

Reading PISA

Education

What international assessments measure, and the inferences they cannot support.

PISA samples 15-year-olds across countries on applied literacy and numeracy.

It can tell you

Rough standing of a cohort at 15

Distribution of results within a country

The gap linked to social background

Trends over several cycles, cautiously

What pupils report about their schooling

It cannot tell you

Which policy caused a country's position

That copying a system would transfer results

Anything about untested subjects

That small rank changes are meaningful

Whether the sample is fully comparable

Educational reference. Rankings are cross-sectional and correlational. Policy borrowing from a high scorer ignores everything else about that