

REMEDIAL LANGUAGE COURSES IN SCHOOL

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

The percentage of 15-year-olds taking remedial language courses was higher in the United States than in five of the other G8 countries.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000 asked 15-year-old students whether or not they had enrolled in remedial language courses in school and outside school. This indicator examines students' remedial language class attendance in the 3 years preceding the assessment, which includes courses taken in school for the purpose of increasing proficiency in the language of the assessment.

In the United States, on average, 7 percent of 15-year-olds reported taking remedial language courses in school regularly in the three years preceding the assessment (figure 18a). The U.S. percentage was higher than the percentage in five of the other G8 countries. France (5 percent), reported a percentage not measurably different from the United States, and the Russian Federation (11 percent) had a higher rate.

On average, fewer 15-year-olds in the United States regularly attended remedial language courses in the 3 years preceding the

assessment outside of school than in school (figure 18a and figure 18b). Whereas 7 percent of U.S. 15-year-olds reported regularly attending remedial language courses in school, 1 percent reported regularly attending remedial language courses outside of school. This percent is lower than the percent of 15-year-olds in France attending remedial language courses outside school (2 percent) but not detectably different from that in any of the other G8 countries reporting data.

For PISA 2000, 15-year-olds from 32 countries were tested and their scores on the combined reading literacy scale were grouped into levels from 1–5, with level 1 or below being the lowest and level 5 being the highest. In the United States, there were no measurable differences in the percentages of 15-year-olds who attended remedial language courses in school at level 1 or below compared to the corresponding percentages at level 5 as well as for the overall population (figure 18a). However, 3 percent of U.S. 15-year-olds at level 1 or below reported regularly attending remedial language classes outside of school, which was higher than the 1 percent of students overall reporting the same; level 1 or below 15-year-olds in the United States, therefore, were overrepresented in this category.

Definitions and Methodology

PISA 2000 measures students' enrollment in remedial courses in the test language in school and outside of school by asking the students two questions: Over the past 3 years, have you taken remedial courses in school in the test language? Over the past 3 years, have you taken remedial courses out of school in the test language? Students were also asked to report how frequently they attended these remedial courses (regularly, sometimes, or never).

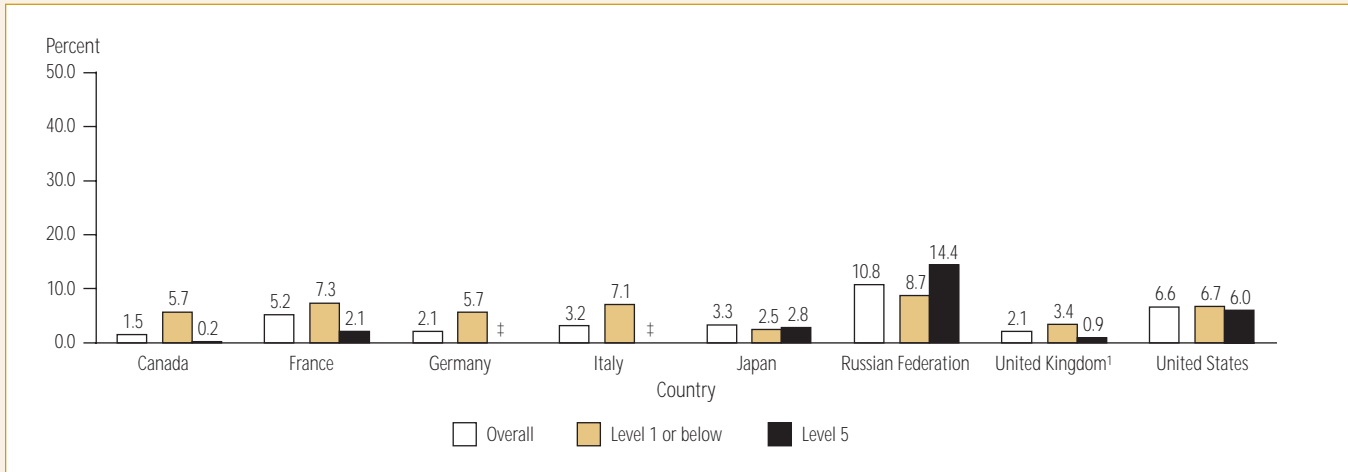
In order to better describe performance in reading literacy, PISA 2000 examined the proportion of students who could accomplish tasks at particular levels. In order to reach a particular level, a student must have been able to answer correctly a majority of

test items at that level. Students were classified into six reading levels according to their scores. Students scoring below 335 were classified as below level 1, students scoring 335 to 407 were at level 1, and students scoring 626 and above were classified at level 5. For the purpose of this report, students scoring at level 1 or below have been combined into a single proficiency level.

A population subgroup is overrepresented in a level if the percentage of the subgroup in that level is statistically higher than the percentage of the population overall in that level.

The combined reading literacy scale is made up of 3 subscales: retrieving information, interpreting texts, and reflecting on texts.

Figure 18a. Percentage of 15-year-olds who reported regularly attending remedial language courses in school in the 3 years preceding the assessment, by reading proficiency level and country: 2000



#Rounds to zero

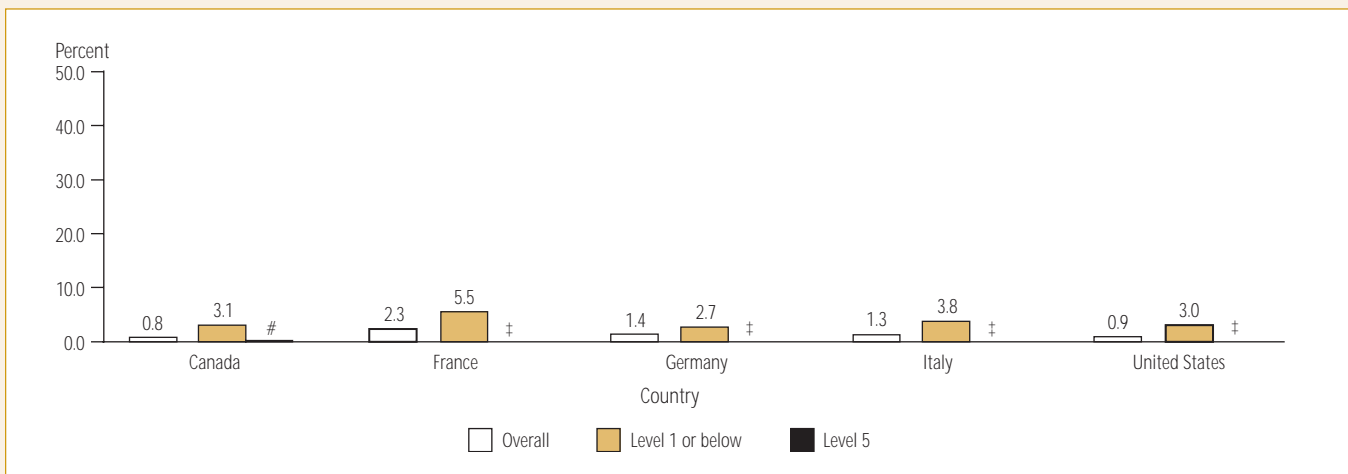
‡Reporting standards not met.

¹The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Wales did not participate in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000.

NOTE: Remedial language courses are those taken in the student's test language. Students were classified into reading levels according to their combined reading literacy scores on PISA 2000. In order to reach a particular proficiency level, a student must have been able to answer correctly a majority of items at that level. Students scoring below 335 were classified as below level 1, students scoring 335 to 407 were at level 1, and students scoring 626 and above were classified at level 5. The overall percentage refers to the percentage of the total 15-year-old student population.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2000.

Figure 18b. Percentage of 15-year-olds who reported regularly attending remedial language courses outside of school in the 3 years preceding the assessment, by reading proficiency level and country: 2000



#Rounds to zero

‡Reporting standards not met.

NOTE: Remedial language courses are those taken in the student's test language. Students were classified into reading proficiency levels according to their combined reading literacy scores on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000. In order to reach a particular level, a student must have been able to answer correctly a majority of items at that level. Students scoring below 335 were classified as below level 1, students scoring 335 to 407 were at level 1, and students scoring 626 and above were classified at level 5. The overall percentage refers to the percentage of the total 15-year-old student population.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA 2000.