

AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF ARTS & SCIENCES



Humanities Report Card

2013



Introduction

The humanities—including the study of languages, literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, comparative religion, and ethics—are disciplines of memory and imagination, telling us where we have been and helping us envision where we are going.

They provide the knowledge, skills, and understanding we need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy. They equip us for leadership in an interconnected world and help foster a society that is innovative, competitive, and strong.

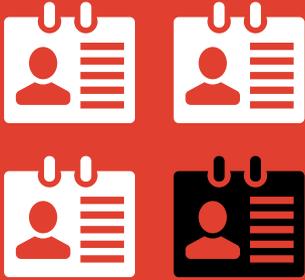
How are they faring? This report card provides a snapshot of where the humanities are today—their value to American society, their continuing vitality, and at the same time, the many challenges they currently face.

Unless otherwise noted, the information presented here comes from the American Academy’s Humanities Indicators, available at www.humanitiesindicators.org. Visit the website for complete graphs, supporting data, notes on methodology, and further resources.

According to *The Heart of the Matter*, the recent report from the Academy’s Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences, the humanities provide a valuable foundation for our efforts to learn, adapt, and share our culture. With the information available from the Humanities Indicators, the Academy hopes to enrich the conversation about the future of the humanities in American public life.

The Academy gratefully acknowledges the financial support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, primary funder of the Humanities Indicators, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities for its collaboration on this project.

The Value of the Humanities



Three out of four employers want new hires with precisely the sorts of skills that the humanities teach: critical thinking, complex problem-solving, as well as written and oral communication.

Source: *It Takes More Than a Major* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013)

84%



Percentage of humanities majors who, a year after college graduation, are satisfied with their choice of major

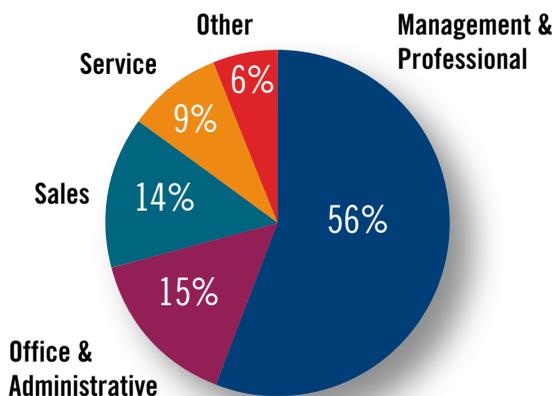
More humanities courses in college



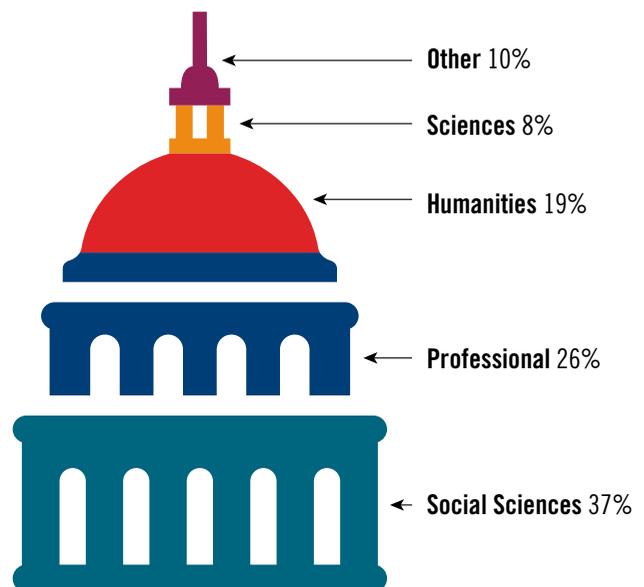
greater probability of

civic engagement

Source: "The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship between Higher Education and Political Engagement," *Political Behavior* (2005)



Humanities graduates are more widely distributed throughout different economic sectors than degree holders in most other fields.

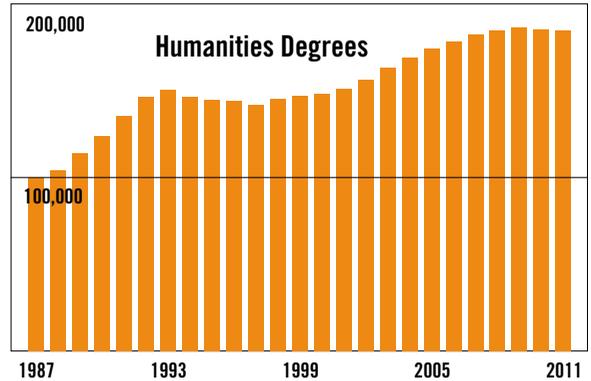


College majors for members of Congress

Signs of Health

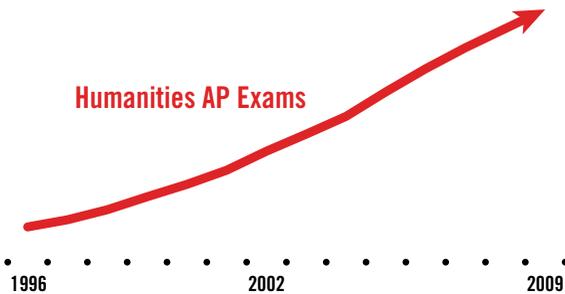


The percentage of high school students taking world history courses increased by **43%** over the past 20 years.

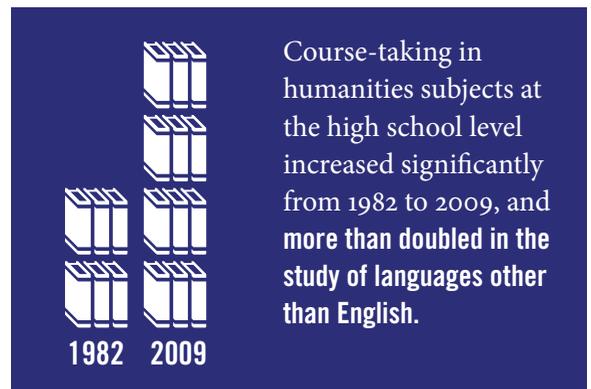


Despite reports on the drop in the number of humanities majors since the 1960s, the number of bachelor's degrees in the humanities has grown appreciably since its nadir in the mid-1980s, with more than 185,000 degrees reported in each year from 2009 to 2011.

Humanities AP Exams



In 2009, the number of Advanced Placement tests taken in the humanities was more than 3 times the number in 1996—**far surpassing every other subject field.**



Between 2000 and 2009, humanities majors scored

9%

higher on the Graduate Management Admission Test than business majors.



The number of adults and children participating in programs sponsored by public libraries increased

12%

from 2006 to 2010.

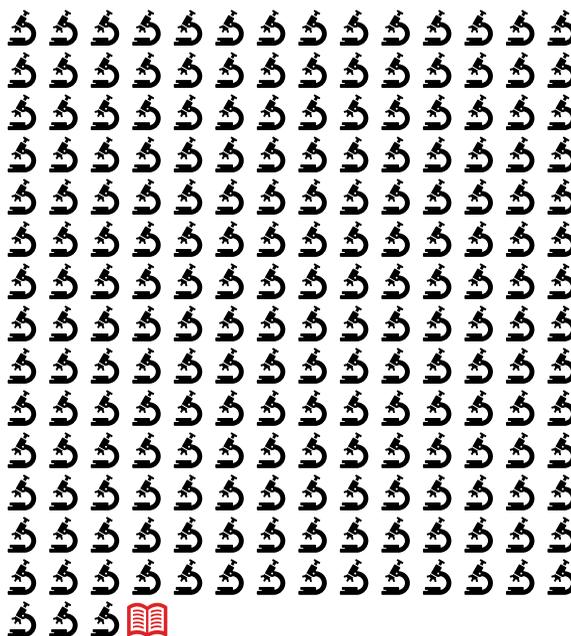
Challenges

1	Shanghai, China
2	Republic of Korea
3	Finland
4	Hong Kong, China
5	Singapore
6	Canada
7	New Zealand
8	Japan
9	Australia
10	United States
11	Portugal
12	Macao, China
13	Italy
14	Latvia
15	Slovenia
16	Greece
17	Spain
18	Czech Republic
19	Slovak Republic
20	Croatia

On a recent international assessment, the **United States ranked 10th** in high school students' reading proficiency.

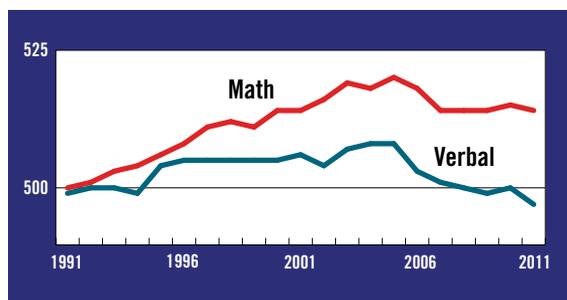


Reading for pleasure declined **11%** from 1992 to 2008.



In 2011, humanities research received only **0.48%**

of the amount dedicated to science and engineering R&D in higher education.



The gap between average math and verbal scores on the SAT is growing.

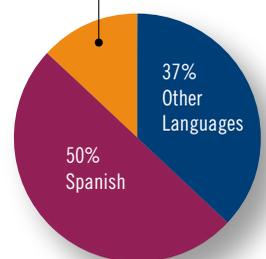
Under 30%

Percentage of 12th grade students proficient in writing, history, and civics

Also the percentage of public high school students who took history courses with a teacher certified in the subject area and with a degree in the field

13%

"Critical Need" Languages



Only a tiny fraction of college students learn languages critically needed for international security and global competitiveness.

8%

Decline in the proportion of young children read to regularly by a family member



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