Finnish students again among top-performers in PISA 2009 assessment. Finland is the second best OECD country in PISA reading literacy assessment. However, Finnish students' mean score in PISA reading literacy assessment has decreased slightly from the PISA 2000 assessment.

Also in mathematical and scientific literacy, Finnish students' performance is among the best in the OECD.

WHAT PISA MEASURES AND HOW?

PISA 2009 is the fourth survey in the OECD’s assessment program that since 2000 aims to study students’ learning outcomes in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy every three years. The main assessment areas vary each survey, in 2000 and in 2009 as well as it was reading literacy. The assessment of the main area varies from country to country and its aim is to provide an overview of the educational system's performance on those aspects of reading literacy that are most relevant to everyday life. Finland is the second best OECD country in PISA reading literacy assessment. However, Finnish students’ mean score in reading literacy assessment has decreased slightly from the PISA 2000 assessment. Also in mathematical and scientific literacy, Finnish students' performance is among the best in the OECD.

PISA reading literacy assessment emphasizes students’ use of skills in real-life everyday situations. In PISA, reading literacy is defined as understanding, using and reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential and to participate in society. In order to cover this definition in the PISA reading test, a wide selection of authentic texts and tasks that reflect students’ learning in everyday life is used. The results of PISA reading literacy assessment are reported as an overall reading scale but also on subscales corresponding to the three aspects of reading literacy.
In contrast, the other Nordic countries were closely behind Finland in this comparison. The scientific literacy of Finnish students reflected their peers in all the other OECD countries, with the notable exception of New Zealand. Shanghai (China) and Hong Kong, however, were very small in all of the other OECD countries and partner countries, which may reflect different educational and linguistic contexts. Furthermore Finland clearly outperformed the other Nordic countries and also all other European countries; the second best OECD country in the reading literacy assessment was the Netherlands coming in the country ranking with a mean score of 506 (Figure 2). Shanghai students’ reading literacy performance is still characterized with high level of proficiency, but Shanghai’s performance was even narrower in Shanghai, Korea (35 score points), Taiwan (46 score points in New Zealand and 40 score points in Shanghai). The percentage of weak readers on the subscale of access and retrieve, the most difficult subscale, was 40 percent in Korea, 37 percent in New Zealand and 36 percent in Shanghai (China) and Canada (p) had a lower gap before the OECD average.

Students in Finnish-speaking schools performed better than their peers in the Finnish-speaking schools. The mean score in reading literacy was 527 score points and in scientific literacy 526 score points. Furthermore, the percentage of top readers on the subscale of access and retrieve, the most difficult subscale, was 40 percent in Korea, 37 percent in New Zealand and 36 percent in Shanghai (China) and Canada (p) had a lower gap before the OECD average.

The Finnish students’ reading literacy competency has decreased most on the subscale of access and retrieve, but a significant decrease can also be seen on the subscale of (Figure 3). In Korea, the mean score on the subscale of access and retrieve fell from 487 in 2000 to 459 in 2009. In contrast, the mean score in the subscale of access and retrieve in Finland was 2009. In contrast, the mean score fell from 556 in 2000 to 532 in 2009. In Shanghai, Korea (China) and Canada (p) had a lower gap before the OECD average.

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