

Conclusions for writing performance

Mean writing scores for grade five

The PILNA 2021 writing results show that Federated States of Micronesia students had a mean score of 473 points and their performance is less than that of the region by 11 points.

Mean writing scores for grade seven

The writing results for Grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia showed an average score of 499 points. This score is 8 points less than the regional 507 points.

Gender grade five

When the grade five writing result is disaggregated by gender, the girls' mean score is 480 points and the boys are 14 points behind, with a mean score of 466 points.

Gender grade seven

When the grade seven writing result is disaggregated by gender, the girls' mean score is 507 and the boys are 16 points behind, with a mean score of 491 points.

School authority grade five

Students in non-government schools showed higher mean scores (528) than those in government schools (465).

School authority grade seven

Students in non-government schools had higher mean scores (548) than those in government schools (493).

Trends

Students in grade five have consistently improved in writing across the three cycles: 2015 (404 points), 2018 (452 points) and 2021 (473 points). Grade seven showed an increase from 2015 (456 points) to 2018 (519 points) and a drop in 2021 (499 points).

Coding: In the PILNA writing assessment at Grade five and 6, students were required to write a story based on either of the two prompts provided. The prompts were provided to encourage ideas and engagement in the process. The criteria for the

narrative task encompassed the two main features of writing – content and language elements – as can be seen in the writing rubric. Six writing skills are assessed in PILNA: ‘Quality of ideas’, ‘Structure and organisation’, ‘Grammar and syntax’, ‘Vocabulary’, ‘Spelling’, and ‘Punctuation’.

Coding data allow for an interpretation of how students have performed. A code is assigned for each criterion, according to how well the student has performed. A Code 0 is assigned when there is insufficient evidence to assess.

Grade five coding

Quality of ideas (Codes 1–8): This criterion measures the quality of the students’ ideas and how well those ideas have been developed to produce an entertaining story. More than half (56%) of grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia were given Code 4 or the codes below 4 in this criterion. These students would have struggled to write a few words or used random words or copied words from the prompt. Almost 40% knew what to do in the writing test and wrote stories that related to the prompt; these students were awarded code 5 or above.

Structure and organisation (Codes 1–5): This measures the students’ ability to shape a story or to produce a coherent story with ideas that relate to each other and are logically sequenced. Seven out of ten grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia received Code 3 or lower in this criterion. Around 46% were awarded code 2 or lower, indicating a lack of understanding of story structure and their writing was limited to a few words and ideas. A little more than 20% of Grade five students were awarded codes 5, 4 and 3. These students were aware of the mechanics of writing and were able to write stories that had logical sequencing of events.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students’ ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. Eight out of ten Grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia received Code 2 or lower in this criterion, indicating that they had written repetitive sentences and had also made frequent errors in grammar.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of their vocabulary in telling the story. About 37% of grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia received Code 1 or 2, indicating that they were limited to only a few words that made sense. Close to 60% had enough words to help them express a variety of ideas in their stories, so they were awarded code 3 or higher.

Spelling (Codes 1–2): This measures the students’ ability to spell both basic and more difficult words. Up to 80% of the grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia received two top codes in this criterion, indicating that they were able to spell some basic words correctly in their writing test and, except for a few errors, managed difficult words well in their stories.

Punctuation (Codes 1–3): This measures the range and precision of punctuation used in telling the story. Close to 76% of grade five students in Federated States of Micronesia received the top three codes in this criterion, indicating a certain level of mastery in the use of punctuation marks in their stories.

Grade seven Coding

Quality of ideas (Codes 1–8): This criterion measures the quality of the students’ ideas and how well the ideas have been developed to produce an entertaining story. A reasonable number of grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia were given Code 4 or lower in this criterion. These students would have struggled to write a few words or random words, or

words copied from the prompt. Five out of ten grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia knew what to do in the writing test and wrote stories that related to a prompt. These students were awarded code 5 or higher.

Structure and organisation (Codes 1–5): This measures the students' ability to shape a story or to produce a coherent story with ideas that relate to each other and are logically sequence. Up to 32% of grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia received Code 2 or lower in this criterion. These students lacked the basic skills in writing, coming up with only a few ideas that did not form a story. More than 60% of grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia were awarded codes 5, 4 and 3 in this criterion, indicating that their stories were introduced and developed well and had a clear conclusion, with no gaps in logic or irrelevant details.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students' ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. Nearly half the grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia received Code 2 or below in this criterion, indicating that they had written repetitive sentences but had also made frequent errors in grammar. The other half would have written stories using a variety of sentence structures.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of the students' vocabulary in telling the story. Seven out of ten (71%) grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia showed evidence that they were able to use a variety of vocabulary and some sophistication to write their stories.

Spelling (Codes 1–2): This measures the students' ability to spell both basic and more difficult words. Nearly 86% of the grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia received the top two codes in spelling, indicating their mastery in writing words correctly.

Punctuation (Codes 1–3): This measures the range and precision of punctuation used in telling the story. Over 80% of Grade seven students in Federated States of Micronesia received the top three codes in this criterion, indicating that they were able to use a variety of punctuation marks in their stories.