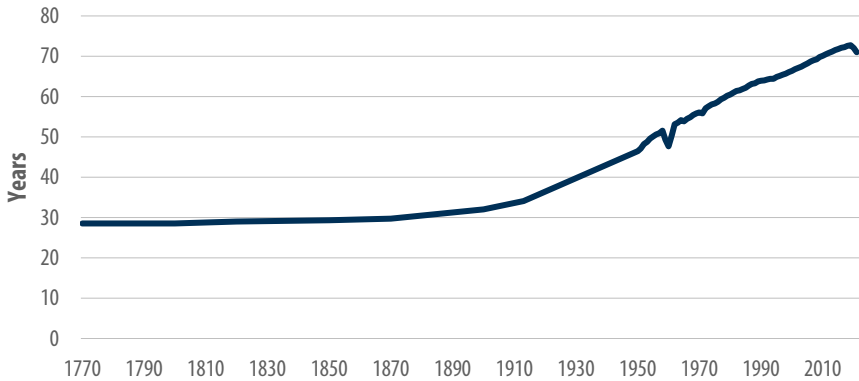


In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to be overwhelmed by daily news cycles, which often focus on crises and challenges. But when we zoom out and take a long-term view, it's clear that global living standards have improved dramatically over the past several decades. While no metric can capture this perfectly, three key indicators — life expectancy, poverty rates, and literacy — show that, overall, we are living in a healthier, wealthier, and more educated world than ever before. In this week's "Three on Thursday," we take a look at these three key metrics that highlight this progress. These trends tell a powerful story of human progress. While challenges remain, the data clearly show that, over the long run, the world has become a better place for billions of people. For a deeper understanding, check out the three charts below.

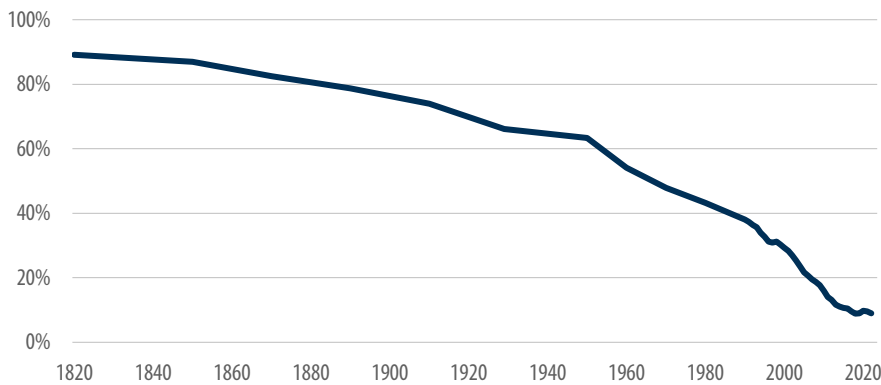
### World Life Expectancy



Source: Our World in Data, First Trust Advisors. Data points for 1770, 1800, 1820, 1850, 1870, 1900, 1913, 1950-2021.

Life expectancy is a key indicator of well-being. From the late 1700s to 1900, average worldwide life expectancy barely budged from 28.5 years in 1770 to only 32 years in 1900. But as capitalism took hold and spread throughout the world, the global trends since 1900 have been incredible. Over the one hundred years since 1900, life expectancy more than doubled to 66.5 years, and by 2021, to 71 years. Developing regions have seen the most dramatic gains, with improved access to vaccines, healthcare, and sanitation driving reduced infant mortality and better health overall. While some regions still face healthcare challenges, the steady rise in life expectancy highlights the impact of innovation and global cooperation in improving health outcomes.

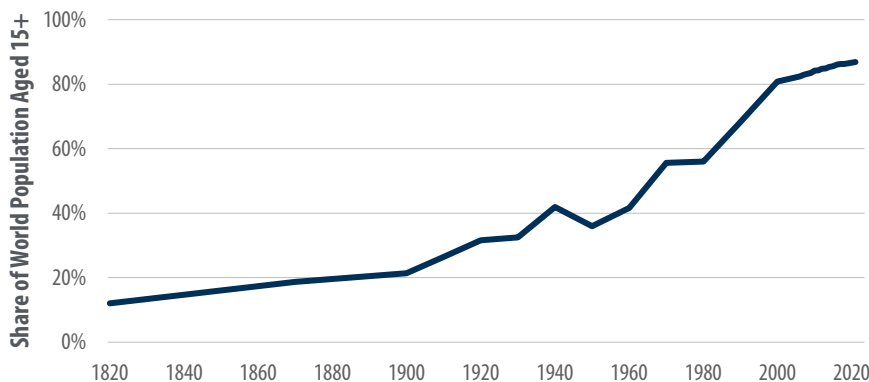
### World Population Living in Extreme Poverty



Source: Our World in Data, First Trust Advisors. For data points 1820-1980 poverty line defined as living on less than \$1.90 per day. For data points 1990-2022 poverty line defined as living on less than \$2.15 per day.

Perhaps one of the most striking indicators of improved living standards is the sharp decline in global poverty rates. Going back to the earliest data available, nine out of ten people in the world lived in extreme poverty around the start of the nineteenth century. By 1960, still over half of the world's population lived in extreme poverty. Since then there has been a rapid increase in world living standards and the share has fallen to just under 10% of world population. Economic development, particularly in regions like East Asia, has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, giving them better access to education, healthcare, and improved living conditions.

### Literacy of World Population



Source: Our World in Data, First Trust Advisors. Data points for 1820, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2006-2022.

Education is the cornerstone of development, and global literacy rates are a testament to the progress that's been made. In 1960, less than half of the global population aged 15 or older could read and write. As of 2022, that figure has surged to 87%. The rise in literacy is particularly notable in developing countries, where access to education has expanded significantly. With a more educated global population, future generations are better equipped to tackle complex global challenges.

This report was prepared by First Trust Advisors L.P., and reflects the current opinion of the authors. It is based upon sources and data believed to be accurate and reliable. Opinions and forward looking statements expressed are subject to change without notice. This information does not constitute a solicitation or an offer to buy or sell any security.