

Developing PIRLS 2011 Items to Meet PIRLS 2011 Purposes

When developing items for PIRLS 2011, every attempt was made to achieve the target percentages across the reading purposes, processes of comprehension, and item formats outlined in the *PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework*. Target percentages included “trend items” (items previously used in PIRLS 2001 or PIRLS 2006 and retained for use in 2011 as a basis for measuring trends) as well as items newly developed for PIRLS 2011. The results of these efforts are shown in the exhibits below. Each multiple-choice item is worth 1 score

PIRLS 2011 Assessment Items by Item Format

	Multiple-choice	Constructed-reponse (1 point)	Constructed-reponse (2 points)	Constructed-reponse (3 points)
Multiple-choice	74 (74)		42%	50%
Constructed-reponse (1 point)	28 (28)			
Constructed-reponse (2 points)	26 (52)		58%	50%
Constructed-reponse (3 points)	7 (21)			
Total	135 (175)			

Score points are shown in parentheses.

PIRLS 2011 Assessment Items by Process

	Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	Make straightforward inferences	Interpret and integrate ideas and information	Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	19 (22)	22%	14 (16)	22%
Make straightforward inferences	26 (28)	28%	20 (21)	28%
Interpret and integrate ideas and information	20 (38)	38%	18 (28)	38%
Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements	10 (13)	13%	8 (9)	12%
Total	75 (101)		60 (74)	135 (175)

Distribution of PIRLS 2011 Item Specifications by Purpose

The item specifications for pre²–5 S 2011 were based on those used in 4²–5 S, with modifications as needed to make the assessment appropriate for pre²–5 S students. For example, since pre²–5 S was developed for students who are still learning to read, the *PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework* specified a greater emphasis on the processes of retrieval and straightforward inferencing. In addition, because the pre²–5 S pilot test suggested that reading the options for a multiple-choice item may be more difficult for pre²–5 S students than providing a short response to a constructed-response item, there is a slightly higher target percentage of constructed-response items in pre²–5 S than 4²–5 S. As shown in the exhibits below, the distribution of items across the reading purposes and processes of comprehension are quite close to the target percentages outlined in the *PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework*.


