

The Humanities in Our Lives

AMERICA'S NATIVE LANGUAGES

The United States has always been a land of many languages. Before Europeans arrived, more than 300 indigenous languages were spoken in North America. As a result of forced cultural assimilation, Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities suffered massive losses of language and culture. Since the civil rights era, many of these communities have begun to reclaim and preserve their languages and encourage their revitalization.

Data corroborate that instruction in indigenous languages offers substantial benefits for Native American society that extend beyond mere bilingualism. With the Native American Languages Act of 1990, these languages were recognized with a distinctive political status and cultural importance.

KEY FACTS

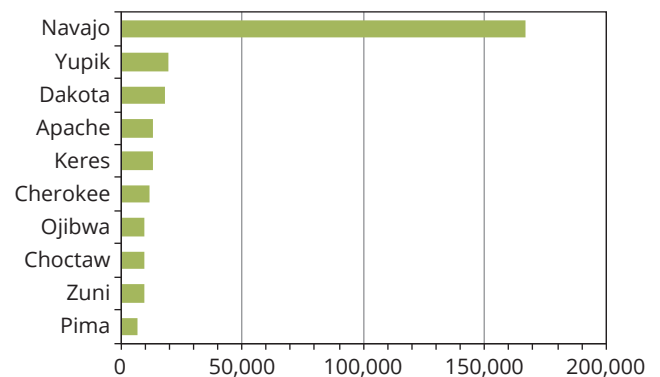
- The U.S. Census reports that 150+ Native American languages are still in use today in the U.S. Some estimates project that, without sustained intervention, only around 20 will remain by 2050.
- These languages are collectively spoken by over 450,000 people, with the top 10 spoken by nearly half this number.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language began in 1983 with private, nonprofit preschools known as *Pūnana Leo* (language nests), which used immersion methods to teach Hawaiian to a handful of children. At the time, fewer than 50 children under age 18 spoke the language at home. Thousands of children are now enrolled annually in these schools. Data from 2013–2015 suggest that students from these schools graduate from high school at rates above both the state-wide and Native Hawaiian averages and attend college at rates above the Native Hawaiian average.

In 1978, Hawaiian was made an official language of the state alongside English, marking an end to policies that had suppressed the language since 1896. Members of the Native Hawaiian community develop instructional materials and train teachers, while also promulgating best practices that can be replicated in other Native American communities.

The Ten Largest Native North American Languages by Number of Speakers over the Age of 5



The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Americans today value community colleges because they are affordable, local, and flexible, with a large population of part-time students. Yet this flexibility has disadvantages, as a sizeable portion of students who enroll in community college courses do not complete their degrees. Many programs have emerged to encourage and support students in earning meaningful credentials.

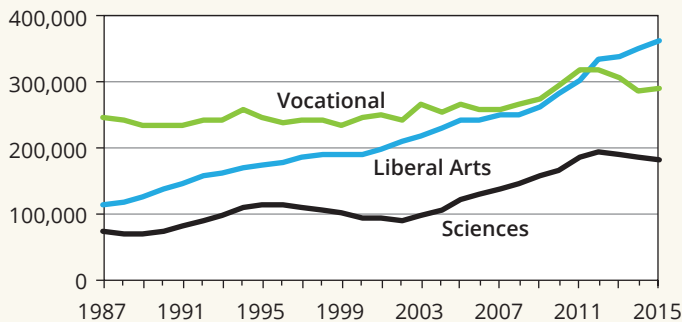
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In the early 20th century, progressives embraced community colleges to expand access to higher education and train a burgeoning workforce by focusing on vocational programs. Today, more than a thousand community colleges in the United States educate nearly 6 million students each fall.

KEY FACTS

- In the fall of 2015, almost 3 million students took humanities courses in community colleges.
- The same year, more than 360,000 students earned associates degrees in humanities and liberal arts fields—a number that represents an annual average increase of 4.3% per year since 1987.

Associates Degrees Conferred, by Field



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

To promote humanities education, the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) launched “Humanities for All” in conjunction with Johns Hopkins University. The program, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, connects Hopkins faculty with CCBC students and faculty to improve course content and foster transfer to four-year institutions.

“[S]ome of our graduates admit that they hadn’t considered themselves as ‘Hopkins material,’ let alone capable of pursuing transfer or continuing undergraduate work at a prestigious institution . . . That changed.”

So far, Humanities for All has offered a 10-week, intensive summer course that allows CCBC students both to take courses with Hopkins faculty and to work independently on scholarly research. With the academic skills gained from Humanities for All, participants have gone on to pursue bachelor’s degrees at Columbia University, UMBC, Towson University, and Roanoke College.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.



The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF HUMANITIES MAJORS

The disciplines within the humanities collectively teach about dimensions of the human experience, as well as research and communication skills valuable later in life. History, literature, languages, philosophy, and the study of the arts help shape understanding of human cultures and provide perspective and tools of analysis.

DEGREES IN THE HUMANITIES

After World War II, the number of humanities bachelor's degrees that American universities awarded rose sharply, then suffered a significant decline in the 1970s and 1980s before rebounding to some extent in the 1990s. In the last decade, humanities degrees have again seen a marked decline.

KEY FACTS

- After 10 consecutive years of declines, the humanities' share of all new bachelor's degrees fell below 12% in 2015 for the first time on record.
- Within the humanities, almost every discipline experienced a decline in the number of degrees awarded from 2012 to 2015.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Many colleges and universities are developing programs to engage and attract students to the humanities while they are still in high school. Flagler College, in St. Augustine, Florida, has pioneered a week-long interdisciplinary humanities summer program for high school sophomores and juniors. Funds for the program—and similar programs run by the University of Florida and Eckerd College—were provided by the Florida Humanities Council.

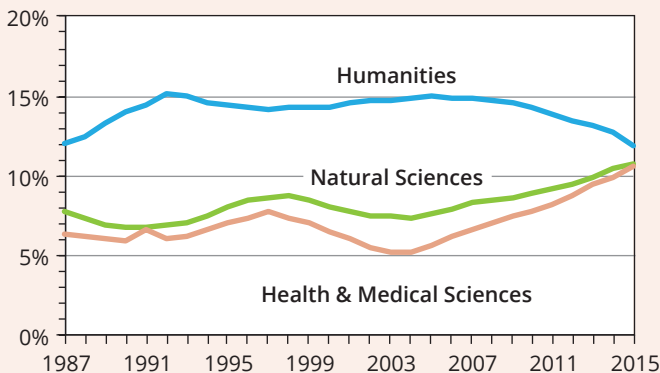
"Students need to understand that studying in the humanities helps make them broader thinkers and better citizens. It also puts them more in control of their lives in the world."

The course "Pirates, Protest and Preservation: Exploring the Stories of St. Augustine" lets students explore the town from the vantage points of literature, history, women's studies, Latin American studies, rhetoric, ethics, and environmental studies. Through lectures, field trips, and conversation, the students gain a sense of college-level study of the humanities.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

Share of Bachelor's Degrees Awarded



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF THE HUMANITIES ONLINE

Digital humanities allow scholars to see patterns they might otherwise miss, and make humanities materials available to the public in new ways. For instance, they have revealed that women wrote half of all published fiction in 1870, but only a quarter in 1970. They have documented the impact of Alzheimer's disease on the novels of Agatha Christie and Iris Murdoch, and mapped the social and intellectual links among key Enlightenment thinkers.

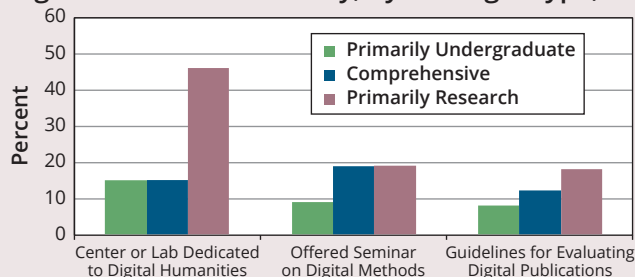
DIGITAL HUMANITIES

The information revolution has long been perceived as a boon for business, science, and technology, but it has also had a profound effect on the humanities. Stanford offers a famed online encyclopedia of philosophy with almost 1,600 entries; *Slate* magazine's animation of the Atlantic slave trade illustrates the trafficking of ten million human beings in two minutes; multimedia archives host the complete works of Shakespeare, Whitman, and Cather; while other websites allow readers to trace the evolution of texts such as Darwin's *Origin of Species* or Melville's *Typee*.

KEY FACTS

- Over 70 centers across the country foster research and projects rooted in digital humanities.
- A Fall 2012 survey found that a third of colleges offered at least one online course, and one in six offered courses in digital methods.

Share of Humanities Departments Engaged with Digital Humanities Activity, by Carnegie Type, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

At Cleveland State University, the department of history runs the **Center for Public History + Digital Humanities**. The Center pioneered a free mobile app called Cleveland Historical, which offers an interactive map of the city featuring walking tours and multimedia exhibits. In addition to promoting the city's history, the app draws visitors and promotes economic development by enriching tourists' experiences.

"The Center aspires to create rich collaborations with community partners and students in an effort to reimagine Cleveland as a place, and to reconnect the city's history to the history of the nation and the world."

The Center has also made the Cleveland Historical software, Curatescape, available to other communities and organizations worldwide.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF READING

Recent research demonstrates that children who develop strong reading skills early in life tend to have greater success at every level of education. Studies show that independent reading can be especially beneficial. When kids choose their own books, their engagement increases. Children who read on their own expand their vocabularies, acquire key knowledge, and improve their overall reading ability. They even strengthen skills in areas that might seem farther afield, such as math.

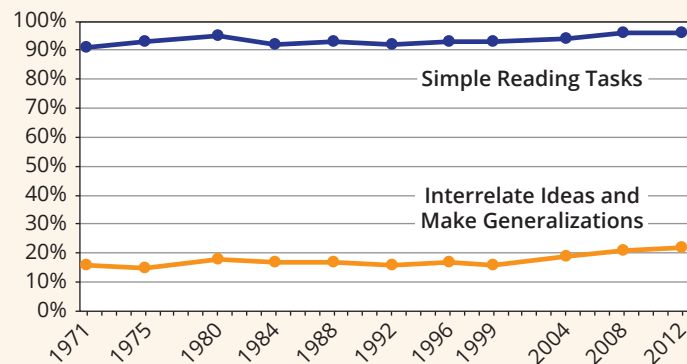
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL READERS

Reading is highly correlated with academic achievement, so much so that students who struggle to read in elementary school face tremendous barriers later in their education. Those who fail to develop proficiency in reading by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers.

KEY FACTS

- In national studies of students' reading ability, nine-year-old readers improved from 1971 to 2012.
- 96% of these young readers have mastered the basic tasks of reading simple, discrete statements, while 22% can connect ideas and draw general conclusions from their reading.

Share of 9-Year Olds at or above Proficient



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

In Washington, D.C., the nonprofit group **Everybody Wins** works to bolster elementary school readers with a creative program that brings adults and children together in a positive and supportive setting.

Volunteers meet weekly with students for “power lunches”—an hour of reading together at midday. Students come from 12 local public schools, and mentors come from the U.S. Congress, law firms, industry, non-profits, and many other walks of life.

“When I read, I learn and grow—you know, like Jack and the Beanstalk kind of growing, and that’s really big!”

—Noah, first grader

Everybody Wins also hosts StoryTime in schools and at the Library of Congress to introduce students to the authors and illustrators behind their favorite books, and help reinforce those connections.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF HISTORY

In a national survey in the early 1990s, Americans expressed doubts when asked about the value of “history” but spoke passionately about the value of understanding the past as a connection to family and a way of understanding contemporary issues and events. History shapes connections to communities, as well as perceptions of current events.

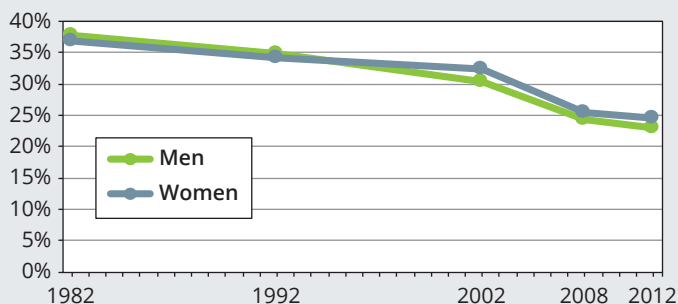
HISTORIC SITES IN THE U.S.

Americans often think about themselves through their family histories and their more general connection to the past, which helps explain the widespread popularity of genealogy in the nation. Despite these personal ties, the Humanities Indicators have reported a long-running decline in the share of Americans visiting historic sites. These declines appear to cut across every generation and signal a substantial decrease in American engagement with the public spaces that mark the nation’s past.

KEY FACTS

- The share of Americans visiting historic sites has been falling over the past 30 years.
- As people aged, they were less likely to visit a historic site. The drop-off in historic site visitation over the life course is at least 25%.

A Declining Share of Americans Visit Historic Sites



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

For two decades, the **Trails and Tales Institute**, run by Peru State College in Nebraska, has offered summer courses and tours to teachers to improve their ability to guide students in the state’s history and literature. At the institute, Peru State faculty teach a five-day course, followed by a six-day tour of over 25 locations.

“Our intent is to inspire and invigorate these teachers, who will in turn develop a better appreciation for our state in their students.”

Participants travel to Fort Robinson, where Crazy Horse died; the hometowns of writers John Niehardt and Willa Cather; Chimney Rock; Ash Hollow; the Nebraska State House; and many other sites. Dr. Holtz, one of the program’s faculty, said of the history the mini-course covers, “So many of these stories are inspiring, not just because they show milestones of progress, but because they show the kind of progress that is only earned through perseverance and battles with prejudice and injustice.”

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF HISTORY

In a national survey conducted in the early nineties, Americans expressed doubts when asked about the value of “history,” but spoke passionately about the value of understanding the past as a connection to family and a way of understanding contemporary issues and events. Skepticism about topics formally labelled “history” in the survey generally appeared rooted in negative classroom experiences at the K–12 level.

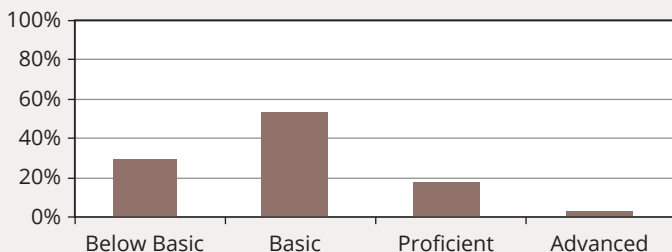
HISTORY IN SCHOOLS

History is one of the most widely taught subjects in the nation’s schools. At the high school level alone, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that more than seven million students took history courses in the 2011–12 academic year.

KEY FACTS

- Only 18% of American eighth-graders demonstrated proficiency on a national test of history knowledge in 2014, and the most recent test of high school seniors (in 2010) demonstrated even lower levels of proficiency.
- Among the more than 60,000 high school teachers of history in 2012, only 26% had both a college degree and certification in the subject (though almost 70% had both credentials in the larger field of social studies).

Share of Eighth-Graders Scoring at NAEP Achievement Level, 2014



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

National History Day draws thousands of middle and high school students together each year, providing them with an opportunity to study and create history in a variety of forms. With competitions that begin at the local and state level, students conduct original research and present their work in skits, documentaries, posters, and papers. Experts in the subject provide feedback to students, and offer them encouragement to further develop their skills and interest in history.

“NHD students are better writers, who write with a purpose and real voice, and marshal solid evidence.”

An independent study conducted in 2011 found lasting benefits for students who participated in History Day. Relative to their peers, participants did better in their history classes, but also demonstrated greater proficiency in other academic activities as well as higher levels of civic engagement.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF HUMANITIES IN MEDICINE

While the humanities are often juxtaposed with the medical sciences, recent work shows important areas of connection. Humanities majors who take the Medical College Admissions Test perform equal to or better than science and math majors. And a growing body of evidence indicates that art observation training in medical school enhances a doctor's diagnostic skills, with studies in the U.S. and U.K. showing significant improvements in diagnostic ability. Medical programs have also started experimental medical humanities programs that have shown positive effects, such as fostering improved communication and empathy between physician and patient.

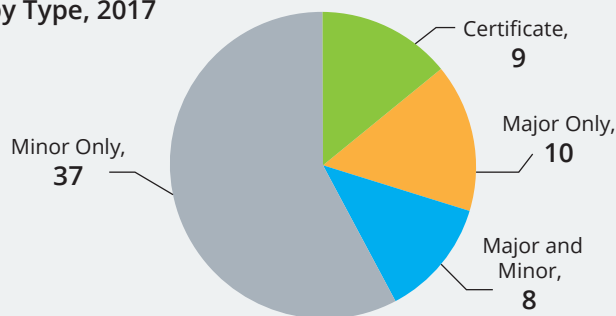
HUMANITIES AND MEDICINE

The humanities have helped define the medical profession for centuries, since the concept of bioethics was born in ancient Greece. Then, as now, physicians were required to take the Hippocratic Oath, which compels physicians to uphold high moral standards. Today bioethics is considered its own discipline, and 2,314 bioethics and applied ethics degrees were awarded from 2000 to 2013.

KEY FACTS

- In a scientific study, medical students with formal art history training demonstrated greater visual diagnostic skills.
- From 2000 to 2017, programs in the health humanities quadrupled, with 66 such programs now offered across 28 states.

Medical Humanities Programs in the U.S., by Type, 2017



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The **Program for Humanities in Medicine** at Yale Medical School includes art, music, literature, drama, writing, philosophy, and history. One study conducted at Yale found that medical students that participated in the art program had a 10% increase in their graded ability to visually diagnose patients over those that attended traditional lectures. Additionally, the program focuses on strategies for better communication and engages with the ethics of medicine.

"We strive to stimulate thought and discussion about the narratives we tell about our patients, ourselves, and the systems we work in; the traditions we have inherited; the role we play in questions of justice; and what futures we imagine for ourselves as a profession."

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

HUMANITIES MAJORS IN THE WORKFORCE

Recent studies have shown that virtually all humanities majors (96%) are employed, and the vast majority of them (87%) are satisfied with their careers—comparable to their peers with degrees in the sciences. And although there is a pay gap between humanities majors and those in many other fields, the gap often decreases over time.

HUMANITIES JOBS

In the past decade, journalists have written countless stories fretting over the supposedly dismal career outcomes of humanities majors. The data do not support this familiar story, as job satisfaction and unemployment rates for humanities graduates are similar to degree recipients from other fields.

KEY FACTS

- Asked about particular aspects of their jobs (such as opportunities for advancement, intellectual challenge, and contribution to society), humanities graduates had satisfaction rates similar to their peers.
- Among graduates with a humanities bachelor's degree, 11% work in professional and managerial positions—about the same rate as social science and business majors.

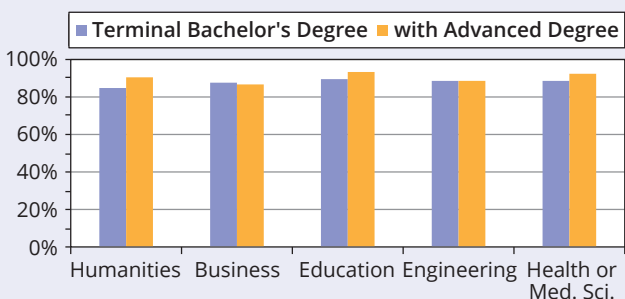
INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

At the University of Wisconsin at Madison, liberal arts students can leverage **SuccessWorks**, an innovative new program tailored to helping them find jobs. The SuccessWorks offices provide standard career counseling services such as help with resumes, internships, practice interviews, as well as workshops and career fairs—even wardrobe assistance (with a lending library of interview clothes available for students).

"It's about helping students capitalize on what is a world-class education and to go on to make a good living and lead a good life."

But what's unique about SuccessWorks is that its advisers specialize in eight specific career areas like health, business, and politics. With the right advice about the skills and approach the industry requires, an English major may find work in the consulting field, or a history student in health care. SuccessWorks provides tools and resources to help smooth graduates' transitions into the workforce.

Overall Job Satisfaction of Bachelor's Degree Holders, by Field of Bachelor's, 2015



The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF HUMANITIES TOURISM

Humanities centers and institutions can be important drivers of economic growth. In 1997, the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum opened its doors in Spain, and it single-handedly revitalized economically depressed Bilbao, Spain. As one reporter observed, “It has given its name to the ‘Bilbao effect’—a phenomenon whereby cultural investment plus showy architecture is supposed to equal economic uplift for cities down on their luck.”

HUMANITIES TOURISM

In 2017, tourism contributed \$500 billion directly and over \$1.5 trillion indirectly to U.S. GDP. This made the U.S. the global leader in total gains from tourism. While shopping and business were major drivers of tourism, visits to humanities-related institutions—historic locations, museums, monuments, and other sites—were among the top reasons for tourism to the U.S. And many U.S. tourists travel within the country to visit historical sites or monuments as part of family and personal trips.

KEY FACTS

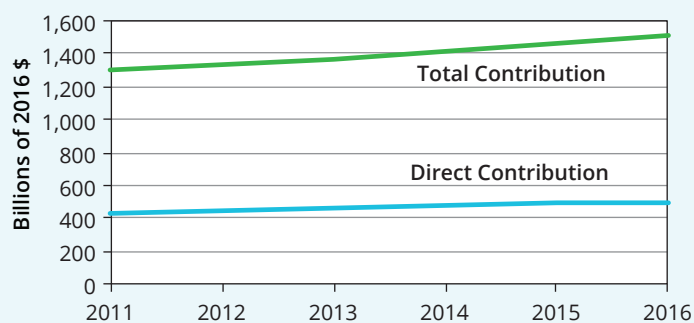
- In 2015, 35% of international travelers to the U.S. visited national parks/monuments, 28.7% art galleries/museums, and 26.7% historic locations.
- In 2015, 40% of U.S. travelers abroad visited historic locations, 32% art galleries/museums, and 30% national parks/monuments.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

One example of a humanities institution driving economic growth is in Seattle, Washington. The creation of the Rem Koolhaas’s architecturally innovative **Seattle Central Public Library** brought in \$16 million in spending associated with visitors to Seattle who said a visit to the library was the primary or important reason they visited downtown Seattle. Seattle tourists that came specifically to see the library spent \$31 on their visit, while non-Seattle tourists spent \$90 on average.

A report from the American Library Association credited the new institution with expanding the identity of the system, “building community character,” and increasing economic vitality in the area. While the net effects vary, the evidence shows that institutions devoted to the humanities in all its forms can be both direct and indirect drivers in local and national economies.

Contribution of Travel & Tourism to U.S. GDP



The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

While data show general declines in higher education language enrollments, K-12 language programs have seen increases. To boost their effectiveness, both K-12 and higher education pedagogy have expanded their focus on real-world uses of languages, with innovations such as cross-disciplinary and project-based learning.

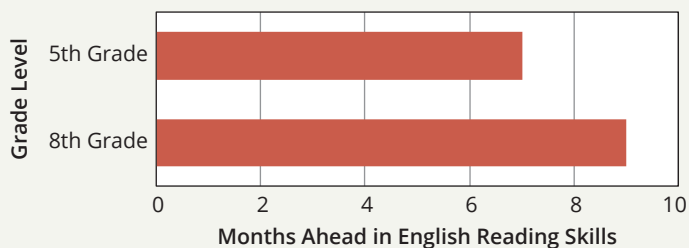
LANGUAGE LEARNING

Growing trends in education have placed new emphasis on building literacy among English Learners (ELs) and developing bilingualism in native English speakers, all in recognition of bilingualism's cognitive, social, and economic value. Public opinion about bilingualism is generally positive, with federal, state, and local governments and other entities all launching initiatives to encourage the study of languages in U.S. schools.

KEY FACTS

- According to U.S. Department of Education data, English Learners (ELs) are the fastest-growing student population in the U.S., representing nearly 10% of all K-12 public school enrollments.
- ELs are increasingly diverse. Nearly 80% are from a Spanish-speaking household, but the remaining 20%+ speaks over 400 languages.

Estimate of the Number of Months Students in Dual-Language Immersion Classes are Ahead of their Peers in Monolingual Classrooms in English Reading Skills, 2012-2015



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

There are an estimated 3,000-4,000 **dual-language immersion programs** nationwide, representing a sharp increase since 2000. Dual-language immersion programs teach core subjects in two languages, which research suggests is a cost-effective method for improving language proficiency. These programs achieve the highest rates of biliteracy, and data routinely show that students in dual-language immersion programs outperform their monolingual peers.

The exponential growth of these programs has outpaced the teacher workforce, with a majority of states reporting bilingual education teacher shortages. In anticipation of continued growth, many states and districts have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the bilingual teacher pipeline by recruiting from the local bilingual, often former-EL population. In Texas, California, and Minnesota, new programs develop an organic bilingual teacher pipeline by offering incentives like tuition reimbursement and guaranteed job placement.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE ON ONE'S HEALTH

Scientific studies indicate significant health benefits associated with learning a second language, as bilingualism offsets certain types of dementia by 4 to 6 years, regardless of age, occupation, sex, rural/urban residence, or even education level. Other studies found that being bilingual assisted with cognitive recovery following a stroke.

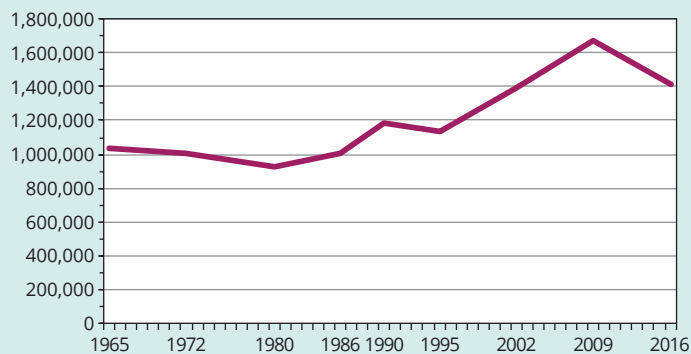
LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

A 2015 Census report found that at least 350 languages are spoken at homes across America. Recent studies point to a range of unexpected cognitive and life benefits for those who speak a second language. For instance, a recent study out of the University of Chicago indicates a person makes better financial decisions when utilizing another language.

KEY FACTS

- Harvard scientists found that on average a second language earned a worker a 2% yearly salary increase.
- Regardless of the benefits, college language enrollments fell 15% from Fall 2009 to Fall 2016, according to the Modern Language Association.

Fall Language Enrollments at U.S. Colleges



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The National Security Education Program, Center for Applied Linguistics, and Georgetown University have collaborated on the **English for Heritage Language Speakers** program. This program recognizes the need for foreign language proficiency across the federal government, and it supports participants in the program with a full scholarship and living expenses as they attend an eight-month-long course at Georgetown University to prepare them for a job in the federal government.

"The curriculum provides a holistic approach conducive to honing every participant's linguistic aptitude while gaining guided insight and assistance to enter the federal job market."

The program seeks a diverse base of native speakers that includes Arabic, Korean, Persian Farsi, Turkish, and other "critical need" languages. Upon graduation, these bilingual workers are in a prime position to join the federal workforce and strengthen the government with their expert language capabilities.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.



The Humanities in Our Lives

LIBRARIES AS A COMMUNITY ANCHOR

With a primary focus on reading, libraries are often local centers of the humanities. Despite funding cuts over the past decade, public libraries had 1.39 billion visits in 2015 (almost 4.5 visits per person per year on average).

KEY FACTS

- In 2015, 9,068 active public libraries provided services through 16,560 locations and 647 bookmobiles.
- The majority of libraries served suburbs, towns, and rural areas. Almost 77% of public libraries served a region with a population of 25,000 people or fewer.

Per Capita Operating Expenses at Public Libraries (in Constant 2015 Dollars)



THE VALUE OF LIBRARIES

Libraries are considered pillars of their communities by many residents. A study on Wisconsin Public Libraries found 90% of respondents “strongly agreed” that the public library contributed in a meaningful way to the quality of life in the community, and 87% agreed it enhanced the quality of their life. Conversely, a PEW study found that 65% of people believed the closure of their local library would have a negative impact on the community, with low-income Americans the most likely to believe it would negatively impact their lives.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The Lexington Public Library in Kentucky received an award in 2017 for its innovative program “On the Table Lex” in which it partnered with local organizations to host discussions on the future direction of the community and the development of the city’s new comprehensive plan.

“We made civic engagement fun and attainable by providing the tools for conversation, feedback mechanisms and publicity for the initiative. The library was a planning partner, hosted eight public sessions and provided free spaces for more than 200 individuals to discuss Lexington’s future.”

The library connected diverse groups such as religious and local neighborhood organizations. More important, the library proactively sought out community participation. Its innovative outreach program led to a dramatic increase in civic participation, with 11,000 residents commenting on Lexington’s comprehensive plan.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 HUMANITIES INDICATORS
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences



The Humanities in Our Lives

LANGUAGES AS SERVICE

Multiple programs exist across the federal government to invest in the pipeline of qualified linguists, some of which are targeted at youth so as to encourage long sequences of language learning. The State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Defense Department’s Defense Language National Security Education Office, and the Education Department’s International and Foreign Language Education office (IFLE) host the majority of these programs.

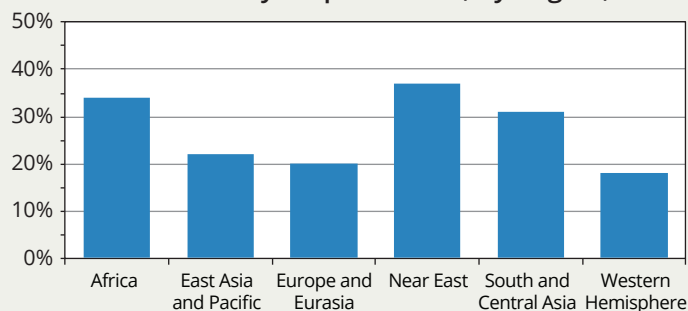
MULTILINGUALISM IN PUBLIC SERVICE

The U.S. government has long recognized that knowledge of other world languages is vital to the national interest for purposes of diplomacy, national security, and economic growth.

KEY FACTS

- In 2016, the State Department required language proficiency for 44% of its 10,111 overseas foreign service officer positions, of which 23% were filled by staff without the requisite proficiency levels.
- Over one million individuals have participated in U.S. State Department exchange programs, including 565 current or former heads of government and 97 current or former members of the U.S. Congress.

Percentages of Overseas Language-Designated Positions Filled by Foreign Service Officers Who Did Not Meet Proficiency Requirements, by Region, 2016



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The **Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS)** program of the IFLE provides academic year and summer fellowships at institutions of higher education. In the most recent FLAS alumni survey, fellows had studied 95 languages, of which 60 were “critical need” languages. Upon completion of the program, 60% indicated that knowledge of another world language was required in their current job, and 68% attributed their advanced language proficiency to the fellowship.

The **National Language Service Corps (NLSC)**, launched in 2007, is a voluntary civilian corps of U.S. citizens with proficiency in languages other than English that provides linguistic expertise and resources to U.S. communities and government agencies when called upon. To date, the NLSC has enrolled nearly 10,000 members, representing over 400 languages and assisting both routine assignments and disaster relief efforts, including during the earthquakes in Nepal in 2015 and in Haiti in 2010.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.



The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF MUSEUMS

Many studies of the benefits of art have focused on school children. When the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art opened in 2011 in Bentonville, Arkansas, researchers took the opportunity to survey thousands of students—both those who went to the museum on school trips and those who did not visit. Their findings suggest that viewing art helps museum-goers improve critical thinking, including skills such as observation, comparison, and interpretation, as well as their ability to analyze other works of art.

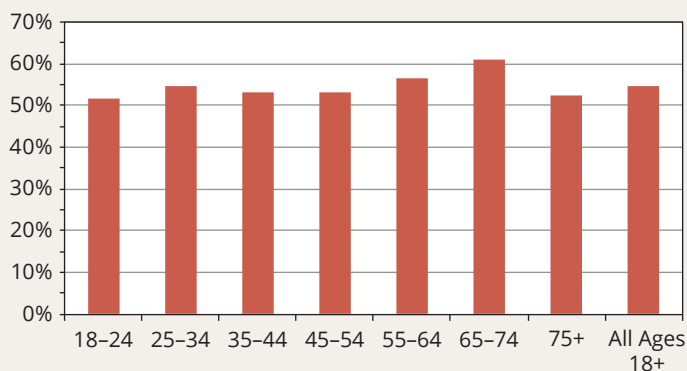
MUSEUM ATTENDANCE

Americans visit art museums less and less often. In 2002, the National Endowment for the Arts found that people took in art at museums or galleries an average of 3.5 times a year; a decade later, that number had dropped to 2.7 annual visits. That's significantly fewer Picassos, O'Keefes, Rembrandts, and Warhols.

KEY FACTS

- In 2012, 21% of the U.S. adult population reported a trip to a museum or art gallery in the previous year—the lowest level ever recorded over the three decades that data have been collected.
- With the exception of seniors, visits to art exhibits fell across all populations from 1982 to 2012.

Share of Americans Who Visited an Art Museum or Gallery in Past Year, by Age Cohort, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The Smithsonian Institution, in collaboration with state humanities councils, hosts “Museum on Main Street,” traveling exhibitions that have visited over 14,000 towns (with average populations of 8,000) across the United States since 1994. The small displays—from 500 to 800 square feet—include photographs, folk art and other objects, interactive exhibits, and videos.

“Our exhibitions are designed to engage communities and become a catalyst for conversation about life in small-town America. We want to start dialogs, build excitement, facilitate connections, and open doors to your community’s history, culture, people, and sense of local pride.”

In addition to offering compelling explorations of topics such as water, work, and hometowns, Museum on Main Street hosts digital story collections that let both adults and students share their experiences more broadly.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.



The Humanities in Our Lives

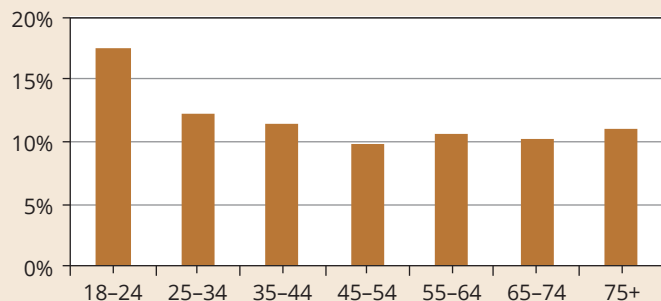
POETRY

The audience for poetry today is livelier—and younger—than it has been in years. Some of that growth may be due to the rise of social media, where poets post their work on Instagram or highlight their spoken-word performances via YouTube. As poet and professor Stephanie Burt puts it, “Poems are easy to share, easy to pass on, and when you read a poem, you can imagine someone’s speaking to you or for you.”

KEY FACTS

- In 2017, almost 12 percent of respondents report that they read poetry in the past year—an audience of 28 million Americans.
- 60 percent of poetry readers are women, and younger Americans read poetry at a higher rate than older Americans.

Share of U.S. Adults Reading Poetry, by Age Cohort, 2017



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

THE VALUE OF POETRY

A 2006 Poetry Foundation survey revealed that 95 percent of readers turn to poetry because it helps them to appreciate the world around them, while 90 percent agreed that it fosters understanding of other people. A full 88 percent valued poetry in times of sadness or difficulty, and 85 percent said that reading poetry helped their critical faculties.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Each year since 2012, the **National Student Poets Program** has chosen five 11th and 12th grade poets to represent different regions of the country. During their tenure, these students present their own work and advocate for poetry and creative writing generally, including at readings and literary festivals.

“[Their] work exhibits exceptional creativity, dedication to craft, and promise . . .”

These student-poets attend the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C., present at National Poetry Month events in April, and lead poetry-related service projects. They also receive opportunities for scholarships and are responsible for mentoring younger poets.

The program is supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In his memoir *Black Boy*, Richard Wright describes how a borrowed library card opened a new world to him, especially as a young man living in the Jim Crow South of the 1920s. “In buoying me up,” he wrote, “reading also cast me down, made me see what was possible, what I had missed.” His eyes opened by his reading, Wright moved to Chicago in search of greater freedom. The public library changed Wright’s life.

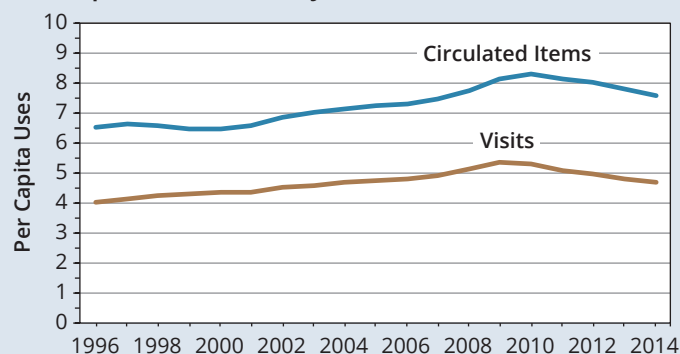
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The country has around 16,500 public libraries and thousands more at colleges and schools. The nation’s public libraries serve a dizzying array of functions: hosting book clubs, story hours, lectures, and other programming; providing assistance with research and digital literacy; lending books, e-books, music, and other media; and serving as places to study, work, and meet.

KEY FACTS

- Per capita visits to and borrowing from public libraries declined in the first half of the 2010s—falling 13% for visits, and 9% for circulation.
- At the same time, attendance at library programming has been on the increase, especially for key children’s programming.

Per Capita Public Library Use



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

At the Washington, D.C., public library (DCPL), librarians have pioneered a new program to help library users preserve memories and media they have saved on cellphones, VHS tapes, floppy disks, and Facebook, as well as in journals and photographs. Called the **Memory Lab**, the program allows library users to digitize a wide range of personal records and gives them guidance about managing their digital collections.

“Personal archiving education and transfer services empower users to decide what to do with their own and their family’s legacies.”

The city’s librarians are working to export the Memory Lab model to seven libraries around the country. As Jaime Mears, the project manager for the effort, puts it, “Preservation of memories should not be a privilege.”

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF READING

Reading remains simultaneously both entertainment and education. Extensive studies in the UK have documented the way that reading for recreation contributes to relaxation, enjoyment, empowerment, and empathy in adults. Adult reading for pleasure is also correlated with an improved sense of community and cultural understanding.

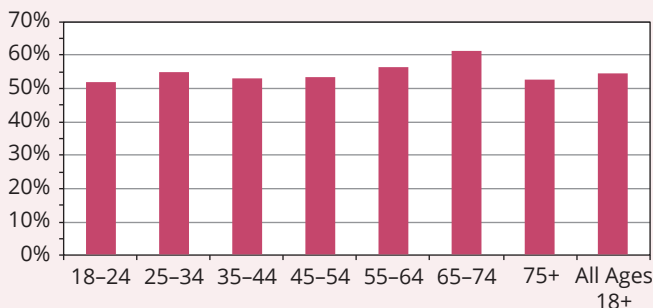
READING FOR PLEASURE

If you love to lose yourself in a good book, now is a terrific time to be a reader, with an ever-growing number of new titles published annually. Despite the growth in the number of books available, however, Americans are reading less literature than they did just five years ago.

KEY FACTS

- From 1992 to 2012, according to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the number of Americans who read a book outside of work or school fell from 61% to 54%.
- In 2017, the average American spent less than half an hour per day reading for personal interest (as compared to more than 2 hours 45 minutes per day watching TV).

Share of Americans Who Read a Book Other Than for Work or School in Past 12 Months, by Age, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

New Hampshire Humanities sponsors the **Connections** program to support and enhance adult literacy. Connections facilitators work in four-week workshops with more than 500 participants annually—both native speakers and English language learners—to foster enthusiasm for and engagement with reading.

“Quality books and stimulating discussions promote English language skills, cultivate conversations about ideas, reinforce family literacy, support a culture of reading, and encourage civic engagement.”

Participants keep the books they read or share them with family, and families are also invited to Connections’ yearly family festival. In addition to an online book list, Connections hosts individual author visits, sponsors an active blog, and offers a variety of other reader and facilitator resources to encourage a habit of reading.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



THE VALUE OF READING

Many studies have documented the value of reading to young children, so much so that in 2014 the American Academy of Pediatrics advised “that reading aloud and talking about pictures and words in age-appropriate books can strengthen language skills, literacy development and parent-child relationships.” Children who listen to family members read to them grow into better and more enthusiastic readers.

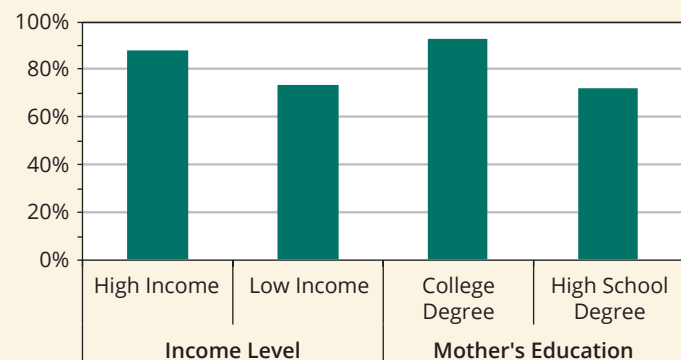
READING TO YOUNG CHILDREN

From Dr. Seuss to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, books touch children’s imagination and help them make sense of the world. Over 80% of parents read to their young children at least three times a week, a number that has not changed significantly since 1995.

KEY FACTS

- Upwards of 90% of mothers with bachelor’s degrees read to their children at least three times a week.
- Children from lower income families were 16% less likely to be read to.

Share of Families Reading to Young Children, by Characteristic, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Reach Out and Read (ROR) focuses on reaching young children when they visit doctors and nurse practitioners. ROR teaches parents about why reading to children is important—and hands out the books to do it. Last year, ROR provided services to 4.7 million children, 25% of whom were part of low-income families, at a cost of \$20 per child.

“Families participating in the Reach Out and Read model read to their children more often (4.3 vs. 3.8 days/week), and their toddlers’ receptive and expressive vocabulary scores were higher, even when adjusting for parental education, foreign-born status, and language proficiency.”

Studies of ROR’s outcomes have found that the program more than doubles the likelihood that parents will read to their children and that they will keep books in the home. These studies also indicate that for children involved in ROR, language development improves by an average of 3–6 months.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The Humanities in Our Lives



MOVEMENTS TOWARD MULTILINGUALISM

A majority of speakers of languages other than English are heritage speakers—born in the U.S. and raised in a non-English-speaking household—but the rate of language attrition, or language loss, between generations has historically been high. Until recently, social and educational policies actively discouraged bilingualism, reflecting a public mindset that speaking a language other than English was a deficit in society and the workforce.

Decades of research have largely dispelled this notion, and it is now widely accepted that multilingualism benefits the individual, community, and nation. This change in cultural mindset has catalyzed policy shifts and social, educational, and workforce development programs toward the promotion of multilingualism for all Americans, including both the acquisition of additional languages by monolingual English-speakers and the preservation of heritage languages for native speakers of languages other than English.

THE VALUE OF LANGUAGES

There is perhaps no trait more unique to humanity than language. Language allows humans to exchange information, express complex thoughts and emotions, and collectively solve problems better. Each of the world's 7,000 languages is its own unique cognitive filter for understanding the world. In the United States today, over 400 languages are used.

KEY FACTS

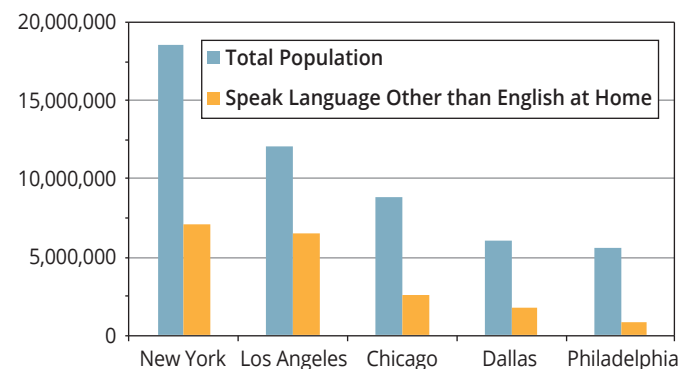
In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau released the largest data set yet on speakers of languages other than English, providing a snapshot of multilingualism across the nation:

- 1 in 5 residents speak a language other than English.
- Between 100 and 200 languages are spoken in each of the 15 largest metro areas, which together account for over one-third of the U.S. population.

LANGUAGE USE IN THE U.S.

Upward of 350 languages are spoken in the U.S., although school districts estimate higher numbers. An estimated 40–50 million speakers of languages other than English are Spanish-speakers, making the U.S. the second-largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world, on track to become the largest by 2050.

Population That Speaks a Language Other than English—Five Largest Metro Areas



The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.



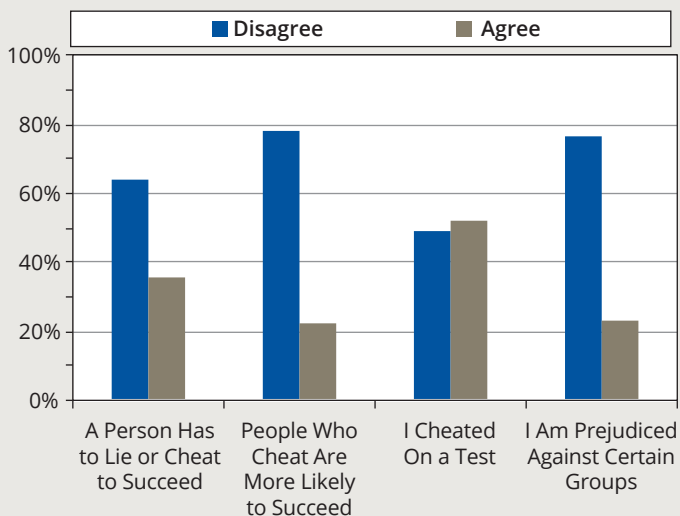
The Humanities in Our Lives

U.S. HIGHER ED ETHICS BOWLS

College students face a myriad of issues during their undergraduate college experience that are complicated and ambiguous, and resolution is often challenging. Today there are intercollegiate case competitions across the country focused on bioethics, business ethics, social responsibility, and other disciplines to help students develop capacities to address these challenges.

The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (IEB) became a national competition in 1997. From a small competition with 14 teams and 84 students, the competitions grew to 250 campuses engaging 1,500 students in 2015.

2012 Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth



THE VALUE OF ETHICS BOWLS

Ethics bowls provide three valuable contributions in the development of students' capabilities in ethical judgment and reasoning.

1. Students develop a framework of analysis for addressing ethical issues.
2. Students acquire valuable background information on ethical issues.
3. Students gain capacity for ethical understanding in a myriad of subjects.

The IEB was established at the Illinois Institute of Technology by Emeritus Professor Robert Ladenson and the Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions. The Association for Practical and Professional Ethics has hosted the IEB since 1997.



Photos courtesy of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.



For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF WRITING

Writing is essential for communicating with others, processing and retaining knowledge, and refining critical thinking. Students who write also expand their capacity for self-expression and develop greater confidence in their own voice. Writing ability is an important life skill, particularly in the job market. In surveys of business leaders and human resources managers, written communication skills are highly sought after among new employees.

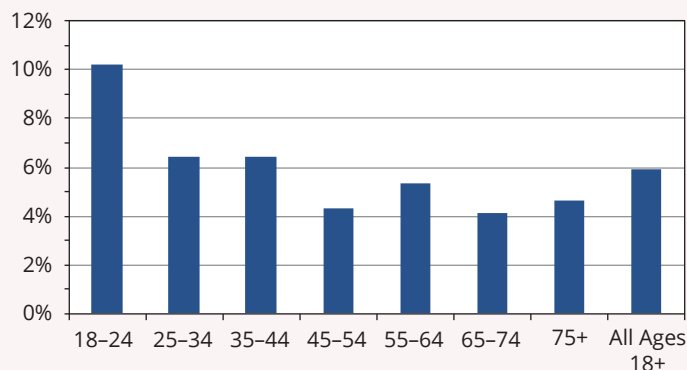
WRITING SKILLS

In a 2008 national survey, 90% of teens reported composing essays and other short writing assignments for school, in addition to drafting Powerpoint presentations, lab reports, journals, and class notes. Over half of them wrote for classes nearly every day. Yet high school students continue to see decreases in their demonstrated writing ability.

KEY FACTS

- As measured by the SAT, writing skills have consistently fallen among high school students since 2006.
- In 2011, a national exam found that half of both 8th graders and 12th graders had basic writing skills, but only a quarter had true proficiency. Another 20% failed to demonstrate even basic achievement.

Share of Americans Who Did Creative Writing in the Previous 12 Months, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

826valencia, named after its street address in the Mission District of San Francisco, works to help under-served students in the Bay Area improve both their academic and creative writing. The group provides one-on-one tutoring in multiple locations around the city and publishes student works as books, magazines, and podcasts.

In addition to tutoring students, 826valencia offers workshops, field trips, summer programs, and college scholarships. Best of all, its main office is located behind its Pirate Supply Store, which sells things like ogre dental floss, quill pens, fool's gold, and, of course, student-written books. The proceeds support the organization's other programs.

In 826valencia's 2016–2017 survey of students, parents, and teachers, 85% of respondents reported that students had greater pride in their writing, and 91% reported stronger writing skills.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

THE
ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION

For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences