

PIRLS 2026

Leading Reading Assessment into the Future

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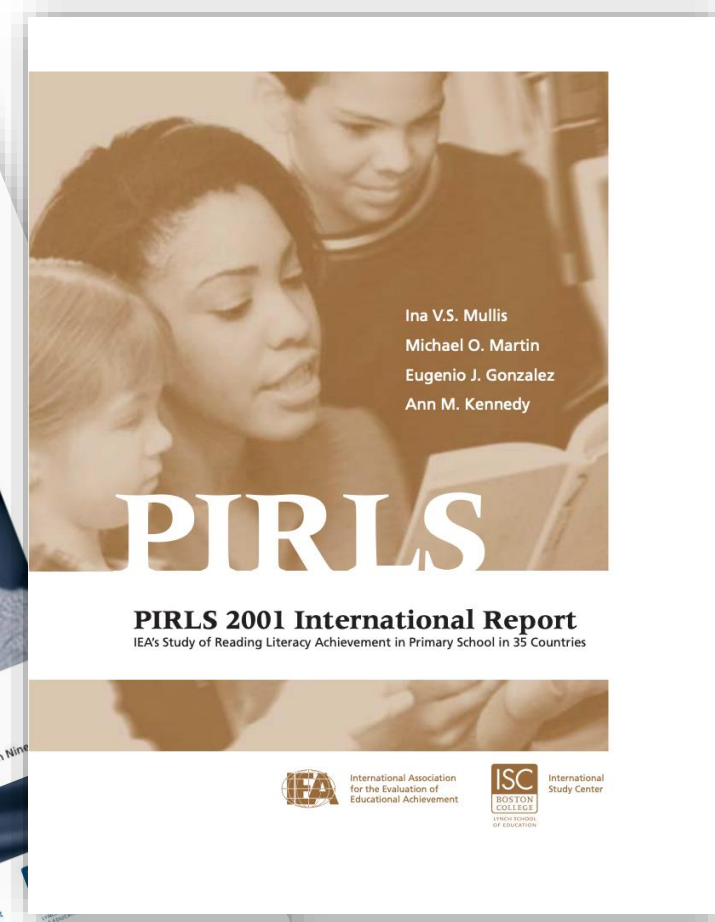
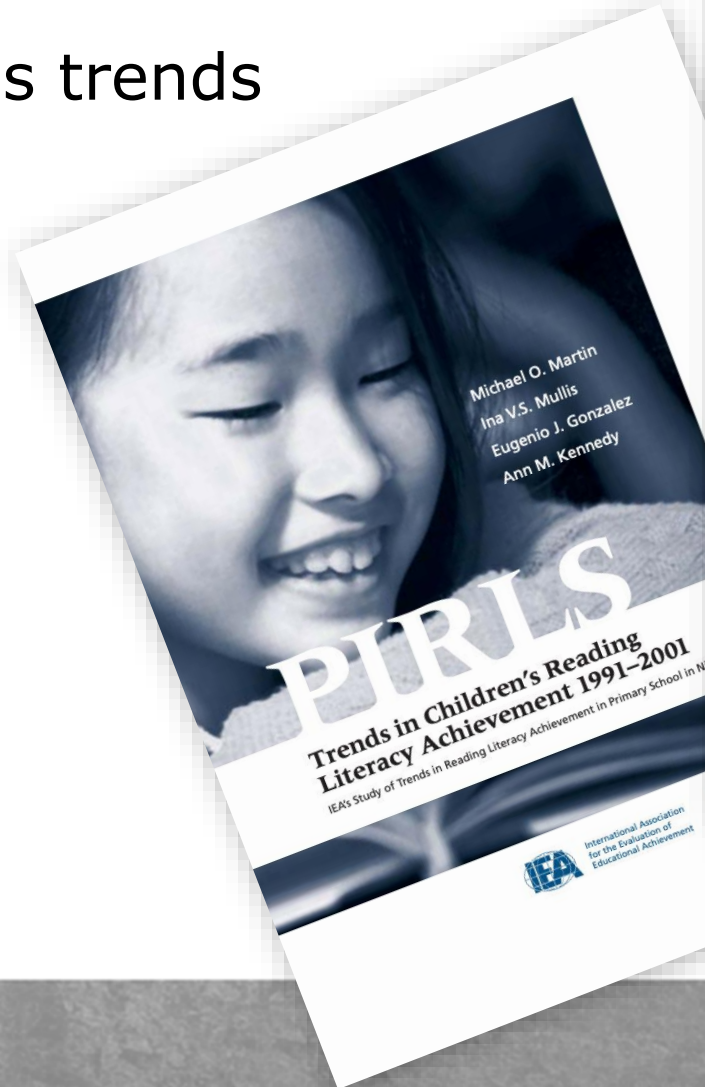


Legacy of Leading Advances in Reading Assessment

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



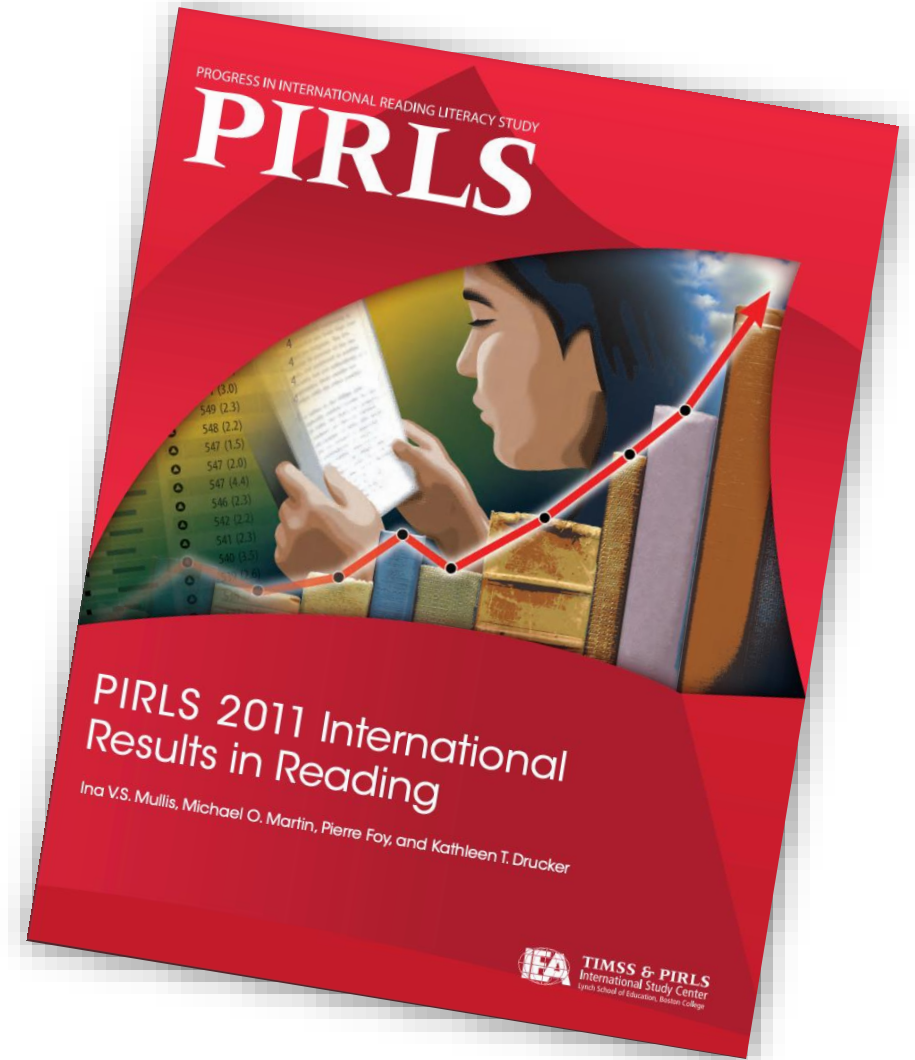
Important Advances with Each Cycle

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.



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

Examples of ePIRLS and Digital PIRLS Reading Texts

ePIRLS: Oceans

Simulated websites

Teacher avatar guides students



Mr. Webster

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

ePIRLS: Oceans

Item #7

<http://google.com?q=ocean+habitats>

Benefits of the World's Oceans

Google



ocean habitats



[Ocean Adventures and Tours](#)

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

Ocean plants and animals live in different places ...

[Explore Your Local Habitat](#)

nearbynature.com/yourhabitat

Everything around your neighborhood is part of a habitat ...

[Support Healthy Habitats and Oceans Program](#)

clearwater.org/healthy-habitats-oceans/donate

Give money and help us improve ocean habitats for endangered marine animals ...

ePIRLS Class Project



Student

☒ They provide our drinking water.☐ They are a place to dump trash.☐ They are a good place for scuba diving.☐ They are deep and endless.✓ **SAVED****Mr. Webster**

Next, we are going to learn more about life in the oceans. Different plants and animals live in different places called habitats.

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

Student

Click on the link that is most likely to include information about different habitats in the ocean

ePIRLS: Oceans

Item #10

<http://www.oceanhabitats.org/home.html>

Benefits of the World's Oceans

Ocean Life and Habitats

Ocean Life and Habitats

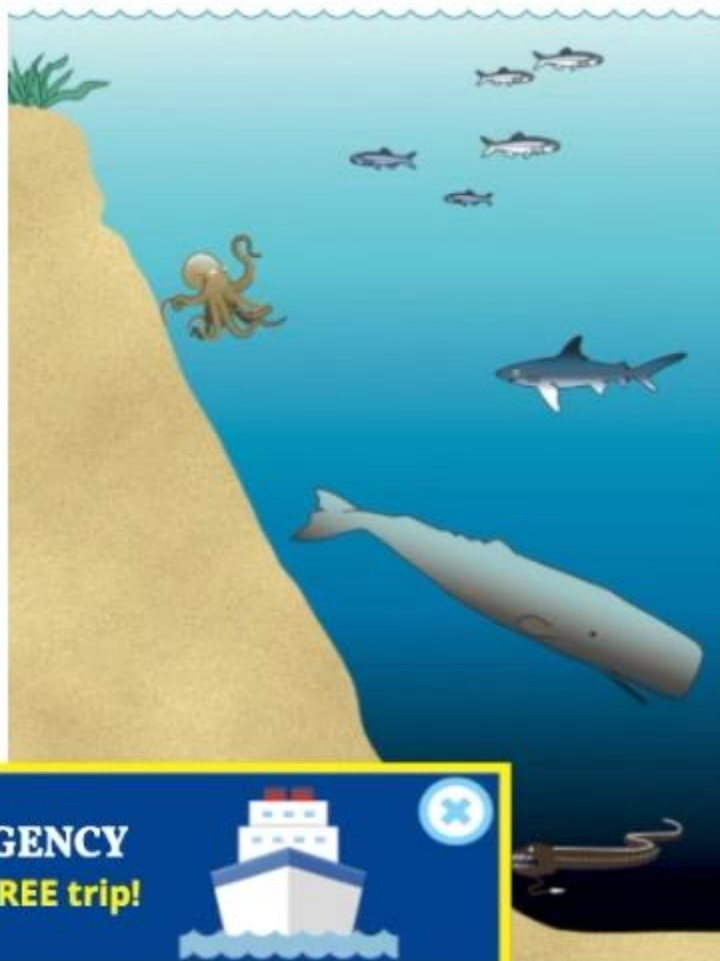
Home

Coral
ReefsMariana
Trench

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.



SEAVIEW TRAVEL AGENCY
Click the ship to WIN a FREE trip!



ePIRLS Class Project



Student

temperature of water

depth of ocean

✓ SAVED

9.

Why are plants mostly found in the top layer of the ocean?



Student

they get sunlight

✓ SAVED



Mr. Webster

Now, click on "Coral Reefs."

ePIRLS: Oceans

Item #16

<http://www.oceanplastic.org/home.html>

Benefits of the World's Oceans

Ocean Life and Habitats

Plastic in the Ocean

Home

Plastic in the Ocean

WHAT CAN
WE DO?

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 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.



Art Made of Plastic

OVER 1000 pieces of art!

Explore our photo galleries!

ePIRLS Class Project

- ☐ Plastic bags are a serious threat to wildlife.
- ☐ The ocean's garbage is over a third plastic.
- ☒ Plastic bags have reached such a remote place.

✓ SAVED

16.

"Besides the garbage that you can see, there is also a lot of garbage that you can't see."

Why did the author include this sentence?



Student

- ☐ To explain about the garbage patch
- ☐ To emphasize the hidden danger
- ☐ To tell what you can do to help
- ☐ To tell you not to worry about it

SAVE

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



The screenshot shows a digital interface for a PIRLS question. At the top, there is a red bar with a "Questions" button (containing a pencil icon) and a black dropdown arrow. Below this, the question text "2. What did each child receive from the Emperor?" is displayed. Underneath the question is a text input field with a small icon of a pencil and the number "1" to its left. At the bottom of the interface, there are two green navigation buttons with left and right arrows, and a "2/17" indicator between them.

Digital PIRLS: **The Empty Pot**

Item #4

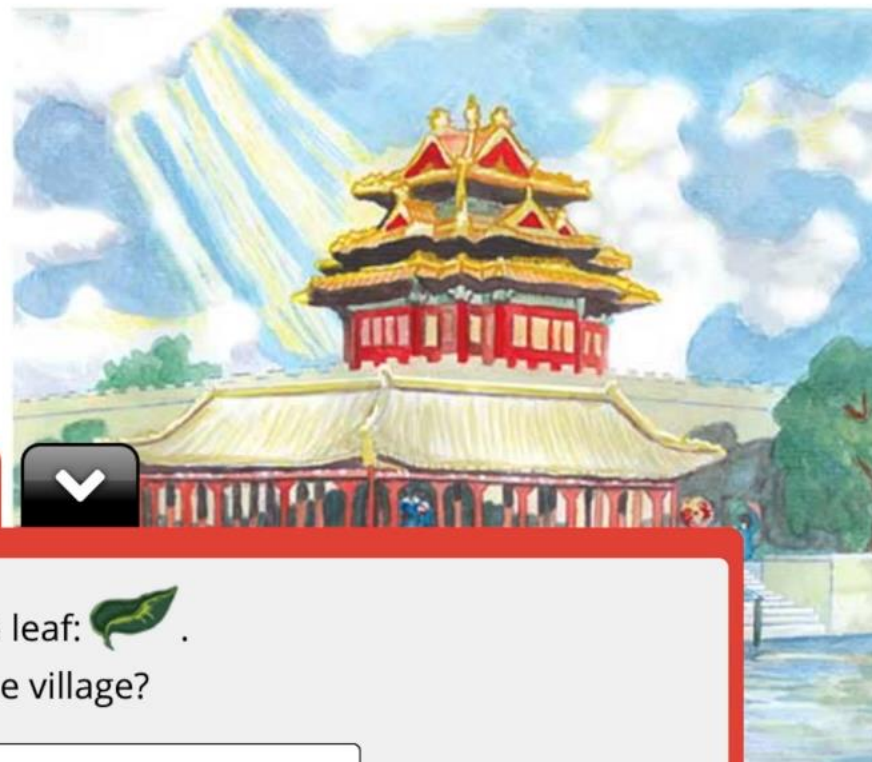
The Empty Pot

Retold by Elaine L. Lindy

illustrated by Jennifer Moher

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 hundreds of children were gathered in the palace courtyard, holding their seeds.



 Questions



4. Find the part of the story next to this picture of a leaf: .

What shows that Jun was the best gardener in the village?



4/17



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.



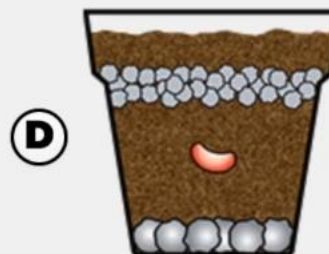
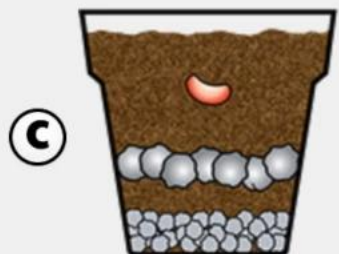
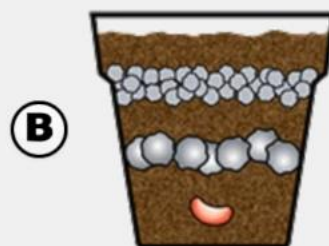
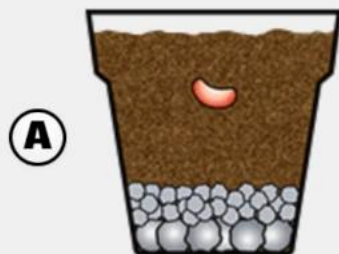
At home, he spread the bottom of a flowerpot with large stones, covered the stones with pebbles, then filled the pot with soil. He pressed the seed about an inch below the surface and covered it with soil. Over the next few days, the seed began to grow.

This is the first time the child had ever seen it with his own eyes. But

Questions



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



5/17

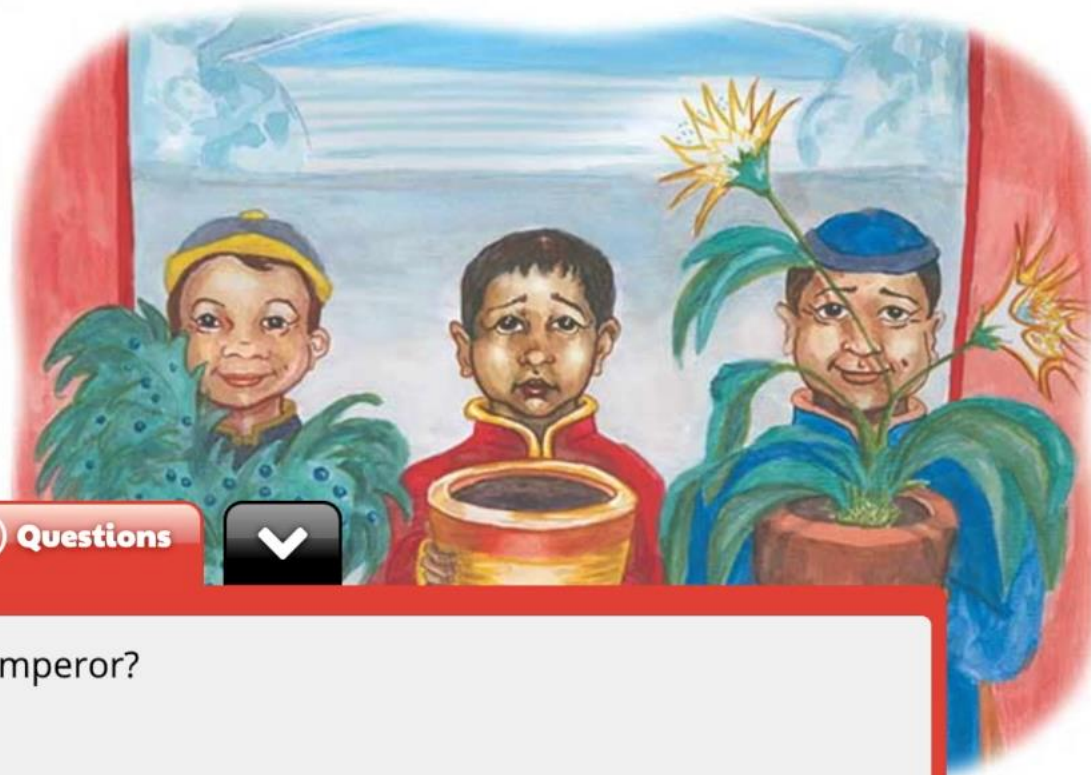


Digital PIRLS: **The Empty Pot**

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.



An octopus in front of its den.

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

Questions



2. What do octopuses use to make doors for their dens?



2/15



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

Reading Purpose	Difficulty Level	Passage Name
Literary	Difficult	Oliver and the Griffin (16)
		<i>New LitD2 (26)</i>
		The Ink Drinker (21)
	Medium	<i>New LitM1 (26)</i>
		The Ostrich and the Hat (21)
		Pemba Sherpa (16)
	Easy	The Summer My Father Was 10 (11)
		<i>New LitE2 (26)</i>
		Library Mouse (16)
Informational	Difficult	Icelandic Horses (16)
		<i>New InfD2 (26) – Voyages (eP21)</i>
		The World's Bank of Seeds (21)
	Medium	<i>New InfM1 (26) – Rainforests (eP16)</i>
		Marie Curie-Prize Winning Scientist (21)
		How Did We Learn to Fly? (16)
	Easy	Training a Deaf Polar Bear (11)
		<i>New InfE2 (26)</i>
		Hungry Plant (16)

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



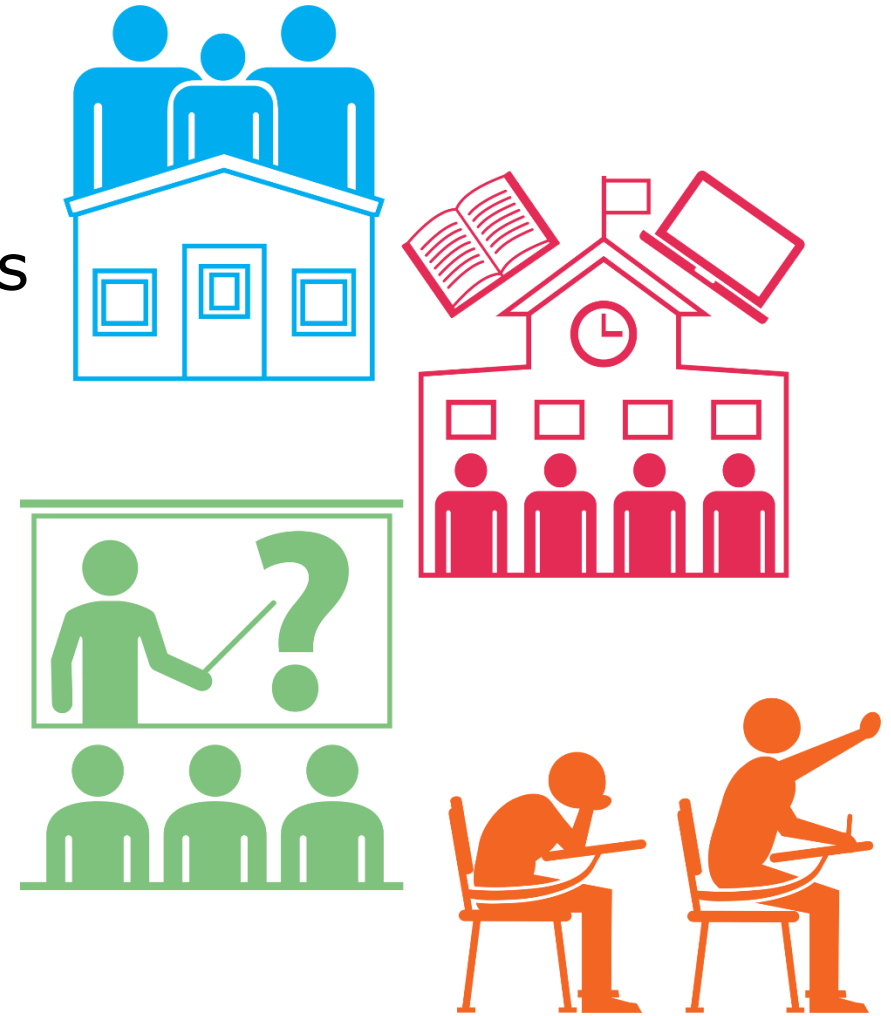
Achievement Data (Cont.)

- 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

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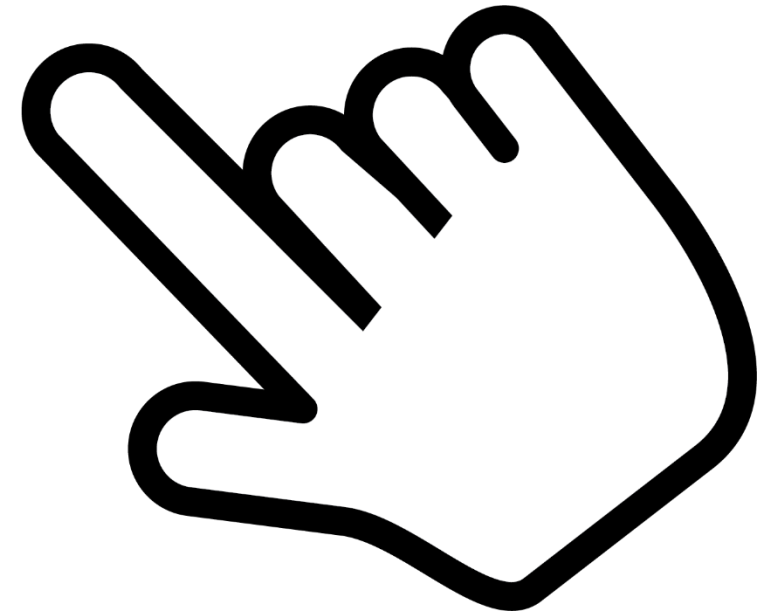
Background Data in Relation to Achievement Data

- 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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