



Education
Quality and
Accountability
Office

OECD

**Programme for International Student Achievement
(PISA) and Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)**

PISA/YITS 2000 Ontario Report

December 2001

Introduction

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is interested in understanding what makes young people, as well as education systems, succeed. To do so, OECD member countries developed the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an assessment tool to monitor student achievement. Human Resources Development Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada and Statistics Canada collaborated to coordinate a Canadian PISA and to administer it simultaneously with the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS).

What is PISA?

PISA is an OECD-initiated project designed to provide international indicators of the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. PISA aims to assess the degree to which students approaching the end of their compulsory education have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. Three PISA cycles have been planned, each focusing on a different literacy domain: reading literacy (2000), mathematical literacy (2003) and scientific literacy (2006).

What is YITS?

The Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) is a new Canadian longitudinal survey designed to examine the patterns of major transitions in young people's lives—particularly those between education, training and work—and the effects of these transitions on young people. YITS will examine key transitions in the lives of youth, such as the transition from high school to post-secondary education, from schooling to the labour market or from the labour market to schooling. The survey is for two different age groups—a 15-year-old cohort and an 18-to 20-year-old cohort.

Participants

Thirty-two countries participated in PISA 2000. In most countries, between 4500 and 10 000 youth aged 15 participated.

Australia	Hungary	New Zealand
Austria	Iceland	Norway
Belgium	Ireland	Poland
Brazil	Italy	Portugal
Canada	Japan	Russian Federation
Czech Republic	Korea	Spain
Denmark	Latvia	Sweden
Finland	Liechtenstein	Switzerland
France	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
Germany	Mexico	United States
Greece	The Netherlands	

The Canadian Context

In April and May 2000, approximately 30 000 15-year-old students from more than 1000 Canadian schools participated in PISA 2000 and YITS. A large Canadian sample was drawn so estimates could be provided at both the national and provincial levels. Sufficient data were collected from both official language groups in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to provide information on the achievement of Canadian students by school-system language.

Data Sources

The 2000 PISA survey included a two-hour student skills assessment in the form of reading, mathematics and science tests. Students completed a 20-minute questionnaire that provided background information on factors contributing to student achievement. A three-minute questionnaire focusing on information technology was also administered to students. Finally, PISA 2000 included a school questionnaire administered to school principals, that collected information about characteristics of the school.

In addition to the PISA assessment, a 30-minute contextual Youth in Transition Survey was administered to students to collect more information on their school experiences, their work activities and their relationships with others. A Statistics Canada employee also conducted a 30-minute interview with a parent of each youth involved in PISA/YITS.

Reporting Scales

The performance of the students was expressed as a score on a scale from 0 to 1000, such that the average score for students in all participating OECD countries was 500 and the standard deviation was 100. This means that internationally about two-thirds of students scored between 400 and 600 on the scale.

In addition, reading achievement was reported using five levels of achievement linked to specific score ranges on the original scale.

Reading Literacy in PISA

PISA defines **reading literacy** as “*Understanding, using and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one’s goal, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.*”

In this assessment, OECD/PISA has introduced an “active” element—“*the capacity not just to understand a text but to reflect on it, drawing on one’s own thoughts and experiences.*”

Reading literacy is assessed in relation to

- the form of reading material or text;
- the type of reading task; and
- the use for which the text was constructed.

Test Structure

The 2000 assessment focused mainly on reading, with the reading test providing achievement information on three sub-skills: “retrieving information,” “interpreting” and “reflecting.” The test contained both multiple-choice items (55% of the assessment) and items requiring students to construct a response (45%). In the latter category, 65 percent of the tasks required reflection on content and form, and 35 percent required students to form broad understandings, retrieve information and develop interpretations.

The following are brief summaries of the PISA reading proficiency levels:

Five levels of reading proficiency

- ➡ level 1 (lowest level)
The student must identify explicit and concrete information from a short text.
- ➡ level 2
The student must identify information that is fairly concrete and make low-level text-based inferences.
- ➡ level 3
The student must identify conditional information and make literal, synonymous or low-level inferences.
- ➡ level 4
The student must not only identify abstract concepts and processes, including reason, evidence, explanation, causation, result, comparison and contrast but must cycle and integrate these.
- ➡ level 5 (highest level)
The student must not only identify quite abstract information, including contrast, equivalence and theme (summary) but must cycle, integrate and generate them.

The test also had a mathematics and a science component; however, since the number of test items was relatively small, each of these subject areas was reported with a single score.

A few examples of PISA 2000 reading test items are found in Appendix A of this report.

Curriculum Match

Comparing OECD PISA (2000) test items with the Ontario Grade 10 academic and applied curricula indicates that there is a close curriculum-to-test match. The PISA reading test items reflect the general categories of curriculum content found in the Ontario Grade 10 curricula. A few items reflect Grade 9 or Grade 11 curriculum. Some elements of the Ontario curriculum are not directly assessed in PISA. Appendix B lists the PISA test items and indicates where they “fit” with the Ontario curriculum. Components of Ontario curriculum not assessed by PISA are also listed.

PISA items that assess reading abilities pertaining to formal genres (novels, poetry) and the study of stylistic effects are more strongly reflected in the academic level of the Ontario curriculum. The reading of non-continuous texts (charts/graphs) and more practical texts appears in the Grade 9 applied-level curriculum and are not specifically mentioned in the academic.

Achievement Results

The following charts provide information about 15-year-old students’ achievement in reading, mathematics and science. The PISA results for countries and for Canada’s provinces are compared with Canada’s national results; the charts show the jurisdictions that performed the same as, higher than or lower than Canada. Within these categories, jurisdictions are listed in alphabetical order.

Countries' and Provinces' Overall Reading Achievement Compared to Canada's¹

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	550 (3.3)	Australia	528 (3.5)	Austria	507 (2.4)
Finland	546 (2.6)	British Columbia	538 (2.9)	Belgium	507 (3.6)
		Canada	534 (1.6)	Brazil	396 (3.1)
		Ireland	527 (3.2)	Czech Republic	492 (2.4)
		Japan	522 (5.2)	Denmark	497 (2.4)
		Manitoba	529 (3.5)	France	505 (2.7)
		New Zealand	529 (2.8)	Germany	484 (2.5)
		Ontario	533 (3.3)	Greece	474 (5.0)
		Quebec	536 (3.0)	Hungary	480 (4.0)
		Saskatchewan	529 (2.7)	Iceland	507 (1.5)
				Italy	487 (2.9)
				Korea	525 (2.4)
				Latvia	458 (5.3)
				Liechtenstein	483 (4.1)
				Luxembourg	441 (1.6)
				Mexico	422 (3.3)
				New Brunswick	501 (1.8)
				Newfoundland	517 (2.8)
				Norway	505 (2.8)
				Nova Scotia	521 (2.3)
				Poland	479 (4.5)
				Portugal	470 (4.5)
				Prince Edward Island	517 (2.4)
				Russian Federation	462 (4.2)
				Spain	493 (2.7)
				Sweden	516 (2.2)
				Switzerland	494 (4.2)
				United Kingdom	523 (2.6)
				United States	504 (7.0)

¹ Reading achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Countries' and Provinces' Reading Achievement, by Sub-Test Scores, Compared to Canada's²

Reading Retrieving

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	549 (3.5)	Australia	536 (3.7)	Austria	502 (2.3)
Finland	556 (2.8)	British Columbia	535 (3.1)	Belgium	515 (3.9)
		Canada	530 (1.7)	Brazil	365 (3.4)
		Ireland	524 (3.3)	Czech Republic	481 (2.7)
		Japan	526 (5.5)	Denmark	498 (2.8)
		Korea	530 (2.5)	France	515 (3.0)
		Manitoba	527 (3.6)	Germany	483 (2.4)
		Ontario	528 (3.5)	Greece	450 (5.4)
		New Zealand	535 (2.8)	Hungary	478 (4.4)
		Quebec	531 (3.2)	Iceland	500 (1.6)
		Saskatchewan	527 (2.7)	Italy	488 (3.1)
		United Kingdom	523 (2.5)	Latvia	451 (5.7)
				Liechtenstein	492 (4.9)
				Luxembourg	433 (1.6)
				Mexico	402 (3.9)
				New Brunswick	494 (1.8)
				Newfoundland	512 (2.9)
				Norway	505 (2.9)
				Nova Scotia	516 (2.7)
				Poland	475 (5.0)
				Portugal	455 (4.9)
				Prince Edward Island	512 (2.8)
				Russian Federation	451 (4.9)
				Spain	483 (3.0)
				Sweden	516 (2.4)
				Switzerland	498 (4.4)
				United States	499 (7.4)

² Reading sub-test achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Countries' and Provinces' Reading Achievement, by Sub-Test Scores, Compared to Canada's³ (Continued)

Reading Interpreting

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	546 (3.3)	Australia	527 (3.5)	Austria	508 (2.4)
Finland	555 (2.9)	British Columbia	534 (2.8)	Belgium	512 (3.2)
		Canada	532 (1.6)	Brazil	400 (3.0)
		Ireland	526 (3.3)	Czech Republic	500 (2.4)
		Korea	525 (2.3)	Denmark	494 (2.4)
		Manitoba	526 (3.3)	France	506 (2.7)
		New Zealand	526 (2.7)	Germany	488 (2.5)
		Ontario	529 (3.3)	Greece	475 (4.5)
		Quebec	538 (3.0)	Hungary	480 (3.8)
		Saskatchewan	525 (2.6)	Iceland	514 (1.4)
				Italy	489 (2.6)
				Latvia	459 (4.9)
				Liechtenstein	484 (4.5)
				Luxembourg	446 (1.6)
				Japan	518 (5.0)
				Mexico	419 (2.9)
				New Brunswick	500 (1.7)
				Newfoundland	512 (2.7)
				Norway	505 (2.8)
				Nova Scotia	517 (2.4)
				Poland	482 (4.3)
				Portugal	473 (4.3)
				Prince Edward Island	513 (2.5)
				Russian Federation	468 (4.0)
				Spain	491 (2.6)
				Sweden	522 (2.1)
				Switzerland	496 (4.2)
				United Kingdom	514 (2.5)
				United States	505 (7.1)

³ Reading sub-test achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Countries' and Provinces' Reading Achievement, by Sub-Test Scores, Compared to Canada's⁴ (Continued)

Reading Reflecting

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	559 (3.5)	British Columbia	547 (2.8)	Australia	526 (3.4)
		Canada	542 (1.6)	Austria	512 (2.7)
		Ireland	533 (3.1)	Belgium	497 (4.3)
		Manitoba	539 (3.3)	Brazil	417 (3.3)
		Ontario	544 (3.2)	Czech Republic	485 (2.6)
		Quebec	537 (3.1)	Denmark	500 (2.6)
		Saskatchewan	539 (2.6)	Finland	533 (2.7)
		United Kingdom	539 (2.5)	France	496 (2.9)
				Germany	478 (2.9)
				Greece	495 (5.6)
				Hungary	481 (4.3)
				Iceland	501 (1.3)
				Italy	483 (3.1)
				Japan	530 (5.4)
				Korea	526 (2.6)
				Latvia	458 (5.3)
				Liechtenstein	468 (5.7)
				Luxembourg	442 (1.9)
				Mexico	446 (3.7)
				New Brunswick	510 (1.9)
				New Zealand	529 (2.9)
				Newfoundland	529 (2.6)
				Nova Scotia	533 (2.4)
				Norway	506 (3.0)
				Poland	477 (4.7)
				Portugal	480 (4.5)
				Prince Edward Island	528 (2.5)
				Russian Federation	455 (4.0)
				Spain	506 (2.8)
				Sweden	510 (2.3)
				Switzerland	488 (4.8)
				United States	507 (7.1)

⁴ Reading sub-test achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Countries' and Provinces' Mathematics Achievement Compared to Canada's⁵

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	547 (3.3)	Australia	533 (3.5)	Austria	515 (2.5)
Japan	557 (5.5)	British Columbia	534 (2.8)	Belgium	520 (3.9)
Quebec	550 (2.7)	Canada	533 (1.4)	Brazil	334 (3.7)
Korea	547 (2.8)	Finland	536 (2.1)	Czech Republic	498 (2.8)
		Manitoba	533 (3.7)	Denmark	514 (2.4)
		New Zealand	537 (3.1)	France	517 (2.7)
		Saskatchewan	525 (2.9)	Germany	490 (2.5)
		Switzerland	529 (4.4)	Greece	447 (5.6)
		United Kingdom	529 (2.5)	Hungary	488 (4.0)
				Iceland	514 (2.3)
				Ireland	503 (2.7)
				Italy	457 (2.9)
				Latvia	463 (4.5)
				Liechtenstein	514 (7.0)
				Luxembourg	446 (2.0)
				Mexico	387 (3.4)
				New Brunswick	506 (2.2)
				Newfoundland	509 (3.0)
				Norway	499 (2.8)
				Nova Scotia	513 (2.8)
				Ontario	524 (2.9)
				Poland	470 (5.5)
				Portugal	454 (4.1)
				Prince Edward Island	512 (3.7)
				Russian Federation	478 (5.5)
				Spain	476 (3.1)
				Sweden	510 (2.5)
				United States	493 (7.6)

⁵ Mathematics achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Countries' and Provinces' Science Achievement Compared to Canada's⁶

Higher than Canada		Same as Canada		Lower than Canada	
Alberta	546 (3.5)	Australia	528 (3.5)	Austria	519 (2.5)
Finland	538 (2.5)	British Columbia	533 (3.2)	Belgium	496 (4.3)
Japan	550 (5.5)	Canada	529 (1.6)	Brazil	375 (3.3)
Quebec	541 (3.4)	Manitoba	527 (3.6)	Czech Republic	511 (2.4)
Korea	552 (2.7)	Ontario	522 (3.4)	Denmark	481 (2.8)
		New Zealand	528 (2.4)	France	500 (3.2)
		Saskatchewan	522 (3.0)	Germany	487 (2.4)
		United Kingdom	532 (2.7)	Greece	461 (4.9)
				Hungary	496 (4.2)
				Iceland	496 (2.2)
				Ireland	513 (3.2)
				Italy	478 (3.1)
				Latvia	460 (5.6)
				Liechtenstein	476 (7.1)
				Luxembourg	443 (2.3)
				Mexico	422 (3.2)
				New Brunswick	497 (2.3)
				Newfoundland	516 (3.4)
				Norway	500 (2.7)
				Nova Scotia	516 (3.0)
				Poland	483 (5.1)
				Portugal	459 (4.0)
				Prince Edward Island	508 (2.7)
				Russian Federation	460 (4.7)
				Spain	491 (3.0)
				Sweden	512 (2.5)
				Switzerland	496 (4.4)
				United States	499 (7.3)

⁶ Science achievement scale scores are provided for each jurisdiction; standard error statistics are provided in parentheses. The 95% confidence interval for each jurisdiction can be calculated by first multiplying the standard error by 1.96, then adding and subtracting the resulting statistic to and from each reported mean score. This means that we can be 95% sure (19 times out of 20) that the true mean for a given jurisdiction lies within the confidence interval. If the confidence intervals of two jurisdictions overlap, we can conclude there is no significant difference in their achievement scores.

The achievement scale scores and standard error statistics in the above chart are rounded figures. The international mean is 500.

Summary of Results

- Canadian 15-year-old students are part of a cluster of countries near the top in all three domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. Only Finland performed significantly better than Canada in reading; only Korea and Japan in mathematics; and only Finland, Japan and Korea in science.
- Canada's achievement relative to other countries has improved substantially over time. Canada has grown from being an average performer in earlier studies, such as the 1995 TIMSS, to being one of the top performing countries in the 1999 TIMSS and now in the PISA assessments.
- In general, Alberta performed significantly better than Canada in reading; Alberta and Quebec students performed better in mathematics and science.
- Ontario performed the same as Canada in reading and science but performed slightly lower than Canada in mathematics.
- In all countries, including Canada, girls performed substantially better than boys on the reading test. This same trend was found in Ontario.
- Canada, France and Germany were the only countries where small gender differences in mathematics were significant. In these countries, results favoured boys.
- For science achievement, there were no significant differences between girls and boys in any country or province.
- In all provinces except Quebec, students enrolled in minority language education systems performed at a significantly lower level in reading and science than the students in the anglophone majority systems in the same provinces.
- Individual factors such as enjoyment of reading and student's career expectations were positively associated with achievement in all Canadian provinces.
- In all participating countries, students from high socio-economic backgrounds performed better in reading than students from low socio-economic backgrounds. In Canada, however, the performance difference between the two groups was far less pronounced.
- Classroom disruptions were negatively related to reading performance. Students attending classes with fewer disruptions and disciplinary problems performed better than those where disruptions and disciplinary problems were more frequent.

Appendix A

Sample Test Items

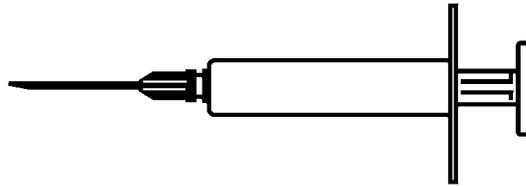
Appendix A provides a few examples of PISA 2000 reading test items. For each item, the sub-skill/sub-domain assessed is given together with the expected/target performance level (of the five levels of reading proficiency). Additional PISA example items can be viewed at the Canadian PISA Website: www.pisa.gc.ca.

Example Item 1

ACOL VOLUNTARY FLU IMMUNISATION PROGRAM

As you are no doubt aware the flu can strike rapidly and extensively during winter. It can leave its victims ill for weeks.

The best way to fight the virus is to have a fit and healthy body. Daily exercise and a diet including plenty of fruit and vegetables are highly recommended to assist the immune

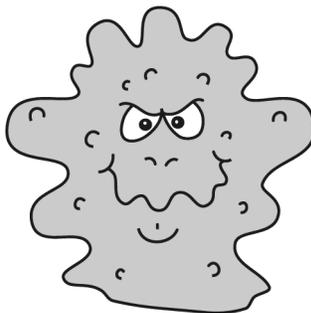


system to fight this invading virus.

ACOL has decided to offer staff the opportunity to be immunised against the flu as an additional way to prevent this insidious virus from spreading amongst us. ACOL has arranged for a nurse to administer the immunisations at ACOL, during a half-day session in work hours in the week of November 13. This program is free and available to all members of staff.

Participation is voluntary. Staff taking up the option will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that they do not have any allergies, and that they understand they may experience minor side effects.

Medical advice indicates that the immunisation does not produce influenza. However, it may cause some side effects such as fatigue, mild fever and tenderness of the arm.



WHO SHOULD BE IMMUNISED?

Anyone interested in being protected against the virus.

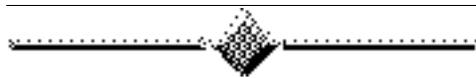
This immunisation is especially recommended for people over the age of 65. But regardless of age, ANYONE who has a chronic debilitating disease, especially cardiac, pulmonary, bronchial or diabetic conditions.

In an office environment ALL staff are at risk of catching the flu.

WHO SHOULD NOT BE IMMUNISED?

Individuals hypersensitive to eggs, people suffering from an acute feverish illness and pregnant women.

Check with your doctor if you are taking any medication or have had a previous reaction to a flu injection.



If you would like to be immunised in the week of November 13 please advise the personnel officer, Fiona McSweeney, by Friday November 3. The date and time will be set according to the availability of the nurse, the number of participants and the time convenient for most staff. If you would like to be immunised for this winter but cannot attend at the arranged time please let Fiona know. An alternative session may be arranged if there are sufficient numbers.

For further information please contact Fiona on ext. 5577.

Enjoy
Good Health

Fiona McSweeney, the personnel officer at a company called ACOL, prepared the information sheet on the previous two pages for ACOL staff. Refer to the information sheet to answer the questions which follow.

Question 1: FLU

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: RETRIEVING, LEVEL 2

Which one of the following describes a feature of the ACOL flu immunisation program?

- A Daily exercise classes will be run during the winter.
- B Immunisations will be given during working hours.
- C A small bonus will be offered to participants.
- D A doctor will give the injections.

Question 2: FLU

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 4

We can talk about the **content** of a piece of writing (what it says).

We can talk about its **style** (the way it is presented).

Fiona wanted the **style** of this information sheet to be friendly and encouraging.

Do you think she succeeded?

Explain your answer by referring in detail to the layout, style of writing, pictures or other graphics.

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Question 3: FLU

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 3

This information sheet suggests that if you want to protect yourself against the flu virus, a flu injection is

- A more effective than exercise and a healthy diet, but more risky.
- B a good idea, but not a substitute for exercise and a healthy diet.
- C as effective as exercise and a healthy diet, and less troublesome.
- D not worth considering if you have plenty of exercise and a healthy diet.

Question 4: FLU

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 5

Part of the information sheet says:

WHO SHOULD BE IMMUNISED?

Anyone interested in being protected against the virus.

After Fiona had circulated the information sheet, a colleague told her that she should have left out the words “Anyone interested in being protected against the virus” because they were misleading.

Do you agree that these words are misleading and should have been left out?

Explain your answer.

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.....

Question 5: FLU

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 4
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According to the information sheet which one of these staff members should contact Fiona?

- A Steve from the store, who does not want to be immunised because he would rather rely on his natural immunity.
- B Julie from sales, who wants to know if the immunisation program is compulsory.
- C Alice from the mailroom who would like to be immunised this winter but is having a baby in two months.
- D Michael from accounts who would like to be immunised but will be on leave in the week of November 13.

Example Item 2

graffiti

I'm simmering with anger as the school wall is cleaned and repainted for the fourth time to get rid of graffiti. Creativity is admirable but people should find ways to express themselves that do not inflict extra costs upon society.

Why do you spoil the reputation of young people by painting graffiti where it's forbidden? Professional artists do not hang their paintings in the streets, do they? Instead they seek funding and gain fame through legal exhibitions.

In my opinion buildings, fences and park benches are works of art in themselves. It's really pathetic to spoil this architecture with graffiti and what's more, the method destroys the ozone layer. Really, I can't understand why these criminal artists bother as their "artistic works" are just removed from sight over and over again.

Helga

There is no accounting for taste. Society is full of communication and advertising. Company logos, shop names. Large intrusive posters on the streets. Are they acceptable? Yes, mostly. Is graffiti acceptable? Some people say yes, some no.

Who pays the price for graffiti? Who is ultimately paying the price for advertisements? Correct. The consumer.

Have the people who put up billboards asked your permission? No. Should graffiti painters do so then? Isn't it all just a question of communication – your own name, the names of gangs and large works of art in the street?

Think about the striped and chequered clothes that appeared in the stores a few years ago. And ski wear. The patterns and colours were stolen directly from the flowery concrete walls. It's quite amusing that these patterns and colours are accepted and admired but that graffiti in the same style is considered dreadful.

Times are hard for art.

Sophia

The two letters on the opposite page come from the Internet and are about graffiti. Graffiti is illegal painting and writing on walls and elsewhere. Refer to the letters to answer the questions below.

Question 6: GRAFFITI

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 2

The purpose of each of these letters is to

- A explain what graffiti is.
- B present an opinion about graffiti.
- C demonstrate the popularity of graffiti.
- D tell people how much is spent removing graffiti.

Question 7: GRAFFITI

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 3

Why does Sophia refer to advertising?

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Question 8: GRAFFITI

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 2

Which of the two letter writers do you agree with? Explain your answer by using **your own words** to refer to what is said in one or both of the letters.

.....

.....

.....

Question 9: GRAFFITI

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 4

We can talk about **what** a letter says (its content).

We can talk about **the way** a letter is written (its style).

Regardless of which letter you agree with, in your opinion, which do you think is the better letter? Explain your answer by referring to **the way** one or both letters is written.

.....

.....

Example Item 3

LAKE CHAD

Figure 1 shows changing levels of Lake Chad, in Saharan North Africa. Lake Chad disappeared completely around 20,000 BC, during the last Ice Age. Around 11,000 BC it reappeared. Today, its level is about the same as it was in AD 1000.

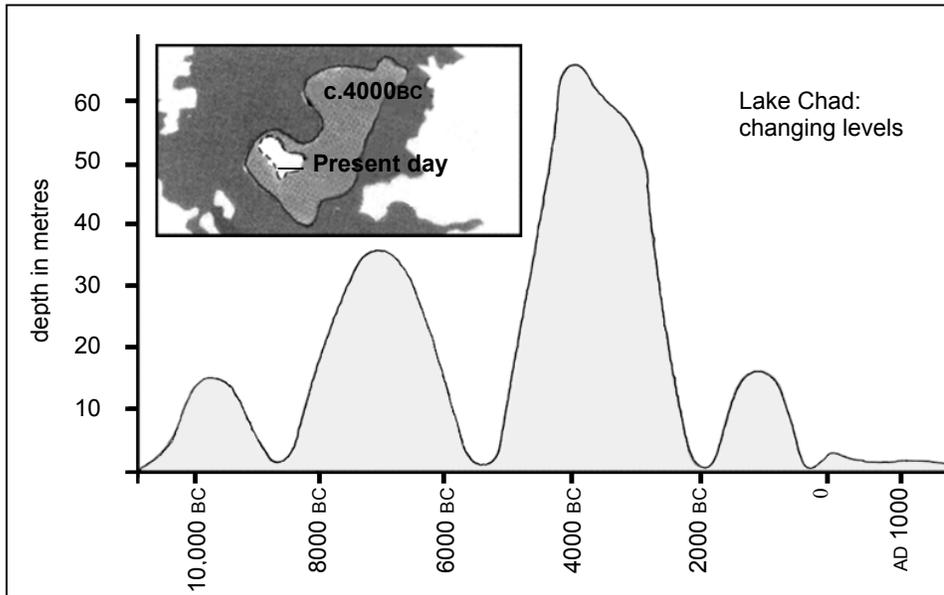


Figure 1

Figure 2 shows Saharan rock art (ancient drawings or paintings found on the walls of caves) and changing patterns of wildlife.

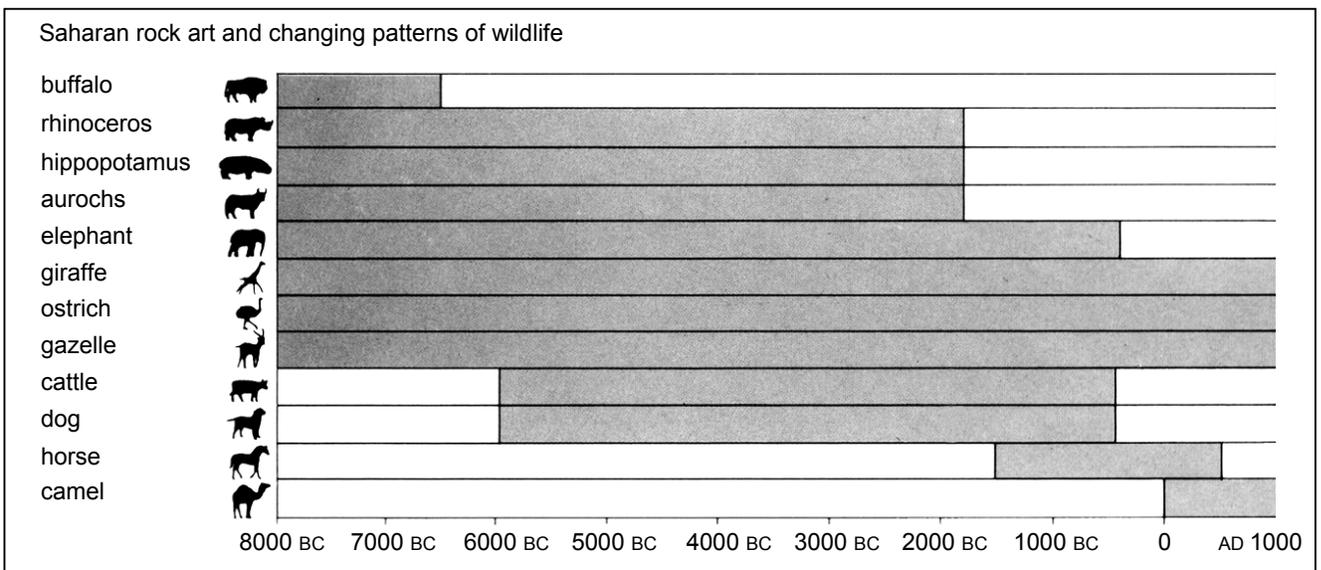


Figure 2

Use the information about Lake Chad on the opposite page to answer the questions below.

Question 10: LAKE CHAD

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: RETRIEVING, LEVEL 2

What is the depth of Lake Chad today?

- A About two metres.
- B About fifteen metres.
- C About fifty metres.
- D It has disappeared completely.
- E The information is not provided.

Question 11: LAKE CHAD

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: RETRIEVING, LEVEL 3

In about which year does the graph in Figure 1 start?

.....

Question 12: LAKE CHAD

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 4

Why has the author chosen to start the graph at this point?

.....

.....

Question 13: LAKE CHAD

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 1

Figure 2 is based on the assumption that

- A the animals in the rock art were present in the area at the time they were drawn.
- B the artists who drew the animals were highly skilled.
- C the artists who drew the animals were able to travel widely.
- D there was no attempt to domesticate the animals which were depicted in the rock art.

Question 14: LAKE CHAD

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 3

For this question you need to draw together information from Figure 1 and Figure 2.

The disappearance of the rhinoceros, hippopotamus and aurochs from Saharan rock art happened

- A at the beginning of the most recent Ice Age.
- B in the middle of the period when Lake Chad was at its highest level.
- C after the level of Lake Chad had been falling for over a thousand years.
- D at the beginning of an uninterrupted dry period.

Example Item 4

THE GIFT

How many days, she wondered, had she sat like this, watching the cold brown water inch up the dissolving bluff. She could just faintly remember the beginning of the rain, driving in across the swamp from the south and beating against the shell of her house. Then the river itself started rising, slowly at first until at last it paused to turn back. From hour to hour it slithered up creeks and ditches and poured over low places. In the night, while she slept, it claimed the road and surrounded her so that she sat alone, her boat gone, the house like a piece of drift lodged on its bluff. Now even against the tarred planks of the supports the waters touched. And still they rose.

As far as she could see, to the treetops where the opposite banks had been, the swamp was an empty sea, awash with sheets of rain, the river lost somewhere in its vastness. Her house with its boat bottom had been built to ride just such a flood, if one ever came, but now it was old. Maybe the boards underneath were partly rotted away. Maybe the cable mooring the house to the great live oak would snap loose and let her go turning downstream, the way her boat had gone.

No one could come now. She could cry out but it would be no use, no one would hear. Down the length and breadth of the swamp others were fighting to save what little they could, maybe even their lives. She had seen a whole house go floating by, so quiet she was reminded of sitting at a funeral. She thought when she saw it she knew whose house it was. It had been bad seeing it drift by, but the owners must have escaped to higher ground. Later, with the rain and darkness pressing in, she had heard a panther scream upriver.

Now the house seemed to shudder around her like something alive. She reached out to catch a lamp as it tilted off the table by her bed and put it between her feet to hold it steady. Then creaking and groaning with effort the house struggled up from the clay, floated free, bobbing like a cork and swung out slowly with the pull of the river. She gripped the edge of the bed. Swaying from side to side, the house moved to the length of its mooring. There was a jolt and a complaining of old timbers and then a pause. Slowly the current released it and let it swing back, rasping across its resting place. She caught her breath and sat for a long time feeling the slow pendulous sweeps. The dark sifted down through the incessant rain, and, head on arm, she slept holding on to the bed.

Sometime in the night the cry awoke her, a sound so anguished she was on her feet before she was awake. In the dark she stumbled against the bed. It came from out there, from the river. She could hear something moving, something large that made a dredging, sweeping sound. It could be another house. Then it hit, not head on but glancing and sliding down the length of her house. It was a tree. She listened as the branches and leaves cleared themselves and went on downstream, leaving only the rain and the lappings of the flood, sounds so constant now that they seemed a part of the silence. Huddled on the bed, she was almost asleep again when another cry sounded, this time so close it could have been in the room. Staring into the dark, she eased back on the bed until her hand caught the cold shape of the rifle. Then crouched on the pillow, she cradled the gun across her knees. "Who's there?" she called.

The answer was a repeated cry, but less shrill, tired sounding, then the empty silence closing in. She drew back against the bed. Whatever was there she could hear it moving about on the porch. Planks creaked and she could distinguish the sounds of objects being knocked over. There was a scratching on the wall as if it would tear its way in. She knew now what it was, a big cat, deposited by the uprooted tree that had passed her. It had come with the flood, a gift.

Unconsciously she pressed her hand against her face and along her tightened throat.
50 The rifle rocked across her knees. She had never seen a panther in her life. She had
heard about them from others and heard their cries, like suffering, in the distance. The
cat was scratching on the wall again, rattling the window by the door. As long as she
guarded the window and kept the cat hemmed in by the wall and water, caged, she
would be all right. Outside, the animal paused to rake his claws across the rusted outer
55 screen. Now and then, it whined and growled.

When the light filtered down through the rain at last, coming like another kind of dark,
she was still sitting on the bed, stiff and cold. Her arms, used to rowing on the river,
ached from the stillness of holding the rifle. She had hardly allowed herself to move for
fear any sound might give strength to the cat. Rigid, she swayed with the movement of
60 the house. The rain still fell as if it would never stop. Through the grey light, finally, she
could see the rain-pitted flood and far away the cloudy shape of drowned treetops. The
cat was not moving now. Maybe he had gone away. Laying the gun aside she slipped off
the bed and moved without a sound to the window. It was still there, crouched at the
edge of the porch, staring up at the live oak, the mooring of her house, as if gauging its
65 chances of leaping to an overhanging branch. It did not seem so frightening now that
she could see it, its coarse fur napped into twigs, its sides pinched and ribs showing. It
would be easy to shoot it where it sat, its long tail whipping back and forth. She was
moving back to get the gun when it turned around. With no warning, no crouch or
tensing of muscles, it sprang at the window, shattering a pane of glass. She fell back,
70 stifling a scream, and taking up the rifle, she fired through the window. She could not see
the panther now, but she had missed. It began to pace again. She could glimpse its
head and the arch of its back as it passed the window.

Shivering, she pulled back on the bed and lay down. The lulling constant sound of the
river and the rain, the penetrating chill, drained away her purpose. She watched the
75 window and kept the gun ready. After waiting a long while she moved again to look. The
panther had fallen asleep, its head on its paws, like a housecat. For the first time since
the rains began she wanted to cry, for herself, for all the people, for everything in the
flood. Sliding down on the bed, she pulled the quilt around her shoulders. She should
have got out when she could, while the roads were still open or before her boat was
80 washed away. As she rocked back and forth with the sway of the house a deep ache in
her stomach reminded her she hadn't eaten. She couldn't remember for how long. Like
the cat, she was starving. Easing into the kitchen, she made a fire with the few
remaining sticks of wood. If the flood lasted she would have to burn the chair, maybe
even the table itself. Taking down the remains of a smoked ham from the ceiling, she cut
85 thick slices of the brownish red meat and placed them in a skillet. The smell of the frying
meat made her dizzy. There were stale biscuits from the last time she had cooked and
she could make some coffee. There was plenty of water.

While she was cooking her food, she almost forgot about the cat until it whined. It was
hungry too. "Let me eat," she called to it, "and then I'll see to *you*." And she laughed
90 under her breath. As she hung the rest of the ham back on its nail the cat growled a
deep throaty rumble that made her hand shake.

After she had eaten, she went to the bed again and took up the rifle. The house had
risen so high now it no longer scraped across the bluff when it swung back from the
river. The food had warmed her. She could get rid of the cat while light still hung in the
rain. She crept slowly to the window. It was still there, mewling, beginning to move about
95 the porch. She stared at it a long time, unafraid. Then without thinking what she was
doing, she laid the gun aside and started around the edge of the bed to the kitchen.
Behind her the cat was moving, fretting. She took down what was left of the ham and
making her way back across the swaying floor to the window she shoved it through the
100 broken pane. On the other side there was a hungry snarl and something like a shock

passed from the animal to her. Stunned by what she had done, she drew back to the bed. She could hear the sounds of the panther tearing at the meat. The house rocked around her.

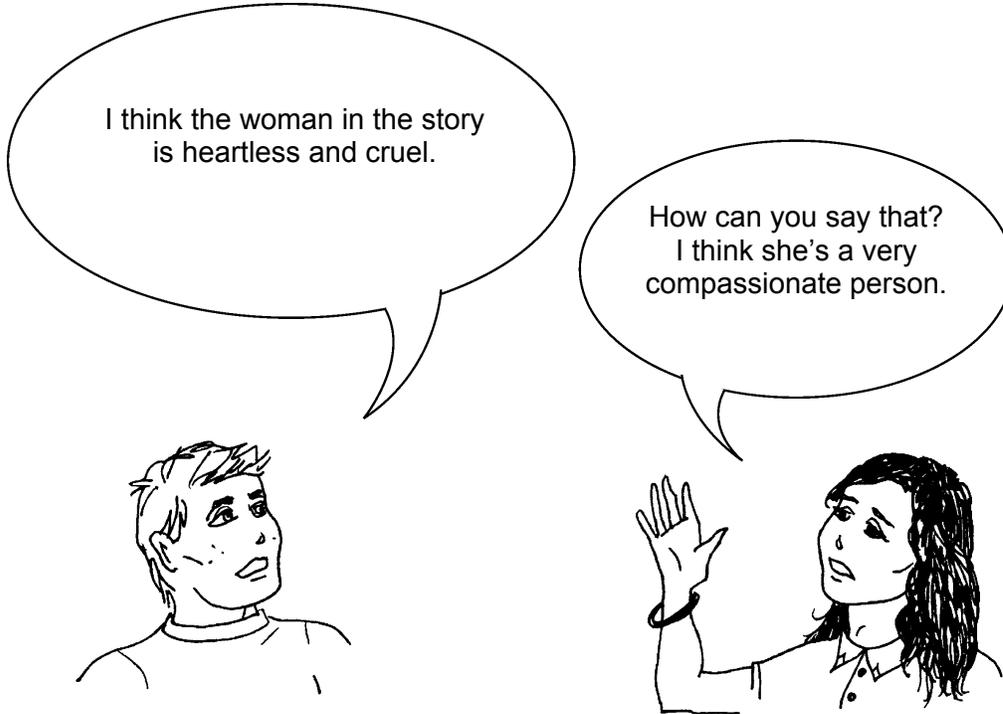
105 The next time she awoke she knew at once that everything had changed. The rain had stopped. She felt for the movement of the house but it no longer swayed on the flood. Drawing her door open, she saw through the torn screen a different world. The house was resting on the bluff where it always had. A few feet down, the river still raced on in a torrent, but it no longer covered the few feet between the house and the live oak. And the cat was gone. Leading from the porch to the live oak and doubtless on into the
110 swamp were tracks, indistinct and already disappearing into the soft mud. And there on the porch, gnawed to whiteness, was what was left of the ham.

Use the story "The Gift" on the previous three pages to answer the questions which follow. (Note that line numbers are given in the margin of the story to help you find parts which are referred to in the questions.)

Question 15: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 3

Here is part of a conversation between two people who read "The Gift":



Give evidence from the story to show how each of these speakers could justify their point of view.

Speaker 1

.....

Speaker 2

.....

Question 16: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 2

What is the woman’s situation at the beginning of the story?

- A She is too weak to leave the house after days without food.
- B She is defending herself against a wild animal.
- C Her house has been surrounded by flood waters.
- D A flooded river has swept her house away.

Question 17: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 5

Here are some of the early references to the panther in the story.

“the cry awoke her, a sound so anguished...” (line 32)

“The answer was a repeated cry, but less shrill, tired sounding...” (line 43)

“She had...heard their cries, like suffering, in the distance.” (lines 50–51)

Considering what happens in the rest of the story, why do you think the writer chooses to introduce the panther with these descriptions?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Question 18: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: RETRIEVING, LEVEL 1

“Then creaking and groaning with effort the house struggled up...” (line 24)

What happened to the house in this part of the story?

- A It fell apart.
- B It began to float.
- C It crashed into the oak tree.
- D It sank to the bottom of the river.

Question 19: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 3

What does the story suggest was the woman's reason for feeding the panther?

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.....

.....

.....

Question 20: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: INTERPRETING, LEVEL 4

When the woman says, "and then I'll see to *you*" (line 89) she means that she is

- A sure that the cat won't hurt her.
- B trying to frighten the cat.
- C intending to shoot the cat.
- D planning to feed the cat.

Question 21: GIFT

SUB-DOMAIN ASSESSED: REFLECTING, LEVEL 5

Do you think that the last sentence of "The Gift" is an appropriate ending?

Explain your answer, demonstrating your understanding of how the last sentence relates to the story's meaning.

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Appendix B

OECD PISA (2000) CURRICULUM-TEST MATCH

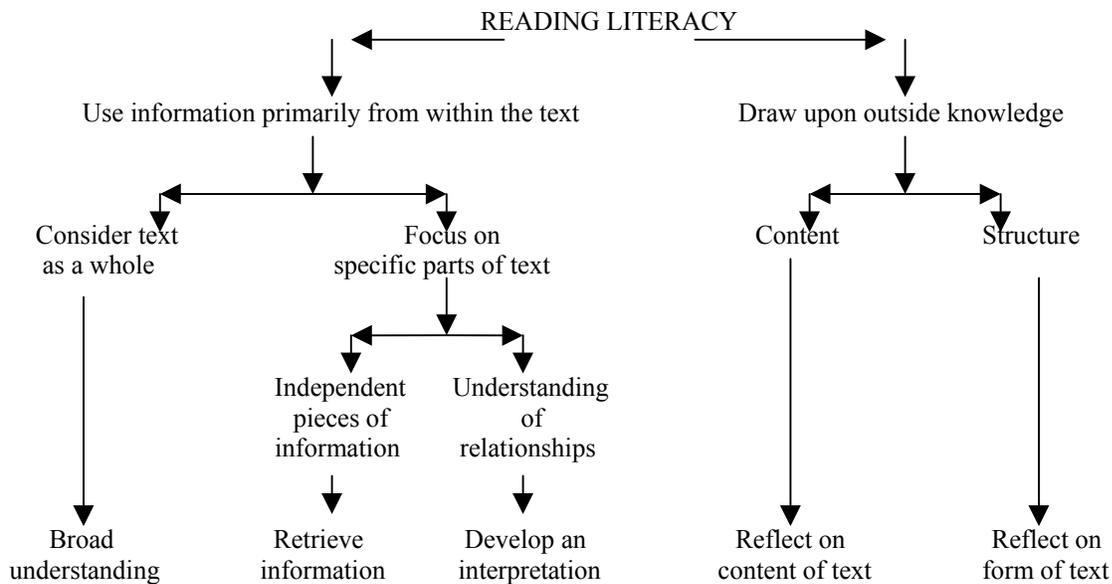
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an assessment that was administered to 15-year-old students in 32 countries in the year 2000. The Canadian sample consisted of approximately 30 000 students, with Ontario's contingent consisting of approximately 4000 students.

The conceptual framework on which PISA 2000 is based presents three domains of "literacy": reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy. For the PISA 2000 study, reading literacy accounted for 60% of the test items, while mathematics and science each accounted for 20% of the test items. In the next two rounds of PISA, mathematics and science will in turn consist of 60% of the test items.

The curriculum-test match that follows is based on the Ontario Grade 10 reading curriculum. The test items found to relate to the Grade 9 and 11 reading curriculums have also been identified.

PISA defines reading literacy as follows: "The capacity to understand, use and reflect on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society."

The PISA assessment is organized to evaluate the three dimensions of reading literacy. The first relates to process skills, which are aptitudes relating to performing different kinds of reading tasks, such as forming a broad general understanding, retrieving specific information, developing an interpretation or reflecting on the content or form of a text. The second dimension focuses on knowledge and understanding in reading different kinds of text—continuous text, classified by type, and documents, classified by structure. The third dimension refers to the context of application when reading texts written for different situations.



Process: Reading Tasks

PISA assesses students' abilities to perform a variety of reading tasks encountered in "authentic" reading situations (i.e., in real life). To this end, the assessment measures five aspects of understanding a text.

1. *Forming a broad, general understanding*

This requires the reader to consider the text as a whole or in a broad perspective. Students may be asked to demonstrate initial understanding by identifying the main topic of the text, to explain the purpose of a map or graph, to match a piece of text to a question about the broad purpose of the text, or to focus on more than one specific reference in the text and to deduce the theme from the repetition of a particular category of information. Selecting the main idea implies establishing a hierarchy among ideas. Such a task indicates whether the student can distinguish between key ideas and minor details or if they can recognize the summary of the main theme in a sentence or title.

2. *Retrieving information*

In the course of daily life, readers often need a particular piece of information, whether it be a telephone number, a time on a schedule, or a particular fact to support or refute a claim. To retrieve information effectively, readers must scan, search, locate and select relevant information. Students have to identify the essential elements of a message: e.g., character, time and setting. They must match information given in the question with information in the text and use this to find the information asked for. This may require discriminating between two similar pieces of information.

3. *Developing an interpretation*

This requires readers to extend their initial impressions, to process information in a logical manner to develop a more specific or complete understanding of what they have read. Tasks that assess this aspect include comparing and contrasting information, drawing inferences about different sources of information and identifying and listing supportive evidence in order to infer the author’s intent.

4. *Reflecting on the content of a text*

This requires readers to relate information found in a text to their own knowledge of the world or to information found in other texts in the assessment or explicitly provided in the question. Typical assessment tasks include providing evidence or arguments from outside the text, assessing the relevance of particular pieces of information or evidence, drawing comparisons with moral or aesthetic values and identifying information that might strengthen the author’s argument.

5. *Reflecting on the form of a text*

Tasks in this category require readers to consider a text objectively and to evaluate its quality and appropriateness. Knowledge of text structure, genre and register play an important role in these tasks. Students are required to detect nuances in language, determine the utility of a particular text for a specified purpose, identify and evaluate the author's use of style, or to reflect and comment on her or his purpose and attitude.

Percentage of PISA Reading Literacy Assessment by Aspect of Reading Literacy

Aspect	% of Assessment
Forming a broad understanding	20
Retrieving information	20
Developing an interpretation	30
Reflecting on content	15
Reflecting on form	15
Total	100

Content: Types of Text

The PISA reading assessment makes a distinction between continuous and non-continuous texts. Continuous-text types are all in a standard prose form and are classified according to the author's purpose. The following five continuous-text types are used in PISA.

1. *Description*

Refers to properties of objects in space and provides an answer to “what” questions.

2. *Narration*

Refers to properties of objects in time and provides an answer to “when” or “in what sequence” questions.

3. *Exposition*
Presents information as composite concepts or mental constructs or as those elements into which concepts or mental constructs can be analyzed. The text provides an explanation of how the component elements interrelate and often answers “how” questions.
4. *Argumentation*
Argumentation presents propositions as to the relationships among different concepts or points of view. Argument texts often answer “why” questions.
5. *Instruction (sometimes called injunction)*
Provides directions on what to do and includes procedures, rules, regulations and statutes specifying certain behaviours.

Non-continuous text types vary in form and are thus classified according to their structure.

1. *Forms*
These structured and formatted texts request the reader to respond to specific questions in specified ways (e.g., applications).
2. *Calls and advertisements*
The purpose of these documents is to persuade the reader; they offer something and request attention and action at the same time (e.g., advertisements, invitations and warnings).
3. *Charts and graphs*
They are iconic representations of data used to display numerical and tabular information in scientific documents, journals and newspapers.
4. *Diagrams*
They often accompany technical descriptions, expository and instructive texts (e.g., how to assemble an object).
5. *Tables*
These are row and column matrices such as timetables and spreadsheets.
6. *Maps*
They indicate geographic relationships between places or distances between places.

Percentage of PISA Reading Literacy Assessment by Type of Texts

Text Type	% of Assessment
<i>Continuous Texts</i>	
Descriptive	13
Narrative	13
Expository	22
Argumentative/Persuasive	13
Injunctive	5
Total Continuous Texts	66
<hr/>	
<i>Non-continuous Texts</i>	
Forms	3
Advertisements	2
Charts/Graphs	12
Diagrams	3
Tables	11
Maps	3
Total Non-continuous Texts	34
Overall Total	100

Context: Purpose of Text

PISA distinguishes four types of reading situation: reading for private use, reading for public use, reading for work and reading for education.

1. *Reading for private use*

This activity is carried out to satisfy a person's own interests, both practical and intellectual, and also to develop and maintain connections to other people through personal letters, fiction, biographies and a variety of informational texts.

2. *Reading for public use*

This form of reading is carried out to participate in the activities of the larger society and includes the reading of official documents or information about public events.

3. *Reading for work*

Although this activity may not be immediately required by 15-year-olds, two reasons are invoked to include such situations in PISA. First, reading in such situations is usually closely associated with the accomplishment of some immediate task. Second, some reading abilities will help to equip students for the world of work.

4. *Reading for education*

This activity is normally involved with acquiring information as part of a larger learning task. A teacher usually assigns reading material specifically designed for the purpose of instruction.

Percentage of PISA Reading Literacy Assessment by Purpose of Text

Purpose of Text	% of Assessment
Personal	28
Public	28
Work	16
Education	28
Total	100

Format of Test Questions

Just over half (55 percent) of the reading literacy assessment is based on multiple-choice items. The remaining 45 percent requires students to construct their own responses. In the latter category, 65 percent of the tasks require reflection on content and form, and 35 percent require students to form broad understandings, retrieve information and develop interpretations.

The following charts indicate how the OECD PISA (2000) reading test items relate to the Ontario curriculum, primarily at the Grade 10 level but also Grade 9 and 11.

OECD PISA (2000) Test Items and Their Relationship to the Ontario Curriculum

Ontario Grade 10 Reading Curriculum Content (Academic and Applied)	PISA Item Number
UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF TEXTS	
1. Describe information, ideas, opinions and themes from different cultures and historical periods in a range of genres:	
novels	
plays	
short stories	R119Q09A
poetry	R086Q07
opinion pieces	
reports	R101Q02 R102Q06 R110Q01
short essays	
full-length non-fiction works	
newspapers	R102Q01
biographies	
magazines	R101Q01
manuals	R104Q01
reference materials	
2. Select and read a range of texts for different purposes with an emphasis on	
recognizing the elements of literary genres	R245Q01 R245Q02
recognizing the organization of informational material	R070Q07 R09Q03 R227Q03
evaluating print materials as sources of information	R070Q04 R102Q04A R220Q01
comparing personal ideas and values with those in texts	R081Q06A R061Q05 R120Q06
3. a) Select and use a variety of reading strategies (such as, previewing a text, predicting main ideas or outcomes) before, during and after reading to understand texts.	
3. b) Use prior knowledge and personal experiences to	
interpret and assess ideas and information	R21901-05 R225Q02 R093Q04 R099Q04B

4. Use relevant, significant, and explicit information and ideas from texts to	
support interpretations	R101404 R10Q05 R091Q07B R119Q09B R076Q04 R083Q06 R100Q0045 R239Q001 R239Q02
support the explanation of a theme (poem/short story)	
select quotations from an essay that best communicate the author's arguments	
5. Present sufficient significant evidence from a text to support opinions and judgements.	R238Q02 R077Q05 R055Q02 R055Q03 R055Q05
6. Explain how the values and perspectives of readers might influence their responses to a text and interpretations of it.	R067Q04 R061Q05
7. Explain how historical or cultural contexts shape the information and ideas in a text.	R067Q05
UNDERSTANDING THE FORMS OF TEXTS	
1. a) Use knowledge of elements of the novel such as	
plot	
subplot	
characterization	
setting	
conflict	
theme	
point of view	
cultural and historical contexts	R061Q01
language	R061Q04
1. b) Use knowledge of elements of the novel to	
understand and interpret examples of the genre	
2. a) Use knowledge of elements of poetry such as	
stanza	
forms	
rhyme	
rhythm	
punctuation	
free verse	R086Q05
imagery	R086Q05
sound devices	
2. b) Use knowledge of elements of poetry to	
understand and interpret examples of the genre	

3. a) Use knowledge of elements of magazines and reports such as	
headlines	
editorials	R236Q01
regular columns	
letters to the editor	R081Q01
advertisements	R234Q01 R234Q02
foldouts	R241Q01 R241Q02
cover art	
table of contents	
layout	
columns	R111Q06B
headings	
subheadings	
3. b) Use knowledge of elements of magazines and reports to understand and interpret texts in the genre	
4. a) Use knowledge of elements of opinion pieces such as	
overt statement of a position or opinion	R101Q03
type of diction	
tone	
paragraphing	
transition words and phrases	
selective supporting detail	R081Q01 R120Q01 R120Q03
allusions	
appeals to authority	
4. b) Use knowledge of elements of opinion pieces to understand and interpret examples of the genre	
UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE	
1. Compare the use of diction and syntax in texts to	
explain how these elements enhance the theme	R070Q04
explain how these elements enhance the message	R081Q06B
2. a) Explain how authors use stylistic devices such as	
varied sentence structure	R111Q02B R110Q06
allusion	R119Q07 R220Q05
contrast	
hyperbole	
understatement	R086Q04
onomatopoeia	R119Q06
oxymoron	
irony	R119Q04
alliteration	
symbol	

2. b) Explain how authors use stylistic devices to	
achieve particular effects in their writing	
communicate ideas	R11Q02B
communicate emotions	R119Q07 R220Q04
communicate information	
3. a) Explain how authors and editors use design elements such as	
typography	R111Q02B R077Q03
layout	R227Q04 R077Q03
headings	R077Q03
3. b) Explain how authors and editors use design elements to	
help communicate ideas	
clarify and enforce meaning	

**OECD PISA (2000) Test Items and Their Relationship
to the Ontario Curriculum**

Ontario Grade 9 Reading Curriculum Content (Academic and Applied)	PISA Item Number
UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF TEXTS	
1. Locate information from texts such as	
brochures	R237Q01 R237Q03 R246Q01-2
charts/graphs/forms	R040Q03A R102Q05 R219Q01A R122Q01-02 R122Q01-03 R225Q01 R076Q03
diagrams	R238Q01 R083Q02-03 R091Q05 R088Q01-03
2. a) Use knowledge of elements of the short story such as	
plot	
subplot	
characterization	
setting	
conflict	
theme	
mood	R119Q05
point of view	
2. b) Use knowledge of elements of the short story to	
understand and interpret examples of the genre	

UNDERSTANDING THE FORMS OF TEXTS	
1. a) Use knowledge of elements of drama such as	
plot	
subplot	R216Q01
character development and revelation	R216Q06
conflict	
dialogue	
stage directions	R216Q02 R216Q03
set design	R216Q04
1. b) Use knowledge of elements of drama to	
understand and interpret examples of the genre	
2. a) Use knowledge of elements of newspapers such as	
headlines	
leads	
titles	
subtitles	
photographs	
2. b) Use knowledge of elements of newspapers to	
understand and interpret texts in the genre	R236Q02

**OECD PISA (2000) Test Items and Their Relationship
to the Ontario Curriculum**

Ontario Grade 11 Reading Curriculum Content (Academic and Applied)	PISA Item Number
UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF TEXTS	
1. Analyze the thinking and responses of a fictional character.	R119Q08 R061Q01
UNDERSTANDING THE FORMS OF TEXTS	
1. a) Use knowledge of the elements and organizational patterns of informational texts such as charts and graphs	R040Q03B
b) Use knowledge of the elements and organizational patterns of informational texts to understand and interpret information	

Conclusion

The foregoing information suggests that the OECD/PISA (2000) reading test items reflect the general categories of curriculum content found in the Grade 10 academic and applied curricula. A few items, as indicated, reflect the curricula that immediately precede or follow the Grade 10 curriculum.

PISA items that assess reading abilities pertaining to formal literary genres (novels, poetry) and the study of stylistic effects are more strongly reflected in the academic level of the Ontario curriculum. The reading of non-continuous texts (charts/graphs) and more practical texts appears in the Grade 9 applied level of curriculum and are not specifically mentioned in the academic curriculum.

While it can be said that the PISA test items assess abilities reflected in the Ontario reading curriculum, students enrolled in the academic or applied levels do not necessarily receive the same instruction and at the same intensity.

The OECD/PISA assessment strives to evaluate the reading abilities of students from a variety of countries where socio-economic conditions have a different impact on the quality and goals of education. Therefore, the reading component of the PISA 2000 assessment tends to be directed more towards practical than literary reading tasks to accommodate those countries where secondary education leads directly to the workplace. This is in contrast to the G-8 countries, where secondary school education is, to a wide extent, followed by post-secondary studies. This explains why the reading abilities pertaining to the literary content of the Ontario curriculum are not as widely evaluated in this assessment.