

Table 401. Percentage distribution of 15-year-olds at selected reading literacy proficiency levels, by country: 2000

Country	Mean score	Percentage distribution at levels of proficiency					
		Below level 1 ¹	Level 1 ²	Level 2 ³	Level 3 ⁴	Level 4 ⁵	Level 5 ⁶
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
OECD total⁷	499 (2.0)	6.2 (0.4)	12.1 (0.4)	21.8 (0.4)	28.6 (0.4)	21.8 (0.4)	9.4 (0.4)
OECD average⁸	500 (0.6)	6.0 (0.1)	11.9 (0.2)	21.7 (0.2)	28.7 (0.2)	22.3 (0.2)	9.5 (0.1)
Australia	528 (3.5)	3.3 (0.5)	9.1 (0.8)	19.0 (1.1)	25.7 (1.1)	25.3 (0.9)	17.6 (1.2)
Austria	507 (2.4)	4.4 (0.4)	10.2 (0.6)	21.7 (0.9)	29.9 (1.2)	24.9 (1.0)	8.8 (0.8)
Belgium	507 (3.6)	7.7 (1.0)	11.3 (0.7)	16.8 (0.7)	25.8 (0.9)	26.3 (0.9)	12.0 (0.7)
Canada	534 (1.6)	2.4 (0.3)	7.2 (0.3)	18.0 (0.4)	28.0 (0.5)	27.7 (0.6)	16.8 (0.5)
Czech Republic	492 (2.4)	6.1 (0.6)	11.4 (0.7)	24.8 (1.2)	30.9 (1.1)	19.8 (0.8)	7.0 (0.6)
Denmark	497 (2.4)	5.9 (0.6)	12.0 (0.7)	22.5 (0.9)	29.5 (1.0)	22.0 (0.9)	8.1 (0.5)
Finland	546 (2.6)	1.7 (0.5)	5.2 (0.4)	14.3 (0.7)	28.7 (0.8)	31.6 (0.9)	18.5 (0.9)
France	505 (2.7)	4.2 (0.6)	11.0 (0.8)	22.0 (0.8)	30.6 (1.0)	23.7 (0.9)	8.5 (0.6)
Germany	484 (2.5)	9.9 (0.7)	12.7 (0.6)	22.3 (0.8)	26.8 (1.0)	19.4 (1.0)	8.8 (0.5)
Greece	474 (5.0)	8.7 (1.2)	15.7 (1.4)	25.9 (1.4)	28.1 (1.7)	16.7 (1.4)	5.0 (0.7)
Hungary	480 (4.0)	6.9 (0.7)	15.8 (1.2)	25.0 (1.1)	28.8 (1.3)	18.5 (1.1)	5.1 (0.8)
Iceland	507 (1.5)	4.0 (0.3)	10.5 (0.6)	22.0 (0.8)	30.8 (0.9)	23.6 (1.1)	9.1 (0.7)
Ireland	527 (3.2)	3.1 (0.5)	7.9 (0.8)	17.9 (0.9)	29.7 (1.1)	27.1 (1.1)	14.2 (0.8)
Italy	487 (2.9)	5.4 (0.9)	13.5 (0.9)	25.6 (1.0)	30.6 (1.0)	19.5 (1.1)	5.3 (0.5)
Japan	522 (5.2)	2.7 (0.6)	7.3 (1.1)	18.0 (1.3)	33.3 (1.3)	28.8 (1.7)	9.9 (1.1)
Korea, Republic of	525 (2.4)	0.9 (0.2)	4.8 (0.6)	18.6 (0.9)	38.8 (1.1)	31.1 (1.2)	5.7 (0.6)
Luxembourg	441 (1.6)	14.2 (0.7)	20.9 (0.8)	27.5 (1.3)	24.6 (1.1)	11.2 (0.5)	1.7 (0.3)
Mexico	422 (3.3)	16.1 (1.2)	28.1 (1.4)	30.3 (1.1)	18.8 (1.2)	6.0 (0.7)	0.9 (0.2)
New Zealand	529 (2.8)	4.8 (0.5)	8.9 (0.5)	17.2 (0.9)	24.6 (1.1)	25.8 (1.1)	18.7 (1.0)
Norway	505 (2.8)	6.3 (0.6)	11.2 (0.8)	19.5 (0.8)	28.1 (0.8)	23.7 (0.9)	11.2 (0.7)
Poland	479 (4.5)	8.7 (1.0)	14.6 (1.0)	24.1 (1.4)	28.2 (1.3)	18.6 (1.3)	5.9 (1.0)
Portugal	470 (4.5)	9.6 (1.0)	16.7 (1.2)	25.3 (1.0)	27.5 (1.2)	16.8 (1.1)	4.2 (0.5)
Spain	493 (2.7)	4.1 (0.5)	12.2 (0.9)	25.7 (0.7)	32.8 (1.0)	21.1 (0.9)	4.2 (0.5)
Sweden	516 (2.2)	3.3 (0.4)	9.3 (0.6)	20.3 (0.7)	30.4 (1.0)	25.6 (1.0)	11.2 (0.7)
Switzerland	494 (4.3)	7.0 (0.7)	13.3 (0.9)	21.4 (1.0)	28.0 (1.0)	21.0 (1.0)	9.2 (1.0)
United Kingdom	523 (2.6)	3.6 (0.4)	9.2 (0.5)	19.6 (0.7)	27.5 (0.9)	24.4 (0.9)	15.6 (1.0)
United States	504 (7.1)	6.4 (1.2)	11.5 (1.2)	21.0 (1.2)	27.4 (1.3)	21.5 (1.4)	12.2 (1.4)
Non-OECD countries							
Brazil	396 (3.1)	23.3 (1.4)	32.5 (1.2)	27.7 (1.3)	12.9 (1.1)	3.1 (0.5)	0.6 (0.2)
Latvia	458 (5.3)	12.7 (1.3)	17.9 (1.3)	26.3 (1.1)	25.2 (1.3)	13.8 (1.1)	4.1 (0.6)
Liechtenstein	483 (4.1)	7.6 (1.5)	14.5 (2.1)	23.2 (2.9)	30.1 (3.4)	19.5 (2.2)	5.1 (1.6)
Russian Federation	462 (4.2)	9.0 (1.0)	18.5 (1.1)	29.2 (0.8)	26.9 (1.1)	13.3 (1.0)	3.2 (0.5)

¹ Less than 335 score points. Although students at this level may have the technical capacity to read, they have serious difficulties in using reading literacy as an effective tool to advance knowledge.

² Between 335 and 407 score points. Indicates an ability to locate a single piece of information, identify the main theme of a text, or make a simple connection with everyday knowledge.

³ Between 408 and 480 score points. Indicates an ability to locate straightforward information, make low-level inferences, work out what a well-defined part of a text means, and use some outside knowledge to understand it.

⁴ Between 481 and 552 score points. Indicates an ability to locate multiple pieces of information, make links between different parts of a text, and relate it to familiar everyday knowledge.

⁵ Between 553 and 625 score points. Indicates an ability to locate embedded information, construe meaning from nuances of language, and critically evaluate a text.

⁶ Above 625 score points. Indicates an ability to manage information that is difficult to find in unfamiliar texts, show detailed understanding of such text, and evaluate critically and build hypotheses.

⁷ Refers to the mean of the data values for all OECD countries, to which each country contributes equally, regardless of the absolute size of the student population of each country.

⁸ Refers to the average for OECD countries as a single entity, to which each country contributes in proportion to the number of 15-year-olds enrolled in its schools.

NOTE: Mean score was designed to have an average of 500 points, and a standard deviation of 100. Standard errors appear in parentheses. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), *Knowledge and Skills for Life, 2000*. (This table was prepared August 2002.)