



2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) Grade 4 Results

PIRLS is administered at grade 4 every five years and is designed to measure progress in reading literacy achievement as well as trends in the associated home and school contexts for learning to read. In 2011, PIRLS assessed 300,000 students who were at least 9.5 years old in 48 countries and 9 benchmarking participants (regions of countries). PIRLS 2011 was the third administration since the program began in 2001. PIRLS is directed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's (IEA) TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College. IEA is an independent international cooperative of national research institutions and government agencies with nearly 70 member countries worldwide.

Students respond to questions designed to measure reading comprehension across two overarching purposes: (1) reading for literary experience and (2) reading to acquire and use information. Within both purposes for reading, PIRLS reports results on two scales: (1) retrieving and straightforward inferencing and (2) interpreting, integrating, and evaluating. The texts and items used in PIRLS 2011 were developed and selected based on the [PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework](#). The framework describes reading literacy as an interactive process between the text and the reader, and describes the ways that PIRLS measures students' reading.

Results are provided below for the 53 education systems participating in PIRLS 2011, including the United States and Florida, the only state that participated as a separate education system. The scores are reported on a scale of 0 to 1,000 with the PIRLS scale centerpoint set at 500 and a standard deviation of 100. PIRLS reports achievement at four points along the scale as international benchmarks:

- Advanced International Benchmark (625) – students take the entire text into account to provide text-based support for their interpretations and explanations
- High International Benchmark (between 550 and 625) – students can distinguish significant actions and information, make inferences and interpretations with text-based support, evaluate content and textual elements, and recognize some language features
- Intermediate International Benchmark (between 475 and 550) – students can retrieve information, make straightforward inferences, use some presentational features, and begin to recognize language features
- Low International Benchmark (between 400 and 475) – students demonstrate the ability to retrieve information from a text when it is explicitly stated or easy to locate

2011 PIRLS Reading Results Overview

- The average score for students in the United States (556) was higher than the PIRLS centerpoint of 500. Only 5 education systems had significantly higher averages (Hong Kong-CHN, Florida-USA, Russian Federation, Finland, and Singapore), whereas 40 had significantly lower averages. There was no significant difference between Florida-USA and the other four top performing education systems.
- Seventeen percent of students in the United States performed at or above the Advanced benchmark. Only two education systems had a percentage that was higher (Singapore and Florida-USA), while 43 had percentages lower than the United States. There was no significant difference between Florida-USA and Singapore.

2011 PIRLS Reading Grade 4

Exhibit 1: Average Scale Scores

| Education System | | Average Score |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Top 4 | Hong Kong-CHN | 571* |
| | Florida-USA | 569* |
| | Russian Federation | 568* |
| | Finland | 568* |
| <i>United States</i> | | 556 |
| PIRLS scale centerpoint | | 500^ |
| Bottom 4 | Qatar | 425^ |
| | Abu Dhabi-UAE | 424^ |
| | Oman | 391^ |
| | Morocco | 310^ |

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|----------------------------------|
| Significantly higher than U.S. * |
| Significantly lower than U.S. ^ |

Exhibit 2: at or above *Advanced* (625)

| Education System | | Percentage performing at or above <i>Advanced</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Top 4 | Singapore | 24* |
| | Florida-USA | 22* |
| | Russian Federation | 19* |
| | Northern Ireland-GBR | 19* |
| <i>United States</i> | | 17 |
| PIRLS median percentage | | 8^ |
| Bottom 4 | Azerbaijan | <1^ |
| | Oman | <1^ |
| | Indonesia | <1^ |
| | Morocco | <1^ |