Summary descriptions for the seven levels of proficiency in reading

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| 6     | 698.32            | 0.8% of students across the OECD and 1.8% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 6 on the reading scale | • Requires the reader to make multiple inferences, comparisons and contrasts that are both detailed and precise.  
• Requires demonstration of a full and detailed understanding of one or more texts and may involve integrating information from more than one text.  
• May require the reader to deal with unfamiliar ideas, in the presence of prominent competing information, and to generate abstract categories for interpretations.  
• Reflect and evaluate tasks may require the reader to hypothesize about or critically evaluate a complex text on an unfamiliar topic, taking into account multiple criteria or perspectives, and applying sophisticated understandings from beyond the text.  
• Access and retrieve tasks: there is limited data about these tasks at this level, but it appears that a salient condition is precision of analysis and fine attention to detail that is inconspicuous in the texts. |
| 5     | 625.61            | 7.7% of students across the OECD and 12.8% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 5 on the reading scale | • For all aspects of reading, tasks at this level typically involve dealing with concepts that are contrary to expectations.  
• Retrieving tasks require the reader to locate and organize several pieces of deeply embedded information, inferring which information in the text is relevant.  
• Reflective tasks require critical evaluation or hypothesis, drawing on specialized knowledge. Both interpretative and reflective tasks require a full and detailed understanding of a text whose content or form is unfamiliar. |
| 4     | 552.89            | 28.6% of students across the OECD and 39.6% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 4 on the reading scale | • Retrieving information tasks require the reader to locate and organize several pieces of embedded information.  
• Some interpretive tasks at this level require interpreting the meaning of nuances of language in a section of text by taking into account the text as a whole. Other interpretative tasks require understanding and applying categories in an unfamiliar context.  
• Reflective tasks at this level require readers to use formal or public knowledge to hypothesize about or critically evaluate a text. Readers must demonstrate an accurate understanding of long or complex texts whose content or form may be unfamiliar. |
| 3     | 480.18            | 57.4% of students across the OECD and 69.6% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 3 on the reading scale | • Tasks at this level require the reader to locate, and in some cases recognize the relationship between, several pieces of information that must meet multiple conditions.  
• Interpretative tasks at this level require the reader to integrate several parts of a text in order to identify a main idea, understand a relationship or construe the meaning of a word or phrase. They need to take into account many features in comparing, contrasting or categorizing. Often the required information is not prominent or there is much competing information; or there are other text obstacles, such as ideas that are contrary to expectation or negatively worded.  
• Reflective tasks at this level may require connections, comparisons, and explanations, or they may require the reader to evaluate a feature of the text. Some reflective tasks require readers to demonstrate a fine understanding of the text in relation to familiar, everyday knowledge. Other tasks do not require detailed text comprehension but require the reader to draw on less common knowledge. |
| 2     | 407.47            | 81.4% of students across the OECD and 89.8% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 2 on the reading scale | • Some tasks at this level require the reader to locate one or more pieces of information, which may need to be inferred and may need to meet several conditions.  
• Others tasks require recognizing the main idea in a text, understanding relationships, or construing meaning within a limited part of the text when the information is not prominent and the reader must make low level inferences.  
• Tasks at this level may involve comparisons or contrasts based on a single feature in the text.  
• Typical reflective tasks at this level require readers to make a comparison or several connections between the text and outside knowledge, by drawing on personal experience and attitudes. |
| 1a    | 334.75            | 94.4% of students across the OECD and 97.7% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 1a on the reading scale | • Tasks at this level require the reader to locate one or more independent pieces of explicitly stated information; to recognize the main theme or author’s purpose in a text about a familiar topic, or to make a simple connection between information in the text and common, everyday knowledge.  
• Typically the required information in the text is prominent and there is little, if any, competing information.  
• The reader is explicitly directed to consider relevant factors in the task and in the text. |
| 1b    | 262.04            | 98.9% of students across the OECD and 99.7% in Canada can perform tasks at least at Level 1b on the reading scale | • Tasks at this level require the reader to locate a single piece of explicitly stated information in a prominent position in a short, syntactically simple text with a familiar context and text type, such as a narrative or a simple list.  
• The text typically provides support to the reader, such as repetition of information, pictures or familiar symbols.  
• There is minimal competing information. In tasks requiring interpretation the reader may need to make simple connections between adjacent pieces of information. |