

Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students on Science Literacy in an International Context

On the combined science literacy scale, U.S. 15-year-old students' average score (489) was lower than the OECD average (500). The U.S. average score was lower than the average score in 16 of the other 29 OECD jurisdictions and 6 of the 27 non-OECD jurisdictions. The U.S. average score was higher than the average of students in 22 jurisdictions (5 OECD and 17 non-OECD).

Average scores of 15-year-old students on combined science literacy scale, by jurisdiction: 2006

Combined science literacy scale	
Jurisdiction	Score
OECD average	500
<i>OECD jurisdictions</i>	
Finland	563
Canada	534
Japan	531
New Zealand	530
Australia	527
Netherlands	525
Korea, Republic of	522
Germany	516
United Kingdom	515
Czech Republic	513
Switzerland	512
Austria	511
Belgium	510
Ireland	508
Hungary	504
Sweden	503
Poland	498
Denmark	496
France	495
Iceland	491
United States	489
Slovak Republic	488
Spain	488
Norway	487
Luxembourg	486
Italy	475
Portugal	474
Greece	473
Turkey	424
Mexico	410
<i>Non-OECD jurisdictions</i>	
Hong Kong-China	542
Chinese Taipei	532
Estonia	531
Liechtenstein	522
Slovenia	519
Macao-China	511
Croatia	493
Latvia	490
Lithuania	488
Russian Federation	479
Israel	454
Chile	438
Republic of Serbia	436
Bulgaria	434
Uruguay	428
Jordan	422
Thailand	421
Romania	418
Republic of Montenegro	412
Indonesia	393
Argentina	391
Brazil	390
Colombia	388
Tunisia	386
Azerbaijan	382
Qatar	349
Kyrgyz Republic	322

Average is higher than the U.S. average
 Average is not measurably different from the U.S. average
 Average is lower than the U.S. average

NOTE: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average is the average of the national averages of the OECD member jurisdictions. Because the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is principally an OECD study, the results for non-OECD jurisdictions are displayed separately from those of the OECD jurisdictions and are not included in the OECD average. Jurisdictions are ordered on the basis of average scores, from highest to lowest within the OECD jurisdictions and non-OECD jurisdictions. Combined science literacy scores are reported on a scale from 0 to 1,000. Because of an error in printing the test booklets, the United States mean performance may be misestimated by approximately 1 score point. The impact is below one standard error. For details see appendix B. Score differences as noted between the United States and other jurisdictions (as well as between the United States and the OECD average) are significantly different at the .05 level of statistical significance.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2006.