

SS6G4 The student will describe the cultural characteristics of people who live in Latin America and the Caribbean.

c. Evaluate how the literacy rate affects the standard of living.

LITERACY AND THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN LATIN AMERICA

A **literate** person is one who can read and write. Literacy is a major factor in whether a person is able to get a job and be successful in the workplace. The countries of Latin America have improved the **literacy rate** of their people. On average, 89 percent of the people in Latin America and the Caribbean are literate. That leaves an **illiteracy rate** of 11 percent. The **standard of living** (the "economic level" achieved by a person, family, or country) is often lower in countries where the illiteracy rate is high.

In some cultures, it is believed to be more important for boys to have an education than girls. This fact is shown in the fact that 12 percent of girls are illiterate in this region while only 9 percent of boys are illiterate. In some countries, the difference between boys' and girls' literacy rates is very large. In other countries, the illiteracy rates are about the same. Either way, the goal of most governments is to have 100 percent literacy among their people. Many governments, missionaries, and aid groups come to the poorest of these countries to assist the people in educating all their children.

One reason that many of the poor cannot learn to read and write is because their communities cannot afford to pay for teachers and schools. Having these basic skills, however, is important. Without the basic skills of reading and writing, workers are stuck in the lowest-paying jobs. Countries with large numbers of illiterate workers cannot build and operate modern industries.

A cycle of poverty can develop in which people cannot get an education, so they can only get low-paying jobs. Because they can only get low-paying jobs, they cannot get enough money to pay for their children's education. The standard of living remains low for these families because their education level remains low.

- ___ **65. When a person is literate, that means that the person can**
- A. read and write.
 - B. get a good job.
 - C. have a greater standard of living.
 - D. pay for his or her child's education.
- ___ **66. Which is often an effect of a high literacy rate?**
- A. a higher illiteracy rate
 - B. lower education levels
 - C. a lower standard of living
 - D. a higher standard of living

67. Why do some countries have higher literacy rates for boys than for girls?

- A. Boys enjoy learning to read and write more than girls do.
- B. Girls enjoy learning to read and write more than boys do.
- C. Some cultures believe that it is not as important for girls to learn to read and write as it is for boys.
- D. Some cultures believe that it is not as important for boys to learn to read and write as it is for girls.

68. An illiterate person is most likely to have all of the following EXCEPT

- A. a large home.
- B. a low-paying job.
- C. a lower standard of living.
- D. children who cannot read and write.