

Identifying information from text

The first reading area that students from PILNA 2021 had difficulty with was identifying information from text.

These questions require students to use comprehension strategies to interpret information from texts of various complexity in content and structure.

Example question

An example of one of these questions and how students responded to it is provided. This question is a simple example for this area, but a substantial proportion of students from PILNA 2021 did not correctly answer it.

Figure DEF#4 / Sample question: Identifying information

? Question:

Which is the **box**? Circle the correct picture.

A.



B.



C.



D.



Note: Any form of selection is acceptable, *circle, underline, tick or circle the letter or picture only.*

Learning outcome:

This is a single word item where students were required to select the image that correctly matches the single word label given in the stem.

In most cases, the single word labels are simple nouns or verbs while the images are familiar to students.

Responses:

✓ Correct response:

Option C

Level of difficulty:



Expected performance:

We would expect the majority of Year 4 and Year 6 students to answer this type of question successfully.

The question item is asked of both Year 4 and Year 6 students.

This question is on Level 2 of the literacy proficiency scale, which is below both the minimum levels of proficiency expected from Year 4 (Level 4) and Year 6 (Level 5).



Performance analysis:

Code	Descriptor	Score	Year 4		Year 6	
0	Distractor	0	<div><div></div></div>	0.1 %	<div><div></div></div>	0.1 %
1	Distractor	0	<div><div></div></div>	1.6 %	<div><div></div></div>	1.7 %
2	Distractor	0	<div><div></div></div>	7.1 %	<div><div></div></div>	9.8 %
3	Selected correct image	1	<div><div></div></div>	84.6 %	<div><div></div></div>	83.3 %
4	Distractor	0	<div><div></div></div>	2.4 %	<div><div></div></div>	1.9 %
9	No response/blank	0	<div><div></div></div>	3.5 %	<div><div></div></div>	3.0 %

This question was below the minimum expected reading proficiency level for both year four and year six students. Most students were expected to answer this correctly, but only 85% of year four students and 84% of year six students managed to.

There may be a need to support the fundamental reading comprehension abilities of many students. In most cases, these types of questions required students to recognise only simple nouns or verbs and match these to images that should be familiar. This question shows that many students have a limited ability to recognise and understand simple words.

How can teachers support learning in this area?

Addressing how these types of questions are taught in schools may increase student performance in future. Below, SPC present some ways that teachers might support learning in this area.

Overall, teachers are encouraged to provide teaching interventions that have students locate information using a direct word to image match in short, highly familiar texts.

1. Create activities related to scanning a text for a key word and finding relevant information.
2. Support students in their understanding of a text, taking them through the steps involved in clearly understanding a question, locating the relevant information, and writing the correct response.



3. Practice producing selection type/multiple choice items, asking students to come up with a question that includes a word match from the text and produce three or four plausible options – one that is a correct response and others that are plausible misreading. This takes some time but encourages students to explore the text more deeply and identify relevant information, as well as information that distracts from the correct response.