

Conclusions for writing performance

Mean writing scores

The PILNA 2021 writing results showed that grade three students had a mean score of 506 points and their performance was higher than the region's score of 484 points.

The writing results for grade five students showed a constant improvement in performance over the last three cycles. The 2021 score is 34 points higher than that of the region.

Gender

When the grade three writing result is disaggregated by gender, the girls' mean score is 507 and the boys' result is 4 points behind, with a mean score of 504 points. Similarly, for grade five, the girls' mean score is 544 points and the boys' is 539 points. At both year levels the mean difference in girls' and boys' score is similar.

School authority

The grade three and grade five students in government and non-government schools showed consistency in performance with very little variation

School location

The grade three and grade five students in urban and non-urban schools showed consistency in performance with very little variation

Trends

The writing performance for students in grade three showed a remarkable increase between 2018 with 445 points and 2021 with 506 points. This is the same with grade five performance, where there was a marked increase from 454 points in 2015 to 598 points in 2018 and to 541 points in 2021.

Coding: *PILNA writing assessment at grade three and 5, 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 encompass 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 to each criterion, according to how well the student has performed. When there is insufficient evidence to assess, Code 0 is assigned.

Grade three 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. Six out of ten grade three students in Papua New Guinea were awarded Code 4 or higher in this criterion, indicating they had an awareness of the task and had written stories that ranged from a simple story line to a well-developed plot that was closely related to the prompt. A smaller proportion (36%) received code 3 or lower in this criterion, indicating that they had written random words or words that may have been copied from the question itself.

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. Up to 67% of grade three students in Papua New Guinea received Code 3 or above in this criterion. These students were aware of the mechanics in writing and were able to write stories that had incorporated the prompts well.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students' ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. Seven or eight grade three students in Papua New Guinea received Code 2 or higher in this criterion, showing that they had used a variety of sentence structures and correct language conventions.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of students' vocabulary in telling the story. Seven out of ten grade three students in Papua New Guinea received Code 2 or higher in this criterion, indicating that they had used a good range of vocabulary and were able to express themselves clearly.

Spelling (Codes 1–2): This measures the students' ability to spell both basic and more difficult words. Almost all the grade three students in Papua New Guinea received Code 1 or higher in this criterion, indicating that they were able to accurately spell basic and difficult words in their writing test.

Punctuation (Codes 1–3): This measures the range and precision of punctuation used in telling the story. Nine out of ten grade three students in Papua New Guinea received Code 1 or higher in this criterion, indicating mastery in the use of a variety of punctuation marks.

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. Eight out of ten grade five students in Papua New Guinea knew what to do in the writing test and wrote stories that related to a prompt. These students were awarded Code 4 or above in this criterion.

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. Nine out of ten grade five students in Papua New Guinea were awarded Code 3 or higher in this criterion, indicating that they were aware of a story structure, and their stories were introduced, well developed, and had a clear conclusion.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students' ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. Nine out of ten grade five students in Papua New Guinea who were awarded Code 2 or higher in this criterion could use correct grammar conventions in a variety of sentence structures.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of students' vocabulary in telling the story. Nine out of ten grade five students in Papua New Guinea had evidence in their writing that they have the correct words to use to effectively bring out their ideas and express themselves. They received Code 2 or higher in this criterion.

Spelling (Codes 1–2): This measures the students' ability to spell both basic and more difficult words. Almost all the grade five students in Papua New Guinea were awarded Code 1 or 2 in this criterion, indicating that they had mastered how to spell basic and more difficult words correctly in their writing test.

Punctuation (Codes 1–3): This measures the range and precision of punctuation used in telling the story. Almost all grade five students in Papua New Guinea received Code 1 or higher in this criterion, indicating that they had used a variety of punctuation marks quite effectively in their writing.