



*PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an assessment of reading comprehension that has been monitoring trends in student achievement at five-year intervals since 2001. PIRLS represents the worldwide standard for reading comprehension at the fourth grade.*

*New in 2016, PIRLS Literacy—a less difficult version of PIRLS—now makes it possible for a range of developing countries to assess reading at the end of the primary school cycle.*



*PIRLS and PIRLS Literacy are projects of IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement). Headquartered in Amsterdam, IEA has been conducting international*

*comparative studies of student educational achievement since 1959. IEA pioneered studies relating cross-national achievement to the different methods for teaching and learning used across the globe so that countries could learn about effective educational approaches from each other.*



*PIRLS and PIRLS Literacy are directed by the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College. PIRLS together with TIMSS, which assesses mathematics and science, comprise IEA's core cycle of studies designed*

*to provide countries with regular information about achievement in three fundamental subjects—reading, mathematics, and science.*



International Association  
for the Evaluation of  
Educational Achievement

[pirls.bc.edu](http://pirls.bc.edu)



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### **PIRLS and PIRLS Literacy Participation Options**

*PIRLS and PIRLS Literacy are designed to meet the needs of a range of countries. Although PIRLS is designed to compare reading achievement across countries for students who have had four years of primary schooling, PIRLS also can be given to students in the fifth or sixth grade in countries where the assessment might be too difficult for fourth grade students. Similarly, depending on a country's educational development, PIRLS Literacy can be given at the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade. Participating in PIRLS/PIRLS Literacy at two grades, such as PIRLS Literacy at fourth grade and PIRLS at sixth grade, can provide countries with comprehensive data about how well students are learning to read at different points in the educational system.*

### **For Country Enrollment, Contact:**

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# PIRLS 2016

Progress in International  
Reading Literacy  
Study



**TIMSS & PIRLS**  
International Study Center  
Lynch School of Education, Boston College

## PIRLS 2016— Assessing Reading Comprehension

**PIRLS  
2016**

Every five years, *PIRLS* provides internationally comparative data about how well children from different countries read after four years of primary schooling. *PIRLS* also provides extensive

information about home supports for literacy and school environments for teaching and learning.

Reading literacy is the foundation for student academic success and personal growth, and *PIRLS* is a valuable vehicle for studying whether new or revised educational policies impact achievement. *PIRLS 2016* will be the fourth assessment since 2001, providing trends in reading achievement over a 15-year period. Fully 55 countries participated in *PIRLS 2011*.

The *PIRLS* reading assessment is based on a comprehensive framework developed collaboratively with the participating countries. The framework specifies in some detail the types of texts and reading comprehension strategies to be assessed. Students with high performance in *PIRLS* can read, comprehend, and interpret relatively complex information in stories and articles of about 800 to 1,000 words.

For each country, *PIRLS* reports overall reading achievement for fourth grade students. In addition, results are provided according to four International Benchmarks (advanced, high, medium, and low) and by two major reading purposes (literary and informational). Countries also obtain diagnostic item-level and summary information about student reading skills and strategies.

## PIRLS Literacy 2016— Testing Basic Reading Skills

**PIRLS  
Literacy  
2016**

*PIRLS Literacy* is based on the same view of reading comprehension as *PIRLS*, but is designed to test basic reading skills that are prerequisites for success on *PIRLS*. In *PIRLS Literacy*,

students read and answer questions about stories and articles just like in *PIRLS*, except the stories and articles are shorter, with easier vocabulary as well as simpler grammar and syntax. *PIRLS Literacy* is designed to assess reading comprehension at the end of the primary school cycle (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> grades) for countries where most children are still developing fundamental reading skills.

*PIRLS Literacy* enables countries to examine students' abilities to:

- Recognize words and phrases
- Understand simple sentences and paragraphs
- Retrieve information
- Make straightforward inferences
- Comprehend the overall message

*PIRLS Literacy* provides the same background data as *PIRLS*, including vital information about curriculum, instruction, and resources. Similarly, the *PIRLS Literacy* assessment provides key diagnostic data about strengths and weaknesses in student reading skills and important information for policy makers about the necessary steps to improve student reading. *PIRLS Literacy* can be viewed as a stepping stone to *PIRLS*.



## Benefits of Participating in PIRLS or PIRLS Literacy

Participating in *PIRLS/PIRLS Literacy* enables evidence-based decisions for educational improvement. High quality internationally comparative data about student reading achievement are important for monitoring and improving the health of a country's education system. Evidence of underperforming areas often spurs education reform, with subsequent assessments being effective monitors of changes in the educational system.

*PIRLS /PIRLS Literacy* results are disseminated through the *PIRLS* International Report and via the web. A well-documented international database provides opportunities for research both within and across countries. Participating countries use the *PIRLS* and *PIRLS Literacy* assessment process and data to:

- Monitor system-level achievement trends in a global context
- Establish achievement goals and standards for educational improvement
- Stimulate curriculum reform
- Improve teaching and learning through research and analysis of *PIRLS/PIRLS Literacy* data
- Conduct related studies, such as monitoring equity or assessing students in additional grades
- Train researchers and teachers in assessment and evaluation

## Schedule Highlights

**2013—March**

Update Frameworks for 2016 at 1st Meeting of National Research Coordinators

**2014—March**

Countries agree on new reading passages for 2016 and develop questions

**2015—March**

Field Test *PIRLS 2016* Assessment Instruments

**2015—October**

Data Collection Southern Hemisphere

**2016—April**

Data Collection Northern Hemisphere

**2017—December**

Data Release

## Benchmarking

*PIRLS/PIRLS Literacy* have a benchmarking component whereby regional entities (e.g., states or provinces) may participate in the same way as countries, and thus compare their achievement to top-performing countries around the world.