



Annex A



KEY FEATURES OF PISA 2009

Content

- The main focus of PISA 2009 was reading. The survey also updated performance assessments in mathematics and science. PISA does not consider students' knowledge in these areas in isolation, but in relation to their ability to reflect on their knowledge and experience and to apply them to real-world issues. The emphasis is on mastering processes, understanding concepts and functioning in various situations within each assessment area.
- For the first time, the PISA 2009 survey also assessed 15-year-old students' ability to read, understand and apply digital texts.

Methods

- Around 470 000 students completed the assessment in 2009, representing about 26 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 65 participating countries and economies. Some 50 000 students took part in a second round of this assessment in 2010, representing about 2 million 15 year-olds from 10 additional partner countries and economies.
- Each participating student spent two hours carrying out pencil-and-paper tasks in reading, mathematics and science. In 20 countries, students were given additional questions via computer to assess their capacity to read digital texts.
- The assessment included tasks requiring students to construct their own answers as well as multiple-choice questions. The latter were typically organised in units based on a written passage or graphic, much like the kind of texts or figures that students might encounter in real life.
- Students also answered a questionnaire that took about 30 minutes to complete. This questionnaire focused on their personal background, their learning habits, their attitudes towards reading, and their engagement and motivation.
- School principals completed a questionnaire about their school that included demographic characteristics and an assessment of the quality of the learning environment at school.

Outcomes

PISA 2009 results provide:

- A profile of knowledge and skills among 15-year-olds in 2009. This consisted of a detailed profile for reading, including digital literacy, and an update for mathematics and science.
- Contextual indicators relating performance results to student and school characteristics.
- An assessment of students' engagement in reading activities, and their knowledge and use of different learning strategies.
- A knowledge base for policy research and analysis.
- Trend data on changes in student knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics, science; on changes in students' attitudes and in socio-economic indicators; and on changes in the impact of some indicators on performance results.

The results of PISA 2009 are presented in six volumes:

- **Volume I**, *What Students Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science*, summarises the performance of students in PISA 2009. It provides the results in the context of how performance is defined, measured and reported, and then examines what students are able to do in reading. After a summary of reading performance, it examines the ways in which this performance varies on subscales representing three aspects of reading. It then breaks down results by different formats of reading texts and considers gender differences in reading, both generally and for different reading aspects and text formats. Any comparison of the outcomes of education systems needs to take into consideration countries' social and economic circumstances, and the resources they devote to education. To address this, the volume also interprets the results within countries' economic and social contexts. The volume concludes with a description of student results in mathematics and science.
- **Volume II**, *Overcoming Social Background: Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes*, starts by closely examining the performance variation shown in Volume I, particularly the extent to which the overall variation in student performance relates to differences in results achieved by different schools. The volume then looks at how factors such as socio-economic background and immigrant status affect student and school performance, and the role that education policy can play in moderating the impact of these factors.
- **Volume III**, *Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices*, explores the information gathered on students' levels of engagement in reading activities and attitudes towards reading and learning. It describes 15-year-olds' motivation, engagement and strategies to learn.
- **Volume IV**, *What Makes a School Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices*, explores the relationships among student, school and system characteristics, and educational quality and equity. It explores what schools and school policies can do to raise overall student performance and, at the same time, moderate the impact of socio-economic background on student

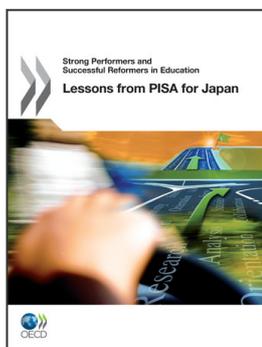


performance, with the aim of promoting a more equitable distribution of learning opportunities.

- **Volume V**, *Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance Since 2000*, provides an overview of trends in student performance in reading, mathematics and science from PISA 2000 to PISA 2009. It shows educational outcomes over time and tracks changes in factors related to student and school performance, such as student background and school characteristics and practices.
- **Volume VI**, *Students On Line: Digital Technologies and Performance*, explains how PISA measures and reports student performance in digital reading, and analyses what students in the 19 countries participating in this assessment are able to do.

Future assessments

- The PISA 2012 survey will return to mathematics as the major assessment area; PISA 2015 will focus on science. Thereafter, PISA will begin another cycle, starting once again with reading.
- Future tests will place greater emphasis on assessing students' capacity to read and understand digital texts and to solve problems presented in a digital format, reflecting the importance of information and communication technologies in modern societies.



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