

## Appendix B

### Examining the Similarities and Differences Between PIRLS and NAEP

Shortly after the release of this report, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will be releasing results for the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth-grade reading assessment. In anticipation of expected questions about these two studies, NCES convened an expert panel to compare various aspects of the content of the PIRLS and NAEP assessments. This involved a close examination of how PIRLS and NAEP define reading, the texts used as the basis for the assessments, and the reading processes required of students in each. The similarities and differences between the two are described here.

#### Similarities

- PIRLS and NAEP define “reading” similarly, as a constructive process.
- PIRLS and NAEP assess reading for a literary experience and reading to be informed.
- PIRLS and NAEP call for students to develop interpretations, make connections across text, and evaluate aspects of what they have read.
- PIRLS and NAEP use literary passages drawn from children’s storybooks and informational texts as the basis for the reading assessment.
- PIRLS and NAEP use multiple-choice and constructed-response questions with similar distributions of these types of questions.

	<b>PIRLS</b>	<b>NAEP</b>
Multiple Choice:	47 percent	45 percent
Short Constructed Response:	44 percent	45 percent
Extended Constructed Response:	8 percent	10 percent

#### Differences

- PIRLS reading passages are, on average, about half the length of the NAEP reading passages: 547 words vs. 1,000 words.
- Results from the Fry Readability Analysis suggest that the PIRLS reading passages are easier than the NAEP passages (grade 5.0 in PIRLS vs. grade 6.9 in NAEP).
- According to Lexile score analysis, the PIRLS passages were determined to be appropriate for the third to fourth grade, and the NAEP passages were determined to be appropriate for the fourth to fifth grade.
- PIRLS calls for more text-based interpretation than NAEP. NAEP places more emphasis on having students take what they have read and connect to other readings or knowledge and to critically evaluate what they have read.