



# Assessment of Reading Literacy and Text Handling Knowledge of 4th Grade Students Based on the PIRLS Program

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**Abstract:** The article discusses the purpose of reading literacy in the PIRLS international assessment program and the criteria for assessing questions and assignments on the texts used in the study. It also discusses the importance of research and working with texts in an elementary 4th grade textbook as part of the research.

**Keywords:** reading literacy, cognitive, metacognitive, literary texts, informative texts, PIRLS, ePIRLS

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There are many definitions of reading literacy. Reading literacy is the ability to understand and use all forms of written language that are valued by the individual and required by society. The reader creates content from texts of various forms. They study to learn, join a community of other students like themselves in school and daily life, and spend their time productively.

At the beginning, middle, and end of the learning process, the student uses a set of basic knowledge and skills in the formation of language skills, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and content. In addition, the conditions that create the reading environment help to shape the content of the text by encouraging and engaging the reader to read, but the conditions can also create certain requirements that do not allow the reader to understand the content of the text. It consists of simple forms and rules that allow each type of text to be interpreted.

At present, according to the PIRLS definition, reading literacy is the ability to understand and use written language forms that are required and valued by society, as well as the ability to generate meaning from texts in various forms. The assessment of PIRLS primary school students' classroom and extracurricular learning focuses on two broad goals. These are:

1. Gaining artistic experience;
2. Obtaining and using information

The main form of artistic texts used in the PIRLS international program belongs to the art genre. Due to the curriculum and cultural differences in the participating countries, the selection of some literary texts as assignments under the PIRLS international assessment program is an additional challenge. For example, because translating poetic texts is difficult for students, they are not put on assignments.

Informative texts are written and read based on a number of tasks. Consequently, since the main function of informative texts is to provide information, writers usually approach the topic they want

to cover with a different purpose. In many informative texts, facts are described directly, such as the stages of a task or biographical details. In order for the reader to better understand the goals and objectives of the text, the information in it can be presented in a different order, i.e., its content, structure and form are changed. Elementary students can read informative texts covering a variety of topics, including scientific, historical, geographical, or social texts.

Because both learning objectives are equally important to elementary school students, the PIRLS program consists of the same amount of material that assesses each goal. In turn, each of these goals combines four broad understanding processes. These are:

1. Focus and find clearly indicated information;
2. Draw a direct conclusion;
3. Examination and evaluation of content, language and text elements;
4. Interpret and harmonize ideas and information

The texts in the study averaged 500 to 800 words, depending on the complexity of the text, 400-500 words for countries with low reading literacy, and about 1000 words in ePIRLS. PIRLS research is divided into levels and described.

Levels of reading literacy in the PIRLS study are described as follows:

- Highest level (625 points and above) - Students are able to master the text as a whole and at the same time understand its individual parts in relation to each other. Can rely on the text to substantiate his or her point in searching for the author's idea.
- High level (550 points) - Students understand the important messages of the text, draw their own conclusions based on the text, evaluate both the content and form of the text, pay attention to some of its linguistic features. The secondary level (475 points) – Students will find information from the text, the text of form and using some of the features of the language, according to the text is out of their votes.
- Intermediate level (475 points) - Students are able to find information in the text, draw some conclusions based on the text, using some features of the text form and language.
- Low Level (400 points) - Students are able to distinguish a message that is clearly given in the text and is easy to restrict.

Student achievement is assessed by conducting objective tests on students selected as representatives of this layer, rather than on all students. Surveys of school principals, teachers, and even parents were conducted to determine factors influencing the quality of school education, including school resources, students' perceptions of learning, and valuable information is collected on unit methods and the extent to which students' learning is supported at home.

PIRLS is an international research program to assess the reading comprehension level of primary school students. In other words, information on public policy in the field of education to improve reading and learning, which allows for an international comparison of information on the level of development of reading comprehension skills of primary school students. is the largest international assessment program offered.

PIRLS also represents two broad goals, which make up the bulk of in-school and out-of-school learning by young learners, namely the acquisition of artistic experience, the assessment of information acquisition and use skills. The social environment created in the classroom or school library allows primary school students to broaden their horizons in the process of learning by sharing knowledge and experience with their teachers and classmates. As students talk with their

members and peers about information and ideas they have learned from reading, this boundary of the environment extends beyond the school as well.

As students create meaning from the text, they provide explanations in relation to clearly explained ideas or information. Summarizing allows students to go beyond the text. Many authors create the text so that the reader can come to a clear or direct conclusion.

In addition to simple conclusions, students can focus on content or general meaning in interpreting and harmonizing ideas and information in a text, or linking details to common themes and ideas. The content of the text can be objectively evaluated and criticized based on the reader's personal opinion.

**Text evaluation and critical analysis include:**

- Evaluation of the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in the text;
- Assess the probability of the actual occurrence of the described event;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the author's ideas in changing people's thoughts and actions;
- Evaluate how well the title of the text illuminates the main content;
- Describe the effects of language features such as metaphor or speech tone;
- Determine the views of the author on the main topic.

This process requires the reader to make an objective assessment, to reject, to approve, to express neutrality in the content of the text. For example, the reader may affirm the points made in the text, object, or confirm the ideas given in the text with information from other sources.

Reading is an activity that is mainly done by students in school or outside of school, where the assessment of reading literacy is focused on goals such as gaining artistic experience and obtaining and using information, as mentioned above.

The learning materials used in the assessment represent the type of text to be read for one of the two objectives, with each text selected based on these objectives. Different question formats are used in PIRLS research to assess students' comprehension of texts. The first type is closed-ended questions with an answer option, in which students are given four options to choose the answer that may be the best answer to the question. Each of the four options will have one correct answer to the question. The correct answer to this type of question is evaluated by 1 point.

Another type of format used in assessment is open-ended questions that require the student to answer the question on their own. Using this question format, students will have to write the question (s) themselves instead of choosing one of several options. Assignment of specific scores to the answers to these types of questions is done by specially trained evaluators, using guidelines based on clear criteria.

Two more types of questions are used in PIRLS research:

1. Questions in which students choose several correct answers to a question (usually the phrase "mark all relevant answers" is used in this type of question);
2. Questions in which students should mark the events described or narrated in the text in the correct sequence based on the text.

Unexplained answers are also given a score of "0". This includes drawn and deleted attempts, unreadable and non-task-related answers, and drawings.

It is important that student responses are systematically evaluated regardless of who evaluates them. This means that each evaluator must evaluate students' responses in the same way as other

evaluators. The evaluator may not always approve every detail of the evaluation guideline. It should systematically follow specific aspects of the evaluation guideline to ensure the highest level of quality in the overall evaluation process. Assessors are responsible for reviewing the student's response according to the descriptions of the assessment levels listed in the assessment guidelines.

For more than 60 years, the IEA has been a leading organization in the field of comparative education. The organization conducts large-scale research in the field of education in order to study in depth the impact of public policy and practice in the education system. These studies review the learning processes and outcomes and make a comparative analysis of the interrelated factors that affect the quality of education.

The PIRLS study is a program designed to understand and analyze the text, and given that the study is a text comprehension program for 4th graders, it is also possible to teach in primary school textbooks as part of this study. leads to a significant expansion of opportunities to achieve the desired goal. Below we review a text from a 4th grade reading book.

The greatest virtue

- In ancient times, a nobleman had three sons. One day he called them to him and said:
- My sons, I want to test you, travel a month. Spend this one month of your life doing good deeds that are useful to the people. Whichever one of your good deeds acquires the greatest virtue, I will give him this very precious ring on my finger.

The boys scattered everywhere and set out on a journey. After traveling for a month, they returned to their father.

The father asked his eldest son:

- "Son, what have you done in this month?"
- "Father, one day I was walking alone in a garden street when a very precious diamond fell somewhere." I took it and immediately handed it over to the appropriate authorities. The chief of staff thanked me. He wrote me this destiny. He found the owner of the diamond and handed it to him. This is a proof that I am right. Isn't this my greatest virtue?
- "You did the right thing, son!" You have done your duty conscientiously. But that diamond is not your private property!

Then the middle boy spoke:

- "One day I was walking along a big ditch." At that moment, a young boy fell into the water. I saw that he was in danger of death. I immediately threw myself into the water. With a lot of effort, I pulled the baby out of the water. I rescued him from the wreckage and handed him over safely to his parents. His parents were very grateful to me and prayed for my rights. I think I deserve your reward for this effort I made to save a young child from disaster, even if my life was in danger.

The father took his middle son's hand and said:

- "Well done, son." Congratulations, just because you felt that your heart was filled with joy because of this beautiful work. Isn't that a reward in itself?

Then the little boy bowed to his father and said:

- "Father, there is a man who is always looking at me with hostility and hurting me." Even if I have done him no harm, he will follow me. He even waits for an opportunity to destroy me. Yesterday I saw him sleeping on the edge of a jar of my enemy. If he fell asleep, rolled from

side to side, or woke up with a louder sound, he could have tried to get up and fall into the ravine. I walked quietly to him without making a sound. I grabbed it very carefully and slowly began to pull it to my side. After a long time of getting rid of the danger, my spirits rose, and I continued on my way with joy.

The father wept for joy at his son's good deeds and nobility. He hugged her and kissed her on the face.

- "Come on, son!" Long live you! You have the right to receive my reward, for the greatest virtue in the world is to do good to evil, "he said, placing his precious ring on his son's finger and praying for him.

*It would be useful to ask the following questions on the text:*

1. What did the father say to his sons in return for the greatest virtue?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. What did the older son say, "This is proof that I am right"?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_.

3. What did the average boy say is "the greatest virtue"?

A. A gardener said he found a diamond on the street and handed it to the administrator and received a certificate.

B. He said he saved the life of a young boy by drowning.

C. He said that he had saved a man who was pursuing enmity from the brink of destruction.

4. To which son did the father shed tears of joy?

A. Big boys

B. Middle boy

C. Little boy

The above-mentioned text and text-based open-ended and closed-ended questions are structured similarly to the texts in the PIRLS international assessment program.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the reading literacy in the PIRLS international assessment program mentioned above allows the development of innovative methods of assessment and development of creative thinking, as well as their introduction among students.

#### **List of used literature:**

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