

PIRLS 2006

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK AND SPECIFICATIONS 2nd Edition

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

February 2006

Ina V.S. Mullis
Ann M. Kennedy
Michael O. Martin
Marian Sainsbury

TIMSS & PIRLS

International Study Center
Lynch School of Education
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
United States



International Association
for the Evaluation of
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PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications 2nd Edition

by Ina V.S. Mullis, Ann M. Kennedy, Michael O. Martin, and Marian Sainsbury.

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For more information about PIRLS:

TIMSS & PIRLS

International Study Center
Lynch School of Education
Manresa House
Boston College
140 Commonwealth Avenue
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
United States

tel: +1-617-552-1600

fax: +1-617-552-1203

CONTENTS

<i>PREFACE</i>	v
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1 Overview of IEA's PIRLS Assessment	1
The IEA and Reading Literacy	1
A Definition of Reading Literacy	3
Overview of Aspects of Student's Reading Literacy	4
Reading Literacy Behaviors and Attitudes	6
Student Population Assessed	7

2 PIRLS Reading Purposes and Processes of Reading Comprehension	11
Processes of Comprehension.....	12
Purposes for Reading	17

3 Contexts for Learning to Read	23
National and Community Contexts	25
Home Contexts	27
School Contexts	31
Classroom Contexts	32

4	Assessment Design and Specifications	37
	Reporting Reading Achievement.....	38
	Test Booklet Design	38
	Selecting Reading Passages for the Assessment	41
	Question Types and Scoring Procedures.....	42
	Releasing Assessment Material to the Public.....	44
	Background Questionnaires	45
	PIRLS 2006 Encyclopedia	46
	REFERENCES.....	49
	IEA READING RESEARCH	55
	APPENDIX A.....	59
	PIRLS National Research Coordinators Contributors to PIRLS Development	
	APPENDIX B	65
	Sample Passages, Questions, and Scoring Guides	
	APPENDIX C	101
	Comparison of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)	

PREFACE

Reading is fundamental to all forms of personal learning and intellectual growth. In today's global society, a literate population is essential for a nation's social and economic development. To improve the quality of life for its people, a country needs to maximize the potential of its human, social, and material resources. Citizens that know how to read are crucial to this effort.

Concrete information about how well their students can read provides policymakers and researchers in every country with insight into how to improve literacy and reading achievement. To help improve reading teaching and learning around the world, the IEA General Assembly approved reading literacy as an essential component of the IEA's regular cycle of core studies, which also includes mathematics and science (known as TIMSS). With PIRLS 2006, IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is in its second round of assessing reading achievement for students in their fourth year of school.

IEA, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, was founded in 1959 for the purpose of conducting comparative studies focusing on educational policies and practices in various countries around the world. In the 45 years since, IEA's membership has grown to more than 50 countries. It has a Secretariat located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and a data processing center in Hamburg, Germany. IEA studies have reported on a wide range of topics and subject matters, each contributing to a deep understanding of educational processes within individual countries and within a broad international context.

PIRLS 2006 provides countries with the unique opportunity to obtain internationally comparative data about how well their children can read. Countries also will obtain detailed information about home supports for literacy as well as school instruction. For the 35 countries that participated in PIRLS 2001, PIRLS 2006 will provide information on changes in students' reading achievement. Since PIRLS will continue on a five-year cycle into the future, new participants can collect important baseline information for monitoring trends in reading literacy.

The PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications is intended as a blueprint for IEA's 2006 assessment of reading literacy. Adapted from the widely-accepted PIRLS 2001 framework, the 2006 framework resulted from a collaborative process involving many individuals and groups – notably the PIRLS Reading Development Group (RDG) and the National Research Coordinators (NRCs) of the more than 40 countries participating in PIRLS. All told, the framework underwent several iterations in response to the comments and interests of the PIRLS countries and the reading research community, and embodies the ideas and interests of many individuals and organizations around the world.

Funding for PIRLS was provided by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education, the World Bank, Boston College, the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, and the participating countries. The work contained in this document represents the efforts of a considerable number of people. I would like to express my thanks to the Reading Development Group; the staff of the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College, especially Ann M. Kennedy, the PIRLS Coordinator; and to the staff involved from the IEA Data Processing Center and Secretariat, Statistics Canada, and the Educational Testing Service. I appreciate, in particular, the contribution of the National Research Coordinators, and of the PIRLS Study Directors, Ina V.S. Mullis and Michael O. Martin.

Hans Wagemaker
Executive Director, IEA

The TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College

The TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College serves as the International Study Center for IEA's studies in mathematics, science, and reading – the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The staff at the Study Center is responsible for the design and implementation of the study. The following had major responsibility for preparing the PIRLS framework for the 2006 assessment.

Ina V.S. Mullis
Michael O. Martin
Co-Directors, PIRLS

Pierre Foy
Director, Sampling and Data Analysis

Ann M. Kennedy
PIRLS Study Coordinator

Marian Sainsbury*
PIRLS Reading Coordinator

Lisa M. White
PIRLS Literacy Specialist

Kathleen L. Trong
PIRLS Research Associate

PIRLS Project Management Team

In implementing PIRLS, the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College works closely with the IEA Secretariat in Amsterdam, Statistics Canada in Ottawa, the IEA Data Processing Center in Hamburg, and Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. In each country, a national representative, called the National Research Coordinator (NRC), is responsible for implementing PIRLS in accordance with international procedures.

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)

The IEA provides overall support in coordinating PIRLS. The Secretariat, located in Amsterdam, has particular responsibility for membership, translation verification, and hiring the quality control monitors. The Data Processing Center, located in Hamburg, is responsible for the accuracy and consistency of the PIRLS database within and across countries. The following persons are closely involved with PIRLS.

Hans Wagemaker
Executive Director

Barbara Malak
Director, Membership Relations

Juriaan Hartenberg
Financial Manager

Dirk Hastedt
Co-Director, IEA Data Processing Center

Oliver Neuschmidt
Julianne Barth
Co-Managers, TIMSS & PIRLS Data Processing

Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada is responsible for PIRLS sampling activities in conjunction with Pierre Foy of the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center and the PIRLS Sampling Referee, Keith Rust of Westat, Inc. in the United States.

Marc Joncas
Director, Sampling

Keith Rust
Sampling Referee

Educational Testing Service

Educational Testing Service provides psychometric support to the TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center. Mathias Von Davier is the ETS liaison to the Study Center.

PIRLS 2006 Advisory Groups

Updating the PIRLS Framework and Specifications for the 2006 assessment was a collaborative effort involving a series of reviews by the Reading Development Group, the Questionnaire Development Group, and the National Research Coordinators.

PIRLS 2006 Reading Development Group

Dominique Lafontaine
Service de Pédagogie
Expérimentale
Belgium

Jan Mejdning
Danish University of Education
Denmark

Sue Horner
Qualifications and Curriculum
Authority
England

Renate Valtin
Humboldt Universität
Germany

Galina Zuckerman
Russian Academy of Education
Russian Federation

Selene Tan
Anne Heenatimulla
Ministry of Education
Singapore

Karen Wixson
University of Michigan
United States

PIRLS 2006 Questionnaire Development Group

Hong wei Meng
The China National Institute of Education
China, PRC

Marc Colmant
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale
France

Knut Schwippert
University of Hamburg
Germany

Bojana Naceva
Bureau for Development of Education
Republic of Macedonia

Mieke van Diepen
University of Nijmegen
Netherlands

Ragnar Gees Solheim
National Centre for Reading, Education and Reading Research
University of Stavanger
Norway

Laurence Ogle
National Center for Education Statistics
United States

National Research Coordinators

The PIRLS National Research Coordinators (NRCs) work with the project staff in the various areas to ensure that the study is responsive to their concerns, both policy-oriented and practical, and are responsible for implementing the study in their countries. The PIRLS NRCs for the 2006 assessment made excellent suggestions for updating the framework and specifications. A full list of NRCs is in Appendix A.

