

LEVEL ONE PIAAC 2023 Austria

Adults with low literacy skills in Austria

In Austria, the percentage of adults who are at low levels of German literacy (PIAAC Level 1 or below) has increased to 27 percent in 2023 (16% in 2012). About two in five adults with low literacy skills (41%) are 55-65-year-olds, an increase from 30% in 2012. Older adults (ages 55-65) are the largest age group in the analysis. There was also a significant decrease in the proportion of young adults (ages 16-24) to 7 percent in 2023 (12% in 2012). There was no change in the proportions of males or females between the two time points.

Proportions in nativity or language status of adults with low literacy skills increased. Among this group, the share of adults not born in Austria increased in 2023 to 44 percent (34% in 2012), or whose parents were also not born in Austria, increased to 44 percent (33% in 2012). There was also an increase in the proportion of adults with low skills whose native language was other than German (42% in 2023).

Among adults with low skills, the proportion of those with less than secondary level qualifications decreased to 32 percent, and the proportion of those with more than secondary level qualifications increased to 13 percent. The change in proportions of those whose parents achieved certain educational qualifications follows a similar pattern between the two time points.

There was no change in the proportions by the employment status of adults with low skills between the two time points, with 60% of them employed in 2023. Occupational categories data are unavailable in the 2023 Austrian public-use data.

The proportion of low-skilled adults participating in non-formal education decreased from 27 percent in 2012 to 18 percent in 2023. However, these results

should be interpreted with caution because the formulation of the question in 2012 may have led to overreporting in non-formal education for that time point. The proportion of adults with low skills acquiring formal degrees remained stable (6% in 2023).

The share of adults with low literacy skills reporting excellent or good health has also remained stable (71% in 2023).

As a result of a change in the formulation of the questions between 2012 and 2023, measuring changes in percentages in social trust and political efficacy between the two time points is not recommended. In 2023, about a third of adults with low literacy (33%) say that most people could be trusted (social trust). While those with higher levels of literacy (Level 2 or above) have higher levels of social trust (50%), political efficacy is at about the same level between those with higher and low levels of literacy. Sixteen percent (16%) of adults with low literacy skills and 18 percent of adults with high literacy skills report having a say in what the government does.

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AUT Table A-2. Percentage distribution of adults in **Austria** ages 16 to 65 overall and with proficiency level 1 or below (adults with low skills) and level 2 or above (adults with middle or high skills), by demographic and personal characteristics: 2012 and 2023

Characteristic	Total, all adults				Level 1 or below				Level 2 or above			
	2012		2023		2012		2023		2012		2023	
All adults	100,0	†	100,0	†	15,6	(0,66)	27,0	(0,82)	84,4	(0,66)	73,0	(0,82)
Age												
16-24	16,1	(0,19)	15,0	(0,18)	12,5	(1,24)	7,3	(0,92)	16,8	(0,27)	17,8	(0,41)
25-34	19,1	(0,26)	19,6	(0,29)	13,1	(1,47)	12,0	(1,27)	20,2	(0,37)	22,4	(0,59)
35-44	22,2	(0,31)	20,2	(0,36)	20,5	(1,92)	18,9	(1,36)	22,5	(0,43)	20,6	(0,53)
45-54	23,9	(0,31)	20,6	(0,41)	24,2	(1,73)	20,9	(1,42)	23,8	(0,44)	20,5	(0,62)
55-65	18,7	(0,20)	24,7	(0,30)	29,7	(1,85)	40,9	(1,41)	16,7	(0,41)	18,7	(0,54)
Gender												
Male	49,9	(0,10)	50,1	(0,13)	48,0	(2,15)	50,6	(1,73)	50,2	(0,41)	49,9	(0,62)
Female	50,1	(0,10)	49,9	(0,13)	52,0	(2,15)	49,4	(1,73)	49,8	(0,41)	50,1	(0,62)
Language: German												
Non-native	14,1	(0,44)	19,9	(0,46)	34,2	(2,16)	41,9	(1,61)	10,4	(0,54)	11,9	(0,71)
Native	85,9	(0,44)	80,1	(0,46)	65,8	(2,16)	58,1	(1,61)	89,6	(0,54)	88,1	(0,71)
Nativity status												
Born in Austria	83,7	(0,41)	77,0	(0,45)	65,9	(2,07)	55,9	(1,65)	87,0	(0,46)	84,9	(0,67)
Born outside of Austria	16,3	(0,41)	23,0	(0,45)	34,1	(2,07)	44,1	(1,65)	13,0	(0,46)	15,1	(0,67)
Immigrant status												
Foreign-born of foreign-born parents	15,1	(0,39)	21,8	(0,43)	33,0	(2,10)	43,7	(1,62)	11,8	(0,45)	13,8	(0,63)
Foreign-born of mixed heritage	1,0	(0,15)	0,9	(0,16)	1,0	(0,48)	!!	!!	1,0	(0,17)	1,2	(0,22)
Foreign-born of native-born parents	0,2	(0,05)	0,2	(0,06)	!!	!!	!!	!!	0,2	(0,06)	0,2	(0,07)
Native-born of foreign-born parents	3,3	(0,23)	4,0	(0,37)	4,7	(0,98)	2,5	(0,53)	3,1	(0,28)	4,5	(0,47)
Native-born of mixed heritage	7,5	(0,40)	5,9	(0,44)	6,9	(1,21)	3,4	(0,66)	7,6	(0,48)	6,9	(0,57)
Native-born of native-born parents	72,9	(0,54)	67,1	(0,52)	54,3	(2,46)	50,0	(1,69)	76,4	(0,66)	73,5	(0,83)
Educational attainment												
Less than secondary	22,8	(0,27)	16,4	(0,17)	45,5	(2,12)	31,8	(1,26)	18,7	(0,50)	10,7	(0,44)
Secondary degree	60,4	(0,27)	50,3	(0,27)	50,3	(2,04)	54,9	(1,51)	62,2	(0,49)	48,6	(0,68)

Above secondary degree	16,8	(0,10)	33,3	(0,26)	4,2	(0,88)	13,3	(1,16)	19,1	(0,22)	40,7	(0,65)
Parental highest educational attainment												
Less than secondary	27,4	(0,59)	20,3	(0,52)	49,2	(2,79)	41,4	(1,84)	23,4	(0,70)	12,8	(0,69)
Secondary degree	52,7	(0,64)	48,7	(0,86)	40,8	(2,46)	44,2	(2,01)	54,8	(0,78)	50,3	(1,08)
Above secondary degree	19,9	(0,58)	31,0	(0,74)	9,9	(1,42)	14,4	(1,51)	21,8	(0,67)	36,9	(0,89)
Employment Status												
Employed	73,5	(0,62)	73,9	(0,13)	61,7	(1,96)	60,1	(1,62)	75,7	(0,61)	78,9	(0,61)
Unemployed	3,5	(0,27)	3,8	(0,36)	4,8	(0,90)	5,1	(0,97)	3,2	(0,30)	3,4	(0,43)
Out of the labor force	23,1	(0,59)	22,3	(0,39)	33,5	(1,88)	34,7	(1,62)	21,1	(0,60)	17,7	(0,66)
Occupation												
Skilled occupations	39,9	(0,82)	p	p	13,6	(1,70)	p	p	44,3	(0,94)	p	p
Semi-skilled white-collar occupations	28,5	(0,76)	p	p	27,9	(2,13)	p	p	28,6	(0,82)	p	p
Semi-skilled blue-collar occupations	22,7	(0,68)	p	p	34,7	(2,30)	p	p	20,7	(0,75)	p	p
Elementary occupations	8,9	(0,46)	p	p	23,9	(1,86)	p	p	6,4	(0,47)	p	p
Job satisfaction												
Satisfied	87,9	(0,62)	88,0	(0,74)	88,7	(1,84)	88,6	(1,70)	87,7	(0,66)	87,9	(0,80)
Not Satisfied	12,1	(0,62)	12,0	(0,74)	11,3	(1,84)	11,4	(1,70)	12,3	(0,66)	12,1	(0,80)
Life satisfaction												
Satisfied	--	--	87,7	(0,55)	--	--	80,3	(1,36)	--	--	90,4	(0,61)
Not Satisfied	--	--	12,3	(0,55)	--	--	19,7	(1,36)	--	--	9,6	(0,61)
Health												
Excellent to good	83,5	(0,51)	82,0	(0,72)	69,4	(1,97)	70,5	(1,68)	86,1	(0,58)	86,3	(0,81)
Fair or poor	16,5	(0,51)	18,0	(0,72)	30,6	(1,97)	29,5	(1,68)	13,9	(0,58)	13,7	(0,81)
Most people could be trusted												
Agree	x	x	45,2	(0,85)	x	x	33,0	(1,79)	x	x	49,6	(0,98)
Disagree	x	x	54,8	(0,85)	x	x	67,0	(1,79)	x	x	50,4	(0,98)
People like me have a say in the government												
Agree	x	x	17,4	(0,64)	x	x	15,5	(1,53)	x	x	18,1	(0,76)
Disagree	x	x	82,6	(0,64)	x	x	84,5	(1,53)	x	x	81,9	(0,76)
Formal education in the last 12 months												
Not participated	84,5	(0,38)	83,4	(0,50)	92,9	(0,93)	94,1	(0,93)	83,0	(0,48)	79,5	(0,61)

Participated	15,5	(0,38)	16,6	(0,50)	7,1	(0,93)	5,9	(0,93)	17,0	(0,48)	20,5	(0,61)
Non-formal education in the last 12 months												
Not participated	53,6	(0,73)	64,1	(0,94)	72,8	(2,39)	81,7	(1,67)	50,1	(0,83)	57,5	(1,11)
Participated	46,4	(0,73)	35,9	(0,94)	27,2	(2,39)	18,3	(1,67)	49,9	(0,83)	42,5	(1,11)
Formal or Non-formal education in the last 12 months												
Not participated	46,4	(0,65)	54,6	(0,88)	68,0	(2,39)	78,0	(1,64)	42,4	(0,75)	46,0	(1,03)
Participated	53,6	(0,65)	45,4	(0,88)	32,0	(2,39)	22,0	(1,64)	57,6	(0,75)	54,0	(1,03)

† Not applicable.

! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

!! Not reportable. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is 50 percent or above.

-- Data not collected

x Data not comparable

p Not available in Public Use Files

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Educational attainment is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011, grouped into below upper secondary (ISCED 1, 2 and 3 short), upper secondary (ISCED 3 and 4) and tertiary (ISCED 5, 6, 7 and 8). Occupation skill-level is based on an OECD measure that classifies occupations into four broad skill-levels: (1) skilled occupations (e.g. legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals); (2) semi-skilled white-collar occupations (e.g. clerks, service workers, and shop and market sales workers); (3) semi-skilled blue-collar occupations (e.g. skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers); and (4) elementary occupations (e.g. cleaners, kitchen assistants) (OECD 2013). Social Trust was asked in a question: Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? Please answer using this card, where 0 means 'you can't be too careful' and 10 mean 'Most people can be trusted'. The estimation here divides the scale into 0-5 as Disagree and 6-10 as Agree. Political efficacy was asked in a question: How much would you say the political system in #CountryName allows people like you to have a say in what the government does? Please answer using this card, where 0 means 'not at all' and 10 means 'completely'. The estimation here divides the scale into 0-5 as Disagree and 6-10 as Agree. The way non-formal education participation was asked in 2012 may have facilitated over-reporting, therefore caution is requested when interpreting the trend results. SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), 2012 and 2023.