

Literacy Rate and Standard of Living

Literacy rate is the amount of people in a country who can read and write. High rates of literacy are often found in developed of industrialized countries. Most of Europe has a high literacy rate. More industrialized countries are wealthier and can provide education, health care, and technology to its citizens.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced in a country. Gross domestic product per capita (GDP per capita) is the total of the goods and services produced in a country divided by the number of people in the country. GDP per capita gives an idea of the standard living, or how well people live in that nation. GDP per capita is often thought of as the average income of the people in the country. Remember, it is an average, with some people far above the average, and many people below it.

Countries with a high literacy rate usually have a high GDP per capita. Nations with low GDP frequently have lower literacy rates since the people in that country have less access to education, and children often have to work to help support the family. There are exceptions to this rule, like Russia. Russia has a high literacy rate, but roughly half of the GDP of most Western European nations.

Country	Literacy Rate	GDP Per Capita
United Kingdom	99%	\$34,800
France	99%	\$33,100
Russia	99%	\$15,900
Germany	99%	\$35,700
Italy	98%	\$30,500
Bosnia Herzegovina	96.7%	\$6,600
Haiti	52.9%	\$1,200
United States	99%	\$47,200

1. What does GDP stand for and represent?
2. What does "per capita" mean?
3. A country that has a high GDP can provide what for its citizens?
4. Why do you think Russia has such a low GDP?
5. How does a country's literacy rate affect standard of living?

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