

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

Information for Students Selected to Participate

What is PISA?

PISA is an international study of the skills and knowledge of students aged 15 and 16. It takes place every 3 years. In 2009, 67 countries will take part in PISA. The main focus will be on reading, with some maths and science questions too.

How was I picked?

You were picked at random! First we picked 160 schools. For each school, we drew up a list of all students born in 1993. Then, up to 35 students were randomly chosen from each school list.

What will I have to do?

You will be asked to complete 2 booklets in March or April:

- a test that includes questions on reading and
- a questionnaire about you, your attitudes and interests.

You should be finished by lunchtime.

SOME students will also be asked to do a reading test on the computer. This will usually take place after lunch.

Most of the questions are multiple choice, and a few ask you to write a line or two for your answer.



Where did the tests and questionnaires come from?

They were developed by experts across all the PISA countries. The aim of PISA is to test students' knowledge in real-life situations, not their knowledge of school subjects, so the tests are a bit different to what you learn at school.

Will anyone see my results?

No. All the tests and questionnaires are totally confidential. When you finish, your booklet and questionnaire will be sent to the Educational Research Centre in Dublin. We will enter your answers into a database, where you are identified only by a number, not by your name. We will never give out information on individuals. Your results will be used to compare students in Ireland as a group with students from other countries.

Don't worry...you don't need to prepare in advance for PISA!

Why take part?

PISA is important because it helps us to identify ways to improve our educational system by providing information on:

- The strengths and weaknesses of the Irish education system in comparison to other countries; and
- How well the educational system is preparing students for life after school.

It is important that as many students as possible take part so that the results are really representative of Irish students.

There will be a prize draw for each school and every student that takes part has a chance to win a gift voucher.

For further information:

Visit the PISA website for Ireland at: <http://www.erc.ie/pisa>

Visit the international PISA website at: <http://www.pisa.oecd.org>

Contact Rachel Perkins: email pisa@erc.ie or phone 01 8373789