



PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

The global standard for measuring reading achievement

PIRLS, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, is one of the core studies for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Directed by the TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College and conducted every five years since 2001, PIRLS is recognized as the global standard for assessing trends in reading achievement at the fourth grade.

PIRLS provides internationally comparative data on how well children read and offers policy-relevant information for improving learning and teaching. The study is administered at a key transition stage in children's reading development: the change from learning to read to reading to learn. Assessing reading achievement at this crucial stage provides educators and policymakers with key insights into the effectiveness of their education system and helps to identify areas for improvement.



WHAT DOES PIRLS MEASURE?

PIRLS provides trends and international comparisons of fourth grade students' reading achievement and students' competencies in relation to goals and standards for reading education.

In addition to reading assessment, the PIRLS school, teacher, student and home questionnaires gather extensive information about the contextual factors at home and school that are associated with the teaching and learning of reading. PIRLS also provides an encyclopedia that includes data about each country's educational context for learning to read. These rich data include information on how the education system is organized to facilitate learning; students' home environment and supports for learning; school climate and resources and how instruction usually occurs in classrooms.



MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Together with the IEA's TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PIRLS data are recognized by UNESCO as a solid evidence base for researchers, educators and policymakers interested in monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: obtaining a quality education for all. For example, the Low International Benchmarks established by PIRLS and TIMSS are recognized as the most appropriate measures of the "SDG minimum proficiency level" (indicator 4.1.1). Students who achieve this level in PIRLS can locate, retrieve, and reproduce explicitly stated information from a text, make straightforward inferences, and begin to interpret story events and central ideas.



MEETING THE NEEDS OF A RANGE OF COUNTRIES

Since its inception in 2001, PIRLS has grown considerably, not just in the numbers of participating educational systems (from 35 in 2001 to 61 in 2016) but also in the variety of assessment options available to participating entities. These include:

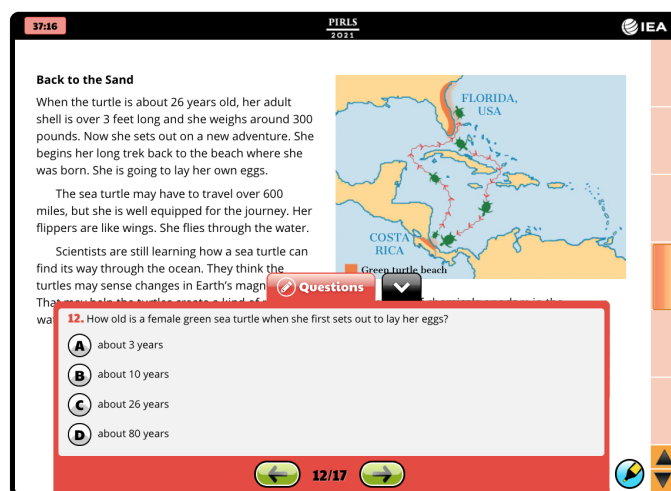
ADAPTING PIRLS TO SUIT COUNTRIES' NEEDS

For countries where most fourth grade children are still developing basic reading skills, PIRLS provides an opportunity to adapt the study to measure reading literacy at the lower end of the achievement scale. The **PIRLS Literacy** assessment is a less difficult version of PIRLS but both assessment versions contain common passages so that results are reported on the same achievement scale. Participating in PIRLS Literacy provides countries with valuable diagnostic information about the strengths and weaknesses of the reading skills of their students at a level appropriate for their national context.

ASSESSING 21ST CENTURY READING SKILLS

PIRLS was initiated as a paper-based assessment and this delivery mode is still an option for countries. To keep up to date with how children read and learn information, PIRLS 2021 introduced the option for participants to administer computer-based assessments. The **digitalPIRLS** reading assessment includes a variety of engaging, visually attractive passages that motivate students to read, interact with the texts and answer comprehension questions. digitalPIRLS includes the ePIRLS assessment of online reading initiated in 2016, which is designed to monitor how well students read, interpret and critique information in an online environment that looks and feels like the internet.

Computer-based PIRLS is offered either as a web-based system delivered through school or IEA servers, or via a USB drive connected locally to a computer with a Windows operating system.



FLEXIBILITY IN WAYS OF PARTICIPATING

PIRLS also has a benchmarking option whereby entities such as regions (e.g. states or provinces), additional grades (e.g. third or fifth grade), or additional language groups may be included in a country's participation. Please contact IEA for further details.



COSTS AND FUNDING

Participating countries are required to cover all the costs of administering the study at the national level, and to share the costs of coordinating the study internationally. National costs depend on the salary levels and cost structures within each country. IEA can assist participants with developing their own national budget by providing an outline of the staffing required, tasks to be covered and equipment needed for successful implementation.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Joining PIRLS is an opportunity for educational systems to participate in a world-class assessment of reading comprehension. The high-quality, internationally comparative data enable countries to:

- ✓ Monitor system-level achievement trends in a global context
- ✓ Use results to inform educational policy and to monitor the impact of new or revised policies
- ✓ Pinpoint any underperforming areas and stimulate curriculum reform
- ✓ Assess students' attitudes towards reading, and the support they receive at home and at school
- ✓ Survey home, classroom and school contexts for teaching and learning

PARTNERS

PIRLS, a project of IEA, is directed by the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College. Other partners involved with PIRLS are IEA, Statistics Canada, and Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the United States. As in all IEA studies, the international coordination and development are undertaken in close cooperation with the national research centers of participating countries.



TIMSS & PIRLS
International Study Center
Lynch School of Education
BOSTON COLLEGE



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ABOUT IEA

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) is an international cooperative of national research institutions, governmental research agencies, scholars, and analysts working to research, understand, and improve education worldwide.

We conduct high-quality, large-scale comparative studies of education across the globe to provide educators, policymakers, and parents with insights into how students perform.

IEA
Keizersgracht 311
1016 EE Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 20 625 36 25
secretariat@iea.nl
www.iea.nl