

## PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA) RESULTS FROM PISA 2018

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey of 15-year-old students that assesses the extent to which they have acquired the key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. In 2018, PISA measured financial literacy for the third time. Results from this assessment provide not just insights into the level of money-related skills and knowledge that students possess, but also into their attitudes, behaviours and experience with financial matters, and the environments in which they learn about financial matters. These results can be used to improve their readiness to take responsible financial decisions and financial resilience once they leave school and enter further education or employment.

### Italy

#### What 15-year-old students in Italy know and can do in financial literacy

- Students in Italy scored, on average, 476 points, which was lower than the OECD average in financial literacy (505 points). Overall, their scores were most similar to those of students in the Slovak Republic.
- Some 21% of students in Italy did not reach the baseline level of proficiency (Level 2) in financial literacy, compared to 15% on average across OECD countries and economies. At best, these students can identify common financial products and terms, recognise the difference between needs and wants, and make simple decisions on everyday spending in contexts that they are likely to have encountered personally. Over 90% of students in the Canadian provinces, Estonia, Finland and Poland displayed at least Level 2 proficiency.
- Some 5% of students in Italy are top performers (Level 5) in financial literacy, compared to 10% on average across OECD countries and economies. These students can analyse complex financial products, solve non-routine financial problems and show an understanding of the wider financial landscape. Over 15% of students in the Canadian provinces, Estonia and Finland were also top performers.
- Mean financial literacy performance in Italy in PISA 2018 was similar to that observed in both PISA 2012 and PISA 2015.
- Students in Italy scored, on average, 17 points lower in financial literacy than what would have been expected based on their performance in mathematics and reading.

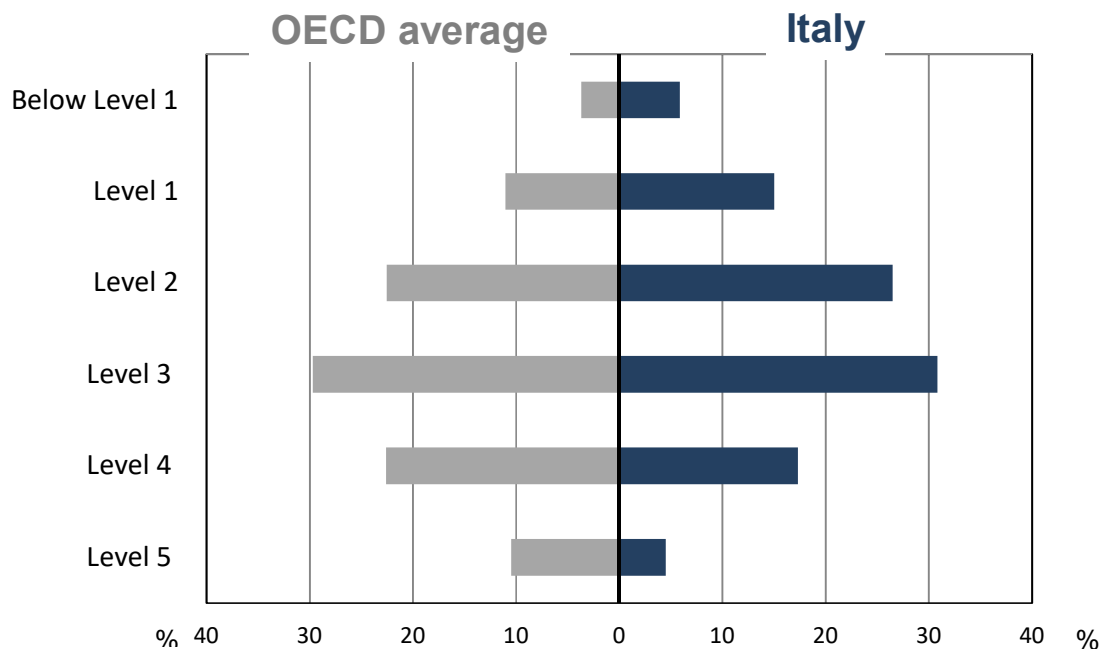
**Table 1. Performance in financial literacy across participating countries and economies**

Country/Economy	Mean score	Percentage of students	
		Below Level 2 (low achievers)	Level 5 (top performers)
Estonia	547	5.3	19.0
Finland	537	9.9	19.9
Canadian provinces	532	8.8	16.7

Poland	520	9.5	11.8
Australia	511	15.6	14.1
United States	506	16.0	12.4
Portugal	505	14.0	8.3
OECD average	505	14.7	10.5
Latvia	501	10.6	6.1
Lithuania	498	14.2	7.7
Russian Federation	495	14.4	6.3
Spain	492	15.0	5.7
Slovak Republic	481	21.2	7.2
Italy	476	20.9	4.5
Chile	451	30.2	3.0
Serbia	444	33.2	2.5
Bulgaria	432	38.5	2.4
Brazil	420	43.6	1.9
Peru	411	46.4	1.4
Georgia	403	49.8	0.7
Indonesia	388	57.4	0.3

Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of their mean score.  
Source: OECD PISA 2018 Database, Tables IV.B1.2.1 and IV.B1.2.4.

Figure 1. Percentage of students at each level of proficiency in financial literacy



Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table IV.B1.2.4.

### Equity in financial literacy performance

- On average across participating OECD countries and economies, boys outperformed girls by just two score points. In Italy, the gender gap in financial literacy was significant in favour of boys, who scored on average 15 points higher than girls. The gender gap in PISA 2018 was not significantly different from what it was in PISA 2012, when it was 8 score points in favour of boys; nor was the gender gap

in PISA 2018 significantly different from what it was in PISA 2015, when it was 11 score points in favour of boys.

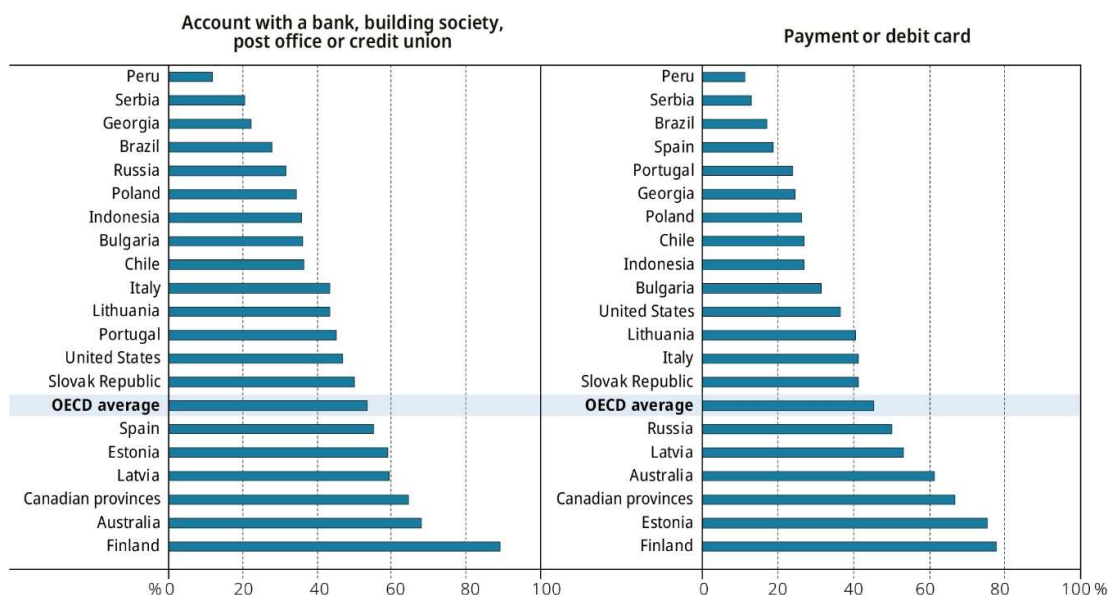
- After accounting for performance in mathematics and reading, the average difference in performance was now only 9 score points in favour of boys. This difference is related to the elements of the assessment that are unique to financial literacy.
- In Italy, advantaged students scored 506 points in the PISA 2018 financial literacy assessment, on average, while disadvantaged students scored 440 points. Advantaged students scored 66 points higher than disadvantaged students, which was narrower than the average performance gap of 78 score points across OECD countries/economies.
- Socio-economic status was a strong predictor of performance in financial literacy in all participating countries and economies. In Italy, it explained 8% of the variation in financial literacy performance in PISA 2018, which was less than the 10% of the variation that it explained on average across OECD countries/economies.
- In 2018, some 10% of students in Italy had an immigrant background. The average difference in financial literacy performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students in Italy was 34 score points in favour of non-immigrant students. After accounting for performance in mathematics and reading, where immigrant students tended to perform worse than non-immigrant students, the average difference in performance was no longer significant.

### How experienced are students in Italy with money matters?

- In Italy, 44% of students who sat the PISA 2018 financial literacy assessment reported holding an account with a bank, building society, post office or credit union (hereafter referred to as a bank account). This was more than the percentage of students who so reported in both PISA 2012 (36%) and PISA 2015 (35%). On average across OECD countries/economies in 2018, 54% of students reported holding a bank account.
- Likewise, in Italy, 41% of students who sat the PISA 2018 assessment reported holding a payment card or debit card. This was significantly more than the percentage of students who so reported in PISA 2012 (19%) and PISA 2015 (37%). On average across OECD countries/economies in 2018, 45% of students reported holding such a card.
- Socio-economic advantage was positively associated with the likelihood of holding both a bank account and a payment/debit card in all countries/economies that participated in PISA 2018.
- Holding a bank account was associated with a 12-point increase in financial literacy performance, while holding a payment/debit card was associated with a 22-point increase in financial literacy performance in Italy in PISA 2018.

**Figure 2. Students holding basic financial products**

Percentage of students who reported holding one of these financial products



Note: Countries and economies are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of students who reported holding each financial product.

Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database, Table IV.B1.6.1.

- Some 74% of students in Italy reported that they had bought something on line (either alone or with a family member) during the 12 months prior to sitting the PISA 2018 financial literacy assessment, compared to an average across OECD countries/economies of 73%. In Italy, buying something on line was associated with a 31-point increase in financial literacy performance.
- Making a payment using a mobile phone was less common. Some 42% of students in Italy reported that they had made such a payment during the 12 months prior to sitting the PISA 2018 financial literacy assessment; the average across OECD countries/economies was 39%. In Italy, making a payment using a mobile phone was associated with a 14-point decrease in financial literacy performance.

### What attitudes and behaviours towards money matters do students in Italy display?

- In Italy, 51% of students reported that they feel confident or very confident in paying with a debit card instead of using cash, compared to 67% of students on average across OECD countries/economies. Such students scored 24 points higher in financial literacy than students who reported otherwise.
- Likewise, some 36% of students in Italy reported that they feel confident or very confident in keeping track of their balance digitally, compared to 65% of students on average across OECD countries/economies. Such students scored 19 points higher in financial literacy than students who reported otherwise.
- Positive associations between both confidence in paying with a debit card instead of using cash and confidence in keeping track of one's balance digitally, on the one hand, and performance, on the other, were observed in 18 of the 19 participating countries/economies.
- In Italy, 36% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy talking about money matters. This disposition was associated with a 14-score point increase in financial literacy performance.
- Most 15-year-old students in all participating countries/economies already display responsible financial behaviours. Just under nine in ten students, on average across OECD countries/economies, reported that they had checked how much money they have at some point during the 12 months prior to sitting the PISA financial literacy assessment (85% in Italy), and a similar proportion reported that they had

checked that they were given the right change when they had bought something over the same period (90% in Italy).

- In Italy, students who reported that they had checked how much money they have scored 54 points higher in financial literacy than students who did not so report; and students who reported that they had checked that they were given the right change after buying something scored 37 points higher in financial literacy than students who did not so report.
- Most 15-year-old students in almost all participating countries/economies also already use responsible spending strategies. In Italy, 77% of students reported sometimes or always comparing prices in different shops, compared to 76% on average across OECD countries/economies. Such students scored 44 points higher in financial literacy in PISA 2018 than students who did not so report.
- Some 71% of students in Italy reported sometimes or always comparing prices between a physical shop and an online shop, compared to 69% on average across OECD countries/economies. These students scored 41 points higher in financial literacy in PISA 2018 than students who did not so report.

### Do students in Italy learn about financial matters at home?

- Some 90% of students in Italy reported obtaining information about money matters from their parents, guardians or other adult relations; this was consistent with a high average of 94% of students reporting so, on average across OECD countries/economies.
- The Internet was another common source of information about money matters, with 83% of students in Italy reporting that they obtain such information through this medium.
- In Italy, students who reported obtaining information about money matters from their parents, guardians or other adult relations scored 38 points higher on the PISA 2018 financial literacy assessment than students who did not so report.
- Most students in Italy reported that they were given a certain level of autonomy in handling money: some 72% agreed or strongly agreed that they could decide independently what to spend their money on, and some 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they were responsible for their own money matters (e.g. for preventing theft). Being able to decide independently what to spend one's money on was associated with a 16 score-point improvement in financial literacy performance, while being responsible for one's own money matters was associated with a 10 score-point improvement in financial literacy performance.

### Do students in Italy learn about financial matters at school?

- Disadvantaged students were more likely than advantaged students to report having encountered certain money-related tasks and activities in school lessons in Italy.
- Some 40% of students in Italy reported encountering certain types of problems about money matters in their mathematics classes. Reporting that they encountered such problems in their mathematics classes was associated with no significant difference in financial literacy performance in PISA 2018.
- A smaller percentage of students, 27%, in Italy reported encountering these types of problems about money matters in another class; reporting that they encountered such problems in these other classes was associated with no significant difference in financial literacy performance in PISA 2018.

## Key features of PISA 2018

### **The content**

- The PISA 2018 survey focused on reading, with mathematics, science and global competence as minor areas of assessment; Italy did not participate in the assessment of global competence. PISA 2018 also included an assessment of young people's financial literacy, which was optional for countries and economies. Results for reading, mathematics and science were released on 3 December 2019; results for financial literacy on 7 May 2020; and results for global competence will be released later in 2020.

### **The students**

- Some 600 000 students completed the main assessment in 2018, representing about 32 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 79 participating countries and economies. The financial literacy sample in PISA 2018 was comprised of around 117 000 students, representing about 13.5 million 15-year-old students in the schools of 20 participating countries and economies. In Italy, 9 182 students, in 539 schools, completed the financial literacy assessment, representing 521 223 15-year-old students (85% of the total population of 15-year-olds).

### **The assessment**

- Computer-based tests were used in most countries, with assessments lasting a total of two hours. All countries/economies that participated in financial literacy delivered the assessment on the computer. In reading, a multi-stage adaptive approach was applied in computer-based tests whereby students were assigned a block of test items based on their performance in preceding blocks.
- Test items were a mixture of multiple-choice questions and questions requiring students to construct their own responses. The items were organised into groups based on a passage of text describing a real-life situation.
- Students also answered a background questionnaire, which took about 35 minutes to complete. The questionnaire sought information about the students themselves, their attitudes, dispositions and beliefs, their homes, and their school and learning experiences. This questionnaire also included questions about students' relationship with financial matters, including where they obtained information about financial matters, and their attitudes, behaviours and experiences with financial matters.
- Some countries/economies also distributed additional questionnaires to elicit more information. These included a questionnaire for teachers asking about themselves and their teaching practices; a questionnaire for parents asking them to provide information about their perceptions of and involvement in their child's school and learning; a questionnaire about students' familiarity with computers; a questionnaire about students' expectations for further education; and a questionnaire, developed for PISA 2018, about students' well-being.

### **References**

OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume IV): Are Students Smart About Money?*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/48ebd1ba-en>

## Map of PISA countries and economies


**OECD member countries**

Australia  
 Austria  
 Belgium  
 Canada  
 Chile  
 Colombia  
 Czech Republic  
 Denmark  
 Estonia  
 Finland  
 France  
 Germany  
 Greece  
 Hungary  
 Iceland  
 Ireland  
 Israel  
 Italy  
 Japan  
 Korea  
 Latvia  
 Lithuania  
 Luxembourg  
 Mexico  
 Netherlands  
 New Zealand  
 Norway  
 Poland  
 Portugal  
 Slovak Republic  
 Slovenia  
 Spain  
 Sweden  
 Switzerland  
 Turkey  
 United Kingdom  
 United States\*

**Partner countries and economies in PISA 2018**

Albania  
 Argentina  
 Baku (Azerbaijan)  
 Belarus  
 Bosnia and Herzegovina  
 Brazil  
 Brunei Darussalam  
 B-S-J-Z (China)\*\*  
 Bulgaria  
 Costa Rica  
 Croatia  
 Cyprus  
 Dominican Republic  
 Georgia  
 Hong Kong (China)  
 Indonesia  
 Jordan  
 Kazakhstan  
 Kosovo  
 Lebanon  
 Macao (China)  
 Malaysia  
 Malta  
 Republic of Moldova  
 Montenegro  
 Morocco  
 Republic of North Macedonia  
 Panama  
 Peru  
 Philippines  
 Qatar  
 Romania  
 Russian Federation  
 Saudi Arabia  
 Serbia  
 Singapore  
 Chinese Taipei  
 Thailand  
 Ukraine  
 United Arab Emirates  
 Uruguay  
 Viet Nam

**Partner countries and economies in previous cycles**

Algeria  
 Azerbaijan  
 Guangdong (China)  
 Himachal Pradesh (India)  
 Kyrgyzstan  
 Liechtenstein  
 Mauritius  
 Miranda (Venezuela)  
 Tamil Nadu (India)  
 Trinidad and Tobago  
 Tunisia

\* Puerto Rico participated in the PISA 2015 assessment (as an unincorporated territory of the United States).

\*\* B-S-J-Z (China) refers to four PISA 2018 participating Chinese provinces/municipalities: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. In PISA 2015, the four PISA participating Chinese provinces/municipalities were: Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

For more information about PISA 2018 visit <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>

Data can also be found on line by following the *StatLinks*  under the tables and charts in the publication.

Explore, compare and visualise more data and analysis using: <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/>.

**Questions can be directed to:**

PISA team, Directorate for Education and Skills

[edu.pisa@oecd.org](mailto:edu.pisa@oecd.org)

OECD International Network on Financial Education, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs

[SecretariatINFE@oecd.org](mailto:SecretariatINFE@oecd.org)

**Country note author:**

Jeffrey Mo, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs

[jeffrey.mo@oecd.org](mailto:jeffrey.mo@oecd.org)