



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 of students at the Grade 4 level.



PIRLS is a project 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 is 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.

Provincial and territorial participation in PIRLS is coordinated by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Founded in 1967, CMEC provides leadership in education at the pan-Canadian and international levels on behalf of the provinces and territories.

CMEC is involved in the design, implementation, and analysis of both pan-Canadian and international assessment programs, as well as other large-scale studies that examine educational environments and the degree to which they are meeting expectations for students' performance at strategic points in their education.

For Further Information

The *PIRLS 2016 Assessment Framework*, which includes sample questions in reading is available at: <http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2016/framework.html>. General information about PIRLS is available at: http://www.iea.nl/pirls_2016.html and at [http://www.cmec.ca/399/Programs-and-Initiatives/Assessment/Progress-in-International-Reading-Literacy-Study_\(PIRLS\)/Overview/index.html](http://www.cmec.ca/399/Programs-and-Initiatives/Assessment/Progress-in-International-Reading-Literacy-Study_(PIRLS)/Overview/index.html).

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**Progress in International
Reading Literacy
Study**



International Association
for the Evaluation of
Educational Achievement



BOSTON
COLLEGE



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



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Council of
Ministers of
Education,
Canada

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. In total, 55 countries including Canada 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 Grade 4 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 in Canada

Canada participated in *PIRLS 2011* with Ontario and Quebec (as benchmarking participants), British Columbia, New Brunswick (French), Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador (at the oversampling level), and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (as part of the Canadian sample).

Eight Canadian provinces and one territory will participate in *PIRLS 2016*. This will include Ontario and Quebec (as benchmarking participants), British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador (at the oversampling level), and Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Territories (as part of the Canadian sample). The Canadian participation is coordinated by the Council of Ministers of Education (Canada).

Across Canada, it is expected that approximately 1,000 schools in the participating provinces and territory will be randomly selected. In each participating school, one or two entire Grade 4 classrooms will be chosen at random.

The assessment will take about 80 minutes to complete at the Grade 4 level (in two parts of 40 minutes each). An additional 30 minutes will be required for students to complete a contextual questionnaire intended to collect information on students' characteristics and attitudes toward learning. Parents or guardians of participating students will be asked to complete a Home Questionnaire on home contexts, while Grade 4 teachers will provide valuable information on the classroom contexts in which reading is taught. School principals will also respond to a School Questionnaire on their school environment and organization. The information in these questionnaires will remain confidential and will not permit individual participants to be identified.



Benefits of Participating in PIRLS

Participating in *PIRLS* 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 results are disseminated through the *PIRLS International Report* and via the Internet. A well-documented international database provides opportunities for research both within and across countries. Participating countries use the *PIRLS* 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* data
- Conduct related studies, such as monitoring equity or assessing students in additional grades
- Train researchers and teachers in assessment and evaluation

In Canada, a detailed national report will provide jurisdictional-level results not only in terms of achievement in reading at the Grade 4 level but also in terms of factors associated with achievement at home, in the classroom, and in the school.

Schools can benefit from participating in *PIRLS* as it provides school administrators, classroom teachers, and students with an opportunity to be involved with a high-quality assessment that will influence how reading is taught and learned in the future.

Schedule Highlights

2014—March

Development of the framework and of the assessment

2015—March

Field Test in Canada

2016—April

Main Administration in Canada (April 11th to May 13th, 2016)

2017—December

Release of the International and Canadian Reports