

## READING PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH

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

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No difference was detected between the mean scores of U.S. 15-year-olds on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reading literacy scale (504) and the mean scores of 15-year-olds in France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom. However, the mean literacy score of U.S. students was below the mean of 534 for Canadian students and above the mean for students in the Russian Federation. The mean score of 462 for Russian students was lower than the mean score in the seven other countries reporting data (figure 17a).

Twelve percent of U.S. 15-year-olds performed at the highest proficiency level on the PISA reading literacy scale. The proportion of 15-year-olds performing at the highest level was higher in the United States than in Italy (5 percent) and the Russian Federation (3 percent), but no differences were detected between the United States and Canada, France, Germany, Japan, or the United Kingdom (figure 17b).

### *Definition and Methodology*

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Combined reading literacy is based on three scales: a “retrieving information scale” that reports students’ ability to locate information in a text, an “interpreting texts” scale that reports on the ability of students to construct meaning and draw on inferences from written information, and a “reflection and evaluation” scale which reports on students’ ability to relate text to their knowledge, ideas and experience.

The combined reading literacy scale was designed to have an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Each of the

three reading scales is divided into five levels of knowledge and skills. Level 5, the highest level of proficiency, corresponds to a score of more than 625, level 4 to a score in the range from 553 to 625, level 3 to scores from 481 to 552, level 2 to scores from 408 to 480, and level 1, the lowest of level of proficiency, to scores from 335 to 407.

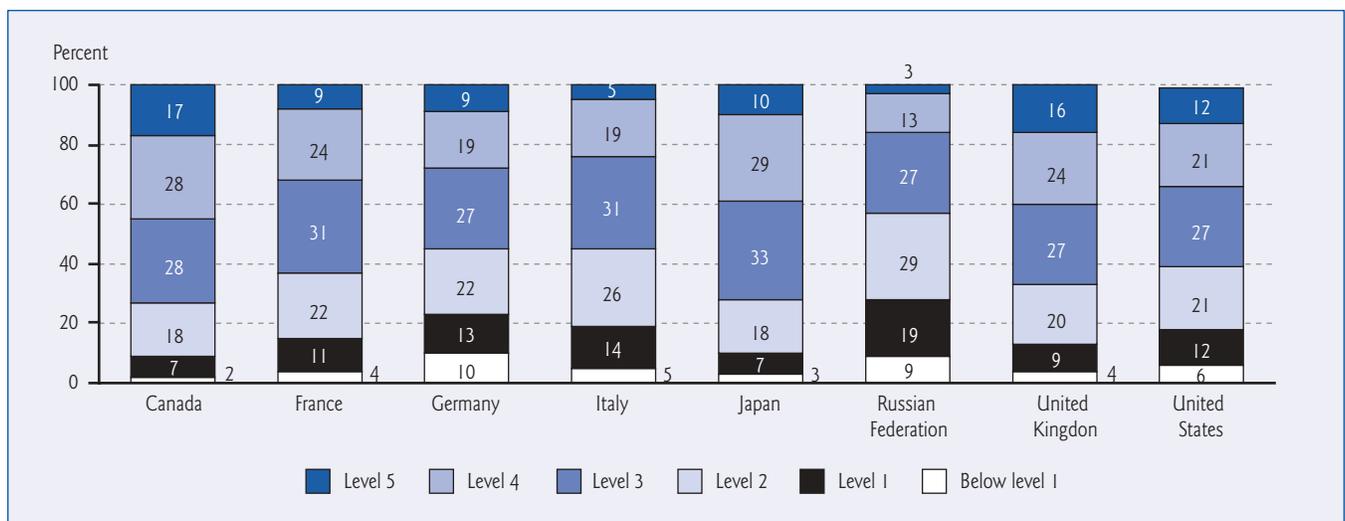
**Table 17. Mean reading literacy performance scores of 15-year-olds, by country: 2000**

Country	Mean score
Canada	534
France	505
Germany	484
Italy	487
Japan	522
Russian Federation	462
United Kingdom	523
United States	504

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Dark shading represents a statistically higher score than the U.S. score; light shading represents a lower score. No shading shows no statistical difference from the U.S. score.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*, 2000, Table 2.3a.

**Figure 17. Percentage of students performing at given proficiency levels on the combined reading literacy scale, by country: 2000**



NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The combined reading literacy scale was designed to have an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Each of the three reading scales is divided into five levels of knowledge and skills. Level 5, the highest level of proficiency, corresponds to a score of more than 625, level 4 to a score in the range from 553 to 625, level 3 to scores from 481 to 552, level 2 to scores from 408 to 480, and level 1, the lowest level of proficiency, to scores from 335 to 407.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*, 2000, Table 2.1a.

## Reading Performance of Secondary School-Age Youth – Data Tables

Table A-17a. Mean reading literacy performance scores of 15-year-olds, by country: 2000

Country	Mean
Canada	534.31 (1.6)
France	504.74 (2.7)
Germany	483.99 (2.5)
Italy	487.47 (2.9)
Japan	522.23 (5.2)
Russian Federation	461.76 (4.2)
United Kingdom	523.44 (2.6)
United States	504.42 (7.0)

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Standard errors are in parentheses.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*, 2000, Table 2.3a.

Table A-17b. Percentage of students performing at given proficiency levels on the combined reading literacy scale, by country: 2000

Country	Below level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Canada	2.38 (0.3)	7.18 (0.3)	17.95 (0.4)	27.99 (0.5)
France	4.18 (0.6)	11.01 (0.8)	21.99 (0.8)	30.61 (1.0)
Germany	9.94 (0.7)	12.69 (0.6)	22.34 (0.8)	26.82 (1.0)
Italy	5.38 (0.9)	13.54 (0.9)	25.63 (1.0)	30.63 (1.0)
Japan	2.74 (0.6)	7.34 (1.1)	17.96 (1.3)	33.33 (1.3)
Russian Federation	8.97 (1.0)	18.45 (1.1)	29.22 (0.8)	26.92 (1.1)
United Kingdom	3.64 (0.4)	9.21 (0.5)	19.64 (0.7)	27.48 (0.9)
United States	6.41 (1.2)	11.51 (1.2)	20.98 (1.2)	27.42 (1.3)

Country	Level 4	Level 5
Canada	27.72 (0.6)	16.78 (0.5)
France	23.74 (0.9)	8.48 (0.6)
Germany	19.40 (1.0)	8.80 (0.5)
Italy	19.48 (1.1)	5.34 (0.5)
Japan	28.77 (1.7)	9.86 (1.1)
Russian Federation	13.25 (1.0)	3.19 (0.5)
United Kingdom	24.41 (0.9)	15.63 (1.0)
United States	21.45 (1.4)	12.24 (1.4)

NOTE: The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Standard errors are in parentheses. Level 1 represents the lowest proficiency level and level 5 represents the highest proficiency level on the PISA combined literacy scale. The combined reading literacy scale was designed to have an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Each of the three reading scales is divided into five levels of knowledge and skills. Level 5, the highest level of proficiency, corresponds to a score of more than 625, level 4 to a score in the range from 553 to 625, level 3 to scores from 481 to 552, level 2 to scores from 408 to 480, and level 1, the lowest level of proficiency, to scores from 335 to 407.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*, 2000, Table 2.1a.