports based on the 2006 assessment, which are available from the ALL publication home page (please refer to the downloads/links inset box on the right).

In 2005, the OECD and Statistics Canada published a comparative ALL report, [Learning a Living](#). This report covered the seven countries that had participated in ALL up till then. In December 2011, the OECD and Statistics Canada published a further report, [Literacy for Life](#) which added in four further countries including New Zealand and Australia.

Downloads / Links

- [ALL Homepage](#)
- [IALS 1996](#)
- [ALL Publications](#)
- [ALL Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Contact Us

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