

Table 1.3

Summary descriptions for the seven levels of proficiency in reading

Level	Lower score limit	Percentage of students able to perform tasks at this level or above	Characteristics of tasks
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.