



Literacy problems block access to justice

Many people don't enforce their rights because low literacy blocks their access to legal information and to the legal system. Legal language intimidates others with adequate reading skills.

Who are these people?

Many seniors attended only elementary school so their reading skills may be low by today's standard.

Baby Boomer high-school graduates have let their reading skills deteriorate.

Many young people have lost reading skills - they get news from television and radio & entertainment from tv, films, and concerts.

Some survivors of childhood poverty, abuse, neglect, or racial discrimination had trouble concentrating at school and never learned to read adequately.

The prose literacy skills of the Aboriginal populations are lower than those of the whole Canadian population.

Immigrants who are literate in their first language may struggle with English while others are not literate in their first language and learn English slowly.

Literacy is relative to time and place

People who usually perform at a higher literacy level can experience situational limited literacy. These factors can temporarily affect literacy:

- *stress*
- *mental health*
- *stage in life*
- *lack of practice or neglect*
- *head or other physical injuries*
- *pressures of legal matter*
- *intimidation by situation*
- *legalese*



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