



Republic of Rwanda  
Ministry of Education



**NESAS** NATIONAL EXAMINATION  
AND SCHOOL INSPECTION  
AUTHORITY

# Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

# PISA 2025



## Introduction to

# PISA

The PISA, Programme for International Student Assessment, is a worldwide study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) every three years, that measures the academic performance of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science, aiming to provide comparable data for countries to evaluate and improve their education policies by benchmarking against other participating nations; its primary impact is driving global discussions on education quality and equity, often influencing policy changes within participating countries based on the results of the assessment.

PISA is not tied to a specific school curriculum but rather assesses how well students can apply their knowledge and skills to real-world challenges. It helps policymakers, educators, and researchers compare education systems across different countries and improve learning outcomes based on data-driven insights.



## Key points about



### Purpose:

To assess skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in key subjects, allowing countries to compare their education systems and identify areas for improvement.

### What measures:

It evaluates the educational performance of 15-year-old students in three key areas:

- **Reading Literacy** – the ability to understand, use, and reflect on written texts.
- **Mathematical Literacy** – the capacity to apply mathematical concepts to real-life problems.
- **Scientific Literacy** – understanding scientific concepts and applying them in everyday situations.

### Impact on participating countries:

- **Policy influence:** PISA results often inform education policy decisions at national levels, leading to reforms aimed at improving performance in identified areas.
- **Public awareness:** The release of PISA results generates public discussion about education quality, potentially putting pressure on governments to address issues.
- **International comparison:** Countries can see how their students compare to peers in other participating nations, facilitating learning from best practices.



### About

# PISA

Up to the end of the 1990s, the OECD's comparisons of education outcomes were mainly based on measures of years of schooling, which are not reliable indicators of what people know and can do. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) changed this. The idea behind PISA lay in testing the knowledge and skills of students directly, through a metric that was internationally agreed upon; linking that with data from students, teachers, schools and systems to understand performance differences; and then harnessing the power of collaboration to act on the data, both by creating shared points of reference and by leveraging peer pressure.

The aim of PISA was not to create another layer of top-down accountability but to help schools and policymakers shift from looking upward within the education system to looking outward to the next teacher, the next school, and the next country. In essence, PISA counts what counts and makes that information available to educators and policymakers so they can make more informed decisions.

The OECD countries that initiated PISA tried to make PISA different from traditional assessments in other ways. In a world that rewards individuals increasingly not just for what they know but for what they can do with what they know, PISA goes beyond assessing whether students can reproduce what they have learned in school. To do well in PISA, students have to be able to extrapolate from what they know, think across the boundaries of subject-matter disciplines, and apply their knowledge creatively in normal



situations, and demonstrate effective learning strategies. If all we do is teach our children what we know, they might remember enough to follow in our footsteps; but if they learn how to learn, and can think for themselves, and work with others, they can go anywhere they want.

Some people argue that the PISA tests are unfair because they may confront students with problems they have not encountered in school. But then life is unfair because the real test in life is not whether we can remember what we learned at school, but whether we will be able to solve problems that we can't possibly anticipate today.

However, the greatest strength of PISA lies in its working methods. Most assessments are centrally planned and then contracted to engineers who build them. That's how tests are created that are owned by a company – but not by the people who are needed to change education. PISA turned that on its head. The idea of PISA attracted the world's best thinkers and mobilised hundreds of experts, educators, and scientists from the participating countries to build a global assessment. Today, we would call that crowdsourcing, but whatever we call it, it created ownership that was critical for success.

In a nutshell, PISA owes its success to a collaborative effort between the participating countries, the national and international experts and institutions working within the framework of the PISA Consortium, and the OECD. Subject-matter experts, practitioners, and policy makers from the participating countries worked tirelessly to build agreement on which learning outcomes are important to measure and how to measure them best.



## Rwanda's Participation in PISA 2025

For the first time, Rwanda will take part in PISA 2025, joining over 80 countries worldwide. This marks a significant step in assessing and improving the country's education system on an international scale.

<b>Why is Rwanda Participating?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>To Benchmark Education Quality:</b> Rwanda will compare its education system to global standards, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.</li><li>• <b>To Improve Learning Outcomes:</b> The assessment will help evaluate how well students are prepared for future challenges.</li><li>• <b>To Guide Policy Reforms:</b> The results will inform policies and strategies to enhance teaching, curriculum development, and teacher training.</li><li>• <b>To Strengthen Rwanda's Vision for Education:</b> Participation aligns with Rwanda's Vision 2050 goals for high-quality education and lifelong learning.</li></ul>
<b>Who is Involved?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Students:</b> Selected 15-year-olds from different schools across Rwanda.</li><li>• <b>Schools &amp; Teachers:</b> They will help prepare students and facilitate the assessment process.</li><li>• <b>Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) &amp; National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA):</b> Leading the coordination and implementation.</li><li>• <b>OECD &amp; International Experts:</b> Conducting and analyzing the assessment results.</li></ul>
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A detailed report on Rwanda's student performance compared to other nations.</li><li>• Insights for improving education policies and teaching methodologies.</li><li>• A stronger foundation for future participation in global education assessments.</li></ul>
<b>What PISA Assesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading literacy (Understanding &amp; interpreting texts).</li><li>• Mathematical literacy (Problem-solving &amp; real-world math applications).</li><li>• Scientific literacy (Understanding scientific concepts &amp; thinking critically).</li></ul>



<p><b>How PISA is Conducted</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer-based testing format.</li> <li>• Paper-based assessment format</li> <li>• Random selection of schools and students.</li> <li>• The role of teachers &amp; school administrators in preparation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PISA 2025</b> Key Dates:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation &amp; Training: 2024</li> <li>• PISA 2025 Main Assessment: 27th April - 7th June, 2025</li> <li>• Reporting of results: 2026</li> </ul>

*N.B. Rwanda will do a paper-based assessment format*

## Sampling Method and Tools used

- **Multistage Sampling:** A hierarchical approach involving multiple stages of random selection. Divide the population into large groups (e.g., provinces, districts), Randomly select some groups. Divide selected groups into smaller units (e.g., schools, classes). Randomly select individuals within those units.
- **Random Sampling (Simple Random Sampling - SRS):** Every individual has an equal chance of being selected. Ensures fairness and minimizes bias.
- Maple Software Used for Selecting Schools and Students

## PISA 2025

A total of **7,455 students** from **213 schools** will participate in the **PISA 2025** main survey.

## Benefits for Rwanda

- Help improve curriculum & teaching strategies.
- Provides international benchmarks for student performance.
- Guide policy decisions to strengthen education quality.

## Role of Stakeholders

- **Government & Education Authorities:** Use results to improve policies.
- **Schools & Teachers:** Prepare students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Parents & Community:** Support students in their learning journey.

## How to Support the Initiative

- Encourage a positive mindset toward PISA among students, teachers, school leaders, and other stakeholders.
- Stay informed & engaged in discussions about education improvements.
- Follow updates from MINEDUC/NESA.

# PISA

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