



Press Release by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on the Occasion of the International Literacy Day on 08/09/2024

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. This rate reached 2.1% among the Palestinian population (15 years and above) during 2023. Thus, the illiteracy rate among Palestinians aged 15 years and above in the occupied Palestinian territory in 1948 reached 3.6% in 2017, according to the data of the Galilee Society (Rikaz). According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the illiteracy rate among persons (aged 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, the rate 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 (aged 15 years and above) in Selected Arab Countries

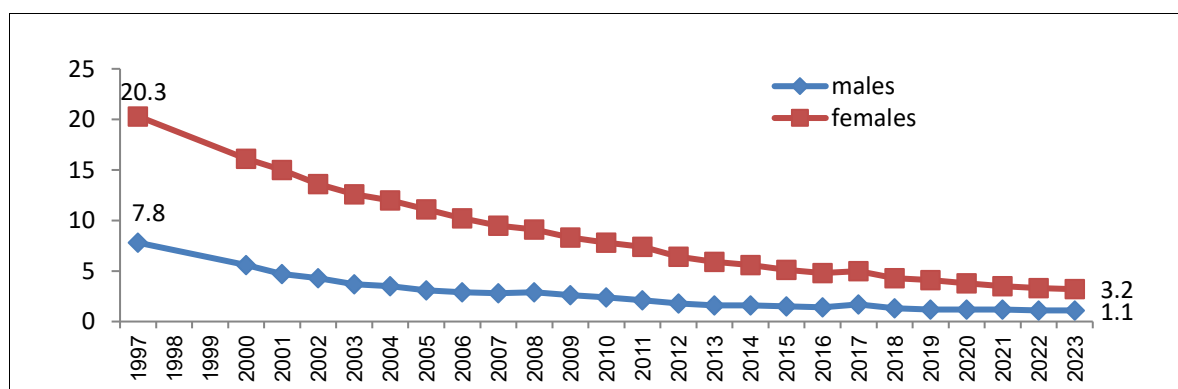
Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate
Palestine (2023)	2.1	Kuwait (2020)	3.5	Algeria	19.6
Jordan (2021)	1.6	Oman (2022)	2.7	Morocco (2022)	22.7
Bahrain (2022)	2.1	Saudi (2020)	2.4	Egypt (2022)	25.5
Lebanon (2019)	4.7	Iraq (2017)	14.4	Sudan (2018)	39.4

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

The illiteracy rate decreased in Palestine by 85% throughout the last two decades

Illiteracy rate among the Palestinian population (aged 15 years and above) in Palestine decreased during the period 1997-2023 from 13.9% to 2.1%. The rate declined from 7.8% in 1997 to 1.1% in 2023 among males, and declined from 20.3% to 3.2% among females during the same period.

Illiteracy rates among persons (aged 15 years and above) in Palestine by sex for the years 1997, 2000-2023



Illiteracy rate by region decreased from 14.1% in 1997 to 2.3% in 2023 in the West Bank, and decreased from 13.7% in 1997 to 1.9% in 2023 in Gaza Strip.



Illiteracy rate among persons (15 years and above) by region and sex, 2023

Region	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Palestine	2.1	1.1	3.2
West Bank	2.3	1.1	3.5
Gaza Strip	1.9	1.1	2.8

20 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 (30-44 years). In 2023, the illiteracy rate among older persons 65 years and above reached about 20.4%. The rate was about 2.2% among the age group 45-64 years, 0.7% among the age group 30-44 years and 0.8% among the youth (15-29 years) for the same year.

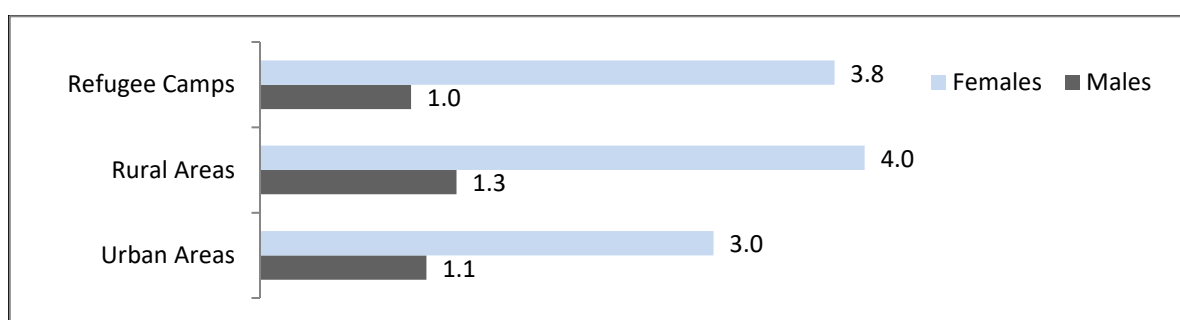
Illiteracy rate among persons (15 years and above) by age group and sex, 2023

Age group	Both Sexes	Males	Females
15-29	0.8	0.8	0.7
30-44	0.7	0.6	0.8
45-64	2.2	1.0	3.5
65 years and	20.4	6.8	32.5
Total	2.1	1.1	3.2

Rural localities recorded the highest illiteracy rate

In 2023, the illiteracy rate reached 2.6% in rural localities, 2.4% in refugee camps and 2.0% in urban areas.

Illiteracy rate among persons (aged 15 years and above) by locality type and sex, 2023



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