Reader's Guide

Data underlying the figures

The data referred to in this volume are presented in Annex B and, in greater detail, including some additional tables, on the PISA website (*www.pisa.oecd.org*).

Four symbols are used to denote missing data:

a   The category does not apply in the country concerned. Data are therefore missing.

c   There are too few observations or no observation to provide reliable estimates (i.e. there are fewer than 30 students or fewer than 5 schools with valid data).

m   Data are not available. These data were not submitted by the country or were collected but subsequently removed from the publication for technical reasons.

w   Data have been withdrawn or have not been collected at the request of the country concerned.

Country coverage

This publication features data on 65 countries and economies, including all 34 OECD countries and 31 partner countries and economies (see Figure I.1.1).

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Two notes were added to the statistical data related to Cyprus:

1. Note by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

2. Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Calculating international averages

An OECD average was calculated for most indicators presented in this report. In the case of some indicators, a total representing the OECD area as a whole was also calculated:

■ The OECD average corresponds to the arithmetic mean of the respective country estimates.

■ The OECD total takes the OECD countries as a single entity, to which each country contributes in proportion to the number of 15-year-olds enrolled in its schools (see Annex B for data). It illustrates how a country compares with the OECD area as a whole.

In this publication, the OECD total is generally used when references are made to the overall situation in the OECD area. Where the focus is on comparing performance across education systems, the OECD average is used. In the case of some countries, data may not be available for specific indicators, or specific categories may not apply. Readers should, therefore, keep in mind that the terms "OECD average" and "OECD total" refer to the OECD countries included in the respective comparisons.

Rounding figures

Because of rounding, some figures in tables may not exactly add up to the totals. Totals, differences and averages are always calculated on the basis of exact numbers and are rounded only after calculation.

All standard errors in this publication have been rounded to one or two decimal places. Where the value 0.0 or 0.00 is shown, this does not imply that the standard error is zero, but that it is smaller than 0.05 or 0.005, respectively.

Reporting student data

The report uses "15-year-olds" as shorthand for the PISA target population. PISA covers students who are aged between 15 years 3 months and 16 years 2 months at the time of assessment and who are enrolled in school and have completed at least 6 years of formal schooling, regardless of the type of institution in which they are enrolled and of whether they are in full-time or part-time education, of whether they attend academic or vocational programmes, and of whether they attend public or private schools or foreign schools within the country.

Reporting school data

The principals of the schools in which students were assessed provided information on their schools' characteristics by completing a school questionnaire. Where responses from school principals are presented in this publication, they are weighted so that they are proportionate to the number of 15-year-olds enrolled in the school.

Focusing on statistically significant differences

This volume discusses only statistically significant differences or changes. These are denoted in darker colours in figures and in bold font in tables. See Annex A3 for further information.

Categorising student performance

This report uses a shorthand to describe students' levels of proficiency in the subjects assessed by PISA:

Top performers are those students proficient at Level 5 or 6 of the assessment.

Strong performers are those students proficient at Level 4 of the assessment.

Moderate performers are those students proficient at Level 2 or 3 of the assessment.

Lowest performers are those students proficient at or below Level 1 of the assessment.

Highest achievers are those students who perform at or above the 90th percentile in their own country/economy.

High achievers are those students who perform at or above the 75th percentile in their own country/economy.

Low achievers are those students who perform below the 25th percentile in their own country/economy.

**Lowest achievers** are those students who perform below the 10th percentile in their own country/economy.

Abbreviations used in this report

ESCS	PISA index of economic, social and cultural status	PPP	Purchasing power parity
GDP	Gross domestic product	S.D.	Standard deviation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education	S.E.	Standard error
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Further documentation

For further information on the PISA assessment instruments and the methods used in PISA, see the *PISA 2012 Technical Report* (OECD, forthcoming).

This report uses the OECD StatLinks service. Below each table and chart is a url leading to a corresponding Excel™ workbook containing the underlying data. These urls are stable and will remain unchanged over time. In addition, readers of the e-books will be able to click directly on these links and the workbook will open in a separate window, if their internet browser is open and running.
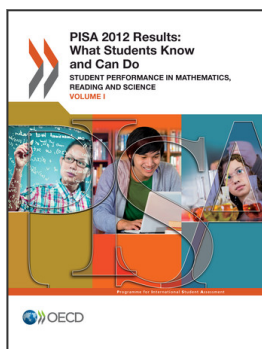
From:
PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do (Volume I)
Student Performance in Mathematics, Reading and Science

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264201118-en