

**Updated**  
**January 2023**

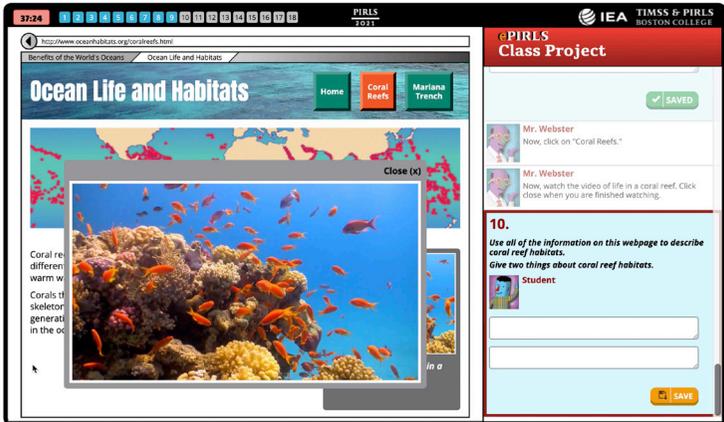
**25**  
**Years of**  
**Trends**

# PIRLS 2026–Engaging students with interactive Literary and Informational tasks

Since 2001, IEA’s PIRLS has enabled countries worldwide to make evidence-based decisions to improve education in reading achievement. PIRLS is conducted every five years at the fourth grade, and PIRLS 2026 will mark 25 years of trend data.

In this ePIRLS task from PIRLS 2021 about the worlds’ oceans and its habitats, students are shown a simulated internet website about coral reefs.

The animated map shows where coral reefs are found, the text describes the characteristics of coral reefs, and a video provides an underwater view of fish swimming by the coral reef.



The screenshot shows a simulated internet browser window. The main content area is titled "Ocean Life and Habitats" and features a navigation menu with "Home", "Coral Reefs", and "Marlana Trench". Below the menu is an animated map of the world with coral reefs highlighted in red. A video player shows an underwater scene with coral and fish. Text on the left describes coral reef characteristics: "Coral reefs are found in warm, shallow, clear, sunlit oceans. Corals are animals that secrete a hard skeleton that forms the structure of the reef." The right sidebar is titled "PIRLS Class Project" and includes a "SAVED" button, a list of tasks, and a "SAVE" button at the bottom.

## PIRLS 2026 Key Features

- *Completes the transition to fully digital assessment*
- *Uses an innovative interface where students can scroll through colorful texts and click on and answer questions*
- *Integrates the ePIRLS tasks based on simulated websites*
- *Relates data about the home and school contexts in which students learn to read to their reading achievement*
- *The digital assessment facilitates deep insights from process data*
- *Extends research in automated scoring of images and short constructed responses*

The screenshot displays a digital reading assessment interface. At the top, it shows the PIRLS 2026 logo and the title "The Amazing Octopus". The main text describes octopuses as sea animals with rounded bodies, bulging eyes, and eight long arms. It mentions that they live in all the world's oceans, especially in warm, tropical waters, and that they often stay on the ocean floor where they can find their favorite foods like crabs, shrimp, and small fish. The text also notes that octopuses capture their prey with their suction cups and then put the food into their mouths. Below the text, there is an illustration of an octopus in front of its den. A question tab is visible, and a question is displayed: "2. What do octopuses use to make doors for their dens?". The interface includes navigation arrows and a progress indicator showing "2/15".

**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.

Questions

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

2/15

*In the PIRLS digital format, students click on a tab to answer questions about what they have read*

## Benefits of Fully Digital Assessment

To facilitate important advances in assessing reading comprehension at the fourth grade, all countries in PIRLS 2026 will participate digitally. As a national option, countries transitioning to the digital format in PIRLS 2026 can conduct an additional National Comparison study between the digital and paper formats. Countries requiring a paper option can consider IEA's LaNA which uses less difficult paper-based versions of PIRLS and TIMSS to assess literacy and numeracy and provides a broad estimate of achievement on the PIRLS and TIMSS scales.

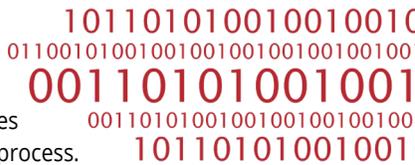
## Improving Student Motivation

The TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College will work in close collaboration with IEA in developing the IEA StudyExpert. This digital assessment system will make it possible for students to participate in a unified reading assessment

based on a wide variety of visually attractive, colorful, and interactive reading materials that reflect younger students' many reading experiences in- and out-of-school. Greater student engagement should stimulate participation and motivate higher achievement.

### More Efficient Data Collection

The digital assessment system will facilitate the translation process and bring greater uniformity and quality control to data collection methods and procedures. Innovative item types can enable more machine scoring as part of the data collection process.



### Automated Scoring

Continuing research to score more image items and short constructed answers automatically.

### Collecting Valuable Process Data

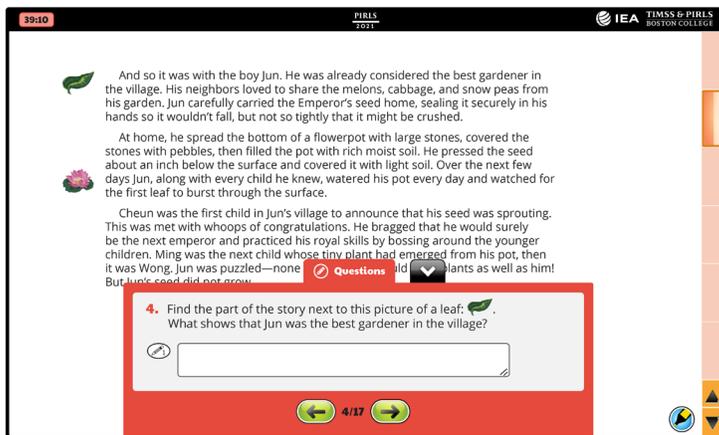
The digital environment provides the opportunity to collect process data about how students proceed through the assessment. Through monitoring students' navigation between the texts, including videos, pop-ups, and graphical displays, and the questions being asked, as well as their use of the PIRLS highlighting tool, PIRLS 2026 will be able to examine the response strategies and processes used by successful readers.



### Longitudinal Option

It is possible to re-assess the same students one year after the PIRLS 2026 assessment to investigate students' learning gains over one year of schooling. This enables examining the

degree of increases across instructional goals and the differences in gains across subgroups of students.



*PIRLS sometimes helps students scroll through the texts by using icons to identify the location of relevant information*

## Countries Receive High Quality Internationally Comparative Data About How Well Fourth Grade Students Can Read

The *PIRLS 2026 International Database* will document the full set of PIRLS 2026 data, providing numerous opportunities for research into teaching and learning reading.

### Data highlights for each country include:

- ▶ Average reading achievement and scale score distributions
- ▶ Percentages of students reaching the PIRLS International Benchmarks with descriptions of students' reading skills at each level
- ▶ Reading achievement by Literary and Informational purposes as well as by comprehension processes
- ▶ Reading achievement results for subgroups of students (e.g., by gender)
- ▶ Trends in reading achievement compared to previous PIRLS assessments
- ▶ A rich array of home, school, classroom, and attitudinal contexts for learning to read in relation to reading achievement
- ▶ Insights into how successful readers navigate through the assessment instruments

### PIRLS 2026 Benchmarking Option

PIRLS 2026 also has a benchmarking component whereby entities within a country, such as regions (e.g., states or provinces), additional grades (e.g. third or fifth grade), or additional language groups can participate in the same way as countries.

### PIRLS 2026 Schedule Highlights

**2023–2024**—Integrated development of reading assessment instruments and software

**2025**—Field test

**2026**—Data collection

**2027**—Analysis and reporting

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PIRLS is a project of IEA. With offices in Amsterdam and Hamburg, IEA pioneered international comparative studies. IEA has been conducting international assessments of educational achievement since 1959.



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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.

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