

**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PIRLS 2016 Main Study (Spring 2016)
Frequently Asked Questions**

What is PIRLS?

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment and research project designed to measure trends in reading achievement at the fourth-grade level as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. Since 2001, PIRLS has been administered every 5 years. PIRLS 2016, the fourth study in the series, will involve students from more than 40 countries, including the United States. For the first time PIRLS will include an innovative assessment of online reading called *ePIRLS*.

Why was my school selected for participation?

Schools of varying demographics and locations were randomly selected so that the overall U.S. sample is representative of the overall U.S. school population. The random selection process is important for ensuring that a country's sample accurately reflects its schools and, therefore, can be compared fairly with samples of schools from other countries.

Will all our fourth-grade students be asked to participate?

It depends on the number of fourth-grade classrooms in the school. In schools with only one or two such classrooms, all students will be asked to participate. In schools with more than two such classrooms, only students in two randomly selected classrooms will be asked to participate. Some classrooms selected to participate in PIRLS may also be asked to take part in ePIRLS. In addition, some students with special needs or limited English proficiency may be excused from the assessment.

Who conducts the PIRLS assessment?

The entire assessment process will be conducted by trained staff from RTI International, a research organization under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 9543) and approval of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under OMB # 1850-0645.

How are the teacher and school questionnaires administered?

The teacher and school questionnaires are administered either online from a secure website or via a hardcopy form. Teacher questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask teachers questions about their experience, available resources, and instructional practices. School questionnaires take about 40 minutes to complete and ask about school practices and resources.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessment?

No, RTI International field staff will visit the school on the day of the assessment, bringing with them all the materials required. These field staff will administer the assessments to students.

When will the assessment be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted between February and May, 2016. RTI International will work with schools to identify an assessment date convenient for the school in that time period.

Where will the assessment be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate.

How long does the assessment take?

The main assessment session is approximately 2 hours, including time for directions. The ePIRLS session will take 80 minutes and will include breaks between sections.

What will happen with the collected data?

The data from the assessment will be used to evaluate how the knowledge and skills of U.S. students compare to those of their peers in other participating countries. By law, the data provided by schools, staff, and students may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Education Science Reform Act of 2002 [ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C. § 9573]). Reports of the findings from the assessment will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those of other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Are schools required by federal law to participate?

No. School participation is voluntary. However, we hope you will participate in this study so that students like those in your school are accurately and fairly represented.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits from PIRLS by having a greater understanding of how the reading knowledge and skills of U.S. 4th graders compare with 4th graders from other countries. To thank participating schools and individuals for their time and effort we offer tokens of appreciation: schools that participate in PIRLS will receive \$200 and the school coordinator (staff person designated to assist with the study) will receive \$100. An additional \$50 will be given to the coordinator for assisting with ePIRLS. Teachers who complete a survey will receive \$20, and each student who participates will receive a small gift.

Where can I find more information about PIRLS?

Visit the PIRLS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/index.asp>.

For additional information about PIRLS 2016, contact the PIRLS U.S. home office at (866) 800-9176 or email PIRLS@rti.org.