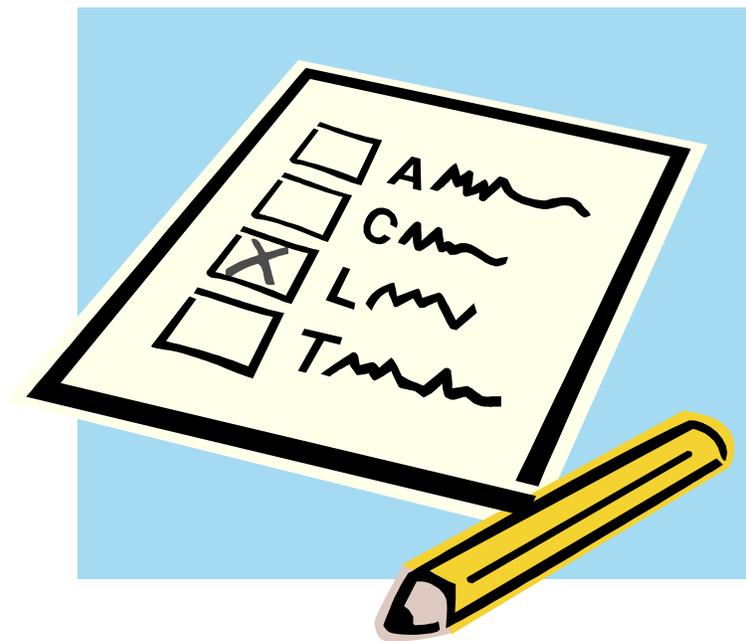


How-to-Kit



Elections 2011

Voting Day is May 2nd, 2011



Elections 2011 How-to-Kit

The federal election will be held May 2nd, 2011. Elections are about making our ideas and opinions heard. They are about participating in the democratic process that is our right as residents of the NWT and of Canada. Voting is the most important way to do this.

Elections come with their own vocabulary, jargon and challenges. They can be intimidating to a learner who is not familiar with the process. Elections are also a great opportunity to build literacy skills.

This *Election How to Kit* includes literacy activities that you can do with adult learners around the election. There are suggestions for activities that will:

- Inform learners.
- Help learners realize that their voices and votes count.
- Develop vocabulary used in elections.
- Encourage learners to play an active role in the upcoming election.

There is also a section on *Learners Take Action for Literacy* that suggests ways that learners can lobby candidates around the issue of literacy in their community and constituency.

Have fun!

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Election Resources

1. [Elections Canada](#) has the following:
 - Information for voters, young voters, Aboriginal Voters
 - Information about how to contact the returning officer for the NWT
 - Finding your electoral district
 - Publications that include resources for teachers
- **NWT Returning Officer**

Elizabeth Wyman
Centre Square Mall, 5022 49th Street, YK, NWT X1A 3R8
Open 9 am – 9 pm (Mon – Fri)
Open 9 am – 6 pm (Sat)
Open 12 pm – 4 pm (Sun)
Toll free number: 1-866-564-6481
Toll free fax number: 1-888-898-3145
- [Elections Canada](#) also has a section on its website devoted to news releases and media advisories for the election.
- **The Canadian Literacy and Learning Network** has an [Interactive Elections Online Tool](#) that provides learners with information on How can I vote?, Who can vote?, Can I get help to vote?, Election vocabulary and much more.
- **CBC** has a whole section devoted to [Canada Votes 2011](#) that gives the latest and most up-to-date information on candidates and issues of the election. A great place to find information about each party and the issues that are at the forefront of the campaign.

- **CBC** also has [Vote Compass](#), an online tool to help Canadians decide on what party reflects their own views. The online tool has 50 questions you answer. After completing the questions, it tells you what party reflects your views most. A great tool to get learners engaged.
- [Election Almanac](#) is a website that offers a range of information and links on the 2011 Election. It gives the latest public opinion polls, links to different news articles and an opportunity to join in the Twitter conversation about the election.

Election Survey

Read each question and check off 'yes' or 'no.' If you answered 'no' to some of these statements, there are activities in this kit that will help you learn more about elections.

1. I know who the candidates are in the upcoming election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
2. I am registered to vote in this election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3. I know the name of the constituency I live in.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
4. I know where to vote (my polling place).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
5. I know the important issues in this election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
6. I know where to go if I have questions about the election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
7. I know how to make a difference in the election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
8. I believe my vote can make a difference.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
9. I understand how elections work.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
10. I am planning to vote in the upcoming election.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Election Vocabulary

Elections come with a lot of jargon and special vocabulary. Here are some words that you will see related to elections.

Election	When people vote to make choices about their government.
Ballot	A form you mark when you vote.
MP	A short way of writing Member of Parliament
Candidate	A person who is trying to get elected.
Eligible	To be allowed to do or get something.
Register	To sign up; to get on an official list.
Campaign	The work people do to get someone elected
Polling place	The place where you go to vote.
Spoiled ballot	A ballot that has been torn or marked incorrectly
Slogan	An election cheer that sums up what the candidate is saying and helps the people to remember who the candidate is.
Register of electors	A list of people who are eligible to vote in an election
Electoral district; Constituency; Riding	The area in the province or territory that the Member of Parliament represents

Election Word Search

Circle the vocabulary words in the word search below. The words may go down or across. Check them off the list as you find them.

B	A	L	L	O	T	Z	C	F	C
E	V	O	T	E	E	P	A	R	A
L	T	I	Q	L	U	R	D	Y	M
I	Y	K	C	E	K	Q	N	O	P
G	H	P	G	C	R	J	D	P	A
I	O	E	K	T	N	S	I	W	I
B	U	B	O	I	C	L	D	Q	G
L	W	J	A	O	M	P	A	I	N
E	Q	I	Z	N	U	R	T	U	R
G	O	V	E	R	N	M	E	N	T

MP

vote

eligible

government

campaign

ballot

candidate

election

People Scavenger Hunt

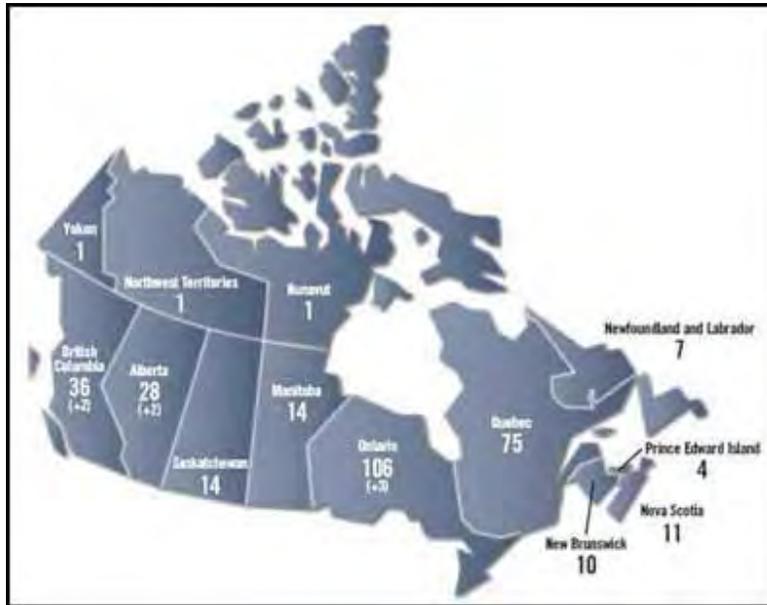
This activity is to get you thinking about the election and the election process and to share your knowledge with each other. The idea is for you to find the answer to each question from a different person and record both the answer and the person you got it from on the scavenger hunt grid. The “winner” is the first person to complete the scavenger hunt.

<p>What is the date of the election?</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>Name a candidate who is running in your electoral district.</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>Name the current Prime Minister of Canada.</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>
<p>Make your own question:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>How long do you have to live in Canada before you can vote?</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>Name the current MP for your constituency.</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>
<p>How old must you be to vote?</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>How often are elections held in Canada?</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p>How many MPs are there in the NWT?</p> <p>Answer: _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>

Electoral Districts

Canada is divided into electoral districts. Each electoral district elects 1 MP. Look at the information below and then answer the questions on the next page.

Electoral Districts in Canada



Northern Electoral Districts

Code	Federal Electoral Districts	Population 2006
60001	Yukon	30,372
61001	Western Arctic (NWT)	41,464
62001	Nunavut	29,474

Questions

1. How many electoral districts are there in Canada? _____
2. How many electoral districts are there in Northern Canada? _____
3. Which province has the most electoral districts? _____
4. Why do you think that candidates spend a lot of time in Ontario and Quebec campaigning?

5. Which provinces or territories have the fewest electoral districts?

6. What is the name of the NWT's electoral district? _____

Federal Parties¹

What do you know about each party? Do you know what each party stands for? Do you know what the issues are for this election? Read the information below and then answer the questions. We have not included information on the Bloc Quebecois as they are a regional party for Quebec, not a national party.

“Canadians are getting ready to head to the polls on May 2, 2011 for the fourth time in only seven years. The last three federal elections have resulted in minority governments, meaning a majority government has not been held since Jean Chrétien led the Liberal party in 2000. Voters are getting tired.

If you’re not sure which party best matches your own beliefs and political opinions, check out CBC.ca and click on “[Vote Compass](#),” an online quiz that asks questions about various political issues and then tells you which party reflects your concerns the most.”

The Conservative Party – Stephen Harper

The Conservatives are focused on keeping tax rates low to promote jobs and economic growth. They want to reduce the deficit over the next four years.



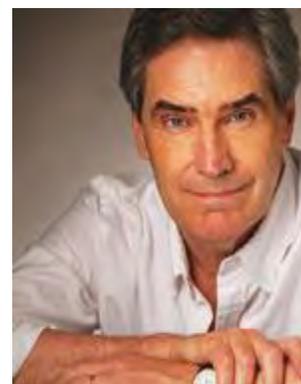
If re-elected, the Conservatives will establish tax breaks for small businesses and families.

“Thanks to our low-tax plan, the average Canadian family is already paying \$3,000 less in taxes each and every year.”

The Liberal Party – Michael Ignatieff

The Liberal party’s agenda stresses putting families “ahead of corporate tax cuts, jets and jails,” in a recent release.

The Liberals want to cancel the Conservative’s tax cuts for the largest corporations, and said they aim to redirect those funds



¹Adapted from Rachael Frey *The Reflector*

into health and education initiatives. Some say this will harm Canada's economy.

If elected, they said they will enact Employment Insurance and tax benefit programs to help families take care of their sick and elderly members.

The Liberals also announced the "learning passport," a grant that will give low-to-middle-income students up to \$6,000 towards their education.

The New Democratic Party – Jack Layton

The NDP platform identifies four key areas they intend to focus on: "making life more affordable, rewarding job creators, improving front-line health services and putting families first."

The NDP also underscored their commitment to improving healthcare for Canadians by outlining a plan to hire 1,200 doctors and 6,000 nurses.



The Green Party – Elizabeth May

The Green Party is planning to "redefine national campaigns in Canada" by running a low-carbon online campaign that will utilize social media rather than "out-of-date, polluting travel."

The Green Party lists the major threats Canada is facing as "the climate crisis, economic instability, increasing militarism and a growing gap between rich and poor."



Aside from their obvious commitment to environmental issues, the Green Party is also focused on getting the other parties to take them seriously after their leader, Elizabeth May, was not invited to participate in the first leader's debate.

Questions

1. What party believes that the environment is the number one issue that Canadians face?

2. What party is running on a platform that families come before corporate tax cuts?

3. What party would like to reduce the deficit? What does deficit mean?

4. What party wants to improve health care problems in our country? How do they want to do this?

5. What party can you relate to? Why? (You don't have to share this information.)

6. Elizabeth May from the Green Party has been excluded from the leader's debates this election. She was excluded because her party does not hold a seat in the House of Commons. The Green Party has 4.2% of the Canadian vote overall. In the 2008 election she was allowed to participate in the debate. Do you think she should be allowed to participate in the leader's debate? Why or why not?

Track the Candidates

Being a candidate in an election is like applying for a job. Candidates in an election try to sell themselves to the electors, just like you try to sell yourself to potential employers.

Track the candidates in your constituency (riding). Keep track of the major issues and how the candidates stand on these issues.

1. Who are the candidates running in your riding and what party are they representing? You can find this information at: <http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>. All you have to do is put in your postal code and the Western Arctic Region will come up with lots of information about your riding.

Name

Party

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Who is the incumbent (person who held the job last, if there is one)?

3. Which candidates do you think will get the most media attention? Why?

4. Do you know anything about these candidates? What? Write down anything you know or assume about them.

5. Where did you get the information you listed above? From the media? From your family?

More Election Ideas!

Election Simulation Kit

You can order a complete election simulation kit from Elections Canada and work through the election process with the learners. This is an excellent opportunity to see how an election works and the various tasks involved in an election.

Election News Board

Encourage learners to bring in news clippings and information from home to discuss with the class. The news board could be divided into areas for different candidates or issues as well as a general section.

Word List

In this unit learners will come across a lot of election specific jargon. You may also choose to have these words on display, possibly with their definitions. This can be built up as the unit progresses and these words are discussed.

Ask learners to:

- Make a poster that describes the issues of each candidate.
- Make a poster about the person who is running for MLA.
- Make a Venn diagram comparing issues or candidates.

National Voter Turnout in Federal Elections: 1960–2008²

This page provides information about voter statistics from 1953 – 2008. Answer the questions on the next page.

Date of election/ referendum	Population	Number of Electors on lists	Total ballots cast	Voter turnout (%)
10 June 1957	16,073,970	8,902,125	6,680,690	74.1
31 March 1958	16,073,970	9,131,200	7,357,139	79.4
18 June 1962	18,238,247	9,700,325	7,772,656	79.0
8 April 1963	18,238,247	9,910,757	7,958,636	79.2
8 November 1965	18,238,247	10,274,904	7,796,728	74.8
25 June 1968	20,014,880	10,860,888	8,217,916	75.7
30 October 1972	21,568,311	13,000,778	9,974,661	76.7
8 July 1974	21,568,311	13,620,353	9,671,002	71.0
22 May 1979	22,992,604	15,233,653	11,541,000	75.7
18 February 1980	22,992,604	15,890,416	11,015,514	69.3
4 September 1984	24,343,181	16,774,941	12,638,424	75.3
21 November 1988	25,309,331	17,639,001	13,281,191	75.3
26 October 1992 ²⁻³	20,400,896	13,725,966	9,855,978	71.8
25 October 1993	27,296,859	19,906,796	13,863,135	69.6 ⁴
2 June 1997	27,296,859	19,663,478	13,174,698	67.0
27 November 2000	28,846,761	21,243,473	12,997,185	61.2 ⁵
28 June 2004	30,007,094	22,466,621	13,683,570	60.9
23 January 2006	30,007,094	23,054,615	14,908,703	64.7
14 October 2008	31,612,897	23,677,639	13,929,093	58.8

²Source: Reports of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery (1867-1917); reports of the Chief Electoral Officer (1921-2008); unpublished summary data prepared by Elections Canada; R. Pomfret, *The Economic Development of Canada* (1987); H.A. Scarrow, *Canada Votes* (1962); *Contact* (1985).

Questions

1. What year had the highest voter turnout? _____

2. What year had the lowest voter turnout? _____

3. What is the trend in the voter turnout from the 1950s to the 2000s?

4. Why do you think this is?

In addition to falling overall voter participation, another trend is the extremely low rate of participation amongst **youth voters**. About 38 percent of eligible voters aged 18 – 24 voted in the 2004 federal election. Studies have shown that many people who don't vote when they are young do not vote when they get older.

5. Why do you think youth are not interested in voting?

To Vote or Not? A Survey

Many countries around the world are troubled by the fact that many people don't exercise their right to vote. What about your classmates, friends and family? Do a small survey among your friends and family. What reasons do they give you for voting or not voting? (Make two lists.) What about you personally?

To Vote or Not?	
Reasons for voting	Reasons for not voting

Why Vote?

You want to convince a friend that she should vote. She says that as a single parent she's too busy with her job, her ALBE classes, and raising her three school-age children (ages 7, 12, and 16) to have time to think about the election. In addition to this stressful situation, one of her children has a chronic illness, and her family lives in a small community away from medical care for her child.

What would you say to her? What kinds of issues might motivate this woman to vote? What arguments might you use to encourage your friend to vote? Make a list below.

Election Scavenger Hunt

Your task is to hunt through newspapers and other news resources (online) for election-related news, photos, editorials, and more.

Try to find some of these items about the election:

- News articles about an important issue in the election
- News articles about an individual candidate's campaign
- Photographs about the election
- Editorial cartoons that relate to one of the candidates
- Editorial cartoons that relate to one of the campaign issues
- Election ads or flyers for candidates from a news source or campaign office

Make an election news board where you can post all your class's findings and news clippings.

What are the Important Issues?

Learners determine the most important issues of the current campaign for your community, for the Northwest Territories and Canada.

1. Brainstorm a list of important issues the next government will face.
2. Ask the learners to vote to narrow those issues to a list of the five most important ones. (Each learner can vote for three issues.)
3. Then hold another vote. Have each learner vote for the single issue that he or she feels is the most important issue.
4. Ask each learner to create a graph to represent that final vote.

My Community	The NWT	Canada

Important Issues for Canadians

Here is a list of important issues that Canadians and Northerners think are important.

- The environment
- Education
- Literacy
- Poverty
- Taxes
- Childcare
- Seniors
- The economy
- Jobs
- Arctic sovereignty
- Youth justice
- Land claims
- Aboriginal issues
- Health care
- Crime

What issues are important to you?

How Do People Decide Whom To Vote For?

This activity is to help you identify ways in which people get their information on candidates and decide how useful these sources are.

There are two types of voting. Which kind do you think most elections are decided by?

Prospective Voting means "forward-looking." This is when voters look carefully at the candidates and think about how their future will be if they vote for each person. This type of voting requires looking closely at the ISSUES.

Retrospective Voting means "backward-looking." How have things been in recent years? If the answer is good, then the voter is likely to re-elect the incumbents. If the answer is not so good, then the voter is likely to vote for one of the challengers.

Brainstorm a list of reasons a voter might vote for the incumbent or the challenger.

Incumbent	Challenger

The Brainstorm

How do people get their information about the candidates? Brainstorm a list of as many places as you can think of where people get their political information.

The Interview

Talk to people in your community about where they get their information about candidates. Make a list of people to talk to.

The Questions

Here are some ideas for questions to ask people:

1. Where do you get your information from about the different candidates in our riding?
2. Where do you get your information about the different parties in Canada?
3. Do you think you have enough information to make an informed decision?
4. Would you like more information?

Some suggestions for where you might find information on candidates.

- TV News
- Radio
- Internet
- Candidate website
- Candidate campaign office
- Newspapers
- Speeches
- Public appearances from candidates
- All candidate meetings
- Family
- Friends
- Campaign flyers
- Magazines
- Twitter
- Facebook

What way do you think is the best way to find out information about candidates? Why?

In this election, social networking is playing a key role in election issues. For example, when Michael Ignatieff announced his plan to help low income families with tuition for college and university it went “viral.” Everyone was tweeting or Facebooking about this topic. How do you think social networking can help or hurt someone’s campaign?

Types of Ads

You will learn to recognize different types of ads and understand why candidates may choose to use these types of advertisements in their campaigns.

There are four main types of ads:

1. **Negative**– One candidate portrays the other in an unfavorable light.
2. **Warm and Fuzzy**– Candidates make the voters feel good about the country or their campaigns.
3. **Humorous**– Candidates try to be funny.
4. **Scary**– Candidates suggest images of fear (usually combined with a negative ad).

Can you think of examples that fit into each of the four types? You can view many of the advertisements from each party on YouTube. After you have closely looked at some political ads, discuss the following questions with a partner or others in your class.

- What are the key messages in each advertisement?
- Which type of ad was more memorable? Why?
- Which do you think would be most effective in convincing viewers to vote for (or against) a candidate?
- Did you learn from the ads? Did they help you to decide which candidate to support?
- What are the limitations of a 30 second commercial?
- How important is a candidate's look in these ads? What type of image are they trying to create?

If you were the campaign manager for a candidate in your constituency, what type of ad would you try to create?

Campaign Promises

What are the campaign promises? Each leader of each party runs on a platform of promises. Find out what the major issues are in the election and learn what each candidate feels about this issue.

Issue	Candidate	His/Her Position or Solution

Learners Take Actions for Literacy & Essential Skills!

Here are some ways that you as an adult learner can make a difference in literacy.

- Organize a “Learners’ Lobby for Literacy.”
- Send a personal letter to each candidate in your area. Use the sample provided, or write your own. Tell each candidate why literacy is important to you.
- Attend official campaign events. Talk to people at the event about literacy. Bring copies of our ‘Literacy Facts in the NWT’ with you and hand them out to people at the event.
- Attend the All Candidate’s Meeting in your community. If people in the audience are allowed to ask the candidates questions, ask a question about issues that are important to you. (Sample questions provided)
- Take part in radio call-in programs with the candidates. Be sure to phone in with questions and information related to issues that are important to you.
- If you are in a literacy program, invite the candidates who come to your community to a forum in your program. Come up with questions to ask the candidates about issues that are important to you.
- Volunteer to work on the campaign of one of your local candidates. You can offer to stuff envelopes or deliver campaign literature door to door. Use your contacts with the candidate and his or her workers to talk about literacy.

Questions for Candidates about Literacy & Essential Skills

Here are some sample questions that you can ask the candidates. They are about literacy and essential skills and what the candidate will do to improve literacy in the NWT.

You can get ideas from these questions to make up questions about other important issues in your community.

- How will you make sure that all adults who want to improve their literacy and essential skills have access to literacy programs?
- How will you make sure that funding is available for different types of literacy programs, such as family literacy, youth literacy, workplace literacy, Aboriginal language literacy and other types of literacy activities?
- How will you make sure that there is money for community-based literacy programs and activities (developed and run by the community)?
- How will you make sure there are supports for learners who want to go back to school, such as learner allowances, child care or special supports for people with disabilities?
- What will you do to make sure that all information on government programs and services is accessible to people with low levels of literacy skills?
- Parents are their children's first and most important teachers and family literacy is an important part of literacy programming. What will you do to support family literacy?
- What will you do to make the adult literacy and basic education program work better so we can improve our literacy and essential skills and take advantage of opportunities at home, at work and in the community?

Sample Letter (from a learner to a candidate)

Your Address

Today's Date

Candidate's Name

Candidate's Address

Dear Candidate:

Did you know that two in five adults in the Canada have difficulty with reading or writing? I am one of those adults, and I will be voting in the upcoming federal election. Right now people like me have few opportunities to improve their skills.

I want to know what you will do, if elected, to improve opportunities for people like me to develop their literacy skills? Your answer will help me decide how to vote in the election.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Asking Questions to Candidates

It is your right to ask questions to the candidates in your constituency. You can ask questions about anything that interests you. Below is a format to help you frame your questions. You can ask these questions by calling each candidate or going to an All Candidate's Meeting.

My name is _____, and I would like to address the issue of _____

1. If you are elected would you please support (name issue) _____
2. This is important because (give your 'needs statement' – your reasons for supporting or opposing this).
3. Our solution is (tell how supporting or opposing this would help your cause).
4. Do you have any questions or suggestions? (Write down any questions or suggestions the candidate has).
5. May I please have your support? YES NO MAYBE
6. Thank you very much for your time.

Name of Candidate: _____

Literacy & Essential Skills Facts in the NWT

Here is some information on literacy if you are interested in asking the candidates in your riding questions about adult literacy in the NWT.

What is literacy?

Literacy is how people understand and use information. It is how they read, write, and use numbers and communication technology (computers, phone, fax, email, Internet).

Functional literacy is the skills people use to read, write, and use numbers for everyday things. People with functional literacy skills can understand and reply to letters. They can complete a form and apply for a job. They can read a drug prescription or a newspaper. They can follow written instructions.

Low literacy is when people don't have the literacy skills they need to do these daily tasks. They have trouble reading, writing, and using numbers.

Why do Adults Need Strong Literacy and Essential Skills?

- Adults are leaders, parents, and role models.
- Adults are responsible for the health and well-being of their family. This includes Elders and children. Adults usually have to have a job to make money to support their family.
- Adults make decisions for their family, their community, their region, and for the whole NWT and Canada. Good information helps people make good decisions. People with good literacy skills have better access to good information.

What is Adult Literacy and Basic Education?

Adult basic education is any program that helps people get ready for post-secondary training or employment. Adult literacy and basic education includes learning to read, write and use numbers and information technology. It also includes life skills, career planning, upgrading in specific subjects, or work training and experience.

How are literacy and other essential skills measured in the NWT and Canada?

The best measure we have of adult literacy levels is the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS), which was last conducted in 2003. That was the first time the NWT was included in the survey. IALSS measures how well people can understand and use printed information in their daily lives by measuring skills in four different areas:

- **Prose Literacy** – the knowledge and skills people need to understand and use information from texts like newspapers, brochures and instruction manuals.
- **Document literacy** – the knowledge and skills people need to understand and use information from things like job applications, payroll forms, maps, tables, diagrams and charts.
- **Numeracy** – the knowledge and skills people need to work with numbers, such as balancing a chequebook, calculating a tip, working out interest on a loan or filling out and order form.
- **Problem Solving** – the knowledge and skills people need to understand and solve problems.

Literacy skills are defined by levels. Level 1 is the lowest and level 5 is the highest.

- At **level 1**, a person has difficulty dealing with any printed material.
- At **level 2**, a person can understand material that is clear and well laid out.

- At **level 3**, a person can understand and use the information he needs for daily life.
- At **levels 4 and 5**, a person can understand and use complex written information.

Level 3 is the level that experts believe people need to get a job in today's knowledge-based world. Ideally, the average literacy score should be level 3 or above.

What are the levels of English literacy among NWT adults?

IALSS results tell us that in the NWT:

- 42.5% of working-aged adults (16-65) had an average prose literacy score below level 3. That's more than 4 out of 10 people.
- About half of working-aged adults had an average numeracy score below level 3.
- Just over 70% of working-aged adults had an average problem solving score below level 3.

It also tells us that there is a huge gap between the scores of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

- 70% of the non-Aboriginal population score at level 3 or above. About 30% were at levels 1 and 2.
- The opposite is true for the Aboriginal population. 69% scored below level 3. 31% scored at level 3 or above.

It is important to remember that the literacy scores for the Aboriginal population reflect, at least in part, the fact that many Aboriginal people speak English as a second language and that, until recently many had limited access to formal schooling.

You can get more information on literacy in the Northwest Territories by downloading the IALSS information brochures from the NWT Literacy Council website at <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/litfacts.htm> .