

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Frequently Asked Questions

PISA 2025 (Spring 2025)

Information for Students

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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What is PISA?

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment of students nearing the end of mandatory schooling that measures how well students apply their knowledge and skills in solving problems in science, reading, mathematics, and a newly developed component about learning in a digital world (LDW). Conducted every three years, PISA presents problems that students are likely to encounter in the real world. This spring, students like you from more than 80 countries and education systems, including the United States, will participate in PISA.

Why should I participate in PISA?

You are one of up to 52 students in your school who have been selected to participate in PISA. Participation in PISA is voluntary, but each student who participates plays a vital role in ensuring the U.S. results are representative of all types of schools and education environments across the country—including public and private schools. Plus, if you participate in PISA you will...

- Receive \$25 for participating;
- Receive a certificate for 4 hours of volunteer service from the U.S. Department of Education;
- Represent students like you across the country; and
- Make an important contribution to this global effort to understand students' ability by representing other students just like you across the United States.

What subjects are assessed in PISA?

Each student participating in PISA will be assessed in various combinations of the following subjects: science, reading, mathematics, and a newly developed component about learning in a digital world (LDW).

What types of questions will I see on PISA?

PISA questions assess the knowledge and skills students have learned, both in and out of school, based on situations you may encounter in real life. Some PISA questions require that you select from a set of provided answers; other PISA questions require that you write out your response. PISA is administered on computer and many of the items are interactive, where you manipulate different pieces of information. To try PISA items on your own, please visit <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/pisa/pisa-test.html>.

How long does PISA take?

The PISA assessment takes approximately 3½ hours to complete. This includes time for instructions, the assessment, breaks, and a survey about you.

How did my school get selected to take PISA?

Your school was selected using statistical sampling methods following international standards so that the overall U.S. sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. This is done to ensure that U.S. schools and students are accurately represented.

Only 6,000 students will have the unique opportunity to participate in PISA across the United States. How often do you get the chance to represent your country? Participating in PISA is a national service. You can have an impact on the bigger picture of education in the United States and around the world.

How did I get selected to take PISA?

The only criteria for being eligible to be selected for PISA are being born in 2009 and enrolled in grade 7 or higher. From a list of all eligible students provided by your school, up to 52 students were selected to participate. Every eligible student enrolled in a PISA selected school has an equal chance of being selected. Students in other countries are selected in the same way to make sure each country is fairly represented and no country is advantaged or disadvantaged because of the types of schools or groups of students selected.

What is done with the information you collect from me?

Your identity and participation will be kept confidential and you will not be directly associated with your PISA responses after the assessment. PISA is not designed to produce individual scores and your individual performance is not shared with teachers, the school, or the district in any way. The data collected for PISA will be used to report on students' knowledge and skills as group descriptions at the national level. All of the information you provide may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB# 1850-0755.

Where can I find more information?

Visit the PISA website at <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/>.

For additional questions about PISA, contact the PISA U.S. home office at 1-888-638-2597 or email PISAHelp@westat.com.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is authorized to conduct the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543), and to collect students' education records from educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of evaluating federally supported education programs under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(3)(iii) and 99.35). The data are being collected for NCES by Westat, a U.S.-based research organization. All of the information you provide may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151).