Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006

Results for 10-year-old students in Québec

Québec

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Overview of the Study

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an initiative of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). PIRLS coordinators aim to assess reading progress regularly with a view to observing trends in the development of reading literacy in the participating countries. The assessment focuses on 10-year-olds, i.e. students who are in the second year of Elementary Cycle Two. It was conducted in 2001, and will be conducted again in 2011.

This study makes it possible to assess students' reading achievement, compare the scores of participating countries and provinces and provide information on the programs of study and instructional practices used. The IEA's aim is to have PIRLS take into account the most recent research findings in the field of reading instruction as they relate to the measurement of reading progress.

Forty countries, including Canada, participated in PIRLS 2006. Canada was represented by five provinces: Nova Scotia, Québec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Québec selected a significant sample, namely 185 classes (3 748 students), to ensure that its results could be easily compared with those of Canada as a whole.

This document features the scores for 10-year-old students in Québec and compares them with those of the participants in the international study and other Canadian students. The data is taken from the *PIRLS 2006 International Report: IEA's Study of Reading Literacy Achievement in Primary Schools in 40 Countries*, which can be downloaded free of charge from the following Web site: http://pirls.bc.edu.

Part 1: Presentation of the Assessment

1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Assessment

The conceptual framework of PIRLS and its assessment instruments are based on the IEA's definition of "reading literacy," which, for the purposes of PIRLS, is as follows:

> "The ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers, and for enjoyment."[1]

It is important to note that from the PIRLS' standpoint, reading is an interactive process between reader and text. In addition to calling on their background knowledge, readers construct meaning using cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The reading situation takes place in a specific context that promotes engagement and motivation to read.

PIRLS focuses on three aspects of reading literacy: processes of comprehension, purposes for reading, and reading behaviours and attitudes. The first two aspects are assessed using the reading test itself, while the questionnaire administered to the students addresses the third aspect. In addition, questionnaires are given to the students' parents, teachers and school principals to gather information on students' home and school experiences in developing reading literacy.

Figure 1.1

Percentage of Reading Assessment Assigned to Each Aspect of Reading Competency

Purposes for Reading	
* Literary experience	50 %
* Acquire and use information	50 %
Processes of Comprehension	
* Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	20 %
* Make straightforward inferences	30 %
* Interpret and integrate ideas and information	30 %
* Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements	20 %
Reading Behaviours and Attitudes	
* Based on a questionnaire submitted to students, teachers, parents and school principals	

Source: IEA, *PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications* (Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, 2004).

1. IEA, *PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications* (Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, 2004):3.

1.2 Reading Tasks

Each of the four processes of comprehension was assessed in the context of the two reading purposes.

In general, students were tested to assess the two reading purposes:

* Reading for literary experience

The PIRLS assessment uses narrative fiction to allow young readers to engage with the text and explore a wide array of situations through their imagination. These texts are fairly long, but were kept intact so as to preserve their authenticity.

* Reading to acquire and use information

The PIRLS assessment uses both chronological and non-chronological texts. Chronologically-organized texts may recount events (e.g. reports, letters, biographies, autobiographies), describe procedures (e.g. recipes or instructions), and present their ideas as a sequence ordered in time. Non-chronological texts explain, describe or aim to convince or persuade, and may take the form of lists, tables, graphs and diagrams.

In general, students were tested to assess the four processes of comprehension:

* With regard to their ability to focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information, students were asked to "identify information that is relevant to the specific goal of reading; look for specific ideas; search for definitions of words or phrases; identify the setting of a story (time or place); find the topic sentence or main idea (when explicitly stated)."

* In terms of their ability to make straightforward inferences, students were asked to "infer that one event caused another event; conclude what is the main point made by a series of arguments; determine the referent of a pronoun; identify generalizations made in the text; describe the relationship between two characters."

* With respect to their ability to interpret and integrate ideas and information, students were asked to "discern the overall message or theme of a text; consider an alternative to actions of characters; compare and contrast text information; infer a story's mood or tone; interpret a real-world application of text information."

* Regarding their ability to examine and evaluate content, language and textual elements, students were asked to "evaluate the likelihood that the events described could really happen; describe how the author devised a surprise ending; judge the completeness or clarity of information in the text; determine the author's perspective on the central topic; describe how the choice of adjectives affects meaning."

1.3 Description of the Assessment Instrument and How It Is Applied

Students had 80 minutes to answer the test items in their booklet and 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. Each student booklet consisted of two 40-minute blocks. In 2006, ten blocks were distributed across thirteen booklets. Booklet 13 contained two blocks (one literary and one informational), presented in colour in magazine-type format with the questions appearing in a separate booklet. This booklet is referred to as the PIRLS "Reader." Figure 1.2 describes the composition of each booklet.

Figure 1.2

PIRLS 2006 Student Booklet Design

Booklet	Literary experience	Acquire and use information
1	L1	L2
2	L2	L3
3	L3	L4
4	L4	I1
5	I1	I2
6	I2	I3
7	I3	I4
8	I4	L1
9	L1	I1
10	I2	L2
11	L3	I3
12	I4	L4
Reader	L5	I5

Source: IEA, *PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications* (Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, 2004).

The texts used had to be translated into several languages. They were selected to avoid cultural bias or culture-specific knowledge, and to engage the interest of 10-year-old students. Each text was less than 1 000 words.

In order to compare the results and trends in PIRLS 2006 and PIRLS 2001, four blocks (two of each type) from PIRLS 2001 were retained and six new blocks (three of each type) were developed.

The four processes of comprehension were assessed using multiple-choice questions (worth one point each) and constructed-response questions. The latter called either for short answers (worth one or two points each) or a more extended response (worth three points each). In general, each test contained seven multiple-choice items, two or three

short-answer items and one extended-response item. This format varied, however, depending on the nature of the texts.

1.4 Presentation of the Texts Used

Assessment was based on ten passages, five for the literary purpose, the other five, for the informational purpose.

The literary texts were:

- *The Little Lump of Clay*
- *Flowers on the Roof*
- *Shiny Straw*
- *Fly Eagle*
- *An Unbelievable Night*

The informational texts were:

- *Antarctica: Land of Ice*
- *Leonardo*
- *Day Hiking*
- *Sharks*
- *Searching for Food*

Part 2: Reading Achievement Scores for 10-Year-Olds in Québec

2.1 Reading Achievement Scores for Québec Students

In PIRLS 2006, Canada was represented by five provinces: Nova Scotia, Québec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, each of which tested both English- and French-speaking students. In Québec, 113 classes in French schools and 72 classes in English schools took part in the assessment.

Ten-year-olds in Québec ranked 18th among the 40 participating countries. The average scores by country and by province for average reading achievement are shown in Graph 1 and Table 1. The different percentiles of performance in reading are shown in Table 2.

2.2 Average Achievement by Gender

In PIRLS 2006, both in Québec and elsewhere, girls outperformed boys on the reading test. Overall, Québec recorded the thirteenth-smallest difference (out of 40) between the scores obtained by girls and those obtained by boys (13 points). Depending on the country, this difference varied between 3 and 37 points, with the exception of one country, which recorded a difference of 67 points between girls and boys. The international average was 17 points.

In PIRLS 2001, the difference between girls' and boys' scores was 12 points. Although both boys and girls scored slightly lower in 2006, the difference remained stable.

The differences between the average reading scores for girls and boys in PIRLS 2006, by country and province, are shown in Table 3.

2.3 Achievement According to Reading Purpose

In PIRLS 2006, Québec students did better in reading for informational purposes than in reading for literary purposes, with a significant difference of four points for Québec students overall. This confirms the scores achieved by Québec students in 2001. French-speaking students performed relatively better in informational reading than in literary reading (six points), while English-speaking students performed relatively better in literary reading (also six points).

Like English-speaking students in Québec, students from the four other participating provinces performed relatively better in literary reading. All four showed a statistically significant difference, varying between three and six points. Ontario, the only other participating province in 2001, obtained similar results. Moreover, girls scored higher than boys in both reading purposes and in all five provinces.

The relative differences in performance between the two reading purposes, by country and province, are shown in Table 4.

The relative differences in performance between the two reading purposes, by gender and by country and province, are shown in Table 5.

2.4 Processes of Comprehension

In PIRLS 2006, the processes in which Québec students scored highest were: "Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information" and "Make straightforward inferences." The difference in performance between these and the two other processes, however, is not significant.

Students in the other provinces scored higher in the processes "Interpret and integrate ideas and information" and "Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements." The difference is significant for each of the provinces. Here again, there is a marked difference between the results of Québec students and students in the other provinces.

The relative differences in performance between reading comprehension processes, by country and province, are shown in Table 6.

The average achievement in reading comprehension processes by gender is shown in Table 7.

Part 3: The Impact of Various Factors on Reading Achievement

3.1 Reading Opportunities

3.1.1 Students who have books of their own

Those who say they do not have books of their own tend to score lower.

3.1.1.1 Number of books in the home

Those who have more books score higher.
Those who have fewer books score lower.

3.1.2 Students who have access to a computer at home

Those who do not have access to a computer at home tend to score lower.

3.1.3 Students who receive a daily newspaper at home

Those who receive a daily newspaper at home tend to score higher.

3.1.3.1 Students who read the newspaper

76 % of young people say they read the newspaper no more than twice a month.

3.1.4 Students who read brochures

Those who say they read a lot of brochures score lower.
Those who say they read few or no brochures at all score higher.

3.1.5 Students who read comic books

Those who say they read comic books very often score lower.
68 % of French-speaking boys say they read comic books at least twice a week.

Those who say they read comic books every day
Students who scored 625 points or higher

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**2 %**	**6 %**
French-speaking	**18 %**	**19 %**

Those who say they do not read comic books at all
Students who scored 625 points or higher

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**42 %**	**38 %**
French-speaking	**29 %**	**9 %**

3.1.6 Students who say they read magazines

Those who say they read magazines very often score lower.
Those who say they never or almost never read magazines also score lower.

Those who say they read magazines every day
Students who scored 400 points or lower

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**27 %**	**22 %**
French-speaking	**20 %**	**26 %**

Those who say they do not read magazines at all
Students who scored 400 points or lower

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**40 %**	**44 %**
French-speaking	**35 %**	**38 %**

3.1.7 Students who say they read instructions

Those who say they read instructions every day score lower.
Those who say they never or almost never read instructions score higher.

Those who say they read instructions every day
Students who scored 400 points or lower

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**25 %**	**38 %**
French-speaking	**35 %**	**35 %**

Those who say they do not read instructions at all
Students who scored 400 points or lower

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**25 %**	**17 %**
French-speaking	**0 %**	**21 %**

3.2 Reading Behaviours or Types of Texts Used

3.2.1 Students who say they read for fun outside of school

49 % of Québec students say they read every day for fun.
74 % of Québec students say they read once or twice a week for fun.
14 % of Québec students say they never read for fun.

Those who say they read at least once or twice a week for fun

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**82 %**	**74 %**
French-speaking	**78 %**	**69 %**

Those who say they never read for fun

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**7 %**	**11 %**
French-speaking	**12 %**	**22 %**

3.2.2 Students who say they read when they feel they have to

Those who agree with this statement score lower.
Those who do not agree with this statement score higher.

Those who say they agree with this statement
Students who scored between 400 and 475 points

	Agree	Disagree
English-speaking	**47 %**	**11 %**
French-speaking	**41 %**	**22 %**

Those who do not agree with this statement
Students who scored between 550 and 625 points

	Agree	Disagree
English-speaking	**13 %**	**39 %**
French-speaking	**10 %**	**54 %**

3.2.3 Students who say that reading is good for their future

Those who agree with this statement score higher.
Those who disagree with this statement score lower.

Those who agree with this statement
Students who scored more than 625 points

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**66 %**	**65 %**
French-speaking	**66 %**	**79 %**

It is interesting to note that the highest percentage of students who agree with this statement are French-speaking boys, despite the fact that in general, they score the lowest.

3.2.4 Students who say they have a favourable attitude toward reading (as measured by the SATR index)

The higher the SATR (Students' Attitude Toward Reading) index, the higher the student's score.

High SATR index
Students who scored more than 625 points

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**87 %**	**75 %**
French-speaking	**84 %**	**86 %**

Low SATR index
Students who scored more than 625 points

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**0 %**	**4 %**
French-speaking	**1 %**	**2 %**

3.2.4.1 Parents who say they have a favourable attitude toward reading (as measured by the PATR index)

65 % of parents surveyed have a high PATR index.
28 % of parents surveyed have a medium PATR index.
8 % of parents surveyed have a low PATR index.

3.2.5 Students and their perceptions of their reading ability (as measured by the SRSC index)

The higher the SRSC (Students' Reading Self-Concept) index, the higher the student's score. Some 96 % of students have a medium or high SRSC, regardless of gender.

3.2.6 Students who say they read for information

Those who say they often read to acquire information tend to score lower.

3.2.7 Students who say they read stories and novels

Those who say they often read stories and novels score higher.
Those who say they do not read stories and novels often score lower.
67 % of students who scored 625 points or higher say they read stories or novels every day.
3 % of students who scored 625 points or higher say they do not read stories or novels.

3.3 School and Classroom Habits

3.3.1 Teachers who say they read aloud in class
3.3.1.1 Students who say they read aloud in class

These behaviours do not foster higher reading achievement.
In moderation, they result in higher scores.

3.3.2 Students who say they read silently on their own in class

Without a doubt, independent reading in class maximizes students' reading performance.
77 % of students say they read independently in class every day.

3.3.3 Oral questioning by the teacher after reading in class

Students say that oral questioning in class does not foster reading comprehension.
Those who never answer questions after reading in class tend to score higher.

3.3.4 Written questions after reading in class

Students say that reading a text accompanied by written questions is effective when done once or twice a week. When used too often, this approach is more of a hindrance.

3.3.5 Writing a response after reading

Students say that writing a response to their reading seems to be an ineffective way of fostering the development of reading comprehension, since those who never write a text after reading say they do better than those who say they often write a text after reading.

3.3.6 Talking with other students after reading in class

This approach appears to have no effect. Used occasionally, it could arouse students' interest.

3.4 Reading Practices Outside of School

3.4.1 Students who say they read aloud at home or outside of school

Those who say they often read aloud at home or outside of school score lower than those who say they do not.

3.4.2 Students who discuss what they are reading with friends
3.4.3 Students who discuss what they are reading with family members

These two indicators have no direct impact on Québec students' scores.

3.5 Types of Texts Used by Teachers

3.5.1 Short stories

14 % of Québec classes use this type of text every day or almost every day.
40 % of Québec classes use this type of text once or twice a week.
7 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.5.2 Chapter books

23 % of Québec classes use this type of text every day or almost every day.
50 % of Québec classes use this type of text at least twice a month.

3.5.3 Poems

1 % of Québec classes use this type of text every day or almost every day.
11 % of Québec classes use this type of text once or twice a week.
29 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.5.4 Plays

3 % of Québec classes use this type of text more than once a week.
67 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.5.5 Descriptions and explanations

5 % of Québec classes use this type of text every day or almost every day.
51 % of Québec classes use this type of text once or twice a month.
12 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.5.6 Instructions or manuals

41 % of Québec classes use this type of text once or twice a month.
32 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.5.7 Charts, diagrams and graphs

2 % of Québec classes use this type of text every day or almost every day.
51 % of Québec classes use this type of text once or twice a month.
20 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of text.

3.6 Approaches Used to Assess Reading Performance

3.6.1 Multiple-choice questions

46 % of Québec classes use this type of instrument once or twice a month.

3.6.2 Short-answer written questions

44 % of Québec classes use this type of instrument more than once a week.
5 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of instrument.

3.6.3 Paragraph-length written responses

Two thirds of Québec classes use this type of instrument at least once or twice a month.
However, 16 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this type of instrument.

3.6.4 Listening to students read aloud

50 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once a week.
81 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once or twice a month.

3.6.5 Oral questioning of students on what they have just read

60 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once a week.
17 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.6.6 Oral summary reports on the reading topic

50 % of Québec classes use this practice once or twice a month.

3.6.7 Discussion among students

11 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once a week.
50 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.7 Developing Reading Strategies

3.7.1 Identifying the main idea of a text

21 % of Québec classes use this practice every day or almost every day.
53 % of Québec classes use this practice once or twice a week.
3 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.7.2 Explaining or supporting understanding of a text

30 % of Québec classes use this practice every day or almost every day.
51 % of Québec classes use this practice once or twice a week.
1 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.7.3 Comparing a text with personal experience

15 % of Québec classes use this practice every day or almost every day.
47 % of Québec classes use this practice once or twice a week.
7 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.7.4 Comparing different texts

47 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once or twice a week.
This practice is entirely nonexistent in more than 12 % of Québec classes.

3.7.5 Making predictions about what will happen next in a text

18 % of Québec classes use this practice every day or almost every day.
47 % of Québec classes use this practice once or twice a week.
7 % of Québec classes never or almost never use this practice.

3.7.6 Making generalizations and inferences

59 % of Québec classes use this practice at least once or twice a week.

3.7.7 Describing the style and structure of a text

Only 8 % of Québec classes use this practice every day or almost every day.
63 % of Québec classes use this practice less than twice a month.

3.8 Developing Reading Literacy

3.8.1 Students who say they do not read as well as other students

Those who agree with this statement score lower.
Those who disagree with this statement score higher.

3.8.2 Students who say they understand what they read

Those who agree with this statement score higher.
Those who disagree with this statement score lower.
None of the students who disagree with this statement scored higher than 625 points.
Only 2 % of students who say they disagree a little or disagree a lot with this statement scored higher than 550 points.

3.8.3 Students who say they read slower than other students

Those who agree with this statement score lower.
Those who disagree with this statement score higher.

3.8.4 Students who say that reading is boring

Those who agree with this statement score lower.
Those who disagree with this statement score higher.

3.8.5 Students who say that reading is easy for them

Those who agree with this statement score higher.
Those who disagree with this statement score lower.

3.8.6 Students who say they like talking about books

Those who disagree with this statement score lower.
49 % of students disagree with this statement.

3.9 General Comments

3.9.1 Students who say they like school

77 % of students say they like school.
14 % disagree a little.
9 % disagree a lot.

3.9.2 Students who say they feel safe when they are at school

88 % agree a little or agree a lot; 62 % agree a lot.
7 % disagree a little.
4 % disagree a lot.

3.9.3 Time spent watching television

Watching too much television hinders reading achievement. Students who watch one to three hours of television on school days or one or two days a week score higher. Watching a reasonable amount of television appears to foster reading performance. It is a means of acquiring knowledge, a complement to students' reading. It provides background knowledge that affects readers' comprehension.

3.9.4 Reading homework

59 % of students say they get reading homework every day or almost every day.
In English schools, 69 % say they get reading homework every day or almost every day; 53 % say they get reading homework every day.
In French schools, 54 % say they get reading homework every day or almost every day; only 35 % say they get reading homework every day.

3.9.5 How often the language of the test is spoken at home

-French:

66 % of students in French schools say they speak French at home.
33 % of students in French schools say they speak French and another language at home.
1 % of students in French schools say they never speak French at home.

-English:

44 % of students in English schools say they speak English at home.
52 % of students in English schools say they speak English and another language at home.
3 % of students in English schools say they never speak English at home.

3.9.6 Students born in Québec

Those who were born in Québec score higher in reading than those born elsewhere. Of the latter, those who arrived in Québec at an earlier age generally score higher.

Those who were born in Québec
Students who scored lower than
400 points

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**75 %**	**90 %**
French-speaking	**92 %**	**88 %**

Those who were born in Québec
Students who scored higher than
625 points

	Girls	Boys
English-speaking	**95 %**	**90 %**
French-speaking	**94 %**	**95 %**

3.9.7 EHLA (Early Home Literacy Activities) index

65 % of Québec students have a high EHLA index.
29 % of Québec students have a medium EHLA index.
6 % of Québec students have a low EHLA index.

3.10 Computer Habits

3.10.1 Students who use a computer at home

43 % of Québec students say they use a computer every day or almost every day.
34 % of Québec students say they use a computer once or twice a week.
Only 12 % of Québec students say they never or almost never use a computer.

3.10.2 Students who use a computer at school

The more students say they use a computer at school, the lower they score. Computers appear to be a preferred means of helping the lowest-achieving students.
Only 2 % of high-achieving students, who scored 625 points or higher, use a computer every day at school.
52 % of students say they use a computer once or twice a week.
However, 18 % of students say they never or almost never use a computer at school.

3.10.3 Students who use a computer elsewhere

More low-achieving students say they use a computer elsewhere.
26 % of students who scored lower than 400 points say they use a computer every day or almost every day.
44 % of students say they never or almost never use a computer elsewhere.

3.10.4 Students who use the Internet to do research for school work

Those who say they use the Internet to do research for school work once or twice a month tend to score higher.
Those who say they use the Internet to do research for school work every day or almost every day tend to score lower.

	Every day	Once or twice a month
Lower than 400 points	**36 %**	**26 %**
Higher than 625 points	**5 %**	**52 %**

In all, 11 % of Québec students say they use the Internet to do research for school work every day or almost every day.
37 % of Québec students say they use Internet to do research for school work once or twice a month.
25 % of Québec students say they never or almost never use the Internet to do research for school work.
French-speaking boys say they use the Internet less often than French-speaking girls and far less often than English-speaking boys or girls.

3.10.5 Students who visit sports-related Web sites

Those who say they visit sports-related Web sites every day or almost every day score lower.
Those who say they never or almost never visit sports-related Web sites score higher.
There is a 20 % difference between boys and girls among those who never or almost never visit sports-related Web sites, in both French and English schools.
There is also a 6 % difference between French-speaking and English-speaking students who never or almost never visit sports-related Web sites.

3.10.6 Students who visit music-related Web sites

Those who say they visit music-related Web sites every day or almost every day also score lower.
Those who say they never or almost never visit music-related Web sites score higher.
The effects are somewhat less marked among French-speaking students, but there is no difference between boys and girls.
50 % of students say they never or almost never visit music-related sites (44 % in English schools and 54 % in French schools).
There is a 10 % difference between English-speaking girls and French-speaking girls.
There is also a 10 % difference between English-speaking boys and French-speaking boys.

3.10.7 Students who use the Internet to send and receive e-mail

This use of the Internet seems to have no effect on reading achievement (the same is not true for writing achievement).
41 % of Québec students say they do not use the Internet to send and receive e-mail.
There is no significant difference between English-speaking and French-speaking students, but there is a difference of 9 % between English-speaking boys and girls and of 11 % between French-speaking boys and girls.

3.10.8 Students who use the Internet for other activities

Those who say they use the Internet for other activities every day or almost every day score lower.
Those who say they never or almost never use the Internet for other activities score higher.
Those who say they use the Internet moderately for other activities also score high.

Part 4: Conclusion

It is important to point out the remarkable performance of Canadian students who placed in the leading cohort on the PIRLS 2006 reading comprehension test. Students in the Russian Federation, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore, Luxembourg, Italy, Hungary and Sweden scored higher. Canadian students placed significantly higher than students in the United States (13th) and those in France (21st). Québec students placed 18th, between those from the United States and France.

Québec students obtained very similar results in 2006 and 2001. A nonsignificant difference of only four points separates the two performances. What directly influenced Québec's ranking in 2006 was the addition of several countries whose students did better and the fact that a few countries did significantly better in 2006 than in 2001 and placed above Québec: the Russian Federation scored 37 points higher, taking first place, Hong Kong SAR scored 36 points higher, taking second place, and Singapore scored 30 points higher, taking third place. These three countries all placed lower than Québec in 2001. A similar increase in Québec could send it to first place at the next PIRLS in 2011.

Like almost everywhere else in the world, girls in Québec score higher than boys. Technology and the use of computers could narrow the gap in the future. English-speaking and French-speaking students' scores are equivalent, although very different. Their averages differ by only one point, but they score differently in terms of reading purpose and process of comprehension. French-speaking students in Québec are very different from English-speaking students in Québec and in the four other provinces that participated in PIRLS 2006.

The concept of reading enjoyment and strategies used by teachers to help students develop reading literacy are the two most important factors in students' performance on the PIRLS reading comprehension test. While reading enjoyment is a matter for students (through means taken by families to prepare future readers), teaching strategies and means of helping students develop reading comprehension are the responsibility of teachers and schools (they must make sure to use every available means to show students all the advantages of reading and understanding what they read).

Watching too much television or watching none at all hinders reading performance, as can spending too much time playing video games or playing none at all, and reading too much of the same types of texts, such as comic books or magazines, or not reading any at all. The best bet seems to be to read all types of texts reasonably often, once or twice a week or once or twice a month, depending on the complexity of the text. Practising different activities also appears to be a good compromise to equip future readers with background knowledge that will help them understand the aims of a text, enjoy it, analyze it and understand it.

Graph 1: Distribution of Reading Achievement

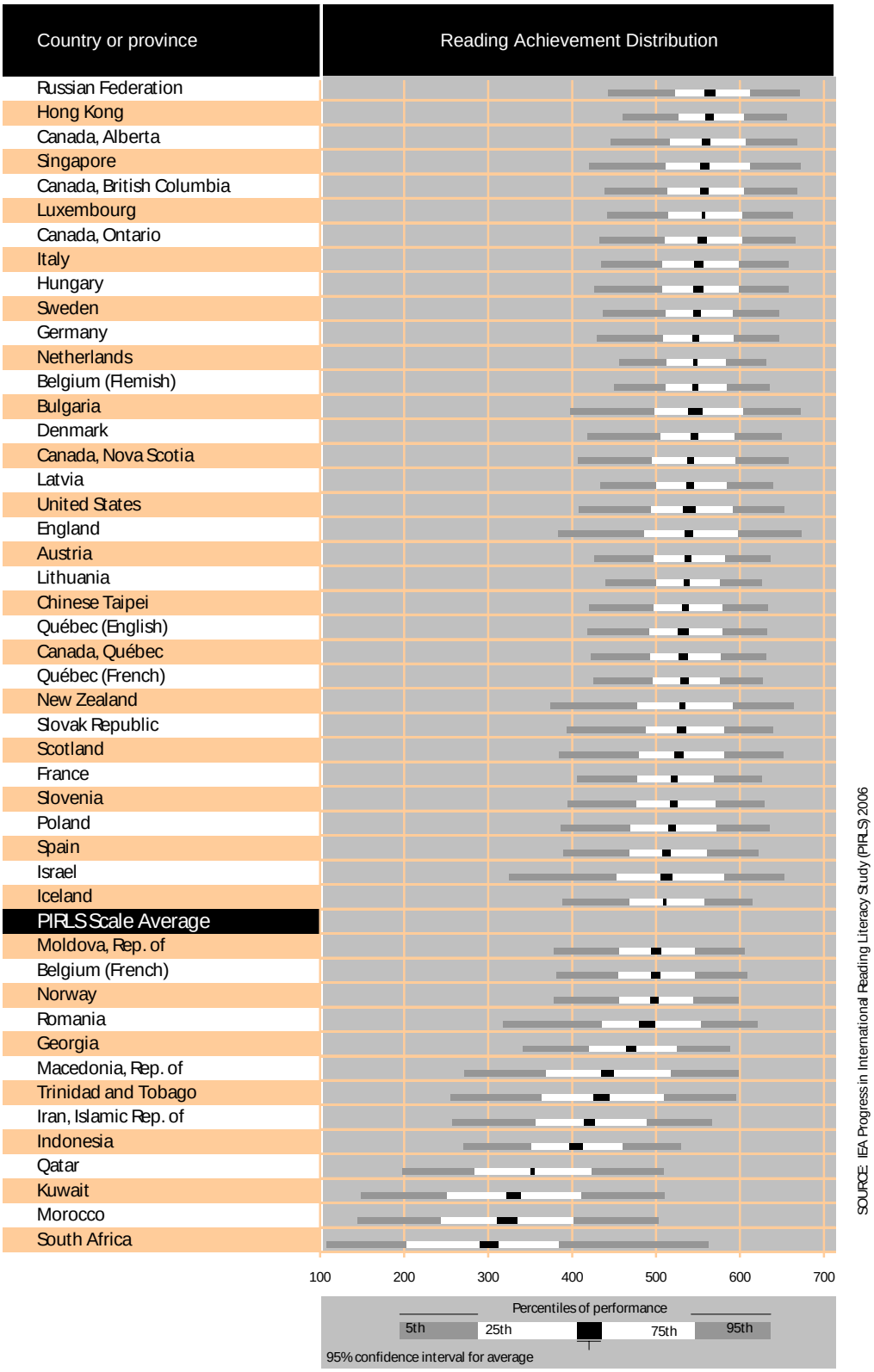

Table 1: Average Reading Achievement by Country and Province

Country or province	Average		Standard error
Russian Federation	565	?	(3,4)
Hong Kong	564	?	(2,4)
Canada, Alberta	560	?	(2,4)
Singapore	558	?	(2,9)
Canada, British Columbia	558	?	(2,6)
Luxembourg	557	?	(1,1)
Canada, Ontario	555	?	(2,7)
Italy	551	?	(2,9)
Hungary	551	?	(3,0)
Sweden	549	?	(2,3)
Germany	548	?	(2,2)
Netherlands	547	?	(1,5)
Belgium (Flemish)	547	?	(2,0)
Bulgaria	547	?	(4,4)
Denmark	546	?	(2,3)
Canada, Nova Scotia	542	?	(2,2)
Latvia	541	?	(2,3)
United States	540	?	(3,5)
England	539	?	(2,6)
Austria	538	?	(2,2)
Lithuania	537	?	(1,6)
Chinese Taipei	535	?	(2,0)
Québec (English)	533	?	(1,6)
Canada, Québec	533	?	(2,8)
Québec (French)	532	?	(1,2)
New Zealand	532	?	(2,0)
Slovak Republic	531	?	(2,8)
Scotland	527	?	(2,8)
France	522	?	(2,1)
Slovenia	522	?	(2,1)
Poland	519	?	(2,4)
Spain	513	?	(2,5)
Israel	512	?	(3,3)
Iceland	511	?	(1,3)
International average	500		(0,0)
Moldova, Rep. of	500		(3,0)
Belgium (French)	500		(2,6)
Norway	498		(2,6)
Romania	489	*	(5,0)
Georgia	471	*	(3,1)
Macedonia, Rep. of	442	*	(4,1)
Trinidad and Tobago	436	*	(4,9)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	421	*	(3,1)
Indonesia	405	*	(4,1)
Qatar	353	*	(1,1)
Kuwait	330	*	(4,2)
Morocco	323	*	(5,9)
South Africa	302	*	(5,6)

? Country average significantly higher than the international average
* Country average significantly lower than the international average

SOURCE: IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006

Table 2: Percentiles of Achievement in Reading

Country or province	5th percentile		25th percentile		50th percentile		75th percentile		95th percentile	
South Africa	108	(3,4)	203	(3,6)	283	(4,8)	384	(9,2)	562	(13,2)
Germany	430	(4,9)	508	(3,0)	553	(3,1)	593	(2,3)	647	(2,4)
England	383	(8,0)	486	(4,6)	546	(2,9)	598	(2,3)	673	(5,1)
Austria	427	(3,5)	498	(4,1)	542	(2,6)	582	(2,2)	636	(5,3)
Belgium (Flemish)	451	(3,7)	512	(1,8)	549	(3,2)	585	(1,9)	636	(4,6)
Belgium (French)	381	(2,7)	455	(3,2)	503	(3,4)	547	(2,9)	608	(4,1)
Bulgaria	397	(10,0)	498	(6,5)	553	(4,6)	604	(3,4)	673	(6,0)
Canada, Alberta	446	(5,8)	516	(4,2)	562	(2,6)	607	(2,6)	668	(2,6)
Canada, British Columbia	439	(5,5)	513	(4,8)	561	(2,8)	606	(2,8)	668	(4,1)
Canada, Nova Scotia	407	(8,1)	495	(3,7)	547	(2,4)	594	(2,8)	658	(3,8)
Canada, Ontario	433	(4,7)	510	(4,0)	557	(3,5)	603	(4,3)	666	(4,7)
Canada, Québec	422	(6,9)	493	(3,4)	536	(3,7)	577	(3,8)	632	(4,0)
Québec (English)	419	(1,7)	491	(1,7)	539	(1,6)	579	(1,7)	632	(1,6)
Québec (French)	426	(1,2)	493	(1,2)	532	(1,2)	574	(1,2)	624	(1,2)
Denmark	418	(4,5)	505	(3,6)	553	(2,7)	594	(1,8)	649	(2,9)
Scotland	385	(5,5)	480	(4,9)	532	(4,1)	581	(3,8)	651	(8,4)
Spain	390	(4,1)	468	(3,4)	517	(2,3)	561	(1,7)	622	(3,8)
United States	409	(7,6)	494	(3,5)	545	(4,2)	592	(3,8)	653	(7,3)
Russian Federation	443	(9,5)	523	(4,4)	569	(4,1)	612	(2,9)	671	(2,7)
France	406	(2,5)	478	(2,4)	525	(2,1)	568	(2,1)	626	(4,7)
Georgia	342	(5,1)	420	(5,5)	475	(3,4)	525	(3,7)	588	(5,1)
Hong Kong	460	(4,7)	527	(2,9)	567	(1,6)	605	(1,8)	655	(2,9)
Hungary	427	(6,4)	507	(5,0)	555	(3,1)	599	(3,5)	658	(2,3)
Indonesia	271	(7,5)	351	(4,6)	408	(4,1)	460	(4,6)	529	(3,2)
Iceland	388	(2,6)	469	(2,0)	516	(1,2)	558	(2,4)	615	(2,3)
Israel	325	(11,0)	453	(5,6)	527	(2,4)	582	(2,8)	653	(5,2)
Italy	435	(5,3)	507	(3,0)	554	(3,3)	599	(4,3)	658	(3,3)
Kuwait	148	(10,1)	251	(6,4)	331	(4,7)	411	(4,4)	510	(2,5)
Latvia	433	(9,2)	501	(4,9)	543	(2,7)	585	(3,1)	639	(3,3)
Lithuania	440	(5,1)	500	(2,0)	539	(1,5)	577	(2,2)	627	(4,5)
Luxembourg	442	(2,7)	514	(1,8)	560	(1,9)	603	(1,2)	662	(2,4)
Morocco	144	(9,6)	244	(7,9)	321	(8,3)	402	(9,1)	503	(7,8)
Norway	378	(3,8)	457	(5,5)	503	(3,2)	544	(2,4)	598	(3,7)
New Zealand	374	(3,0)	478	(2,5)	539	(2,2)	592	(2,1)	664	(4,0)
Netherlands	457	(3,3)	513	(1,8)	549	(1,9)	584	(1,8)	631	(2,1)
Poland	386	(5,8)	470	(3,9)	525	(3,1)	572	(1,7)	635	(3,0)
Qatar	198	(2,9)	284	(1,4)	353	(1,6)	424	(2,2)	509	(4,0)
Macedonia, Rep. of	272	(8,4)	369	(4,6)	448	(6,0)	518	(4,5)	599	(7,5)
Moldova, Rep. of	378	(4,1)	457	(4,2)	505	(4,4)	547	(2,2)	606	(3,8)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	258	(5,3)	357	(4,7)	427	(3,6)	489	(4,6)	567	(2,5)
Slovak Republic	394	(6,3)	488	(4,0)	539	(4,4)	582	(2,6)	639	(2,9)
Romania	317	(12,7)	436	(8,5)	501	(4,5)	554	(3,0)	621	(3,5)
Singapore	420	(5,8)	512	(4,9)	565	(4,0)	612	(2,8)	672	(3,2)
Slovenia	395	(3,7)	476	(2,2)	527	(1,9)	571	(1,7)	629	(2,6)
Sweden	437	(3,6)	512	(3,4)	554	(2,2)	592	(2,3)	647	(5,5)
Chinese Taipei	420	(3,9)	497	(3,0)	540	(1,7)	579	(2,0)	633	(4,7)
Trinidad and Tobago	255	(6,3)	364	(5,3)	443	(6,0)	510	(4,1)	595	(6,6)

SOURCE: IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006

Table 3: PIRLS Average Reading Achievement by Gender

Countries	Girls					Boys				Difference	
	Percent of Girls		Average Score			Percent of Boys		Average Score			
Luxembourg	49	(0,7)	559	(1,3)		51	(0,7)	556	(1,6)	3	(2,0)
Spain	49	(1,1)	515	(2,6)		51	(1,1)	511	(3,1)	4	(2,8)
Belgium (French)	50	(0,7)	502	(2,8)	?	50	(0,7)	497	(2,9)	5	(2,3)
Hungary	50	(0,9)	554	(3,6)	?	50	(0,9)	548	(2,9)	5	(2,6)
Belgium (Flemish)	50	(0,9)	550	(2,3)	?	50	(0,9)	544	(2,4)	6	(2,5)
Italy	48	(0,8)	555	(3,3)	?	52	(0,8)	548	(3,3)	7	(2,9)
Netherlands	51	(0,8)	551	(2,0)	?	49	(0,8)	543	(1,6)	7	(2,2)
Germany	49	(0,7)	551	(2,5)	?	51	(0,7)	544	(2,5)	7	(2,6)
Canada, Alberta	48	(0,8)	564	(2,4)	?	52	(0,8)	556	(2,7)	8	(1,9)
Canada, British Columbia	50	(0,8)	562	(2,9)	↑	?	(0,8)	554	(3,1)	9	(3,0)
Austria	49	(0,7)	543	(2,3)	?	51	(0,7)	533	(2,6)	10	(2,3)
United States	51	(0,7)	545	(3,3)	?	49	(0,7)	535	(4,4)	10	(3,2)
Hong Kong SAR	49	(1,3)	569	(2,5)	?	51	(1,3)	559	(2,8)	10	(2,5)
Québec (English)	51	(1,4)	538	(4,3)	?	49	(1,4)	528	(5,4)	10	(5,0)
France	48	(0,7)	527	(2,4)	?	52	(0,7)	516	(2,4)	11	(2,5)
Slovak Republic	49	(0,8)	537	(2,7)	?	51	(0,8)	525	(3,3)	11	(2,5)
Canada, Quebec	49	(1,0)	539	(2,7)	?	51	(1,0)	527	(3,5)	13	(3,0)
Québec (French)	49	(1,1)	539	(3,0)	?	51	(1,1)	527	(3,9)	12	(3,3)
Canada, Ontario	49	(1,1)	562	(3,3)	?	51	(1,1)	549	(3,3)	13	(3,8)
Chinese Taipei	48	(0,5)	542	(2,2)	?	52	(0,5)	529	(2,3)	13	(1,9)
Denmark	52	(0,9)	553	(2,8)	?	48	(0,9)	539	(2,7)	14	(3,2)
Moldova, Rep. of	50	(1,0)	507	(3,1)	?	50	(1,0)	493	(3,5)	14	(2,5)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	46	(1,1)	429	(5,3)	?	54	(1,1)	414	(3,8)	14	(6,7)
Romania	48	(1,0)	497	(5,0)	?	52	(1,0)	483	(5,7)	14	(4,2)
Israel	48	(1,2)	520	(4,1)	?	52	(1,2)	506	(3,7)	15	(4,0)
Russian Federation	51	(0,9)	572	(3,9)	?	49	(0,9)	557	(3,4)	15	(2,9)
Singapore	48	(0,6)	567	(3,1)	?	52	(0,6)	550	(3,3)	17	(2,9)
Poland	51	(0,8)	528	(2,6)	?	49	(0,8)	511	(2,7)	17	(2,6)
Georgia	48	(1,0)	480	(3,3)	?	52	(1,0)	463	(3,8)	17	(3,2)
Morocco	47	(1,0)	332	(6,6)	?	53	(1,0)	314	(6,6)	18	(5,8)
Sweden	48	(1,1)	559	(2,6)	?	52	(1,1)	541	(2,6)	18	(2,5)
Lithuania	49	(0,9)	546	(2,0)	?	51	(0,9)	528	(2,0)	18	(2,2)
Iceland	50	(0,9)	520	(1,7)	?	50	(0,9)	501	(1,9)	19	(2,5)
Norway	49	(1,1)	508	(2,8)	?	51	(1,1)	489	(3,1)	19	(3,2)
England	50	(0,9)	549	(3,0)	?	50	(0,9)	530	(2,8)	19	(2,7)
Slovenia	48	(0,7)	532	(2,1)	?	52	(0,7)	512	(2,7)	19	(2,5)
Indonesia	49	(0,9)	415	(4,2)	?	51	(0,9)	395	(4,6)	20	(3,3)
Bulgaria	49	(1,0)	558	(4,4)	?	51	(1,0)	537	(5,0)	21	(3,8)
Canada, Nova Scotia	49	(0,7)	553	(2,5)	↑	?	(0,7)	531	(2,8)	21	(3,2)
Macedonia, Rep. of	49	(0,7)	453	(4,4)	?	51	(0,7)	432	(4,4)	21	(3,5)
Scotland	51	(0,9)	538	(3,6)	?	49	(0,9)	516	(3,1)	22	(3,8)
Latvia	48	(1,0)	553	(2,7)	?	52	(1,0)	530	(2,6)	23	(2,7)
New Zealand	49	(0,9)	544	(2,2)	?	51	(0,9)	520	(2,9)	24	(3,1)
Trinidad and Tobago	49	(1,7)	451	(4,9)	?	51	(1,7)	420	(6,0)	31	(5,6)
South Africa	52	(0,6)	319	(6,3)	?	48	(0,6)	283	(5,5)	36	(4,6)
Qatar	50	(0,2)	372	(1,7)	?	50	(0,2)	335	(1,7)	37	(2,6)
Kuwait	50	(2,0)	364	(4,7)	?	50	(2,0)	297	(6,2)	67	(7,5)
International Avg.	49	(0,2)	509	(0,6)	?	51	(0,2)	492	(0,6)	17	(0,5)

? Average significantly higher than other gender

Table 4: Relative Difference in Performance Between Literary and Informational Purposes

Country or province	Literary Average	Informational Average	Relative Difference
Indonesia	397 (3,9)	418 (4,2)	20 (1,3)
Morocco	317 (6,5)	335 (6,0)	17 (2,8)
South Africa	299 (5,2)	316 (5,1)	16 (1,2)
Moldova, Rep. of	492 (2,8)	508 (3,0)	16 (1,5)
Singapore	552 (2,9)	563 (2,8)	12 (1,1)
Hong Kong	557 (2,6)	568 (2,3)	11 (1,1)
Macedonia, Rep. of	439 (3,7)	450 (4,2)	11 (1,3)
France	516 (2,4)	526 (2,1)	10 (2,1)
Chinese Taipei	530 (2,0)	538 (1,8)	8 (1,1)
Bulgaria	542 (4,5)	550 (4,4)	8 (1,2)
New Zealand	527 (2,1)	534 (2,2)	6 (0,7)
Trinidad and Tobago	434 (4,6)	440 (4,6)	6 (1,5)
Québec (French)	528 (3,2)	534 (3,8)	6 (1,5)
Canada, Québec	529 (2,8)	533 (2,7)	4 (1,3)
Slovenia	519 (2,0)	523 (2,4)	4 (1,4)
Belgium (Flemish)	544 (1,9)	547 (2,0)	3 (1,3)
Netherlands	545 (1,8)	548 (1,6)	3 (1,7)
Russian Federation	561 (3,3)	564 (3,3)	3 (1,3)
Sweden	546 (2,3)	549 (2,4)	3 (1,3)
Luxembourg	555 (1,0)	557 (1,0)	2 (1,1)
Latvia	539 (2,4)	540 (2,4)	1 (1,4)
Scotland	527 (2,6)	527 (2,6)	0 (1,3)
Austria	537 (2,1)	536 (2,3)	1 (1,2)
Belgium (French)	499 (2,4)	498 (2,8)	2 (1,1)
England	539 (2,6)	537 (2,5)	2 (1,6)
Qatar	358 (1,3)	356 (1,6)	2 (1,8)
Italy	551 (3,3)	549 (2,9)	3 (1,7)
Canada, Ontario	555 (3,0)	552 (3,0)	3 (1,6)
United States	541 (3,6)	537 (3,4)	3 (0,9)
Canada, Nova Scotia	543 (2,4)	539 (2,4)	4 (1,6)
Germany	549 (2,2)	544 (2,3)	4 (1,5)
Canada, Alberta	561 (2,7)	556 (2,4)	5 (1,8)
Québec (English)	534 (4,0)	528 (4,0)	6 (1,5)
Canada, British Columbia	559 (2,7)	554 (2,7)	6 (1,2)
Denmark	547 (2,6)	542 (2,4)	6 (2,1)
Romania	493 (4,8)	487 (4,9)	6 (1,5)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	426 (3,1)	420 (3,1)	6 (1,6)
Slovak Republic	533 (2,9)	527 (2,6)	7 (1,6)
Norway	501 (2,5)	494 (2,8)	7 (1,4)
Poland	523 (2,5)	515 (2,2)	8 (1,6)
Spain	516 (2,7)	508 (2,9)	8 (1,9)
Israel	516 (3,4)	507 (3,6)	9 (1,0)
Iceland	514 (1,7)	505 (1,4)	9 (1,6)
Georgia	476 (3,2)	465 (3,6)	11 (2,4)
Lithuania	542 (1,9)	530 (1,6)	12 (1,1)
Kuwait	340 (3,7)	327 (4,3)	14 (1,9)
Hungary	557 (2,9)	541 (3,1)	16 (1,2)

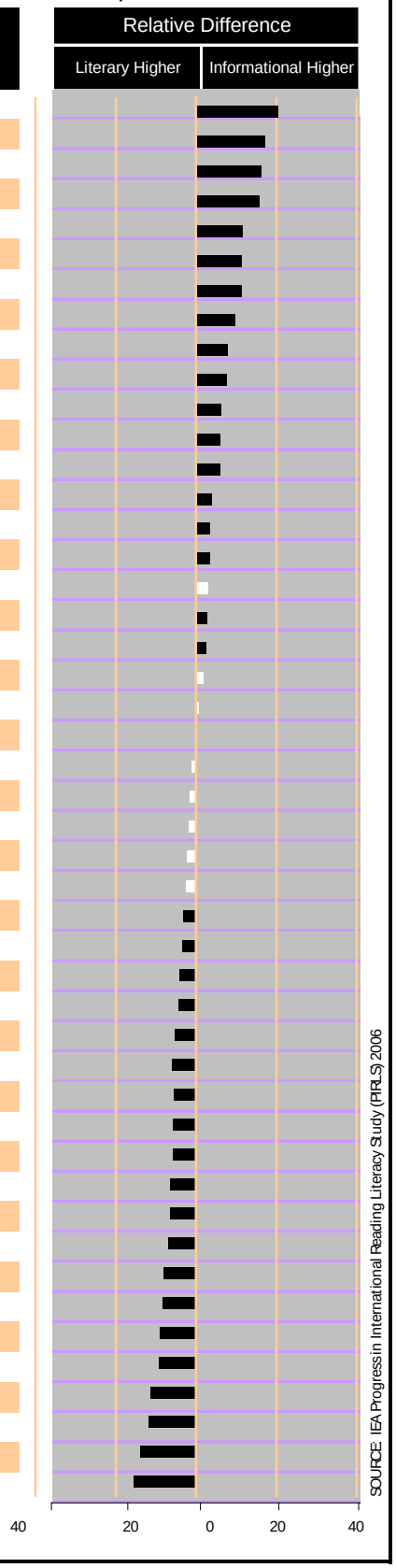

Table 5: Achievement in Reading for Literary and Informational Purposes by Gender

Country or province	Literary							Informational						
	Girls Average			Boys Average		Girls Higher Average		Girls Average			Boys Average		Girls Higher Average	
South Africa	318	(6,0)	?	281	(5,3)	38	(4,3)	332	(5,8)	?	299	(5,4)	33	(4,5)
Germany	554	(2,4)	?	544	(2,6)	9	(2,5)	547	(2,4)	?	542	(2,7)	6	(2,4)
England	550	(3,1)	?	528	(2,7)	22	(2,7)	545	(2,8)	?	529	(2,9)	16	(2,6)
Austria	543	(2,6)	?	531	(2,4)	11	(2,7)	540	(2,7)	?	533	(2,6)	7	(2,6)
Belgium (Flemish)	504	(2,6)	?	495	(2,8)	9	(2,5)	499	(3,3)		497	(3,0)	1	(3,0)
Belgium (French)	547	(2,2)	?	541	(2,3)	6	(2,4)	550	(2,4)	?	545	(2,2)	5	(2,1)
Bulgaria	553	(4,6)	?	532	(5,4)	21	(4,7)	558	(4,4)	?	542	(5,2)	16	(4,3)
Canada, Alberta	567	(2,9)	?	556	(3,0)	11	(2,2)	559	(2,5)	?	553	(2,8)	7	(2,1)
Canada, British Columbia	565	(3,0)	?	553	(3,2)	12	(3,2)	556	(3,3)	?	551	(2,8)	6	(3,0)
Canada, Nova Scotia	552	(3,4)	?	534	(2,6)	18	(3,7)	549	(2,8)	?	529	(3,0)	20	(3,3)
Canada, Ontario	562	(3,5)	?	549	(3,3)	12	(3,5)	558	(3,3)	?	547	(3,9)	11	(4,0)
Canada, Québec	536	(3,1)	?	523	(3,4)	12	(3,5)	539	(2,7)	?	528	(3,6)	11	(3,3)
Québec (French)	535	(3,6)	?	523	(3,8)	12	(3,7)	539	(3,0)	?	528	(4,0)	11	(3,4)
Québec (English)	539	(4,3)	?	528	(5,4)	10	(5,4)	533	(4,2)	?	522	(5,4)	11	(5,3)
Denmark	554	(3,0)	?	541	(3,1)	13	(3,2)	547	(2,8)	?	536	(3,1)	11	(3,4)
Scotland	538	(3,4)	?	515	(3,0)	23	(3,9)	537	(3,6)	?	517	(2,8)	20	(3,9)
Spain	520	(3,1)	?	513	(3,1)	7	(3,0)	508	(3,2)		508	(3,2)	0	(2,7)
United States	547	(3,6)	?	534	(4,1)	12	(2,8)	542	(3,1)	?	532	(4,4)	9	(3,3)
Russian Federation	568	(3,8)	?	554	(3,3)	15	(2,5)	572	(3,5)	?	555	(3,6)	17	(2,7)
France	523	(2,6)	?	510	(2,7)	12	(2,4)	531	(2,7)	?	521	(2,3)	10	(2,8)
Georgia	484	(3,7)	?	470	(3,6)	14	(3,3)	474	(3,7)	?	457	(4,4)	17	(3,8)
Hong Kong	564	(2,6)	?	551	(3,3)	13	(2,8)	572	(2,2)	?	564	(2,8)	8	(2,2)
Hungary	560	(3,6)	?	553	(2,9)	7	(2,9)	543	(3,7)		539	(3,1)	4	(2,8)
Indonesia	408	(4,0)	?	387	(4,4)	20	(3,3)	427	(4,6)	?	409	(5,0)	18	(4,8)
Iceland	525	(2,4)	?	504	(1,9)	20	(2,9)	514	(1,9)	?	497	(2,1)	17	(2,9)
Israel	524	(4,0)	?	509	(3,8)	15	(3,8)	513	(4,5)	?	502	(4,1)	11	(4,8)
Italy	556	(3,6)	?	548	(3,6)	8	(3,0)	551	(3,1)		547	(3,4)	5	(2,9)
Kuwait	372	(4,5)	?	310	(5,2)	62	(6,8)	361	(6,3)	?	292	(6,0)	68	(9,2)
Latvia	550	(3,0)	?	529	(2,7)	21	(3,1)	553	(2,7)	?	527	(2,7)	26	(2,8)
Lithuania	550	(2,4)	?	533	(2,0)	17	(2,2)	539	(2,2)	?	521	(2,0)	17	(2,6)
Luxembourg	557	(1,4)	?	552	(1,4)	5	(2,2)	557	(1,2)		556	(1,5)	1	(1,9)
Morocco	326	(6,9)	?	310	(7,4)	17	(6,3)	344	(6,1)	?	326	(6,9)	19	(5,1)
Norway	512	(2,8)	?	491	(2,7)	21	(2,6)	502	(3,4)	?	486	(2,8)	16	(3,0)
New Zealand	539	(2,3)	?	516	(2,9)	23	(3,1)	545	(2,3)	?	522	(3,0)	23	(2,9)
Netherlands	548	(2,2)	?	541	(2,3)	6	(2,7)	552	(1,8)	?	543	(1,9)	9	(2,0)
Poland	532	(2,8)	?	514	(3,0)	18	(3,0)	523	(2,3)	?	507	(2,8)	16	(2,6)
Qatar	376	(1,8)	?	341	(2,3)	36	(3,3)	374	(2,3)	?	339	(2,3)	35	(3,2)
Macedonia, Rep. of	449	(4,3)	?	429	(4,0)	20	(3,7)	460	(4,6)	?	440	(4,4)	21	(3,4)
Moldova, Rep. of	499	(3,3)	?	486	(3,0)	13	(2,9)	514	(3,2)	?	502	(3,5)	13	(2,6)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	432	(5,3)		421	(4,0)	11	(6,8)	429	(4,9)	?	412	(3,8)	17	(6,1)
Slovak Republic	539	(2,9)	?	527	(3,5)	12	(3,1)	532	(2,5)	?	522	(3,3)	10	(2,7)
Romania	501	(4,9)	?	485	(5,6)	16	(4,2)	494	(5,2)	?	481	(5,4)	13	(3,8)
Singapore	560	(3,2)	?	544	(3,4)	16	(3,2)	572	(2,9)	?	555	(3,3)	16	(2,7)
Slovenia	529	(2,3)	?	511	(2,6)	18	(2,7)	533	(2,4)	?	514	(3,2)	18	(3,2)
Sweden	557	(2,7)	?	536	(2,6)	20	(2,8)	557	(2,9)	?	541	(2,6)	15	(3,0)
Chinese Taipei	538	(2,2)	?	523	(2,2)	15	(1,8)	543	(1,8)	?	534	(2,3)	8	(2,0)
Trinidad and Tobago	450	(4,9)	?	419	(5,6)	31	(5,4)	455	(5,0)	?	426	(5,5)	28	(5,4)
International average	509	(0,6)	?	491	(0,6)	17	(0,5)	509	(0,7)	?	493	(0,6)	16	(0,7)

? Average significantly higher than other gender

SOURCE: IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006

Table 6: Relative Difference in Performance Between Reading Comprehension Processes

Country or province	Retrieving and straightforward inferencing *Average score*	Interpreting, integrating and evaluating *Average score*	Relative difference (absolute value)
Moldova, Rep. of	486 (2,9)	515 (2,9)	29 (1,7)
[2a] *Canada, Ontario*	543 (3,1)	563 (2,9)	19 (1,6)
[2a] Bulgaria	538 (4,2)	553 (4,4)	15 (1,5)
Canada, Nova Scotia	533 (2,2)	548 (2,0)	15 (0,8)
New Zealand	524 (2,3)	538 (2,2)	14 (1,3)
[†2a] United States	532 (3,3)	546 (3,3)	14 (0,9)
Italy	544 (2,8)	556 (2,9)	12 (1,1)
Québec (English)	525 (1,7)	537 (1,6)	12 (1,6)
[2a] *Canada, British Columbia*	551 (2,8)	562 (2,5)	11 (1,4)
Latvia	534 (2,5)	545 (1,9)	11 (1,2)
[2a] *Canada, Alberta*	553 (2,6)	564 (2,3)	11 (1,2)
Hungary	544 (2,8)	554 (3,0)	10 (1,9)
England	533 (2,8)	543 (2,4)	10 (1,1)
Lithuania	531 (1,9)	540 (1,6)	9 (1,2)
[2b] Israel	507 (3,2)	516 (3,6)	9 (1,4)
Hong Kong	558 (2,5)	566 (2,4)	8 (1,3)
Spain	508 (2,5)	515 (2,6)	7 (1,1)
Poland	516 (2,4)	522 (2,3)	6 (1,6)
Slovenia	519 (2,1)	523 (2,0)	5 (0,8)
[†] Scotland	525 (2,8)	528 (2,6)	4 (1,9)
[†2a] Belgium (Flemish)	545 (1,9)	547 (1,8)	3 (1,2)
Slovak Republic	529 (2,8)	531 (2,8)	2 (0,8)
Romania	489 (5,2)	490 (5,3)	1 (1,2)
[2a] Russian Federation	562 (3,4)	563 (3,2)	0 (1,7)
Canada, Québec	533 (2,7)	531 (2,7)	2 (1,1)
Trinidad and Tobago	438 (4,7)	437 (5,0)	2 (1,9)
Québec (French)	532 (1,3)	528 (1,2)	4 (1,2)
Sweden	550 (2,4)	546 (2,2)	4 (1,0)
Belgium (French)	501 (2,6)	497 (2,5)	4 (1,2)
Singapore	560 (3,3)	556 (2,7)	5 (1,1)
Indonesia	409 (3,9)	404 (4,1)	5 (1,5)
France	523 (2,1)	518 (2,3)	6 (1,1)
Macedonia, Rep. of	446 (3,8)	439 (4,0)	7 (1,6)
[‡] Norway	502 (2,3)	495 (2,4)	7 (1,2)
[2a] Denmark	551 (2,7)	542 (2,3)	9 (1,9)
[†] Netherlands	551 (2,0)	542 (1,5)	9 (1,6)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	428 (3,3)	418 (3,3)	10 (1,5)
Chinese Taipei	541 (2,0)	530 (1,9)	11 (0,7)
Iceland	516 (1,2)	503 (1,3)	13 (1,2)
Austria	544 (2,1)	530 (2,2)	14 (0,9)
Germany	555 (2,6)	540 (2,2)	14 (1,5)
[2a] Georgia	478 (3,3)	461 (3,5)	17 (1,3)
Luxembourg	565 (1,2)	548 (0,9)	17 (1,0)
Kuwait	337 (3,9)	+ +	+ +
Morocco	336 (6,2)		
Qatar	361 (1,2)		
South Africa	307 (5,3)	+ +	+ +

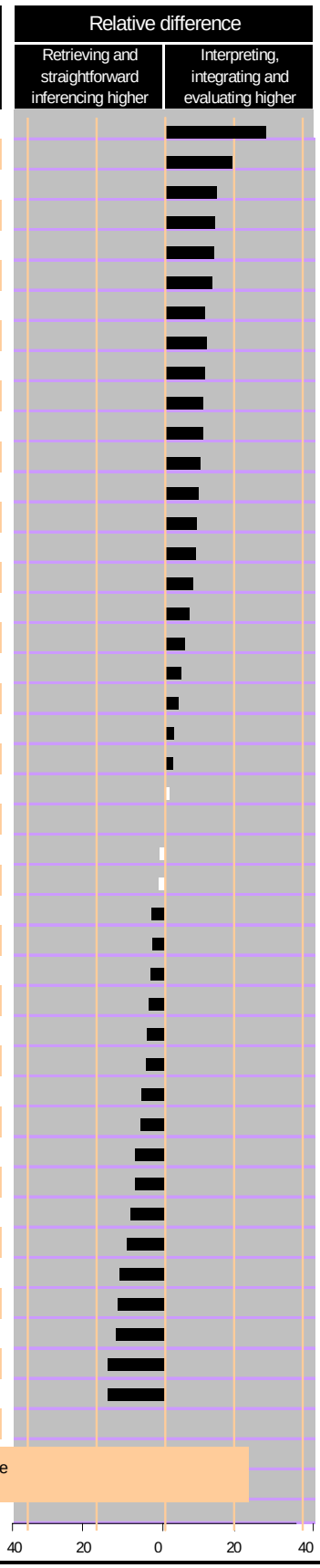

Table 7: Average Achievement in Reading Comprehension Processes by Gender

	Retrieving and straightforward inferencing							Interpretating, integrating and evaluating						
	Girls average			Boys average		Girls higher average		Girls average			Boys average		Girls higher average	
South Africa	322	(6,0)	?	291	(5,4)	31	(4,4)	+	+		+	+	+	+
Germany	559	2,8	?	550	3,1	8	2,7	543	(2,4)	?	537	(2,7)	6	(2,8)
England	543	(3,5)	?	524	(2,8)	20	(2,8)	552	(2,8)	?	534	(2,7)	18	(2,5)
Austria	547	2,3	?	541	2,5	6	2,4	536	(2,7)	?	524	(2,4)	13	(2,6)
Belgium (Flemish)	548	(2,3)	?	542	(2,3)	6	(2,6)	550	(2,4)	?	544	(2,0)	6	(2,5)
Belgium (French)	504	2,8	?	498	3	6	2,5	500	(2,6)	?	494	(2,9)	6	(2,5)
Bulgaria	544	(4,3)	?	531	(5,0)	13	(4,1)	565	(4,4)	?	540	(5,1)	25	(3,9)
Canada, Alberta	556	2,7	?	550	3,1	6	2,5	570	(2,5)	?	558	(2,8)	11	(2,5)
Canada, British Columbia	554	(3,0)	?	547	(3,2)	7	(2,8)	567	(2,7)	?	557	(3,1)	9	(3,3)
Canada, Nova Scotia	542	3,1	?	525	2,9	17	4,1	559	(2,2)	?	537	(2,6)	21	(2,7)
Canada, Ontario	548	(3,8)	?	538	(3,4)	11	(3,8)	569	(3,2)	?	556	(3,1)	13	(2,8)
Canada, Québec	537	2,8	?	528	3,3	9	3	539	(2,6)	?	523	(3,3)	16	(2,8)
Québec (English)	528	(2,6)	?	522	(2,5)	6	(2,5)	543	(2,1)	?	529	(2,4)	14	(2,2)
Québec (French)	537	1,7	?	527	1,8	10	1,7	537	(1,6)	?	520	(1,8)	17	(1,8)
Denmark	558	(3,1)	?	543	(3,2)	15	(3,3)	548	(2,8)	?	536	(2,6)	12	(2,8)
Scotland	537	3,8	?	512	3	24	3,8	538	(3,3)	?	519	(2,9)	18	(3,6)
Spain	509	(2,8)		508	(2,7)	1	(2,4)	519	(2,9)	?	512	(3,0)	7	(2,7)
United States	537	3,2	?	527	4,1	10	3,1	552	(3,0)	?	540	(4,1)	12	(2,7)
Russian Federation	570	(3,9)	?	554	(3,4)	16	(2,5)	569	(3,8)	?	555	(3,2)	14	(2,8)
France	529	2,5	?	518	2,5	11	2,7	523	(2,6)	?	513	(2,5)	10	(2,4)
Georgia	486	(3,5)	?	471	(3,9)	15	(3,3)	471	(4,1)	?	453	(4,1)	18	(4,1)
Hong Kong	562	2,5	?	553	3	8	2,3	572	(2,6)	?	559	(2,8)	13	(2,4)
Hungary	545	(3,5)		542	(2,8)	4	(3,1)	557	(3,6)		551	(3,0)	6	(2,9)
Indonesia	418	4	?	401	4,4	17	3,1	415	(4,1)	?	393	(4,8)	22	(3,6)
Iceland	525	(1,7)	?	508	(1,9)	17	(2,7)	514	(1,9)	?	493	(1,7)	21	(2,5)
Israel	513	3,9	?	502	3,7	11	4	523	(4,3)	?	510	(3,7)	14	(3,7)
Italy	546	(2,9)		542	(3,4)	4	(2,8)	559	(2,9)	?	552	(3,4)	7	(2,9)
Kuwait	368	4,6	?	306	5,2	62	6,6	+	+		+	+	+	+
Latvia	546	(2,7)	?	523	(3,0)	23	(3,2)	557	(2,3)	?	534	(2,2)	24	(2,7)
Lithuania	541	2,2	?	521	2,4	20	2,5	549	(2,2)	?	532	(2,0)	17	(2,6)
Luxembourg	567	(1,9)		564	(1,5)	3	(2,3)	550	(1,4)	?	546	(1,2)	4	(1,9)
Morocco	345	7,2	?	329	6,5	16	5,8	+	+		+	+	+	+
New Zealand	535	(2,4)	?	513	(3,1)	22	(3,1)	550	(2,3)	?	526	(2,9)	24	(2,8)
Norway	510	3,1	?	494	3,1	16	4,2	505	(2,5)	?	485	(2,9)	20	(2,7)
Netherlands	553	(2,7)		549	(2,3)	4	(3,0)	547	(2,0)	?	538	(1,8)	9	(2,4)
Poland	525	2,6	?	507	2,8	18	2,6	529	(2,4)	?	514	(3,0)	16	(3,0)
Qatar	377	(2,0)	?	344	(1,6)	33	(2,7)	+	+		+	+	+	+
Macedonia, Rep. of	456	4,1	?	437	4,2	19	3,2	451	(4,7)	?	428	(4,2)	23	(3,7)
Moldova, Rep. of	491	(3,0)	?	481	(3,4)	10	(2,8)	523	(3,1)	?	508	(3,2)	15	(2,5)
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	435	5,4		422	4	13	6,7	425	(5,5)		412	(4,2)	13	(7,1)
Slovak Republic	534	(2,8)	?	524	(3,6)	10	(3,3)	538	(2,8)	?	525	(3,4)	13	(2,9)
Romania	495	5,2	?	483	5,9	13	4,1	498	(5,6)	?	482	(5,9)	16	(4,6)
Singapore	570	(3,6)	?	552	(3,9)	18	(3,6)	564	(2,8)	?	548	(3,2)	16	(2,6)
Slovenia	527	2	?	511	2,8	16	2,6	534	(2,1)	?	514	(2,4)	20	(2,4)
Sweden	558	(2,5)	?	544	(2,9)	14	(2,7)	557	(2,7)	?	537	(2,5)	20	(3,0)
Chinese Taipei	546	2,1	?	536	2,3	10	2,2	537	(1,9)	?	523	(2,2)	14	(1,9)
Trinidad and Tobago	453	(5,0)	?	424	(5,6)	29	(5,4)	453	(5,5)	?	421	(5,8)	32	(5,5)
International average	508	(0,6)	?	493	(0,6)	15	(0,6)	509	(0,6)	?	492	(0,6)	17	(0,5)

? Average significantly higher than other gender

SOURCE: IEA Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006