

1. WHAT STUDENTS KNOW AND CAN DO – TRENDS

Changes in reading scores since 2000

- In countries where reading improved overall between 2000 and 2009, girls' scores generally rose more than those of boys.
- In most countries that saw improvements in reading performance, the number of low-performing students fell sharply; but in only two countries, Israel and Korea, were there also substantially more top performers.
- In several countries, the impact of socio-economic background on reading performance weakened significantly.

What it means

Nearly a decade after the first PISA survey, countries can see not just whether they have raised standards overall, but also whether they have succeeded in raising performance among various groups.

Findings

Changes in reading performance between 2000 and 2009 were not the same across all groups of students or all levels of proficiency.

Boys' reading scores rose in only five countries, compared to 13 countries where girls' reading scores improved. In most countries where reading performance improved overall, girls' performance improved more than boys' did – around twice the rise in score points or more in Israel, Korea, Poland, Portugal and the partner country Brazil. However, in Chile, and the partner countries Albania and Peru, boys made great strides in reading, improving by at least 35 points, or over half a proficiency level.

Conversely, boys' reading performance declined in eight countries, while girls' reading performance declined in only two. In Ireland, boys scored 37 points lower in 2009 than in 2000, falling, on average, from the middle of proficiency Level 3 to the top of Level 2.

Rises in mean country scores were more often driven by a reduction in the proportion of low-performing students than by an increase in the proportion of top performers. The percentage of students who do not reach the baseline proficiency Level 2 fell in 14 countries. In Chile and the partner countries Albania, Indonesia, Latvia and Peru, this fall was substantial: between 12 and 18 percentage points. But only six countries showed a rise in the number of students reaching Level 5 or above; and in only Israel,

Japan, Korea and the partner economy Hong Kong, China was this rise greater than one percentage point. Of these, only Israel and Korea showed overall improvements in reading performance. In most countries that showed overall declines in reading performance, the number of top performers fell and the number of low performers rose significantly. The exception was Australia, where the proportion of top performers fell sharply, from 18% to 13%, but the proportion of low performers did not change significantly.

Between 2000 and 2009, the relationship between student background and reading performance weakened in nine countries, including three of the five countries where reading scores improved the most – Chile and the partner countries Albania and Latvia. Germany is the only other country where the relationship weakened while performance improved. On the other hand, the relationship appears to be stronger in five countries.

Definitions

Level 2 is considered the baseline level of proficiency in reading, at which students begin to demonstrate the competencies that will enable them to participate effectively and productively in life. PISA tasks at this level may involve comparisons or contrasts based on a single feature in a text. They may also require students to make a comparison or several connections between the text and outside knowledge, by drawing on personal experience and attitudes. Top performers are those students who attain proficiency Level 5 or 6, the highest levels of performance.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Going further

More detailed information on how reading performance has evolved between 2000 and 2009 is provided in Chapter 2 of *PISA 2009 Results Volume V, Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance since 2000*.

1. WHAT STUDENTS KNOW AND CAN DO – TRENDS

Changes in reading scores since 2000

Table 1.1. A summary of changes in reading performance

	Mean score in reading 2009	All students	Boys	Girls	Share of students below proficiency Level 2	Share of students at proficiency Level 5 or above	Association of socio-economic background with reading performance
Peru	370	43	35	50	-14.8	0.4	0.1
Chile	449	40	42	40	-17.6	0.8	-7.6
Albania	385	36	35	39	-13.7	0.1	-9.9
Indonesia	402	31	23	39	-15.2		-6.9
Latvia	484	26	28	23	-12.5	-1.2	-11.0
Israel	474	22	9	35	-6.7	3.3	-8.4
Poland	500	21	14	28	-8.2	1.3	-1.5
Portugal	489	19	12	26	-8.6	0.6	-4.7
Liechtenstein	499	17	16	17	-6.4	-0.4	-13.3
Brazil	412	16	9	21	-6.2	0.8	-0.6
Korea	539	15	4	25	0.0	7.2	8.5
Hungary	494	14	11	17	-5.1	1.0	-4.2
Germany	497	13	10	15	-4.2	-1.2	-7.7
Greece	483	9	3	13	-3.1	0.6	2.0
Hong Kong, China	533	8	0	17	-0.8	2.9	-8.6
Switzerland	501	6	1	10	-3.6	-1.1	-2.3
Mexico	425	3	1	6	-4.0	-0.5	-7.3
Belgium	506	-1	0	-5	-1.2	-0.8	0.7
Bulgaria	429	-1	-8	6	0.7	0.6	-4.5
Italy	486	-1	-5	2	2.1	0.5	3.2
Denmark	495	-2	-5	-1	-2.7	-3.4	-3.2
Norway	503	-2	-5	-1	-2.5	-2.8	0.4
Russian Federation	459	-2	-6	1	-0.1	0.0	1.4
Japan	520	-2	-6	3	3.5	3.6	c
Romania	424	-3	-18	11	-0.9	-1.5	10.7
United States	500	-5	-2	-6	-0.3	-2.4	-9.2
Iceland	500	-7	-10	-6	2.3	-0.5	5.4
New Zealand	521	-8	-8	-8	0.6	-3.0	4.9
France	496	-9	-15	-4	4.6	1.1	7.0
Thailand	421	-9	-6	-10	5.8	-0.2	-0.7
Canada	524	-10	-12	-10	0.7	-4.0	-6.4
Finland	536	-11	-12	-8	1.2	-4.0	5.8
Spain	481	-12	-14	-10	3.3	-0.9	1.5
Australia	515	-13	-17	-13	1.8	-4.9	-1.4
Czech Republic	478	-13	-17	-6	5.6	-1.9	-11.4
Sweden	497	-19	-24	-15	4.9	-2.2	7.7
Argentina	398	-20	-15	-22	7.7	-0.7	-1.7
Ireland	496	-31	-37	-26	6.2	-7.3	5.8

Mean score in reading 2009 is statistically significantly above the OECD average. Changes in reading performance and in the share of students at proficiency Level 5 or above are statistically significantly positive. Changes in the share of students below proficiency Level 2 and in the association of socio-economic background with reading is statistically significantly negative.

Mean score in reading 2009 is not statistically significantly different from the OECD average. Changes in reading performance and in the share of students at proficiency Level 5 or above, in the share of students below proficiency Level 2 and in the association of socio-economic background with reading are not statistically significantly different.

Mean score in reading 2009 is statistically significantly below the OECD average. Changes in reading performance and in the share of students at proficiency Level 5 or above are statistically significantly negative. Changes in the share of students below proficiency Level 2 and in the association of socio-economic background with reading is statistically significantly positive.

Source: OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results, Volume V, Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance Since 2000, Figure V.1.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932359948>.



From:
PISA 2009 at a Glance

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264095298-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2011), "Changes in reading scores since 2000", in *PISA 2009 at a Glance*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264095250-14-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.