



PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)
RESULTS FROM PISA 2012 FINANCIAL LITERACY

ITALY

PISA's first financial literacy assessment shows the extent to which 15-year-old students have the financial knowledge and skills needed to make a successful transition from school into higher education, employment or entrepreneurship. Many 15-year-olds are already consumers of financial services, such as bank accounts, and as they near the end of compulsory education they will face more challenging financial choices, including whether to continue with formal education and, if so, how to finance such study.

Italy's performance in financial literacy is below the average of the 13 OECD countries and economies that participated in the assessment. More than one in five students in Italy (21.7% compared with 15.3% on average in OECD countries and economies) does not reach the baseline level of proficiency in financial literacy. At best, these students can recognise the difference between needs and wants, can make simple decisions on everyday spending, and can recognise the purpose of everyday financial documents, such as an invoice. Only 2.1% of students are top performers (compared with 9.7% on average in OECD countries and economies).

Overall, Italy's performance in financial literacy is lower than might be expected, based on students' skills in mathematics and reading. This is particularly true among students with strong performance in mathematics. This evidence suggests that the core skills students acquire in school do not provide them with the skills to perform well in the assessment of financial literacy.

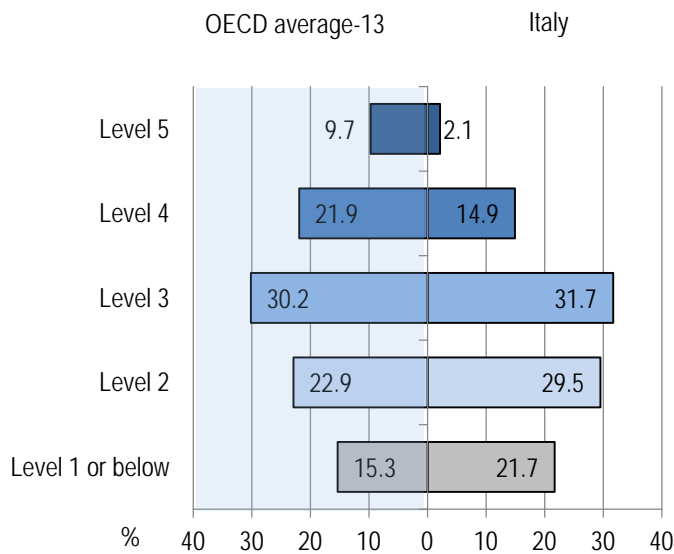
In Italy, the relationship between socio-economic status and performance in financial literacy is significantly weaker than the OECD average, suggesting that the country provides students with relatively equitable opportunities for learning. However, regional differences are large, as the difference between the best-performing regions (Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto) and the worst-performing one (Calabria) is 86 score points, larger than one proficiency level.

Italian students have less experience with financial products and services than students in the other OECD countries that participated in the assessment: 44% of Italian students have a bank account or a prepaid debit card compared with the OECD average of 54%.

PISA 2012 defines financial literacy as *"...knowledge and understanding of financial concepts and risks, and the skills, motivation and confidence to apply such knowledge and understanding in order to make effective decisions across a range of financial contexts, to improve the financial well-being of individuals and society, and to enable participation in economic life"*. For a full explanation, see the [PISA 2012 Assessment and Analytical Framework](#).

Performance in financial literacy

Students at each level of proficiency in financial literacy



Source: Table VI.2.1

Country/Economy	Mean performance in financial literacy	
	Mean score	Range of ranks
Shanghai-China	603	1 - 1
Flemish Community (Belgium)	541	2 - 2
Estonia	529	3 - 4
Australia	526	3 - 5
New Zealand	520	4 - 6
Czech Republic	513	5 - 7
Poland	510	6 - 7
Latvia	501	8 - 9
United States	492	8 - 12
Russian Federation	486	9 - 14
France	486	9 - 14
Slovenia	485	9 - 14
Spain	484	10 - 15
Croatia	480	11 - 16
Israel	476	11 - 17
Slovak Republic	470	15 - 17
Italy	466	16 - 17
Colombia	379	18 - 18
OECD average-13	500	

Partner countries and economies are marked in blue.

Source: Figure VI.2.3.

- Students in Italy score below the average of the 13 OECD countries and economies that were assessed in financial literacy in 2012. With a mean score of 466 points, the rank of Italy among all 18 participating countries and economies is estimated to lie between 16 and 17.
- Average performance in Italy is not significantly different from average performance in Israel and the Slovak Republic.

Student performance in financial literacy in comparison with that in reading and mathematics

- In Italy, financial literacy is positively correlated with mathematics and reading performance. Around 62% (compared with the OECD average of 75%) of the financial literacy score reflects skills that can be measured in mathematics and/or reading assessments, while 38% (compared with the OECD average of 25%) of the score reflects factors that are uniquely captured by the financial literacy assessment.
- Students in Italy perform worse than might be expected in financial literacy, based on their performance in mathematics and reading. The difference between observed and expected performance in financial literacy is particularly large among students with strong performance in mathematics.

Formal financial education

- In Italy, finance and education authorities have implemented an experimental programme to incorporate financial education into school curricula in primary and secondary education. The pilot has been accompanied by an impact assessment evaluation.
- The programme was piloted in the school year 2008/09 with about 630 students and was then made available nationwide, reaching about 23 000 students in 2011/12. Participation in the programme is voluntary; teachers who decide to participate receive training and pedagogical resources.

How performance in financial literacy varies

Performance in financial literacy by subgroup	
	Mean score/score dif.
Boys	470
Girls	462
Difference (Boys - Girls)	8
Non-immigrant students	474
Immigrant students	441
Difference (non-imm. - imm.)	33
Strength of the relationship between socio-economic status and performance	
Performance variation accounted for by socio-economic status (%)	
Financial literacy	7.5
Mathematics	7.9
Difference (FL - M)	-0.4

Statistically significant differences are marked in bold.

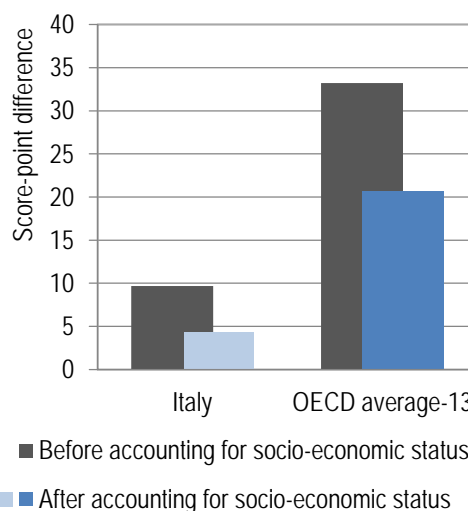
Source: Tables VI.3.1, VI.3.4, VI.3.10.

- In Italy, boys score slightly higher than girls in financial literacy, on average, and there are more boys than girls among top performers and low performers.
- About 8% of the variation in student performance in financial literacy in Italy is associated with socio-economic status, lower than the OECD average.
- Students in Italy with at least one parent in a skilled occupation perform better in financial literacy, by 34 score points, than students whose parents have a semi-skilled or elementary occupation.
- The performance difference between the best-performing Italian regions (Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto) and the worst-performing one (Calabria) is 86 score points, larger than one proficiency level.

Students' experience and behaviour with money, and their performance in financial literacy

- In Italy, 44% of students have a bank account or a prepaid debit card and 49% earn money from work, including working outside school hours (e.g. a holiday job, part-time work), working in a family business, or performing occasional informal jobs, such as baby-sitting or gardening.
- Students in Italy who hold a bank account score 10 points higher than students who do not, but they perform at the same level after taking socio-economic status into account.
- In Italy, 60% of students reported that they would save if they want to buy something for which they do not have enough money; 10% reported that they would not buy the item.
- Students in Italy who reported that they would save if they want to buy something for which they do not have enough money perform better in financial literacy than students of similar socio-economic status who would buy the item anyway.

Score-point difference between students who hold a bank account and students who do not



Statistically significant differences are marked in a darker colour.

Source: Table VI.4.2.

Legal framework for young people's access to financial products

- In Italy, children and teenagers cannot open current accounts but they can open saving accounts jointly with parents/guardians (savings accounts for young people aged 12 to 17 have some limitations, e.g. on the number of withdrawals or the maximum amount that can be withdrawn).
- Italy requires parents' consent to allow 15-year-olds to open and operate cash withdrawal/ATM cards, prepaid cards and debit cards. In addition to parents' permission, there are limitations to the operations that can be performed by minors with these cards.

What is PISA?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey that assesses the extent to which 15-year-old students near the end of compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies. The assessment does not just ascertain whether students can reproduce knowledge; it also examines how well students can extrapolate from what they have learned and apply that knowledge in unfamiliar settings, both in and outside of school.

PISA offers insights for education policy and practice, and helps monitor trends in students' acquisition of knowledge and skills across countries and in different demographic subgroups within each country. The findings allow policy makers to gauge the knowledge and skills of students in their own countries in comparison with those in other countries, set policy targets against measurable goals achieved by other education systems, and learn from policies and practices applied elsewhere.

Key features of the PISA 2012 assessment of financial literacy

PISA 2012 is the first large-scale international study to assess the financial literacy, learned in and outside of school, of 15-year-olds nearing the end of compulsory education. Eighteen countries and economies participated in the assessment of financial literacy, including 13 **OECD countries and economies**: Australia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and the United States; and five **partner countries and economies**: Colombia, Croatia, Latvia, the Russian Federation and Shanghai-China.

The assessment

- Financial literacy was assessed through a paper-based test lasting 60 minutes. Students assessed in financial literacy also completed a one-hour assessment of mathematics and reading.
- Test questions were a mixture of multiple-choice questions and those requiring students to construct their own responses. Sample items can be explored online at <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/test/>.
- Students who took the assessment of financial literacy also answered the PISA student questionnaire about themselves, their homes, their school and learning experiences, and their attitudes towards learning. Students also answered questions, included in the financial literacy test booklets, about their experience with money.
- School principals received a questionnaire that asked standard questions about school policies and the learning environment, and also included questions about financial education in school.

The students

- An additional sample of students was selected in the same schools that participated in the core PISA assessment. In general, eight additional 15-year-old students were chosen at random from each participating school to take the financial literacy assessment. Around 29 000 students completed the assessment of financial literacy in 2012, representing about nine million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 18 participating countries and economies.

In Italy, 7 068 students in 1 158 schools completed the assessment of financial literacy.

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For more information on PISA and to access the full set of PISA 2012 results, visit: www.oecd.org/pisa

For more information on the OECD work on financial education, visit: www.financial-education.org