

An Introduction to Using the Resources for *Flowers on the Roof*

Reading Comprehension
Resource Pack 1



Introduction

This resource pack is based on IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and uses the PIRLS materials to support the best practices for teaching reading comprehension in a classroom. It accompanies the [How to Help Students Develop Reading Comprehension Skills](#) Teacher Snippet XL and book [Putting PIRLS to Use in Classrooms Across the Globe](#), which is part of the IEA Research for Educators series.

PIRLS is directed by the [TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center](#) at Boston College and is conducted every five years since 2001. PIRLS provides international data on reading comprehension of students in their fourth year of schooling. In PIRLS 2016, students from 50 participating countries and 11 benchmarking entities were tested in their language of instruction, using two out of 12 different reading passages.

The passage *Flowers on the Roof* with corresponding questions is a part of PIRLS 2016. The purpose of this passage is for reading for literary experience and is based on the [PIRLS 2016 Reading Framework](#), which describes the major purposes of reading and processes of comprehension to be tested at the fourth grade.

The *How to Help Students Develop Reading Comprehension Skills* Teacher Snippet XL focuses on strategies for teaching comprehension of the *Flowers on the Roof* passage. Teacher Snippets XL are a short-format series with information for teachers concerning classroom instruction linked to selected assessment materials from IEA's studies.

More strategies can be found in the book *Putting PIRLS to Use in Classrooms Across the Globe*, which draws on PIRLS data to provide resources for teaching reading comprehension. The book gives practical guidance on how teachers can help students learn reading skills and contains examples from five PIRLS countries on teaching multilingual classrooms.

Copyright Notice: the provided materials from PIRLS are only intended for non-commercial, research, and educational use as a learning resource or formative evaluation. The materials are not to be used in any form of commercial use.

© *Flowers on the Roof* by Ingibjorg Sigurdardottir, illustrated by Brian Pilkington and published by Mal Og Menning (www.malogmenning.is), 1985, is reproduced by kind permission of the author.

Intended Use

The primary purpose of the resource pack is to serve as an international learning resource for insights into students' progress and strategies for teaching reading comprehension. It is meant to be used for classroom instruction and can be incorporated as a learning activity.

The passage *Flowers on the Roof* with corresponding questions and the related scoring guide are useful as a starting point for classroom discussion and to address students' needs in reading comprehension processes. The scoring guide provides correct answers for multiple choice questions (MC) and points to the evidence that needs to be considered in deciding about correctness of the responses to the constructed response questions (CR) with some useful examples included. The international averages displayed for each question illustrate how challenging the questions were overall for students in 2016.

When using the passage as an evaluation, the results should be used in a formative way for helping you identify and focus on the processes that your students are having difficulties with. Please note that a direct comparison and placement of your class results to the international PIRLS 2016 tables based on this single passage is not possible.

Suggested Instructions for Testing Based on International Procedures Used in PIRLS 2016

In the case of using the passage and the related questions in the classroom, please adhere to the timing and testing procedure indicated below, including reading directions to your students and supervising the testing session.

You will need the following testing materials:

- The reading passage *Flowers on the Roof* and corresponding questions
- A stopwatch, timer, or watch
- A supply of pens or pencils
- And in case some of your students finish early, activity sheets and/or books

Testing procedure and timing

Allow at least 10 minutes for preparations, distribution of reading materials, and reading of the instructions. Students should have 40 minutes for reading the passage and answering the questions.

Directions to be read to the students:

- In this test, you will read a story and answer questions about what you have read. You may find some parts easy and you may find some parts difficult.
- You will be asked to answer different types of questions. Some questions will be multiple choice and other questions will be short answer.
- If you are not sure about the answer to a question, fill in the circle next to the answer you think is best, and move on to the next question.
- As you work through the questions, you can look back at the passage you have read to help you answer the questions.
- You will have 40 minutes to complete the test. Do your best to answer all the questions. If you cannot answer a question, move on to the next one.

Supervising the testing session

- Make sure students understand the instructions and time restraints of the test. You may answer any questions students have about these matters.
- Do not answer questions about the content of the test questions or provide any specific information or answers about any test question. The best response to any such requests is, “I am sorry, I can’t answer any questions. Just do your best to answer the question.”
- All electronic devices, such as cell phones, portable computers, photo or video cameras, must be stored away for the duration of the test administration.
- While students are working, move around the room to see that they are following directions and answering questions in the appropriate section.
- If a student completes the test early, he/she may use the time to review his/her answers to the questions. You may also provide activity sheets or books for students to work on during this time.

Questions and Scoring Information

This Scoring Guide section provides a brief overview of the process of comprehension behind each question, followed by a detailed overview of how to score your students' responses. In addition, it includes information from PIRLS data showing which of the questions proved to be challenging for students globally in 2016.

After students have read the passage and have answered the accompanying questions, the scoring guide provides the key for giving students feedback. When providing feedback, use the scoring guide to identify the questions that were difficult for the students to answer. After identifying the difficult questions, you can then use the information provided in the scoring guide to identify the specific process or processes of reading comprehension to address. Then you can refer to chapter 3 of the book *Putting PIRLS to Use in Classrooms Across the Globe* for strategies and suggestions on how to address these processes in the classroom.

The information in this resource pack should be used alongside the *How to Help Students Develop Reading Comprehension Skills Teacher Snippet XL* and the book *Putting PIRLS to Use in Classrooms Across the Globe*, as they contain practical information and strategies that can be used to enhance reading comprehension.

If your country took part in PIRLS 2016, you can find the related national results in the extract document *Item Statistics* included in this pack. For your information, the *Item Statistics* document provides an overview of the international and national averages of students who answered each question correctly.

If you would like more information or would like to view the complete *Item Statistics* from PIRLS 2016, please use the following link:

<https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2016/international-database/index.html>

Scoring Guide

Please note: the abbreviation MC is used after the question number to identify multiple choice questions and the abbreviation CR is used to identify constructed response questions.

Flowers on the Roof, Question 1(MC)

Process: Interpret and Integrate Ideas and Information

International Average: 78% correct

1. Who is telling the story?

Correct answer: B. a child

Flowers on the Roof, Question 2 (MC)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 78% correct

2. Which of these is most like Granny Gunn's farmhouse?

Correct answer: C.



Flowers on the Roof, Question 3 (MC)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 75% correct

3. Why did the doctor think that Granny Gunn should move to town?

Correct answer: D. in case she needed someone to look after her

Flowers on the Roof, Question 4 (MC)

Process: Focus on and Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information

International Average: 82% correct

4. Who offered to look after Granny Gunn's animals when she moved to town?

Correct answer: A. The people on the next farm

Flowers on the Roof, Question 5 (MC)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 67% correct

5. Granny Gunn did not like the walls and windows in her new flat. Why else was she unhappy?

Correct answer: D. She felt homesick.

Flowers on the Roof, Question 6 (CR)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 56% correct

6. Why did Granny Gunn scream when the cat jumped out of the window?

1 – Acceptable Response

The response provides an appropriate inference for why Granny screamed. It should demonstrate the understanding that Granny did not know there was a balcony outside of her window and may simply state that she did not know this.

Examples:

- She did not know there was a balcony.
- Because she thought it was a long drop.

Or, the response may focus on the fact that she was afraid her cat would be hurt, or could die.

Examples:

- She thought the cat would fall.
- She was afraid he would get hurt.

0 – Unacceptable Response

The response does not provide an appropriate inference for why Granny screamed. It does not demonstrate the understanding that Granny did not know there was a balcony outside of her window.

Examples:

- She thought the cat was going to run away.
 - It made her afraid.
 - She loved her cat.
-

Flowers on the Roof, Question 7 (CR)

Process: Interpret and Integrate Ideas and Information

International Average: Complete Comprehension: 36% correct
Partial Comprehension: 15% correct

7. When Granny Gunn was on the balcony, she crouched down so that she could not see any of the rooftops – only mountains and the sky. Why did she do this?

2 – Complete Comprehension

The response demonstrates complete comprehension by integrating ideas from across the text to interpret Granny's feelings about the mountains and sky. It provides a connection between Granny's view from the balcony and her home in the country. It may state that Granny was reminded of her home in the country when she saw the mountains and the sky. OR the response may suggest that Granny could actually see the countryside where she had lived.

Examples:

- Because they reminded her of the country
- She could easily imagine that the mountains were those that were near her farm.
- She was thinking about her farm and missing it.
- Because she wanted to see the countryside where she had lived before

1 – Partial Comprehension

The response demonstrates partial comprehension of Granny's feelings about the mountains and the sky. It accurately describes Granny's feelings about the view from her balcony or provides an appropriate explanation for why she did this. However, the response does not make a connection to her feelings about her home in the country.

Examples:

- The mountains were beautiful.
- So she could see the countryside
- She didn't like the rooftops.

0 – No Comprehension

The response demonstrates no comprehension of Granny's feelings about the mountains and the sky. It does not accurately describe Granny's feelings about the view from the balcony and does not make a connection to her feelings about her home in the country, or repeats question.

Examples:

- because she was tired
- because she couldn't see over the rooftops
- to see only the mountains and the sky (The response repeats question.)

Flowers on the Roof, Question 8 (CR)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 64% correct

8. Find the part of the story by this picture of Granny Gunn: [picture of Granny winking]. Why did Granny Gunn wink and grin at the little boy?

1 – Acceptable Response

The response provides an appropriate inference for why Granny winked. It demonstrates the understanding that Granny realized at that point that she could bring more of her animals to the city. It may simply state that she had an idea or a plan, or that she realizes the little boy had a good idea.

Examples:

- Because the child gave her a good idea.

- She had a plan.
- She thought it was an unusual idea. (NOTE: “Unusual” is an acceptable interpretation of Granny’s reaction to the idea since it does not imply that she rejects the idea.)

Or, the response may simply indicate that Granny agrees with the little boy’s idea.

Examples:

- She was thinking yes, I will do that.
- because she agreed that it was a good plan

Or, the response may describe that the idea was to bring more of her animals to the city.

Examples:

- because she thought she could fetch her animals to town
- She decided to go get her hens.

Or, the response may accurately describe the little boy’s idea that prompted her wink and grin.

Examples:

- because he said, why don’t you go and get your animals
- because the little boy told her it was okay to bring her animals to town

0– Unacceptable Response

The response does not provide an appropriate inference for why Granny winked. It does not demonstrate understanding that Granny had an idea or plan at that point in the story. It may only provide an inaccurate or vague explanation.

Examples:

- She liked the little boy.
- She thought it was a bad idea.
- because she was happy
- She decided to put grass on the roof. (NOTE: This is not the idea or plan that Granny had when she winked at the child.)
- as if to say thanks

Flowers on the Roof, Question 9 (CR)

Process: Focus on and Retrieve Explicitly Stated Information

International Average: Complete Comprehension: 63% correct
Partial Comprehension: 18% correct

9. Write two ways in which Granny Gunn made her new flat feel like home.

2 – Complete Comprehension

The response demonstrates complete comprehension of Granny’s actions to make her flat feel like home. It provides any two of the actions taken by Granny listed below.

Example:

- Granny Gunn put grass on the rooftop and moved her chickens into the apartment.

- She brought her cat with her and then went to get her farm animals.
- (NOTE: Bringing her cat and bringing her animals are considered two different events.)

1 – Partial Comprehension

The response demonstrates partial comprehension of Granny's actions to make her flat feel like home. It provides only one of the actions taken by Granny listed below.

Examples:

- She brought her cat to town.
- She put some grass and flowers on the roof.
- She put grass on the roof. She planted flowers on the roof.
- (Note: Putting grass and flowers on the roof are considered a reference to only one event.)
- She put flowers on the roof and could see the mountains when she crouched down.
- (Note: seeing the mountains is not an appropriate way).

0 – No Comprehension

The response demonstrates no comprehension of Granny's actions to make her flat feel like home. It does not provide any of the actions taken by Granny listed below. It may describe other actions taken by Granny not related to making her apartment feel like home.

Example:

- She moved to the city.

Or, the response may provide only a vague or circular description of her attempt to make her apartment feel like home.

Examples:

- She tried to make it look like her farm.
- She brought them back with her. (Please note that "them" is too vague.)

Actions Taken by Granny to Make Her Apartment Feel Like Home

To receive credit for "two ways", students must give one example from at least two different categories. More than one example from any individual category is only counted as one way Granny made her apartment feel like home.

Actions related to her animals

- She brought her animals. (Students may or may not mention hens.)

Actions related to her cat

- She brought her cat. (This may be considered different from "bringing her animals" since the two events occurred at different points in the story.)

Actions related to her roof

- She put grass/flowers on the roof. (Both flowers and grass may be mentioned, but they are credited as only one action. This may also be phrased as a generalization, such as "Made the roof look like it had in the country.")
 - She brought the smell of earth.
-

Flowers on the Roof, Question 10 (CR)

Process: Make Straightforward Inferences

International Average: 83% correct

10. At the end of the story, how did Granny Gunn feel about her new home?

1 – Acceptable Response

The response provides an appropriate inference of Granny's feelings at the end of the story. It demonstrates the understanding that Granny had a positive feeling about her new home at the end of the story.

Examples:

- She felt like she was back home.
- She decided that she liked it after all.

0 - Unacceptable Response

The response does not provide an appropriate inference of Granny's feelings at the end of the story. It does not demonstrate the understanding that Granny had a positive feeling about her new home at the end of the story. It may provide only inaccurate information.

Examples:

- She doesn't like it.
- She felt homesick.
- unhappy because she missed her animals

Or, the response may describe other aspects of the story without accurately describing Granny's feelings.

Example:

- She put grass on the roof.
-

Flowers on the Roof, Question 11(MC)

Process: Evaluate and Critique Content and Textual Elements

International Average: 59% correct

11. The last line in the story is: 'How is she going to get the cow into the lift?!' Why does the story finish with this question?

Correct answer: A. To add a joke to the story.

Flowers on the Roof, Question 12 (CR)

Process: Interpret and Integrate Ideas and Information

International Average: Satisfactory Comprehension or better: 27% correct
Limited Comprehension: 18% correct

12. What were the little boy's feelings about Granny Gunn when she first moved in and at the end of the story? Use what you have read to describe each feeling and explain why his feelings changed.

Responses may describe the little boy's feelings about or impressions of Granny Gunn. Also, feelings about Granny Gunn before she moved in (e.g., excited) are not appropriate for a feeling when she moved in.

3 – Extensive Comprehension

The response demonstrates extensive comprehension by integrating ideas from across the text to interpret the little boy's feelings about Granny Gunn when she first moved in and at the end of the story, as well as why his feelings about her changed. It describes the little boy's negative feelings when Granny Gunn first moved in and the positive feelings he had at the end of the story. In addition, the response explains why his feelings changed using appropriate and specific information from the story. Often, his feeling at the end will be implied through the explanation for why his earlier feelings changed.

Examples:

- At first, he didn't like the idea of a Granny living in the opposite apartment. He started to like Granny when he saw how much fun it was to have animals around.

Or, the response describes the child's plausible feelings of empathy for Granny Gunn when she first moved in and at the end of the story, rather than feelings about her, and explains why his feelings changed.

- At first he was sad for Granny Gunn because she missed her animals, but then he was happy because she was happy. His feelings changed because she brought her animals and he saw that she was no longer homesick. (Note that the little boy's feelings of empathy are plausible given the story events. The reason for the change of feelings also is provided.)

2 – Satisfactory Comprehension

The response demonstrates satisfactory comprehension of the little boy's feelings about Granny Gunn and why they changed. It describes the little boy's negative feelings when Granny Gunn first moved in and the positive feelings he had at the end of the story. However, it does not explain why his feelings changed or may include only a vague or general reason for the change.

Examples:

- He was disappointed that children weren't moving in but in the end he liked her.
- At first he was excited because he thought children were moving in. Then he was sad because it was Granny. At the end he was happy.
- He was sad she was moving in but then he liked her because he got to know her. ("got to know her" is a vague explanation for why his feelings changed)

Or, the response describes one of his feelings (his negative feelings about Granny Gunn when she first moved in OR his positive feelings about her at the end of the story) and explains why his feelings changed. The response does not demonstrate understanding of the progression of negative to positive feelings. Often, these responses will describe and explain his feelings at the end only.

- He thought she could do anything because she had made her new home like her farm.
- He liked her at the end of the story because she was happier with her new home.
- The little boy was disappointed because he was hoping that kids would move in, but his opinion changed because he saw that she could do anything.

1 – Limited Comprehension

The response demonstrates limited comprehension of the little boy's feelings. It describes his negative feelings about Granny Gunn when she first moved in OR his positive feelings about her at the end of the story.

Examples:

- He was disappointed when she moved in.
- At the end, he really liked her.
- At the beginning of the story the little boy thinks Granny is a strange old lady. Later in the book he says “She can do anything.” (NOTE: first part of the response is inaccurate, but the response conveys understanding of a positive impression of Granny at the end of the story)

Or, the response explains why his feelings changed but does not describe either feeling.

- He saw she could do anything.

0 – Unsatisfactory Comprehension

The response demonstrates unsatisfactory comprehension of the little boy’s feelings. It does not provide an accurate description of the little boy’s feelings when Granny Gunn first moved in or at the end of the story or explain why his feelings changed. Or, a feeling is named, but the response does not indicate if it is a feeling about Granny Gunn when she first moved in or at the end of the story.

Examples:

- The little boy first thought Granny was strange.
- The little boy felt bad for her.
- He was happy. (NOTE: no association of the feeling with either part of the story)

Flowers on the Roof, Question 13 (MC)

Process: Evaluate and Critique Content and Textual Elements

International Average: 71% correct

13. Which of the following might you learn from this story?

***Correct answer:* B. You can make a new place feel like home if you bring familiar things with you.**
