

Teaching Times for Reading in USA and New Zealand (2016/2021)

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The United States leads comparable countries in the time spent teaching reading to 9-10 year-olds at primary school - on average well over an hour at 109 minutes per day.

New Zealand (Year 5) is behind USA (Fourth Grade) in teaching time but on average actually spends just over an hour teaching reading at 68 minutes per day.

However, this does NOT mean the US or New Zealand are leading other countries in their reading performance. Surprisingly, the US scores at only average performance while New Zealand comes in almost last out of comparable countries.

It is not the TIME spent teaching that matters most; what matters is WHAT is done during that space and time. For example, New Zealand leads the world in the amount of "silent reading" that teachers asks their students to do. Are they actually "reading" during this time? A 2016 survey showed New Zealand teachers rarely asked their Year 5 students to read aloud and consequently New Zealand had the highest percentage (88%) of students among English language countries who were asked daily to read silently on their own.

Table 1 below or <https://ibb.co/NpgKD9V>

Table 1 shows, in decreasing order, each country's average test score (PIRLS, 2016 and 2021) and teaching times in minutes per day and hours per year (for 2016, the last year that teaching times were surveyed). PIRLS evaluates students' reading comprehension skills by reporting a test score and reports the percentage of students reaching four literacy standards or "benchmarks" (thresholds) for assessing the comprehension of texts of increasing complexity: low, intermediate, high, and advanced.

-From a research article by Paul Treffner examining recent data on teaching times for reading and maths in New Zealand and for comparable countries (data from OECD, PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS).

Table 1. Primary school (Year 5): Countries ranked by minutes per day of teaching reading, PIRLS score, and percentage of students reaching PIRLS benchmarks (Paul Treffner/metaffordance.com)

Country	mins	%	PIRLS score				LOW %		INTERMEDIATE %		HIGH %		ADVANCED %		Country	hrs	%									
			2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021												
United States	109	32	Russian Federation	581	Singapore	587	Hong Kong SAR	99	Hong Kong SAR	98	Russian Federation	94	Hong Kong SAR	92	Russian Federation	70	Singapore	71	Singapore	29	Singapore	35	United States	327	32	
Portugal	101	34	Singapore	576	Ireland	577	Netherlands	99	Ireland	98	Hong Kong SAR	93	Ireland	91	Singapore	66	Hong Kong SAR	68	Russian Federation	26	Ireland	27	Portugal	301	34	
Belgium (French)	84	27	Hong Kong SAR	569	Hong Kong SAR	573	Norway	99	Russian Federation	98	Finland	91	Singapore	90	Hong Kong SAR	65	Ireland	67	Northern Ireland	22	Northern Ireland	23	Belgium (French)	247	27	
New Zealand	68	24	Ireland	567	Russian Federation	567	Russian Federation	99	England	97	Norway	90	Russian Federation	89	Finland	62	Russian Federation	63	Ireland	21	Hong Kong SAR	21	New Zealand	215	24	
Hungary	66	25	Finland	566	Northern Ireland	566	Austria	98	Italy	97	Ireland	89	Northern Ireland	87	Ireland	62	Northern Ireland	61	England	20	Russian Federation	21	Canada	206	22	
Canada	66	22	Northern Ireland	565	England	568	Finland	98	Lithuania	97	Singapore	89	England	86	Northern Ireland	61	England	57	Finland	18	England	18	Netherlands	205	19	
Netherlands	62	19	England	559	Lithuania	552	Ireland	98	Northern Ireland	97	Netherlands	88	Lithuania	86	Norway	58	Lithuania	54	Hong Kong SAR	18	United States	18	Hungary	201	25	
Australia	61	19	Norway	559	Finland	549	Italy	98	Singapore	97	Sweden	88	Finland	84	England	57	Finland	53	Hungary	17	Sweden	15	Australia	199	19	
France	61	19	Sweden	555	United States	548	Sweden	98	Austria	96	Italy	87	Italy	83	Sweden	57	United States	52	Australia	16	Australia	14	Slovak Republic	180	23	
Slovak Republic	58	23	Hungary	554	Sweden	544	Belgium (Flemish)	97	Czech Republic	96	Northern Ireland	87	Czech Republic	82	Hungary	56	Sweden	50	United States	16	Finland	14	Russian Federation	171	27	
Lithuania	49	23	United States	549	Australia	540	Czech Republic	97	Denmark	96	Denmark	86	Denmark	81	United States	53	Hungary	49	Norway	15	Lithuania	14	France	165	19	
Russian Federation	49	27	Italy	548	Czech Republic	540	Denmark	97	Finland	96	England	86	Norway	81	Denmark	52	Australia	48	Sweden	14	Hungary	13	Ireland	150	16	
Ireland	48	16	Lithuania	548	Denmark	539	England	97	Netherlands	96	Lithuania	86	Sweden	81	Italy	52	Denmark	48	Canada	13	Canada	12	Italy	148	14	
Spain	46	16	Denmark	547	Hungary	539	Hungary	97	Norway	96	Czech Republic	85	United States	81	Lithuania	52	Czech Republic	47	Israel	13	Czech Republic	11	Lithuania	144	23	
Czech Republic	44	19	Netherlands	545	Norway	539	Lithuania	97	Spain	95	Hungary	85	Australia	80	Australia	51	Norway	47	Lithuania	12	Denmark	11	Czech Republic	143	19	
Italy	44	14	Australia	544	Canada	537	Northern Ireland	97	Sweden	95	Austria	84	Austria	80	Canada	50	Canada	45	Denmark	11	New Zealand	11	Northern Ireland	137	14	
Norway	42	17	Canada	543	Italy	537	Portugal	97	United States	95	Canada	83	Canada	79	Czech Republic	49	Italy	44	Germany	11	Norway	11	Spain	136	16	
Northern Ireland	41	14	Czech Republic	543	Austria	530	Singapore	97	Australia	94	Slovenia	83	Hungary	79	Slovenia	49	Slovak Republic	42	Italy	11	Germany	8	Norway	134	17	
Denmark	40	13	Slovenia	542	Slovak Republic	529	Spain	97	Belgium (Flemish)	94	United States	83	Netherlands	79	Netherlands	48	Austria	41	New Zealand	11	Israel	8	Denmark	132	13	
Hong Kong SAR	40	13	Austria	541	Netherlands	527	Canada	96	Canada	94	Australia	81	Slovak Republic	79	Austria	47	New Zealand	41	Slovenia	11	Italy	8	Hong Kong SAR	128	13	
England	39	12	Germany	537	Germany	524	Slovenia	96	France	94	Germany	81	Spain	76	Germany	47	Germany	39	Czech Republic	10	Slovak Republic	8	England	125	12	
Finland	39	17	Slovak Republic	535	New Zealand	521	United States	96	Germany	94	Slovak Republic	81	Germany	75	Slovak Republic	47	Netherlands	37	Slovak Republic	10	Austria	7	Singapore	124	12	
Singapore	39	12	Israel	530	Spain	521	Germany	95	Hungary	94	Belgium (Flemish)	80	Portugal	75	Israel	46	Portugal	36	Austria	8	Netherlands	6	Finland	122	17	
Sweden	34	12	Portugal	528	Portugal	520	Australia	94	Portugal	94	Spain	80	Slovenia	75	New Zealand	41	Israel	35	Netherlands	8	Portugal	6	Sweden	101	12	
Austria	32	13	Spain	528	Slovenia	520	France	94	Slovak Republic	94	Portugal	79	France	72	Spain	39	Slovenia	35	Portugal	7	Spain	6	Israel	98	9	
Belgium (Flemish)	29	9	Belgium (Flemish)	525	France	514	Slovak Republic	93	Slovenia	94	Israel	75	Belgium (Flemish)	71	Portugal	38	Spain	35	Spain	6	France	5	Austria	95	13	
Germany	28	11	New Zealand	523	Belgium (Flemish)	511	Belgium (French)	92	New Zealand	90	New Zealand	73	New Zealand	71	Belgium (Flemish)	35	France	32	Belgium (Flemish)	4	Slovenia	5	Germany	87	11	
Israel	26	9	France	511	Israel	510	Israel	91	Belgium (French)	89	France	72	Israel	67	France	30	Belgium (Flemish)	29	France	4	Belgium (Flemish)	3	Slovenia	84	12	
Slovenia	25	12	Belgium (French)	497	Belgium (French)	494	New Zealand	90	Israel	88	Belgium (French)	65	Belgium (French)	62	Belgium (French)	22	Belgium (French)	23	Belgium (French)	3	Belgium (French)	3	Belgium (Flemish)	84	9	
average	51	18	av	545	av	538	av	96	av	95	av	84	av	80	av	50	av	47	av	13	av	12	av	158	18	
standard deviation	21	7	sd	19	sd	22	sd	2	sd	2	sd	7	sd	11	sd	11	sd	12	sd	6	sd	8	sd	61	7	
			av mins Top	10	44	av mins Top	10	49	av mins Top	10	42	av mins Top	10	44	av mins Top	10	44	av mins Top	10	53	av mins Top	10	53	av mins Top	10	46
			sd	9	sd	9	sd	10	sd	10	sd	8	sd	9	sd	9	sd	22	sd	22	sd	22	sd	22	sd	22
			av mins Bottom	10	53	av mins Bottom	10	53	av mins Bottom	10	59	av mins Bottom	10	56	av mins Bottom	10	50	av mins Bottom	10	54	av mins Bottom	10	54	av mins Bottom	10	55
			sd	26	sd	27	sd	27	sd	27	sd	25	sd	26	sd	26	sd	24	sd	24	sd	24	sd	24	sd	24

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