Reader's Guide

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Organisations

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

ACER	Australian Council For Educational Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	The Programme for International Student Assessment
TCMA	Test-Curriculum Match Analysis
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study

Country codes

OECD Countries

CODE	COUNTRY	CODE	COUNTRY
AUS	Australia	MEX	Mexico
AUT	Austria	NLD	Netherlands
BEL	Belgium	NZL	New Zealand
CAN	Canada	NOR	Norway
CZE	Czech Republic	POL	Poland
DNK	Denmark	PRT	Portugal
FIN	Finland	KOR	Korea
FRA	France	SVK	Slovak Republic
DEU	Germany	ESP	Spain
GRC	Greece	SWE	Sweden
HUN	Hungary	CHE	Switzerland
ISL	Iceland	TUR	Turkey
IRL	Ireland	GBR	United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
ITA	Italy		
JPN	Japan	SCO	Scotland
LUX	Luxembourg	USA	United States

OECD Partner Countries and Economies

CODE	COUNTRY	CODE	COUNTRY
BRA	Brazil	PER	Peru
HKG	Hong Kong-China	RUS	Russian Federation
IDN	Indonesia	YUG	Serbia
LVA	Latvia	THA	Thailand
LIE	Liechtenstein[1]	TUN	Tunisia
MAC	Macao-China	URY	Uruguay

1. Liechtenstein's results are not included in results requiring a separate national scaling of item values as the sample size in the country was too small to provide an accurate result.

PISA items and item codes

PISA tests consist of units, which contain a stimulus and one or more items related to the stimulus (see, for example, Annex A1, WALKING). Each of these units has a code (*e.g.* M124). Each item within the unit has its own code (*e.g.* M124Q01, M124Q02). The item names and a question number, *e.g.* WALKING Q1, are used to identify particular items.

Some of the PISA items are secured for future use and cannot be shown in this report. However, a number of PISA mathematics items have been released into the public domain. All released items from PISA 2003 are placed in Annex A1.

TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

Item difficulty – Historically, item difficulty is the proportion of those taking an item, or test, which get the item correct. Within situations employing item response theory (IRT) modelling of response to items relative to the underlying trait (*e.g. mathematical literacy* in the area being measured), item difficulty is the value on the trait scale where the slope of the item's corresponding item response function reaches its maximal value.

Fifteen-year-olds – The use of fifteen-year-olds in the discussion of the PISA sample population refers to students who were aged between 15 years and 3 (complete) months and 16 years and 2 (complete) months at the beginning of the assessment period and who were enrolled in an educational institutions regardless of grade level or institution type or if they were enrolled as a full-time or part-time students.

OECD average – Takes the OECD countries as single entities, each with equal weight. Hence, an OECD average is a statistic generated by adding the country averages and dividing by the number of OECD countries involved. The OECD average provides data on how countries rank relative to the set of countries within the OECD.

OECD total – Takes the OECD countries merged as a single entity to which each country contributes in proportion to the number of its students in the appropriate population. The computation of the OECD total involves the sum total of the outcome variable of interest divided by the total number of data-related students within the OECD countries. The OECD total provides a comparison statistic for the total human capital present with the OECD countries.

Rounding of numbers – Because of rounding, some columns or groups of numbers may not add up to the totals shown. Totals, differences, and averages are always calculated on the basis of exact numbers and then rounded after calculation.

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION

For further documentation on the PISA assessment instruments and the methods used in PISA, see the PISA 2003 Technical Report (OECD, 2005), the Australian Council of Educational Research PISA site (*www.acer.edu.au/ozpisa*) and the PISA web site (*www.pisa.oecd.org*).