PIRLS 2026
Leading Reading Assessment into the Future

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IEA General Assembly
Split, Croatia
October, 2022
Legacy of Leading Advances in Reading Assessment

1991 IEA’s International Reading Literacy Study

2001 Assembled NRCs to assess trends —And some countries did

Call for a new generation of Reading Assessment!
PIRLS 2001

• Longer, authentic texts to reflect what students read
• Reading for a purpose
  — Literary experience
  — Acquire and use information
• Greater variety of texts to reflect purposes
  — Separate brochure, colorful “Reader”
• Heavy reliance on constructed response items
Important Advances with Each Cycle

2006 Processes as well as Purposes
   —Retrieve
   —Make inferences
   —Integrate ideas
   —Evaluate and critique

2011 Assessed with TIMSS Fourth Grade
   —Opportunity to assess same students
   —Relationships among reading, mathematics, and science achievement
Important Advances with Each Cycle (Cont.)

2016 Pioneering computer-based assessment of online reading—ePIRLS
  — Voluntary since PIRLS was still paper based
  — PIRLS Literacy (less difficult option) linked to PIRLS

2021 Transition to Digital Assessment and Group Adaptive Design
  — Half the countries digital, ePIRLS and process data
  — All countries had option of choosing proportion of students given less difficult or more difficult texts (most 50/50)
  — In COVID times (before it was the new normal), modified Southern Hemisphere data collection schedule
PIRLS 2026

- Completes the transition to fully digital assessment
- Integrates “ePIRLS” into PIRLS so just “PIRLS 2026”
  — Informational reading includes on the internet
- Implements the data collection schedule where the Southern Hemisphere follows the Northern Hemisphere in the same calendar year
- Continues the Group Adaptive Design

Note: Countries requiring a paper option can consider IEA’s LaNA.
Examples of ePIRLS and Digital PIRLS Reading Texts

**ePIRLS: Oceans**

Simulated websites

Teacher avatar guides students

Hi, I am the teacher who is going to help you today.

Mr. Webster
ePIRLS: Oceans

Item #7
**Ocean Adventures and Tours**
[oceanadventures.com/tour-habitats/](http://oceanadventures.com/tour-habitats/)
Join us for up-close ocean experiences with dolphins and sea lions in their natural habitats ...

**Ocean Life and Habitats**
[oceanhabitats.org/home](http://oceanhabitats.org/home)
Ocean plants and animals live in different places ...

**Explore Your Local Habitat**
[nearbynature.com/yourhabitat](http://nearbynature.com/yourhabitat)
Everything around your neighborhood is part of a habitat ...

**Support Healthy Habitats and Oceans Program**
[clearwater.org/healthy-habitats-oceans/donate](http://clearwater.org/healthy-habitats-oceans/donate)
Give money and help us improve ocean habitats for endangered marine animals ...

**7.**
*Look at the Google search results, at left.*

*Click on the link that is most likely to include information about different habitats in the ocean.*
ePIRLS: Oceans

Item #10
Animals that live in different parts of the ocean have different natural homes. These different habitats often depend on:

- Temperature of the water
- Distance from the shore
- Depth of the ocean

This is why different places in the ocean are home to particular plants and animals. Plants are found mostly in the top layer of the ocean where there is enough sunlight for them to grow. But animals are found at all depths of the ocean.
ePIRLS: Oceans
Item #16
Plastic is very useful, but half the plastic we produce is only used once. Much of it is thrown away and then ends up in the oceans. So much plastic is in the ocean that there is a giant floating pile of plastic bottles and garbage called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. A plastic bag was even found all the way down in the Mariana Trench.

Besides the garbage that you can see, there also is a lot of garbage that you can't see. After plastic is in the ocean a long time, the sunlight and waves break it up into tiny pieces. Fish and animals eat these tiny pieces of poisonous plastic and then humans often eat the poisoned fish.
Examples of ePIRLS and Digital PIRLS Reading Texts

Digital PIRLS: The Empty Pot

Literary Text/Story

Updated from paper

Students scroll through text and click through questions

2. What did each child receive from the Emperor?
Digital PIRLS: The Empty Pot

Item #4
The Emperor of China announced a contest to decide the next heir to the throne. The Emperor was old and had no children. Because he loved plants, he declared that any child who wanted to be emperor should come to the palace to receive one royal seed. Whichever child could show the best results within six months would win the contest and become the next emperor.

You can imagine the excitement! On the day the seeds were to be handed out, crowds of hopeful children holding bowls and baskets gathered to see the magnificent ceremony.
Digital PIRLS: The Empty Pot
Item #5
And so it was with the boy Jun. He was already considered the best gardener in the village. His neighbors loved to share the melons, cabbage, and snow peas from his garden. Jun carefully carried the Emperor’s seed home, sealing it securely in his hands so it wouldn’t fall, but not so tightly that it might be crushed.

At home, he spread the bottom of a flowerpot with large stones, covered the stones with pebbles, then filled the pot with soil. He pressed the seed about an inch below the surface and covered it with pebbles. Over the next few days, the seed started to sprout.

5. Which of these looks most like Jun’s flowerpot when he first planted the seed?

A  
B  
C  
D
Digital PIRLS: The Empty Pot
Item #13
Ashamed, Jun carried his empty pot on the road to the palace, while gleeful children carrying pots tottering with huge plants marched to his right and left.

At the palace, children lined up in rows with their blossoming plants and awaited judgment. The Emperor, wrapped in his silk robe, strode down the line of hopeful contestants, viewing each plant with a frown. When he came to Jun, he scowled even more and said, “What is this? You brought me an empty pot?”

13. Why did Jun say, “I’m sorry” to the Emperor?

A) He had cheated in the contest.
B) He didn’t want to become an Emperor.
C) He thought he disappointed the Emperor.
D) He watered his seed too often.
Examples of ePIRLS and Digital PIRLS Reading Texts

Digital PIRLS: The Amazing Octopus

Informational Text

Students scroll through text and click through questions

Some animations (new in 2021)
Digital PIRLS: The Amazing Octopus

Item #1
The Amazing Octopus

Octopuses are sea animals that have rounded bodies, bulging eyes, and eight long arms. Their arms are very strong and lined with powerful suction cups. They live in all the world's oceans but they especially like warm, tropical waters. They often stay on the ocean floor where they can find their favorite foods. They like to eat crabs, shrimp, and small fish. They capture their prey with their suction cups and then put the food into their mouths.

Octopuses often live alone in dens built from rocks. Octopuses sometimes even make rock "doors" for their dens that can be pulled closed to keep them safe.

An octopus in front of its den.
Digital PIRLS: The Amazing Octopus

Item #2
The Amazing Octopus

Octopuses are sea animals that have rounded bodies, bulging eyes, and eight long arms. Their arms are very strong and lined with powerful suction cups. They live in all the world’s oceans but they especially like warm, tropical waters. They often stay on the ocean floor where they can find their favorite foods. They like to eat crabs, shrimp, and small fish. They capture their prey with their suction cups and then put the food into their mouths.

Octopuses often live alone in dens built from rocks. Octopuses sometimes even make rock "doors" for their dens that can be pulled closed to keep them safe.

2. What do octopuses use to make doors for their dens?
Digital PIRLS: The Amazing Octopus

Item #13
Recognizing Their Keepers

Besides toys and puzzles, octopuses like it when their keepers spend time touching them and playing with them. When octopuses see their keepers coming to feed them and stroke their heads, they turn red to show they are excited. They also might greet their keepers by standing up tall on their arms and leaning forward. Octopuses have been known to hop on their back "legs" while waving their arms to get the attention of their keepers.

Octopuses like the company as much as they like the food. When the octopuses finish eating they will reach up with one arm and then another, curling them over their keeper's hands and arms. Octopuses and keepers will hold each other's arms, with the octopuses gently latching onto their keepers with their suction cups.

An octopus latching on to its keeper's arms.
## Group Level Adaptive Testing in PIRLS 2026

### Passages and Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Purpose</th>
<th>Difficulty Level</th>
<th>Passage Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literary</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Oliver and the Griffin (16)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>New LitD2 (26)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Ink Drinker (21)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><em>New LitM1 (26)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Ostrich and the Hat (21)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pemba Sherpa (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td><em>New LitE2 (26)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Summer My Father Was 10 (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Library Mouse (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informational</strong></td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td><em>New InD2 (26) – Voyages (eP21)</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The World’s Bank of Seeds (21)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td><em>New InM1 (26) – Rainforests (eP16)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marie Curie-Prize Winning Scientist (21)</td>
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<td>How Did We Learn to Fly? (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Training a Deaf Polar Bear (11)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>New InE2 (26)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hungry Plant (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PIRLS 2026 Framework Update

- Continue with PIRLS basic assessment framework of Literary and Informational purposes and four comprehension processes
- Update role of reading online in Partnership with John Sabatini, University of Memphis
- First meeting PIRLS 2026 RDG - January 2023
- First meeting PIRLS 2026 NRCs - February 2023
  — Hosted by IEA in Amsterdam
IEA StudyExpert – Digital Assessment System

• Collaboration with IEA in building StudyExpert

• Progress towards new interactive types of reading materials

• Progress towards new innovative item types that can be machine scored

• Progress towards automated scoring of various types of students’ constructed responses

• More efficient data collection—translation, administration, scoring
Achievement Data

• Average achievement and distribution on the PIRLS Fourth Grade Reading Comprehension Scale

• Average achievement on subscales
  — Purposes: Reading for Literary enjoyment and to find Information
  — Processes: Retrieve/Make Inferences and Integrate/Evaluate

• Percentages of students reaching the PIRLS International Benchmarks
  — Low, Intermediate, High, Advanced
Achievement Data (Cont.)

• International Benchmarks accompanied by descriptions of the types of reading accomplished by students reaching each level in PIRLS 2026

• Trends in achievement—overall and by gender
Background Data in Relation to Achievement Data

- Parents’ descriptions of home support for learning to read
  - Books/internet, early childhood experiences
- School climate
  - Resources, emphasis on academics, safety
- Classroom climate and instructional approaches/activities
- Students’ attitudes and behaviors concerning reading and reading instruction
Process Data

• Students’ navigation through the assessment
  — How much of the text do they read before accessing questions? Do they scroll through the text in sync with the questions? Do they go back to earlier sections? Do they play the videos? Do they use the highlighter?

• Students’ timing from question to question
  — Response times per question (relatively longer or shorter—too short?) including, information about omits
Longitudinal Option

- Re-assess the same students one year after the PIRLS 2026 assessment
- Investigate students’ learning gains over one year of schooling
- Compare degree of increases across instructional goals
- Examine differences across subgroups of students
Overview of PIRLS 2026 Schedule

2023–2024 Integrated development of reading assessment instruments and software
  —Texts, items, background questionnaires; translation, administration, and scoring systems

2025 Field Test

2026 Data Collection

2027 Analysis and Reporting
Thank You!

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