

Conclusions for writing performance

Mean writing scores

The writing result for year four students was similar to the region, with only a minimal difference of less than 10 points. Year four students scored 476 points compared to the region with 484 points.

The writing result for year six students is also similar to the region, with a minimal difference of less than 10 points. Year six students scored 500 points compared to the region with 507 points.

Gender

When the year four writing result is disaggregated by gender, the results showed that girls scored 480 points and the boys 473 points. Girls achieved a slightly higher level of performance.

Similarly, for year six, girls achieved a slightly higher writing score (505) than boys (496).

School authority

Year four students in non-government schools performed better than year four students in government schools in writing. The difference in performance was about 8 points.

Similar results were seen at the year six level, where students in non-government schools performed better than those in government schools. The difference in performance was about 21 points.

School location

Year four and year six students in urban schools performed better than those in non-urban schools. The difference in performance at the year four level was 25 points and at the year six level was 28 points.

Trends

Writing performance for students in year four was similar in 2015 and 2018 and then experienced a notable increase of 48 points in 2021.

Writing performance for students in year six, increased from 2015 (479 points) to 2018 (494 points) and further increased in 2021 (500 points).

Coding

PILNA writing assessment at year four 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 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 allows 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.

Year four 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. In Solomon Islands, 38% of year four students were awarded Code 3 or higher in this criterion. This indicates an awareness of the task and having written a story that ranged from a simple storyline to a well-developed plot that was closely related to the prompt. A reasonable proportion of year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 3 or lower, indicating limitations in their ability to craft a story that is related to a prompt.

Structure and organisation (Codes 1–5): This measure the students' ability to shape a story, or to produce a coherent story, with ideas that relate to each other and are logically sequenced. Six out of ten year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 2 or lower in this criterion. These students were able to link a few ideas but were not able to create a story using the mechanics in writing.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students' ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. In Solomon Islands, 55% of year four students were awarded Code 2 or higher in this criterion, meaning they could write using correct grammar conventions in a variety of sentence structures.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of students' vocabulary in telling the story. More than half the year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 2 or higher in this criterion. This indicates that the students had used a range of vocabulary to express many ideas. Around 40% of year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 1 or lower in this criterion highlighting their limited vocabulary.

Spelling (Codes 1–2): This measures the students' ability to spell both basic and more difficult words. Almost all of the year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 1 or 2 in Spelling, indicating that they were able to accurately spell basic and difficult words.

Punctuation (Codes 1–3): This measures the range and precision of punctuation used in telling the story. More than 70% of year four students in Solomon Islands received Code 1 or below in this criterion. This indicates that they had mostly used commas and full stops but also made some errors using them. Others in this category had no evidence of correct use of punctuation in their writing.

Year six 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 year six students in Solomon Islands knew what to do in the writing test and wrote stories that related to a prompt, these students were awarded Code 4 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. Six out of ten year six students in Solomon Islands 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 also had a clear conclusion.

Grammar and syntax (Codes 1–4): This measures the students' ability to produce a range of sentence structures with accuracy. Eight out of ten year six students in Solomon Islands were awarded Code 2 or higher in this criterion as they used correct grammar conventions in a variety of sentence structures.

Vocabulary (Codes 1–4): This measures the variety of students' vocabulary in telling the story. Seven out of ten year six students in Solomon Islands showed evidence in their writing that they used vocabulary to effectively bring out their ideas and express themselves. They were awarded 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 year six students in Solomon Islands were awarded Code 1 or higher 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. Nine out of ten year six students in Solomon Islands received Code 1 or higher in this criterion. This indicates that they had used a variety of punctuation marks quite effectively in their writing.