

About PISA

"What is important for citizens to know and be able to do?" That is the question that underlies the triennial survey of 15-year-old students around the world known as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies.

Since 2000, PISA has been testing students worldwide in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science. The assessment also collects information on students' backgrounds and on how their schools are managed in an effort to identify the factors that influence student performance.

PISA also regularly introduces new tests to assess students' skills in other areas relevant to modern life, such as creative problem solving and financial literacy (tested for the first time in 2012) and collaborative problem solving (testing will begin in 2015).

A new project called PISA for Development is underway. It aims to adapt the PISA instruments to make them even more relevant for a broader range of contexts, particularly those of developing countries. These instruments will be developed and tested in a small number of countries over the next three years. To find out more go to:

www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaforddevelopment

Participants of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

Albania	Latvia
Algeria	Lebanon
Argentina	Liechtenstein
Australia	Lithuania
Austria	Luxembourg
Azerbaijan	Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of)
Belgium	Malaysia
Brazil	Malta
Bulgaria	Mauritius
Canada	Mexico
Chile	Moldova
China (People's Republic of)	Montenegro
<i>Hong Kong</i>	Netherlands
<i>Macao</i>	New Zealand
<i>Shanghai</i>	Norway
Colombia	Panama
Costa Rica	Peru
Croatia	Poland
Czech Republic	Portugal
Denmark	Qatar
Dominican Republic	Romania
Estonia	Russian Federation
Finland	Serbia
France	Singapore
Georgia	Slovak Republic
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	Spain
Hungary	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
India	Chinese Taipei
<i>Himachal Pradesh</i>	Thailand
<i>Tamil Nadu</i>	Trinidad and Tobago
Indonesia	Tunisia
Ireland	Turkey
Israel	United Arab Emirates
Italy	United Kingdom
Japan	United States
Jordan	Uruguay
Kazakhstan	Venezuela
Korea	<i>Miranda</i>
Kosovo	Vietnam
Kyrgyz Republic	

OECD member countries

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Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The OECD assessment of 15-year-olds in key competencies to help improve quality, equity and efficiency in education systems



What makes PISA unique ?

PISA results reveal what is possible in education by showing what students in the highest-performing and most rapidly improving education systems can do. It is unique in the way it looks at:

Public policy issues: PISA helps stakeholders assess how well schools are equipping today's youth for adult life, whether education systems are fair, and whether some schools and teaching methods are more effective than others.

Literacy: Rather than examine mastery of specific school curricula, PISA looks at students' ability to apply what they learn in school to real-life situations.

Lifelong learning: PISA not only looks at student performance but also finds out about students' potential for lifelong learning by asking them about their motivation, their self-beliefs and their learning strategies.

Performance over time: Countries and economies participating in successive PISA cycles can compare the performance of their students over time and assess the impact of education policy decisions.



Key facts about PISA 2012

The content: The PISA 2012 survey focused on mathematics, with reading, science and problem-solving as minor areas of assessment. For the first time, PISA 2012 also included an assessment of the financial literacy of young people, which was optional for countries.

The students: Around 510 000 students completed the assessment in 2012, representing about 28 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 65 participating countries and economies.

The assessment: Paper-based tests were used, lasting two hours for each student. In some countries an extra 40 minutes were devoted to the computer-based assessment of mathematics, reading and problem solving.

Questions were a mixture of multiple choice and those requiring students to construct their own responses. Try out some questions here:

www.oecd.org/pisa/test

Students answered a questionnaire that sought information about themselves, their homes and their school and learning experiences. School principals were given a questionnaire that covered the school system and the learning environment.

In some countries parents answered a questionnaire to provide information on their perceptions of and involvement in their child's school, their support for learning at home and their child's career expectations.



PISA results

Policy makers use PISA results to gauge the knowledge and skills of students in their own countries in comparison with those in other countries, set policy targets against measurable goals achieved by other education systems, and learn from policies and practices applied elsewhere. Among many other results, PISA has found that:

- Among low-income economies, the amount spent on education is an important factor in promoting performance.
- Successful school systems in high-income economies tend to prioritise the quality of teachers over the size of classes.
- PISA shows that equity concerns do not need to be sacrificed to achieve at high levels: many school systems combine high levels of performance with above average social equity.
- Improvements in performance are possible, whatever the starting point for students, schools and education systems. Improvements are not, however, inevitable and require the concerted efforts of policy makers, teachers, parents, students and society at large.
- Grade repetition is an expensive policy that is not associated with performance improvements at the system level. Socio-economic disadvantage is associated with grade repetition on top and beyond its effect on performance.

Joining PISA

The next assessment countries can join will be in 2018. The deadline for joining is the end of 2014.

Countries can express their interest by sending a message to edu.pisa@oecd.org.

Find out more at www.oecd.org/pisa/.