

Just Read. Just help.

The Internet is a powerful tool. It opens up information wormhole filled with accessible information about slugs to job openings. But the key to harnessing the vast information stockpile is understanding it all. Millions of pages of valuable knowledge is wasted if you can't read. Cutting off the internet as a key path to advancement is bad enough, but without being able to comprehend the written word, libraries, and schools are swiftly cut down. Without these means to communication, can a person survive in our advanced society?

To be successful in life, and especially in the United States, a person needs a job. And with the ever - increasing population (298,444,215 people), a steady wage is becoming more and more competitive. This has lead to a rise in college applicants, all seeking to gain the edge in a new workforce. Imagine the pressure on students who can read, then double it, triple it, and multiply it times ten to get a picture of the hardship on students forgotten by school administration. Many of the students who can't read in high school, abandon that hopeless endeavor completely. According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, conducted by the US department of education, fourteen percent of American adults scored at a "Below Basic" level in prose literacy. More than half didn't obtain a high- school diploma. With no high school diploma or higher education, young adults are not able to join the more educated workforce, which leaves illegal activities to participate in, just to make a living.

The prison system is imperfect, but is now being viewed as a way to rehabilitate inmates into success stories of the American Dream. People often wonder why prisoners continue to stay in the justice system, but it isn't complicated. One third of incarcerated persons read at below a ninth grade level, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey. Along with a criminal record, low literacy levels puts ex-criminals at a disadvantage for gaining access in the workplace, and puts them at high risk for recommitting crimes.

While one way to stop a vicious circle spiraling in the criminal justice system is to implement reading programs at prisons, a far better way is to head the problem off early, while illiterate students are being ignored in high school, and not getting the help they need at home. The organization, "Just Read" extends the olive branch from the successful world to serve teenagers and help them obtain a diploma. If the institution of education turns a blind eye, the community has to pick up the slack, to protect themselves, and the students.