

Reader's Guide

Data underlying the figures

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

Five symbols are used to denote missing data:

- a The category does not apply in the country concerned; data are therefore missing.
- c There were too few observations to provide reliable estimates (i.e. there were fewer than 30 students or fewer than 5 schools with valid data).
- m Data are not available. There was no observation in the sample; these data were not collected by the country; or these data were collected but subsequently removed from the publication for technical reasons.
- w Results were withdrawn at the request of the country concerned.
- x Data included in another category or column of the table, e.g. x(2) means that data are included in Column 2 of the table.

Country coverage

This publication features data on 79 countries and economies, including all OECD countries and more than 40 partner countries and economies (see map of PISA countries and economies in “What is PISA?”).

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 apply to the statistical data related to Cyprus:

- **Footnote 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”.
- **Footnote 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.

B-S-J-Z (China) refers to the four provinces/municipalities in China that participated in PISA 2018: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

International averages

The OECD average corresponds to the arithmetic mean of the respective country estimates. It was calculated for most indicators presented in this report.

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. It can be used to assess how a country compares with the OECD area as a whole.

In order to facilitate analysis and comparisons over time, historical data for all OECD Members have been provided over as long a period as possible, often even before a country became a member of the Organisation. This is also the case for Colombia, which became a Member on 28 April 2020, and which has been included in the OECD averages. Information on the membership dates of all OECD Member countries can be found at OECD Ratification Dates.

In this publication, the OECD average is generally used when the focus is on comparing performance across education systems. 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. In cases where data are not available or do not apply for all sub-categories of a given population or indicator, the «OECD average» is not necessarily computed on a consistent set of countries across all columns of a table.

In analyses involving data from multiple years, the OECD average is always reported on consistent sets of OECD countries, and several averages may be reported in the same table. For instance, the «OECD average-37» refers to the average across all 37 OECD countries (including Colombia), and is reported as missing if fewer than 37 OECD countries have comparable data; the “OECD average-30” includes only 30 OECD countries that have non-missing values across all the assessments for which this average itself is non-missing. This restriction allows for valid comparisons of the OECD average over time.

The number in the label used in figures and tables indicates the number of countries included in the average:

- **OECD average-37:** Arithmetic mean across all OECD countries (including Colombia).
- **OECD average-30:** Arithmetic mean across all OECD countries, excluding Estonia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey and the United Kingdom
- **OECD average-28:** Arithmetic mean across all OECD countries, excluding Colombia, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Rounding figures

Because of rounding, some figures in tables may not add up exactly 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 whether they are in full-time or part-time education, whether they attend academic or vocational programmes, and 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. Unless otherwise specified, the significance level is set to 5%. See Annex A3 for further information.

Abbreviations used in this report

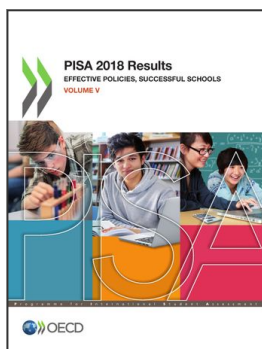
ESCS	PISA index of economic, social and cultural status
GDP	Gross domestic product
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ICT	Information and communications technology
PPP	Purchasing power parity
S.D.	Standard deviation
S.E.	Standard error
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
Score dif.	Score-point difference
% dif.	Percentage-point difference

Further documentation

For further information on the PISA assessment instruments and the methods used in PISA, see the *PISA 2018 Technical Report* (OECD, forthcoming).

StatLink 

This report has *StatLinks* at the bottom of tables and graphs. To download the matching Excel® spreadsheet, just type the link into your Internet browser, starting with the *http://dx.doi.org prefix*, or click on the link from the e-book version.



From:
PISA 2018 Results (Volume V)
Effective Policies, Successful Schools

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Reader's Guide", in *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/78cd6458-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, as well as any data and 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. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.