

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [You're not crazy, more than half of adults are borderline retarded](#)

Hackers - May 16, 2026, 6:09 am

<https://www.thenationalliteracyinstitute.com/2024-2025-literacy-statistics>

On average, 79% of U.S. adults nationwide are literate in 2024.

21% of adults in the US are illiterate in 2024.

54% of adults have a literacy below a 6th-grade level (20% are below 5th-grade level).

I think we should give this more attention. It's like a coin flip on whether a grown adult even has the ability to comprehend a basic sentence, let alone a paragraph or nuanced thought.

This is most likely responsible for a number of incorrect thoughts that are manipulated as "opinions", in an effort to hide the person's incompetence.

CL1B - May 16, 2026, 6:11 am

The worst thing about this is when you talk to them they get offended so easily while that was never your intention. These days if one gives me the impression there's a big gap intellect I simply disengage ASAP.

Especially common in Americans

Edmond Dantes - May 16, 2026, 6:13 am

Explains why americans often fall to some of the dumbest scams possible.

jcole - May 16, 2026, 6:16 am

This is actually insane. Technology was supposed to make the world smarter, but all it has done is make the world more dependent.

Mercury - May 16, 2026, 6:17 am

Have you ever seen the movie "Idiocracy"? We are genuinely witnessing the plot of that movie unfold in real time, in our society.

Hackers - May 16, 2026, 6:18 am

(May 16, 2026 06:11 AM)MarlboroMan Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The worst thing about this is when you talk to them they get offended so easily while that was never your intention. These days if one gives me the impression there's a big gap intellect I simply disengage ASAP.

Especially common in Americans

100% yep, it's why I don't waste my time with certain topics anymore. You can't fix stupid.

Especially when the same demographic frequently aims to lower education funding & standards, worsening the problem.

(May 16, 2026 06:17 AM)Mercury Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Have you ever seen the movie "Idiocracy"? We are genuinely witnessing the plot of that movie unfold in real time, in our society.

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.

Eventually we'll need to stop pretending we are all equal in the voting booths. Some people are genuinely more valuable to a country than others, and we shouldn't allow certain topics to be voted on when more than half the population isn't able to even understand a fraction of it, let alone be trusted to vote on it.

Yakless - May 16, 2026, 6:37 am

It is quite crazy. This website is a mess but I remember seeing this & talking to teachers that I personally know and it really is a mess.

<https://nypost.com/2026/05/03/us-news/high-school-student-exposes-classmates-abysmal-reading-skills/>

Mastercarder - May 16, 2026, 6:41 am

People underestimate how dangerous low comprehension actually is. A lot of arguments online aren't even disagreements anymore, it's literally two people operating at completely different reading levels trying to debate complex topics.

Mercury - May 16, 2026, 6:44 am

(May 16, 2026 06:41 AM)Mastercarder Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) People underestimate how dangerous low comprehension actually is. A lot of arguments online aren't even disagreements anymore, it's literally two people operating at completely different reading levels trying to debate complex topics. This is factual. I've noticed that the younger generations (Specifically people below about 40) are significantly less mature than they were even as recently as the early 90's-00's too. Adults aren't even adults anymore.

Society is becoming so "dumbed down" and unsustainable, it's depressing really.

Mastercarder - May 16, 2026, 6:46 am

(May 16, 2026 06:44 AM)Mercury Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) This is factual. I've noticed that the younger generations (Specifically people below about 40) are significantly less mature than they were even as recently as the early 90's-00's too. Adults aren't even adults anymore.

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Spot on. I agree with you also. I also don't even think it's just intelligence declining, it's attention span and overstimulation too. People consume everything in 10 second clips now, so when they're faced with nuance, statistics, or long-form discussion, they mentally check out halfway through or start going crazy.

Hackers - May 16, 2026, 6:48 am

(May 16, 2026 06:41 AM)Mastercarder Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) People underestimate how dangerous low comprehension actually is. A lot of arguments online aren't even disagreements anymore, it's literally two people operating at completely different reading levels trying to debate complex topics. 100%, been saying it for a while but the stats were outdated (lots of reports from 2004-5, 2015 era, but not as many for 2024-2026). Sad to see the stats are still very bad.

But yeah, it's like they're pointing at a blue sky and saying it's red, and then claiming that their viewpoint is equally valid. Like nah, they're just color blind & wrong.

I like the color example because to them, they are 100% accurate and it's what they are seeing and interpreting with their brain.

But that there is the problem.

Mercury - May 16, 2026, 6:48 am

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Yeah, if something or someone doesn't provide an instant dopamine boost people are like zombies anymore.

Hackers - May 16, 2026, 6:49 am

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yeah... People even on HF get upset if you write more than a few sentences, calling 2-paragraph replies "essays". I've also noticed that some people can't listen to someone talk about a topic for a minute or two.

It's frustrating because so many topics require days and days of reading to understand them, and then you can't even give someone a 3 paragraph explanation, or 2 minute breakdown without them tuning out and sometimes arguing back because they saw a 20 second clip that they believe more strongly in.

See this all the time actually

Mastercarder - May 16, 2026, 6:52 am

(May 16, 2026 06:48 AM)Mercury Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Yeah, if something or someone doesn't provide an instant dopamine boost people are like zombies anymore.

Correct.. also you know what worries me - 10 years down the line.. I wonder how bad it will be.

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Exactly. People now confuse 'I watched a short clip about it' with actual understanding. Real understanding is slow, layered, and usually comes from reading conflicting viewpoints over time, not consuming algorithm-fed highlights. I will type "essays" over a half assed sentence or two any day.

Mercury - May 16, 2026, 6:56 am

(May 16, 2026 06:52 AM)Mastercarder Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Correct.. also you know what worries me - 10 years down the line.. I wonder how bad it will be.

I read this article the other day about how American school district test scores are lower almost everywhere compared to where they were 10 years ago and it really made me think about things. If the education system is failing, it will continue to fail. If the people currently pursuing higher education are going to school to become the next generation of teachers and they are currently performing poorly, won't they perform poorly at teaching the next generation of students? Sorry I

know that a was messy way to describe it, but it's crazy.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/13/upshot/test-scores-school-districts-us.html>

Mastercarder - May 16, 2026, 7:02 am

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Yeah I get what you mean. I live in Australia and honestly it doesn't seem as bad over here yet compared to the US, but I've definitely noticed a difference from when I was younger to now. Attention spans feel destroyed compared to back then. Even in school years ago, people could sit through longer explanations, discussions, documentaries, etc. Now everything has to be ultra-fast stimulation or people lose interest instantly.

I also think phones and algorithms are training people to react emotionally instead of critically thinking. A lot of younger people are growing up consuming endless short-form content before they even build proper focus or reasoning skills.

Makes you wonder what another 10-15 years of this does to society honestly.

Sift - May 16, 2026, 7:04 am

I also feel like the younger generation is getting dumber

Undead - May 16, 2026, 7:32 am

Yeah, people have been deliberately dumbed down over the years through the educational system and mass media.

Eran - May 16, 2026, 8:06 am

I mean, in today's fucked up world, it would be crazy if someone is "normal" to be completely honest..

DAL-SHA - May 16, 2026, 8:41 am

I'm seeing some reels on Instagram and Shorts on YouTube Recently for some social experiments about this particular thing , this issue is not new to the Western Society specifically the United States !

Miles Morales - May 16, 2026, 10:53 am

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French here.

Kids working in factories in the 50's are more well spoken than most of managers in big companies in the country.

Trust me, I'm not lying here. There are videos.

Edmond Dantes - May 16, 2026, 11:13 am

The issue is that bad stuff are considered normal, and normal stuff considered crazy

Jamika - May 16, 2026, 11:45 am

(May 16, 2026 06:09 AM)Hackers Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#)

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I think the percentage will be higher for us... even though I doubt that education is truly the main problem for adults.

oRequiem - May 16, 2026, 12:31 pm

Not surprising when you see the political opinions of people.

Codexpal77 - May 18, 2026, 5:17 pm

I agree. To bad they can't be fixed.

Mastercarder - May 18, 2026, 11:56 pm

(May 16, 2026 10:53 AM)Miles Morales Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) French here.

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I don't have a hard time believing that at all.

It's a shame it's only going to get worse and worse down the line.

Pr0m3th3us - May 19, 2026, 12:10 am

Another thread where Nodes let us know we are all retards and can't touch him on his ivory tower. That's 2 in less than a week.

Miles Morales - May 19, 2026, 12:27 am

(May 18, 2026 11:56 PM)Mastercarder Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I don't have a hard time believing that at all.

It's a shame it's only going to get worse and worse down the line.

Because that's the only way they can get the edge over us

Hackers - May 19, 2026, 5:30 am

(May 19, 2026 12:10 AM)Rust-0l3um Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Another thread where Nodes let us know we are all retards and can't touch him on his ivory tower. That's 2 in less than a week.

100%, I would say AT LEAST 50% of the users here are demonstrably incompetent.

The statistics appear to support this finding, so not sure why you are taking personal offense to it. If you are unable to see the point of this thread, as a reference to the impact on society as a whole, then that's on you.

I'm sure if we correlate intelligence & comprehension with people who attack the messenger (like you have here), we will find that there is a strong correlation.

Let me simplify this for you:

> People who are incapable of engaging in intellectual discussions such as this one will commonly avoid the discussion altogether by attempting to diminish the importance of the topic with tactics such as whataboutism, straw man arguments, attacking the poster, or other bad faith strategies.

Let me over simplify this for you:

> You are either choosing to ignore the topic at hand, or are incapable of comprehending the topic. Which one is it?

Pr0m3th3us - May 19, 2026, 1:47 pm

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I just like to get you going LOLZ....clearly it worked.

NIGG3R - May 19, 2026, 4:05 pm

I agree almost every human i come into contact with is retarded

Dboi2 - May 19, 2026, 7:18 pm

Well, this explains a lot

Hackers - May 19, 2026, 7:24 pm

(May 19, 2026 01:47 PM)Rust-0l3um Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I just like to get you going LOLZ....clearly it worked.

Fair enough..

Here's another article guys - Colleges noticing that kids are arriving without the ability to read...

<https://fortune.com/2026/01/09/gen-z-college-students-struggling-to-read-professors-forced-to-rethink-standards-warn-of-anxiety-lack-of-workplace-preparedness/>

There's this thing called sight reading where the kids memorize words and how they look, but never learn how to sound out syllables or learn new words on their own... And they end up memorizing repeatable structures instead of analyzing the words in a sentence to come up with an interpretation... The end result is that they can use sentences and read paragraphs they're familiar with, but cannot learn new words or draw from relevant context to defer true meaning.

It could be a case where we taught kids how to use fancy methods for math, but not how to calculate... And methods to quickly get through school reading, but not how to read...

Sad.

Unknown - May 19, 2026, 11:43 pm

A few years back I was doing work at a non-profit teaching digital literacy skills and I can say that this is accurate. While not in the realm of general literacy, general literacy does play into digital and information literacy. When I had signed up for the role, I assumed I would predominantly be teaching computer adjacent skills at a reasonable pace. That never ended up being what would happen, it was a lot of having to explain seemingly simple concepts to people (unrelated to computers/tech.) I was essentially a social worker, because the people that sign up for those classes are often don't have a ton of life experience. With that said, the people that I encountered are the people that KNEW they had a decent bit to learn; can you imagine the people that don't even realize they had a lot to learn?

Last year I spent some time in jail. The experience was really eye opening to how deficient some members of the general population really are. A lot lacked comprehension of hypotheticals and basic pattern recognition. A perfect example of this is one of the dudes who also ended up in weekend jail. He was about 25 years old or so, and was in on a domestic charge. I'd looked into his case a bit deeper, and it would appear that this wasn't his first time in the exact situation he was in. Him and his baby mama would have regular crashout arguments leading to police involvement. He was locked up again for a violation of his probation for getting into a yelling match with his baby mama. You'd think that after a certain point, you'd see the pattern and go "damn, I really shouldn't be with this woman if I constantly end up locked up due to my proximity to her." This was apparently not a thought that crossed his mind. He would also lie to me regarding his employment and how much money he made, despite previously disclosing to me that he was living with his mother, never finished high school, and didn't have a car (we're in a fairly rural county, so the no car thing matter more than one would think,) and was in active meth addiction.

The current trajectory of our education system raises serious concerns about social stability. Because educational attainment is strongly linked to career success, and poverty remains a primary driver of crime, declining educational standards risk trapping more people in financial hardship; ultimately steering us toward a lower-trust society

