

PIRLS 2011

PIRLS 2011 Target Populations

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As described in the [Sample Design in TIMSS and PIRLS](#), the *international target population* for PIRLS (and prePIRLS) 2011 was defined as the grade that represented 4 years of formal schooling, counting from the first year of primary or elementary schooling.¹ Exhibit 1 presents the grades identified as the target grades for sampling by each country, and includes the number of years of formal schooling that the grades represent and the average age of students in the target grade at the time of testing.

For most countries participating in PIRLS (or prePIRLS), the target grade did indeed turn out to be the grade with 4 years of schooling, i.e., fourth grade. However, in England, Malta, New Zealand, and Trinidad and Tobago, children begin primary school at an early age. Therefore, these countries assessed students in the fifth year of schooling and their students were still among the youngest in PIRLS 2011.

As a new initiative in 2011, prePIRLS was developed as a less difficult version of PIRLS to provide more assessment options for developing countries where students may not be prepared for the demands of PIRLS. prePIRLS is based on the same view of reading comprehension as PIRLS but is designed to assess basic reading skills that are a prerequisite for success on PIRLS. Botswana, Colombia, and South Africa administered prePIRLS to their fourth grade students. Colombia also administered PIRLS to the same fourth grade students, providing the basis for a link between the PIRLS and prePIRLS scales.

As another new initiative, PIRLS 2011 also could be given to students in the fifth or sixth grades in countries where the assessment might be too difficult for fourth grade students. Accordingly, Botswana, Honduras, Kuwait, and Morocco chose to administer PIRLS in the sixth grade. Morocco also administered PIRLS at the fourth grade.

¹ Given the cognitive demands of the assessments, TIMSS and PIRLS want to avoid assessing very young students. Thus, PIRLS recommends assessing the fifth grade if the average age of fourth grade students at the time of testing would be less than 9.5 years.

Exhibit 1: National Grade Definitions - PIRLS 2011

Country	Country's Name for Grade Tested	Years of Formal Schooling	Average Age at Time of Testing
Australia	Year 4	4	10.0
Austria	Grade 4	4	10.3
Azerbaijan	Grade 4	4	10.2
Belgium (French)	Grade 4	4	10.1
Bulgaria	Grade 4	4	10.7
Canada	Grade 4	4	9.9
Chinese Taipei	Grade 4	4	10.2
Colombia	Grade 4	4	10.4
Croatia	Grade 4	4	10.7
Czech Republic	Grade 4	4	10.4
Denmark	Grade 4	4	10.9
England	Year 5	5	10.3
Finland	Grade 4	4	10.8
France	CM1 (Cours Moyen 1ère année)	4	10.0
Georgia	Grade 4	4	10.0
Germany	Grade 4	4	10.4
Hong Kong SAR	Grade 4	4	10.1
Hungary	Grade 4	4	10.7
Indonesia	Grade 4	4	10.4
Iran, Islamic Rep. Of	Grade 4	4	10.2
Ireland	Fourth class	4	10.3
Israel	Grade 4	4	10.1
Italy	Grade 4	4	9.7
Lithuania	Grade 4	4	10.7
Malta	Year 5	5	9.8
Morocco	Grade 4	4	10.5
Netherlands	Group 6 (Grade 4)	4	10.2
New Zealand	Year 5	4.5 - 5.5	10.1
Northern Ireland	Year 6	4	10.4
Norway	Grade 4	4	9.7
Oman	Grade 4	4	9.9
Poland	Grade 3 of primary school	4	9.9
Portugal	Grade 4	4	10.0
Qatar	Grade 4	4	10.0
Romania	Grade 4	4	10.9
Russian Federation	Grade 4	4	10.8
Saudi Arabia	Grade 4	4	10.0
Singapore	Primary 4	4	10.4

Exhibit 1: National Grade Definitions - PIRLS 2011 (Continued)

Country	Country's Name for Grade Tested	Years of Formal Schooling	Average Age at Time of Testing
Slovak Republic	Grade 4	4	10.4
Slovenia	Grade 4	4	9.9
Spain	Primary education year four	4	9.8
Sweden	Grade 4	4	10.7
Trinidad and Tobago	Standard 3	5	10.3
United Arab Emirates	Basic Stage, Cycle 1, Level1	4	9.8
United States	Grade 4	4	10.2
Sixth Grade Participants			
Botswana	Standard 6	6	12.8
Honduras	Grade 6	6	12.7
Kuwait	Grade 6	6	11.9
Morocco	Grade 6	6	12.7
Benchmarking Participants			
Alberta Province, Canada	Grade 4	4	9.9
Ontario Province, Canada	Grade 4	4	9.8
Quebec Province, Canada	Grade 4	4	10.1
Maltese - Malta	Year 5	5	9.8
Eng/Afr(5) - South Africa	Grade 5	5	11.4
Andalusia Province, Spain	Grade 4	4	9.9
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	Grade 4	4	9.7
Dubai, United Arab Emirates	Grade 4	4	9.8
Florida, United States	Grade 4	4	10.4

National Grade Definitions - prePIRLS 2011

Country	Country's Name for Grade Tested	Years of Formal Schooling	Average Age at Time of Testing
Botswana	Standard 4	4	10.6
Colombia	Grade 4	4	10.4
South Africa	Grade 4	4	10.5