A Press Release by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on the Occasion of the International Literacy Day on 08/09/2025

The illiteracy rate in Palestine is one of the lowest rates in the world

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an illiterate person applies to persons unable to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life. Hence, the illiteracy rate reached 2.1% among the Palestinian population (15 years and above) during 2023. According to the data of the Galilee Society (Rikaz), illiteracy rate among Palestinians (15 years and above) in the occupied Palestinian territory in 1948 reached 3.6% in 2017. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the illiteracy rate among persons (15 years and above) in *Western Asia and Northern Africa* was 19.0% in 2022 (13.7% among males compared to 24.6% among females). In the same year, it was 13.0% in *the world* among the same age group (9.7% among males compared to 16.2% among females).

Illiteracy rates for persons (15 years and above) in Selected Arab Countries

Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate
Palestine (2023)	2.1	Kuwait (2020)	3.5	Algeria (2018)	19.6
Jordan (2021)	1.6	Oman (2022)	2.7	Morocco (2022)	22.7
Bahrain (2022)	2.1	Saudi Arabia (2020)	2.4	Egypt (2022)	25.5
Lebanon (2019)	4.7	Iraq (2017)	14.4	Sudan (2018)	39.4

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics homepage (http://data.uis.unesco.org/**).**

Due to the ongoing aggression against Gaza Strip, it was not possible to collect data for Gaza Strip Labor Force Survey, 2024. Therefore, in the paragraphs below, we will review the illiteracy rates for individuals (15 years and above) in the West Bank only.

Narrowing the gap in illiteracy rates between males and females

Illiteracy rate among individuals (15 years and above) in the West Bank was 2.1% in 2024 (0.9% among males and 3.3% among females). While the illiteracy rate among males (15 years and above) in the West Bank was 7.3% in 1997, compared to 21.1% among females of the same age group and year.

18 out of every 100 elderly people are illiterate

The illiteracy rate varies considerably by age groups. The age group (65 years and above) recorded the highest rate, while the lowest rate was among the age group (15-29 years). In 2024, the illiteracy rate among elderly people (65 years and above) reached about 18.3%, while it was about 2.1% among the age group 45-64 years, 0.9% among the age group 30-44 years, and 0.6% among the youth (15-29 years) during the same year.

Illiteracy rate among individuals (15 years and above) in the West Bank by age group and sex, 2024

Age group	Both Sexes	Males	Females
15-29	**0.6**	0.5	0.8
30-44	**0.9**	0.8	1.0
45-64	**2.1**	0.8	3.4
65 years and	**18.3**	5.6	29.8
Total	**2.1**	**0.9**	**3.3**

Rural localities recorded the highest illiteracy rate

In 2024, the illiteracy rate in the West Bank reached 2.4% in rural localities, 2.0% in urban areas, and 1.9% in refugee camps.

Illiteracy rate among individuals (aged 15 years and above) in the West Bank by locality type and sex, 2024

