

Exhibit 3. Description of PISA science literacy proficiency levels: 2018

Proficiency level and lower cut score	Task descriptions
Level 6 (708)	At Level 6, students can draw on a range of interrelated scientific ideas and concepts from the physical, life, and earth and space sciences and use content, procedural and epistemic knowledge in order to offer explanatory hypotheses of novel scientific phenomena, events and processes or to make predictions. In interpreting data and evidence, they are able to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information and can draw on knowledge external to the normal school curriculum. They can distinguish between arguments that are based on scientific evidence and theory and those based on other considerations. Level 6 students can evaluate competing designs of complex experiments, field studies or simulations and justify their choices.
Level 5 (633)	At Level 5, students can use abstract scientific ideas or concepts to explain unfamiliar and more complex phenomena, events and processes involving multiple causal links. They are able to apply more sophisticated epistemic knowledge to evaluate alternative experimental designs and justify their choices and use theoretical knowledge to interpret information or make predictions. Level 5 students can evaluate ways of exploring a given question scientifically and identify limitations in interpretations of data sets, including sources and the effects of uncertainty in scientific data.
Level 4 (559)	At Level 4, students can use more complex or more abstract content knowledge, which is either provided or recalled, to construct explanations of more complex or less familiar events and processes. They can conduct experiments involving two or more independent variables in a constrained context. They are able to justify an experimental design by drawing on elements of procedural and epistemic knowledge. Level 4 students can interpret data drawn from a moderately complex data set or less familiar context, draw appropriate conclusions that go beyond the data and provide justifications for their choices.
Level 3 (484)	At Level 3, students can draw upon moderately complex content knowledge to identify or construct explanations of familiar phenomena. In less familiar or more complex situations, they can construct explanations with relevant cueing or support. They can draw on elements of procedural or epistemic knowledge to carry out a simple experiment in a constrained context. Level 3 students are able to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific issues and identify the evidence supporting a scientific claim.
Level 2 (410)	At Level 2, students are able to draw on everyday content knowledge and basic procedural knowledge to identify an appropriate scientific explanation, interpret data, and identify the question being addressed in a simple experimental design. They can use basic or everyday scientific knowledge to identify a valid conclusion from a simple data set. Level 2 students demonstrate basic epistemic knowledge by being able to identify questions that can be investigated scientifically.
Level 1a (335)	At Level 1a, students are able to use basic or everyday content and procedural knowledge to recognise or identify explanations of simple scientific phenomena. With support, they can undertake structured scientific enquiries with no more than two variables. They are able to identify simple causal or correlational relationships and interpret graphical and visual data that require a low level of cognitive demand. Level 1a students can select the best scientific explanation for given data in familiar personal, local and global contexts.
Level 1b (261)	At Level 1b, students can use basic or everyday scientific knowledge to recognize aspects of familiar or simple phenomena. They are able to identify simple patterns in data, recognize basic scientific terms and follow explicit instructions to carry out a scientific procedure.

NOTE: To reach a particular proficiency level, a student must correctly answer a majority of items at that level. Students were classified into science literacy levels according to their scores. Cut scores in the exhibit are rounded; exact cut scores are provided in table A-2 in the Methodology and Technical Notes. Scores are reported on a scale from 0 to 1,000.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2018.