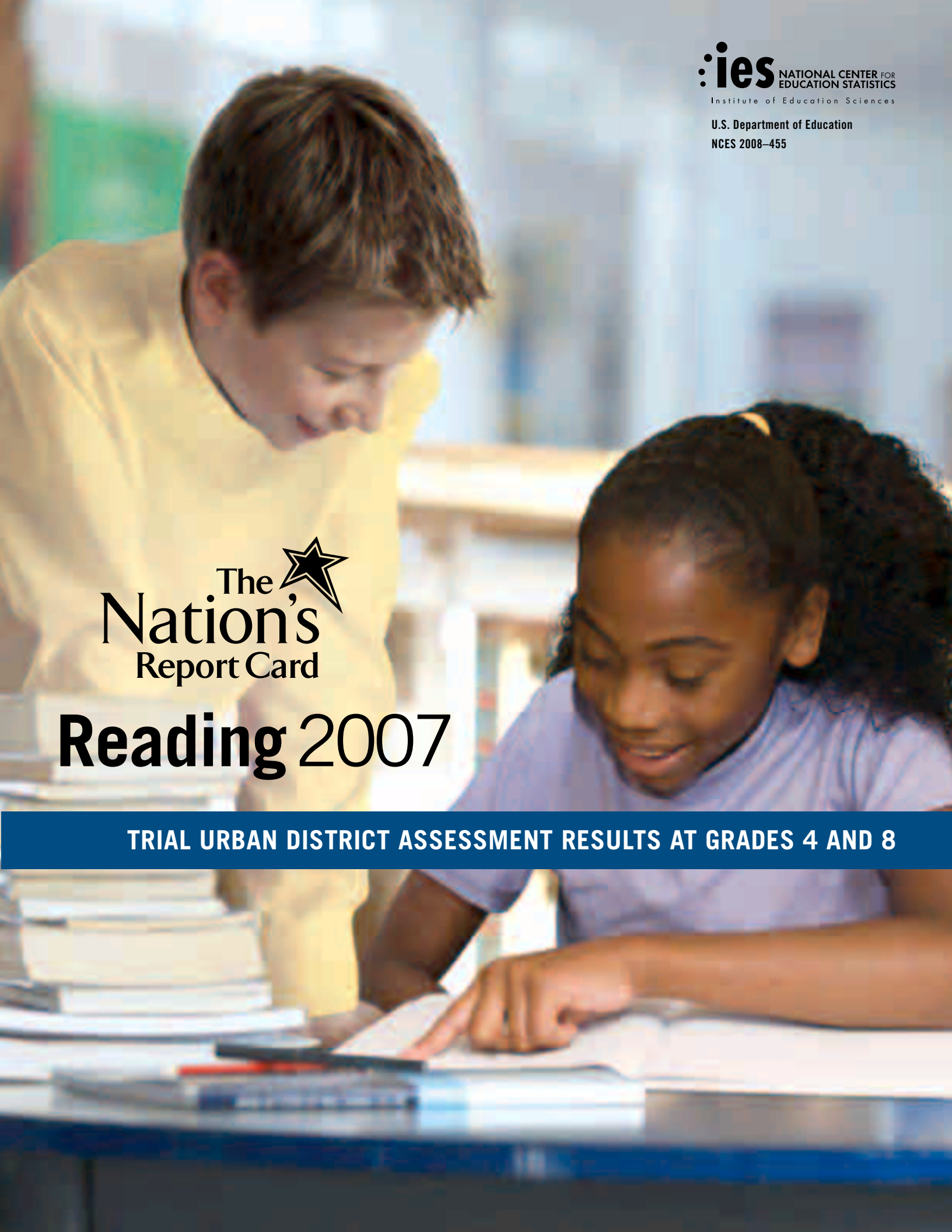


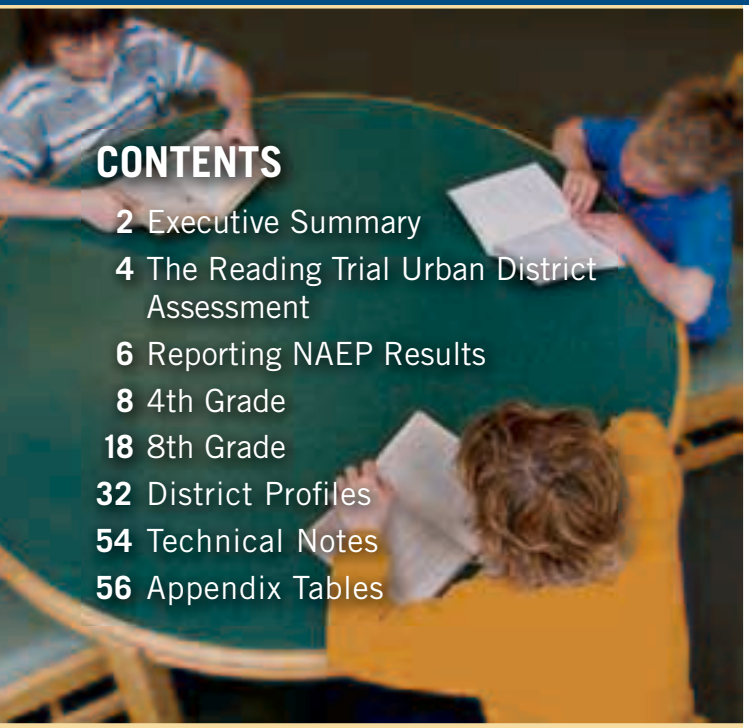
ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

U.S. Department of Education
NCES 2008–455

The Nation's Report Card

Reading 2007

TRIAL URBAN DISTRICT ASSESSMENT RESULTS AT GRADES 4 AND 8



CONTENTS

What is The Nation's Report Card™?

The Nation's Report Card™ informs the public about the academic achievement of elementary and secondary students in the United States. Report cards communicate the findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time.

For over three decades, NAEP assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. By collecting and reporting information on student performance at the national, state, and local levels, NAEP is an integral part of our nation's evaluation of the condition and progress of education. Only information related to academic achievement and relevant variables is collected. The privacy of individual students and their families is protected, and the identities of participating schools are not released.

NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. The Commissioner of Education Statistics is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project. The National Assessment Governing Board oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

Executive Summary

Reading achievement held steady or improved for most districts. At grade 4, the majority of the districts that participated in 2002 had improved scores in 2007. At grade 8, several districts had increases compared with 2005.

The results from the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) make it possible to compare the performance of students in participating urban school districts to that of public school students in the nation, in large central cities (population over 250,000), and to each other.

About 37,000 fourth- and eighth-graders from the following 11 urban districts participated in the fourth reading Trial Urban District Assessment in 2007. Six districts at grade 4 and five districts at grade 8 participated in 2002, ten districts participated in 2003, and eleven in 2005.

Atlanta	Chicago	Los Angeles
Austin	Cleveland	New York City
Boston	District of Columbia	San Diego
Charlotte	Houston	

At grade 4

- Four districts showed score increases compared with 2002, two districts had higher average scores compared with 2005, and one district had a lower average score in 2007 compared with 2005.
- Five districts improved their 2007 percentages at or above *Basic,* and three districts improved their percentages at or above *Proficient* compared with 2002.

At grade 8

- Two districts showed increases compared with 2002, and four districts had higher average scores compared with 2005.
- Two districts improved their 2007 percentages at or above *Basic* compared with 2002, and two districts improved their percentages at or above *Basic* compared with 2005.

Changes in NAEP reading scores

District	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	Since 2002	Since 2005	Since 2002	Since 2005
Atlanta	↑	↑	↑	↑
Austin	—	↔	—	↔
Boston	—	↔	—	↔
Charlotte	—	↔	—	↔
Chicago	↑	↔	↔	↔
Cleveland	—	↔	—	↑
District of Columbia	↑	↑	↔	↑
Houston	↔	↓	↔	↑
Los Angeles	↔	↔	↑	↔
New York City	↑	↔	‡	↔
San Diego	—	↔	—	↔

↑ Indicates the score was higher in 2007.
↓ Indicates the score was lower in 2007.
↔ Indicates there was no significant change in the score in 2007.
— Not available. District did not participate in 2002.
‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size was insufficient to permit a reliable estimate for New York City in 2002.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

CONTEXT FOR URBAN DISTRICT RESULTS

It is important to examine the results for each of the districts by race/ethnicity and family income status. There is generally a higher concentration of minority (races other than White) and lower-income families in these urban districts than in the nation as a whole.

For example, Black and Hispanic students made up about 37 percent of fourth-graders in the nation, but between 55 and 93 percent of the fourth-graders across the 11 districts. At grade 8, between 47 and 100 percent of students in each of the participating districts were eligible for the National School Lunch Program (an indicator of poverty) in 2007, compared to 40 percent of eighth-graders nationally.

In many cases, when scores for only Black, Hispanic, or lower-income students in the districts are compared with their peers nationally, students in the districts score comparably or higher. Additionally, over time these student groups are making gains.

For additional information, see the individual district profiles beginning on page 32 and visit http://nationsreportcard.gov.

GAINS MADE FOR RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS

At grade 4, compared with 2002 for the six participating districts, scores were higher for

- White students in one district, Black students in four districts, and Hispanic students in two districts, and
- all three racial/ethnic groups in one of the districts.

At grade 8, compared with 2002 for the five participating districts, scores were higher for

- Black students in one district and Hispanic students in one district.

LOWER-INCOME STUDENTS IN SOME DISTRICTS OUTPERFORM PEERS IN NATION

When results for only lower-income students in 2007 were compared at grade 4

- four districts had scores that were higher than or not significantly different from the score for lower-income students in the nation, and
- seven districts scored lower.

When only scores for lower-income students were compared at grade 8

- six districts had scores that were not significantly different from the score for lower-income students in the nation, and
- five districts scored lower.

PERFORMANCE IN MANY DISTRICTS HIGHER THAN OR SIMILAR TO LARGE CENTRAL CITIES

In 2007, fourth-graders in Austin, Charlotte, and New York City scored higher on average than students in large central cities, while those in Chicago, Cleveland, the District of Columbia, and Los Angeles scored lower. Scores for fourth-graders in the other four districts were not significantly different from the score for students in large central cities.

Eighth-graders in Austin and Charlotte scored higher on average in 2007 than students in large central cities, while students in Atlanta, the District of Columbia, and Los Angeles scored lower. Scores for eighth-graders in the other six districts were not significantly different from the score for students in large central cities.

The Reading Trial Urban District Assessment

The NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) is designed to explore the feasibility of using NAEP to report on the performance of fourth- and eighth-grade public school students at the district level. Eleven urban districts participated in the fourth TUDA in reading in 2007. Students from these districts took the same assessment as those students sampled nationally for the main NAEP reading assessment, and their data were included as part of the national and state results presented in other 2007 NAEP reports.

The Reading Framework

The NAEP reading framework serves as the blueprint for the assessment, specifying what should be assessed. Developed under the direction of the National Assessment Governing Board, the framework reflects ideas from a variety of organizations involved in reading education, including reading experts, school administrators, policymakers, teachers, parents, and others.

The current NAEP reading framework was first used to guide the development of the 1992 assessment and has continued to be used through 2007. Updates to the framework over the years have provided more detail regarding the assessment design but did not change the content, allowing students' performance in 2007 to be compared with previous years. For more information on the framework, see http://www.nagb.org.

CONTEXTS FOR READING

Reading for literary experience includes exploring events, characters, themes, settings, plots, actions, and the language of literary works by reading novels, short stories, poems, plays, legends, biographies, myths, and folktales.

Reading for information involves reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, textbooks, essays, and speeches in order to better understand the world.

Reading to perform a task requires readers to apply what they learn from reading materials such as bus or train schedules, directions for repairs or games, classroom procedures, maps, and so on.

ASPECTS OF READING

Forming a general understanding involves considering the text as a whole and having an overall understanding of it.

Developing interpretation requires extending initial impressions and linking information across parts of the text, as well as focusing on specific information.

Making reader/text connections includes linking information in the text with knowledge and experience and applying ideas to the real world.

Examining content and structure involves understanding and critically evaluating text content, features, or appropriateness.

The framework provides a broad definition of reading that includes developing a general understanding of written texts, interpreting texts, and using texts for different purposes. In addition, it views reading as an interactive and dynamic process involving the reader, the text, and the context of the reading experience.

Recognizing that readers vary in their approach to reading according to the demands of any particular text, the framework specifies that reading performance be measured in two dimensions: reading contexts and aspects of reading. Three *contexts for reading* provide guidance for the types of texts included in the assessment. Four *aspects of reading* provide guidance for the types of questions that are asked about the texts.

Assessment Design

Because of the large number of questions and the variety of texts included in the NAEP reading assessment, each student took just a portion of the test, consisting of two 25-minute sections or one 50-minute section. Each section contained a reading passage and a set of related questions. The passages used in the assessment reflected those typically available to students, such as collections of stories, children's magazines, or informational books. Students were asked to respond to both multiple-choice and constructed-response (i.e., open-ended) questions.

Each question in the NAEP reading assessment measured one of the aspects of reading within the broader context for reading. All three contexts for reading are assessed at grade 8, but only two—reading for literary experience and reading for information—are assessed at grade 4 as shown in table 1.

Table 1. **Percentage distribution of NAEP reading questions, by grade and context for reading: 2007**

Context for reading	Grade 4	Grade 8
Reading for literary experience	51%	36%
Reading for information	49%	40%
Reading to perform a task	†	24%

† Not applicable. Reading to perform a task was not assessed at grade 4.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Reading Assessment.

Reporting NAEP Results

Reading results are presented for the following 11 urban districts: Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cleveland, the District of Columbia, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, and San Diego. Results for scale scores and achievement levels are presented separately for grades 4 and 8 in the sections that follow. Immediately after the overall results and sample test questions, two-page profiles of each district show trend comparisons with the district's home state NAEP results, and trends for lower-income students and racial/ethnic groups.

Representative samples of between 1,100 and 2,700 fourth-graders and between 900 and 2,100 eighth-graders were assessed in each district. Sample sizes are proportionate to the district enrollment. See appendix table A-1 for the number of participating schools and the number of students in each district. The performance of students in each urban district is compared to the performance of public school students in the nation, large central cities (i.e., cities with populations of 250,000 or more), and other participating districts. The comparison with large central cities is made because these students represent a peer group with characteristics that are most similar to the characteristics of students in the 11 urban districts.

All of the 11 urban districts that participated in the 2007 assessment also participated in the 2005 TUDA, and all except Austin participated in 2003, allowing for comparisons in performance over time. Results for six of the districts can be compared to results from the 2002 reading assessment.

Scale Scores

NAEP reading results are reported on a 0–500 scale. Because NAEP scales are developed independently for each subject, average scores cannot be compared across subjects even when the scale has the same range.

Achievement Levels

Based on recommendations from policymakers, educators, and members of the general public, the Governing Board sets specific achievement levels for each subject area and grade. Achievement levels are performance standards showing what students should know and be able to do. They provide another perspective with which to interpret student performance. NAEP results are reported as percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* and *Proficient* levels and at the *Advanced* level.

As provided by law, NCES, upon review of congressionally mandated evaluations of NAEP, has determined that achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted with caution. The NAEP achievement levels have been widely used by national and state officials.

NAEP ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

BASIC denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade.

PROFICIENT represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.

ADVANCED represents superior performance.

Accommodations and Exclusions in NAEP

Testing accommodations, such as extra testing time or individual rather than group administration, are provided for students with disabilities or English language learners who could not fairly and accurately demonstrate their abilities without modified test administration procedures.

Even with the availability of accommodations, there still remains a portion of students excluded from the NAEP assessment. Variation in exclusion and accommodation rates due to differences in policies and practices regarding the identification and inclusion of students with disabilities and English language learners should be taken into consideration when comparing students' performance over time and across districts. While the effect of exclusion is not precisely known, comparisons of performance results across districts could be affected if exclusion rates are comparatively high or vary widely over time. See appendix tables A-2 and A-3 for the percentages of students accommodated and excluded in each district. More information about NAEP's policy on inclusion and types of accommodations offered is available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/inclusion.asp.

Interpreting Results

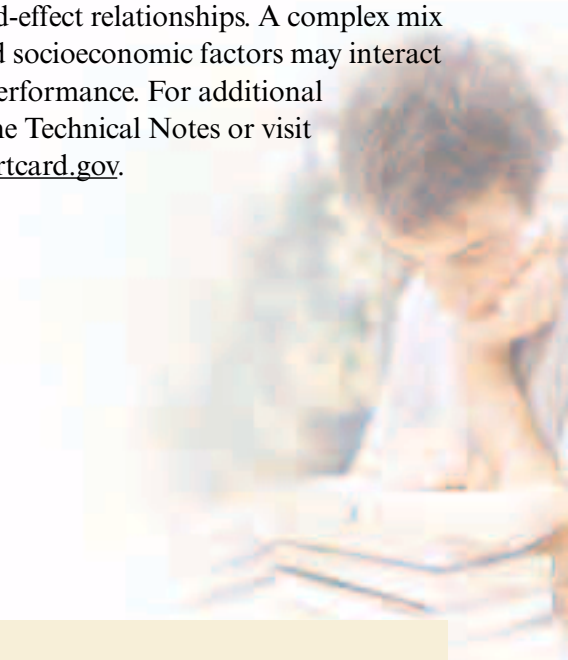
Changes in performance results over time may reflect not only changes in students' knowledge and skills, but also other factors, such as changes in student demographics, education programs and policies (including policies regarding exclusion), and teacher qualifications.

Widely accepted statistical standards are used for reporting results. Findings are reported based on a statistical significance level set at .05 with appropriate adjustments for multiple comparisons, as well as adjustments for the part-whole relationship when individual districts are compared to results for large central cities or the nation. In the tables and figures, the symbol (*) indicates that scores or percentages are significantly different from each other.

Score differences or gaps cited in this report are calculated based on differences between unrounded numbers. Therefore, the reader may find that the score difference cited in the text may not be identical to the difference obtained from subtracting the rounded values shown in the accompanying tables or figures.

In addition to the overall performance of students, results are presented by different demographic characteristics (for example, race/ethnicity or family income level). District results for other student groups can be found in the NAEP Data Explorer at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde.

Simple associations between background characteristics and achievement cannot be used to establish cause-and-effect relationships. A complex mix of educational and socioeconomic factors may interact to affect student performance. For additional information, see the Technical Notes or visit http://nationsreportcard.gov.



SEE THE TABLES IN THE APPENDIX FOR INFORMATION ON

- students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL),
- selected percentile scores,
- performance by race/ethnicity,
- trends in score gaps by race/ethnicity, and
- performance by eligibility status for the National School Lunch Program.

4th Grade

Score gains in a few districts

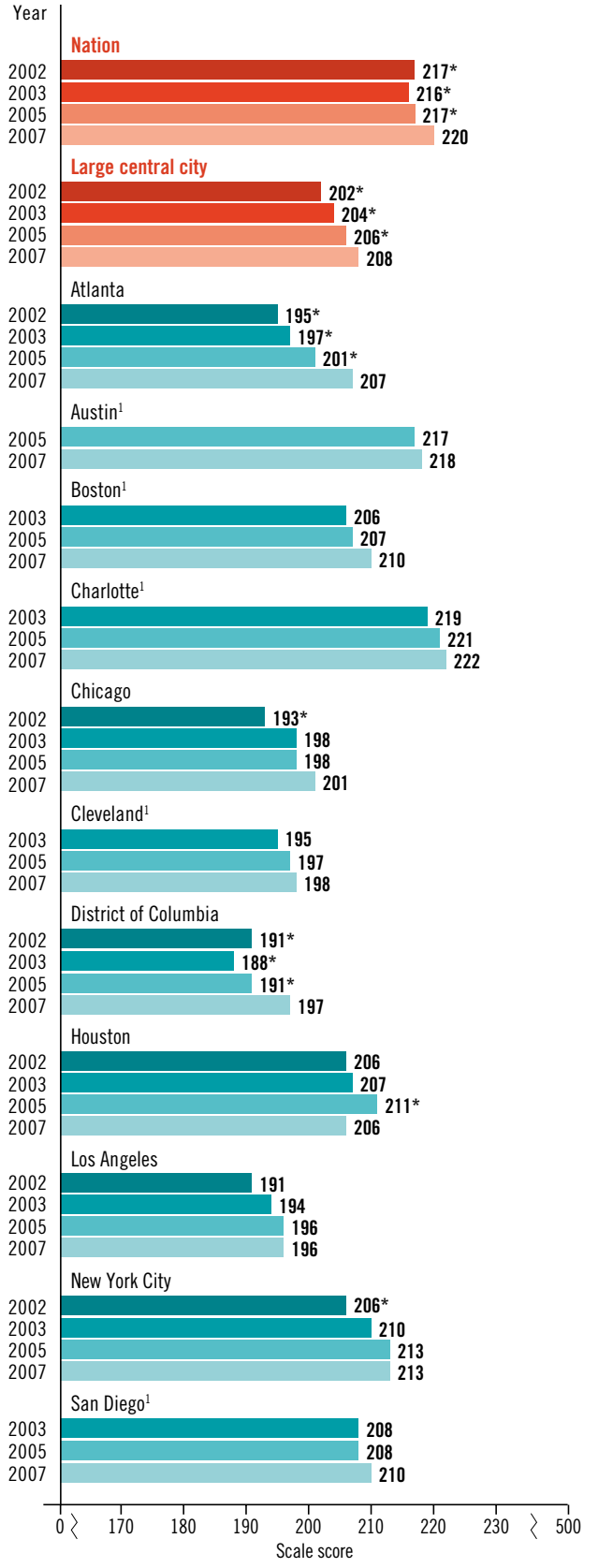
Students in Atlanta and the District of Columbia showed improvement, with higher scores in 2007 than in each of the previous assessments (figure 1). The scores in Chicago and New York City were higher in 2007 than in the initial assessment in 2002, but not significantly different from scores in 2003 and 2005. Houston showed a decrease in 2007 compared to 2005. By comparison to all previous assessments, the average scores for public schools in the nation and in large central cities were up in 2007.

Some districts score higher than large central cities, but most score lower than the nation

In Austin, Charlotte, and New York City, fourth-graders scored higher, on average, than their peers in large central cities, while students in Chicago, Cleveland, the District of Columbia, and Los Angeles scored lower (figure 3). The average scores for students in the other districts were not significantly different from the score for large central cities.

Compared to public schools nationally, the average scores for 9 of the 11 districts in 2007 were lower. Scores in Austin and Charlotte were not significantly different from the national average.

Figure 1. **Trend in average scores for fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction**



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2007.
[1] District did not participate in 2002 and/or 2003.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2002–07 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments.

Some districts improve in percentages at or above *Basic* and *Proficient*

The percentages of students performing at NAEP achievement levels provide a broader look at the range of student performance. For example, although average scores may have been low compared to the nation, there were students in all districts who scored at or above the *Proficient* and at the *Advanced* levels (table 2).

Comparing the district percentages at or above *Basic,* Atlanta and the District of Columbia improved in 2007 compared with 2005, 2003, and 2002. Three additional districts improved their 2007 percentages at or above *Basic* compared with 2002. Percentages at or above *Proficient* increased in Atlanta, Chicago and the District of Columbia when comparing 2007 with 2002.

Compared to public schools nationally, 9 of the 11 participating districts had lower percentages of students at or above *Basic* and at or above *Proficient*. The percentages of students at these achievement levels in Austin and Charlotte did not differ significantly from the nation. In five districts, the percentages of students performing at or above *Proficient* were higher than or not significantly different from those of students in large central cities nationally. When looking at the percentages of students scoring at or above *Basic*, six districts performed higher than or not significantly different from the percentage in large central cities. Achievement-level results by race/ethnicity are available at http://nationsreportcard.gov/tuda_reading_2007/data.asp.

Table 2. **Achievement-level results for fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction: Various years, 2002–07**

	Percentage of students															
	Below *Basic*				At or above *Basic*				At or above *Proficient*				At *Advanced*			
Jurisdiction	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007
Nation	38***	38***	38***	34*	62***	62***	62***	66*	30***	30***	30***	32*	6***	7***	7***	7*
Large central city	56***	53***	51***	47**	44***	47***	49***	53**	17***	19***	20***	22**	3***	4	4	5**
Atlanta	65***	63***	59***	52*,**	35***	37***	41***	48*,**	12***	14	17	18*,**	3	4	4	5**
Austin	—	—	39	38*	—	—	61	62*	—	—	28	30*	—	—	7	8*
Boston	—	52	49	46**	—	48	51	54**	—	16	16	20**	—	2	3	4**
Charlotte	—	36	35	34*	—	64	65	66*	—	31	33	35*	—	8	9	10*
Chicago	66***	60	60	56*,**	34***	40	40	44*,**	11***	14	14	16*,**	2***	3	2	3*,**
Cleveland	—	65	63	61*,**	—	35	37	39*,**	—	9	10	9*,**	—	1	1	1*,**
District of Columbia	69***	69***	67***	61*,**	31***	31***	33***	39*,**	10***	10***	11***	14*,**	2***	3	2***	4**
Houston	52	52	48	51**	48	48	52	49**	18	18	21	17*,**	3	3	5	3*,**
Los Angeles	67***	65	63	61*,**	33***	35	37	39*,**	11	11	14	13*,**	2	2	3	2*,**
New York City	53***	47	43	43*,**	47***	53	57	57*,**	19	22	22	25*,**	5	4	5	6
San Diego	—	49	49	45**	—	51	51	55**	—	22	22	25**	—	5	5	6

— Not available. District did not participate in 2002 and/or 2003.
* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from large central city public schools in 2007.
** Significantly different ($p < .05$) from nation (public schools) in 2007.
*** Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2007.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2002–07 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments.

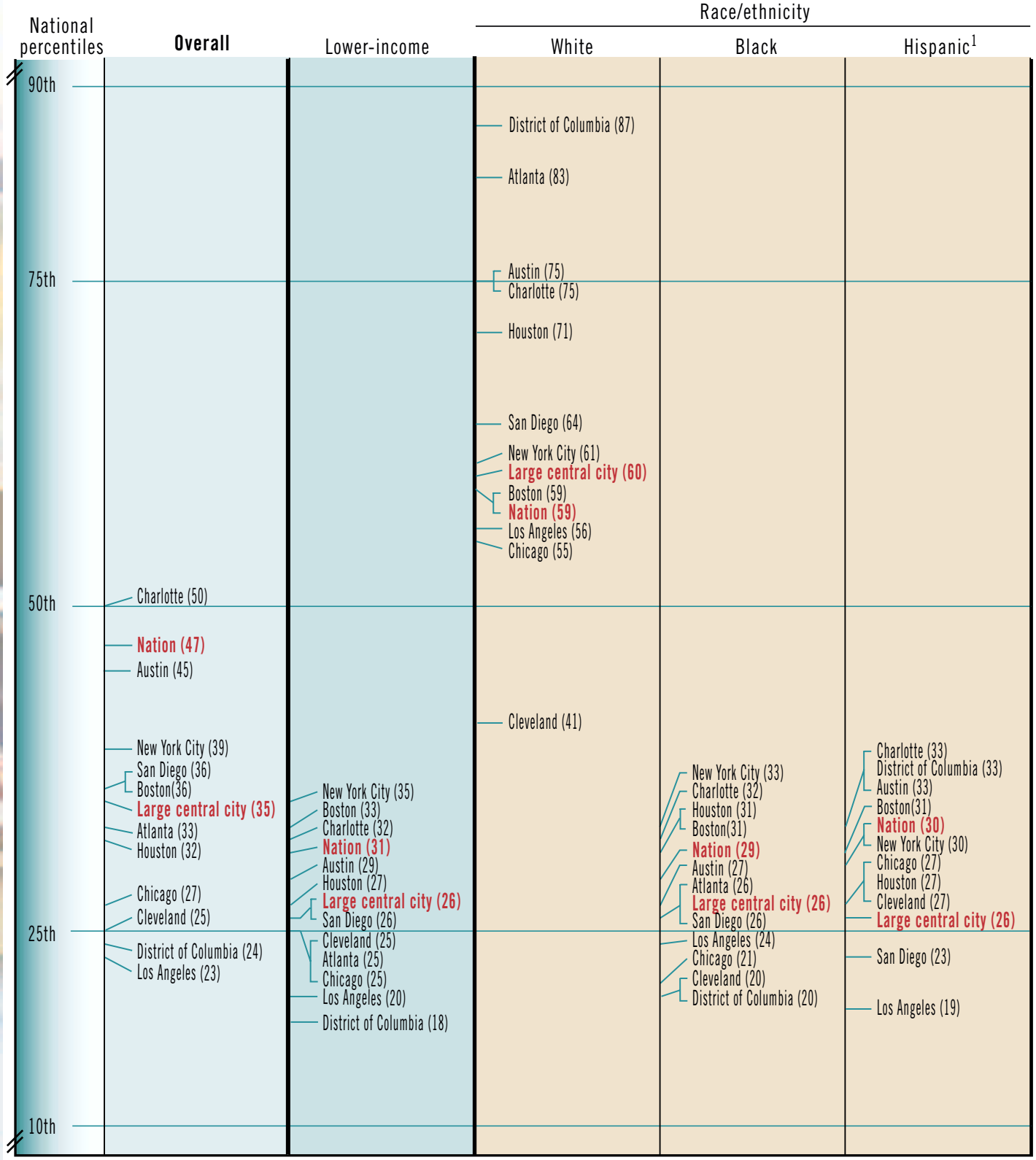
Percentile rankings for districts vary by demographic groups

Figure 2 on the opposite page shows how groups of students within each participating district compared with the NAEP national public school percentiles. The average score for the group was used to determine its percentile rank compared with public schools nationally. The scores for the nation and large central cities are also plotted. For example, the average score for Hispanic students in New York City was at the 30th percentile. This means that these students performed as well as or better than 30 percent of students nationwide, including their Hispanic counterparts in large central cities whose average score was at the 26th percentile.

The percentile range for the four selected student groups is wide—from the 87th percentile for White students in the District of Columbia to the 18th percentile for lower-income students, also in the District of Columbia. The relative rankings of student groups versus same-category peers in large central cities and the nation can be seen in figure 2. For example, Black fourth-graders in Charlotte, Houston, and New York City outscored their peers in large central cities. (Boston's score was not significantly different.) Similarly, Hispanic students in Austin, Boston, Charlotte, and New York City had higher average scores and percentile rankings than their counterparts in large central cities. (The District of Columbia's score was not significantly different.)

Additional results for racial/ethnic groups are provided in the district profiles beginning on page 32 and in the appendix in tables A-5 and A-6 and figures A-1 and A-2.

Figure 2. **National percentile rankings for urban districts based on average scores for fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by lower-income status and selected race/ethnicity categories: 2007**



[1] Sample size was insufficient to permit a reliable estimate for Hispanic students in Atlanta.
NOTE: Groups not shown are included in overall scores. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The 50th percentile represents the middle score in the distribution of scores for public school students nationally. The average score for these students, however, fell below that point at the 47th percentile because there was a greater concentration of scores toward the lower end of the scale compared to the higher end.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

For lower-income students, fewer performance differences among districts

The two figures below show how the performance across districts varies according to income. Figure 3 identifies significant differences when comparing average scores for all students in the districts to each other, the nation, and large central cities.

Participating districts typically have greater percentages of students from lower-income families than public schools nationally (see table 4, page 30). NAEP uses students' eligibility for the National School Lunch Program as an indicator of poverty[1]. Eligible students are from lower-income families and tend to have average scores that are significantly below those of students from higher-income families.

When all public school students are considered, the highest-scoring districts have some of the smallest percentages of lower-income students. The lowest-performing districts, however, have some of the largest percentages of lower-income students. This contrast helps in understanding why the overall average scores for most participating districts are below that of the nation.

Figure 4 shows the cross-district comparisons for lower-income students only. The pattern of results and ranking among districts for lower-income students is quite different from the comparison shown in figure 3. For example, New York City, Boston, and Houston move up in the rankings, and fewer differences are seen in performance among the other districts.

Read across each district's row to determine whether the average score of that district was higher than, not significantly different from, or lower than the jurisdiction in the column heading. The direction of the arrow indicates whether the district in the row is higher than (up arrow), lower than (down arrow), or not significantly different from (no arrow) the jurisdiction in the column heading.

Figure 3. **Cross-district comparison of average scores for all fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading: 2007**

DISTRICT (Average score)	Nation	Large central city	Charlotte	Austin	New York City	San Diego	Boston	Atlanta	Houston	Chicago	Cleveland	District of Columbia	Los Angeles
Charlotte (222)		▲			▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Austin (218)		▲				▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
New York City (213)	▼	▲	▼					▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
San Diego (210)	▼		▼	▼						▲	▲	▲	▲
Boston (210)	▼		▼	▼						▲	▲	▲	▲
Atlanta (207)	▼		▼	▼	▼					▲	▲	▲	▲
Houston (206)	▼		▼	▼	▼					▲	▲	▲	▲
Chicago (201)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼				▲
Cleveland (198)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼				
District of Columbia (197)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼				
Los Angeles (196)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼			

▲ District had higher average scale score than the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

No statistically significant difference detected from the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

▼ District had lower average scale score than the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

Comparison not made.

Figure 4. **Cross-district comparison of average scores for lower-income fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading: 2007**

DISTRICT (Average score)	Nation	Large central city	New York City	Boston	Charlotte	Austin	Houston	San Diego	Cleveland	Atlanta	Chicago	Los Angeles	District of Columbia
New York City (209)	▲	▲				▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Boston (207)		▲					▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Charlotte (205)		▲					▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Austin (203)			▼									▲	▲
Houston (201)	▼		▼	▼	▼							▲	▲
San Diego (198)	▼		▼	▼	▼							▲	▲
Cleveland (198)	▼		▼	▼	▼							▲	▲
Atlanta (198)	▼		▼	▼	▼							▲	▲
Chicago (197)	▼		▼	▼	▼							▲	▲
Los Angeles (191)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		
District of Columbia (188)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		

NOTE: The average score for all students in the nation was 220 and for students from lower-income families was 205. The average score for all students in large central cities was 208 and for students from lower-income families was 200. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

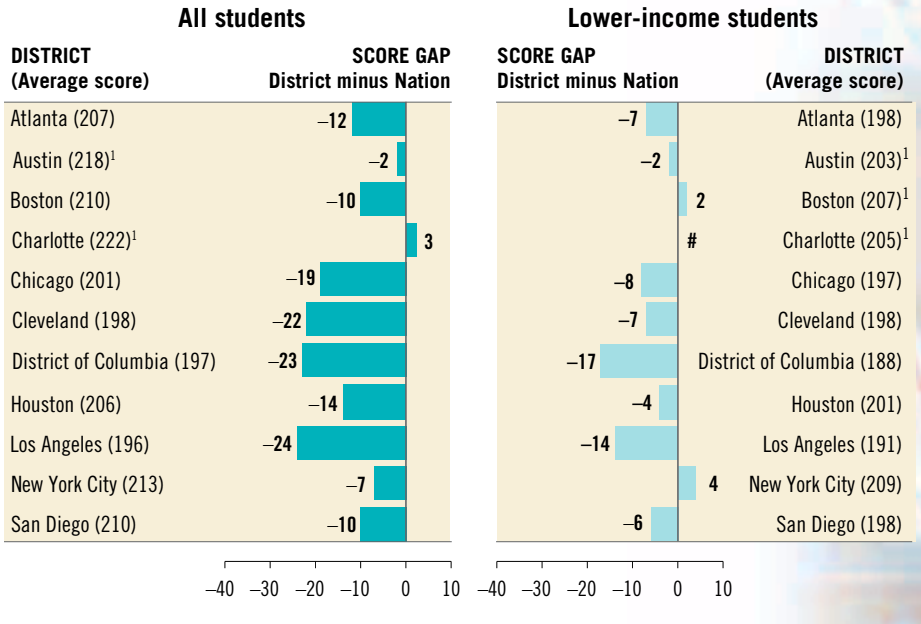
[1] Under the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program, children from families with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. For the period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, for a family of four, 130 percent of the poverty level was $26,000, and 185 percent was $37,000.

Nation – district gaps narrower for lower-income students

The size of the score gap between the performance of students in the districts and students nationally changes when looking at lower-income students only, as shown in figure 5. As discussed previously, most of the districts scored lower on average than the nation. These differences ranged from –7 to –24 points (shown by the bars on the left side of the figure). The average scores for Charlotte and Austin were not significantly different from the nation.

These gaps in overall scores may be associated with the greater percentages of lower-income students in the districts who usually have lower reading performance. The right side of the figure shows the gaps between lower-income students in the nation and in each district. Using Chicago as an example, the district's average score was 19 points lower than the national average. Chicago's average score for lower-income students, however, was 8 points lower than the average for lower-income students nationally. Lower-income students in New York City scored higher, on average, than lower-income students in the nation, and the average scores in Austin, Boston, and Charlotte were not significantly different from the nation. For trend results for lower-income students in each district and their peers nationwide, see the section on individual districts later in this report.

Figure 5. **Average scores and score gaps between the nation and districts for all students and lower-income fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by urban district: 2007**



Rounds to zero.
[1] The score-point difference between this district and the nation was not statistically significant.
NOTE: The average score for all students in the nation was 220 and for students from lower-income families was 205. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Assessment Content at Grade 4

The content of the assessment varied by grade to reflect the reading skills appropriate for each grade level, with differing proportions of assessment questions devoted to each of the contexts for reading. At grade 4, assessment questions were divided between two of the contexts for reading: reading for literary experience and reading for information, with a slightly higher proportion of assessment questions devoted to reading for literary experience. The 2007 fourth-grade reading assessment included a total of 10 reading passages and 100 questions.

Reading Achievement Levels at Grade 4

The following descriptions are abbreviated versions of the full achievement-level descriptions for grade 4 reading. The cut score depicting the lowest score representative of that level is noted in parentheses.

Basic (208): Fourth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of what they read. When reading text appropriate for fourth-graders, they should be able to make relatively obvious connections between the text and their own experiences and extend the ideas in the text by making simple inferences.

Proficient (238): Fourth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of the text, providing inferential as well as literal information. When reading text appropriate to fourth grade, they should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making inferences, drawing conclusions, and making connections to their own experiences. The connections between the text and what the student infers should be clear.

Advanced (268): Fourth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should be able to generalize about topics in the reading selection and demonstrate an awareness of how authors compose and use literary devices. When reading text appropriate to fourth grade, they should be able to judge texts critically and, in general, give thorough answers that indicate careful thought.

The full descriptions can be found at http://www.nagb.org/frameworks/reading_07.pdf.

Sample Reading Passage

The short story below is an example of what a fourth-grader might read for literary experience. The story centers around one main character and how her actions over the course of a single day bring about a change in her situation. The two sample questions that follow were based on this reading passage.

DISHPAN DUCKS

By Margaret Springer
Illustrated by Don Dyen

Rosa walked home from school slowly. The rows of apartment buildings and the streets full of cars looked all the same. And it was cold.

Rosa missed her country. She had begun to learn some English, but she did not know what to say or what to do when other kids were around. They were friendly, but Rosa felt safer being alone.

Behind Rosa's brick apartment building was a special place, a small creek where Rosa always stopped after school. There were ducks there, and she could speak to them in her language. The ducks seemed to understand.

Every afternoon Rosa sat on a concrete slab above the creek and watched the ducks until Mama came home from work.

Rosa did not feed them. She knew that most "people food" was not right for ducks. But she watched them swim and feed and walk up to her, quacking. Once they even walked over Rosa's tummy as she lay with her feet stretched out on the bumpy grass. They like me, Rosa said to herself.

One day after school, the ducks were not in the water. They did not waddle toward Rosa, even though she stayed very still. Something was wrong.

Gently, Rosa tiptoed to where the ducks were huddled. "Are you sick?" she whispered. They looked different. They looked greasy.

Then Rosa noticed the creek. An oily film covered it, making patches of color on the water's surface. She looked closely at the ducks. Their feathers were stuck together. They could not swim. They could not fly.

I must get help, said Rosa to herself. But how? I don't know anyone. Mama told me not to speak to strangers. Besides, I don't know how to ask in English.

Rosa had an idea. She rushed back to the street, walked to the traffic light, then raced around the corner and back to the school yard.

Rosa was in luck. Boys and girls were still there, practicing baseball with the gym teacher. Rosa had never played baseball in this country.

"Please! Come!" said Rosa, breathless, "Ducks!"

"Hello, Rosa," said the teacher. "What's the trouble?"

"Ducks!" said Rosa again. It was one of the few English words she was sure of. "Come. Please. Ducks!"

She pointed in the direction of the creek. The kids were staring at her, but she didn't care. "Ducks!" she said again, her eyes pleading.

The teacher said something in English to his team. They looked at Rosa and talked all at once. Then the teacher smiled. "OK, Rosa," he said. "Show us." They all grabbed their jackets and their baseball mitts and bats, and followed Rosa to the creek.

Pretty soon there were more people at Rosa's creek than she had ever seen there before. First the police came with their squad cars and sirens. Then came the firefighters with their big trucks and Humane Society workers in their vans.

People came out from the apartment building with dishpans and towels and liquid dish detergent. Rosa did not understand all the talk, but she knew what was happening.

The ducks were too weak to fly or run away. She and the other kids rounded them up and held them in the dishpans while the Humane Society people worked. Four washes for each duck with mild detergent, and four rinses with clear water. It reminded Rosa of doing the wash.

continued...

After a while someone brought a blow-dryer. Rosa laughed as the ducks were blown fluffy-dry. One by one, they were packed carefully into cages in the Humane Society vans.

"We'll keep them for a few days," one of the workers said. "They need time to regain the natural oils in their feathers, so they can keep themselves warm and swim properly. A big factory upstream spilled four hundred gallons of diesel fuel into the storm sewers last night. What a mess! You got to these ducks just in time, young lady."

Rosa did not know what the man was saying, but she saw how everyone smiled at her, and she felt proud.

By the time Rosa's mama came home, the cars and the vans and the people were gone. Rosa was in her special place by the creek. But she was not alone. She was playing baseball with three friends. Rosa was good at baseball. She was getting better at English, too.

"Home run!" she shouted, laughing, after she slugged the ball almost to the parking lot. Rosa was happy. And the dishpan ducks were safe.

Sample Question About Vocabulary in Context

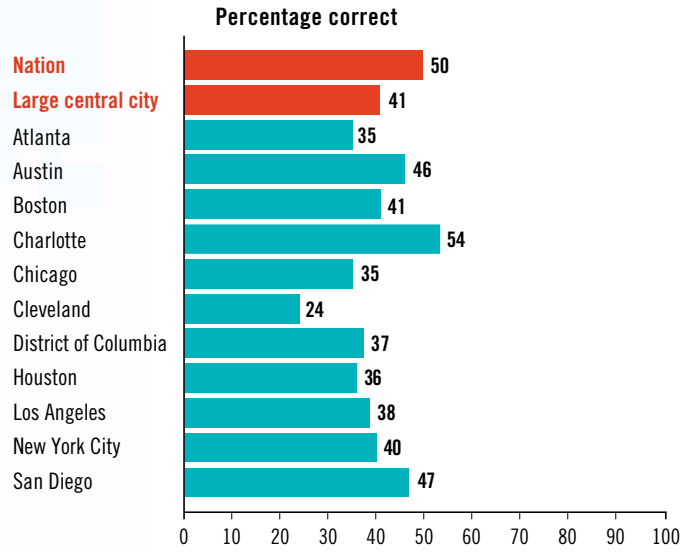
This sample question asked fourth-graders to use their understanding of a part of the story to identify the meaning of a word. The meaning of the word is related to a major event in the story. This question was classified under the reading aspect, *Developing Interpretation*.

What does the word "pleading" mean, as it is used in the sentence below? *"Ducks," she said again, her eyes pleading.*

- (A) **Yelling**
- (B) **Begging**
- (C) **Looking**
- (D) **Blinking**

Fifty percent of fourth-grade public school students in the nation selected the correct answer (choice B), demonstrating their understanding that the main character knows only a few English words and so uses her eyes to ask for help with the emergency. The percentage of correct responses in each of the districts ranged from 24 percent in Cleveland to 54 percent in Charlotte.

Percentage correct for fourth-grade public school students in 2007, by jurisdiction



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Sample Question About Character Motivation

This sample question asked students to demonstrate their understanding of the main character by providing the motivation for an action at a particular point in the story. In addition, students needed to support their answer with details from the story. This question was classified under the reading aspect, *Developing Interpretation*.

Student responses for this question were rated using the following three-level scoring guide:

Full comprehension—These responses use details from the story to explain why Rosa visits the ducks at the beginning of the story.

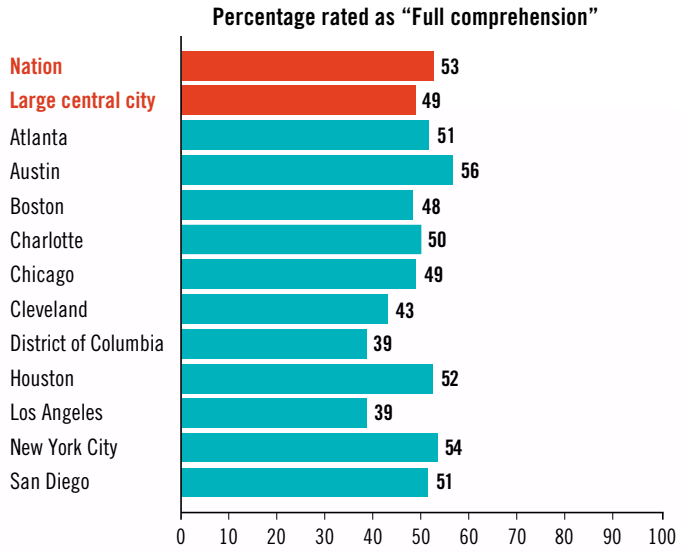
Partial or surface comprehension—These responses demonstrate a general understanding of why Rosa visits the ducks at the beginning of the story but do not support it with details from the story. Or, responses may provide a story detail related to Rosa visiting the ducks but are unrelated to why she visits them.

Little or no comprehension—These responses provide inappropriate information or personal opinions that are not related to why Rosa visits the ducks at the beginning of the story.

The student response shown below was rated as "Full comprehension" because it provided both a reason why Rosa visits the ducks—"because she feels safer"—and supports it with details related to why she feels safer with the ducks.

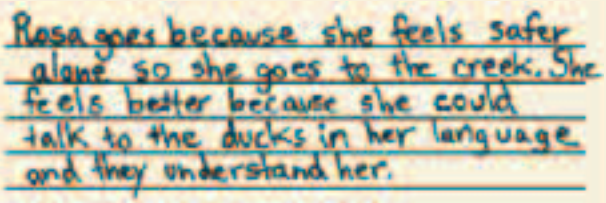
The figure below shows the percentages of fourth-graders whose answers to the question were rated as "Full comprehension." Fifty-three percent of fourth-grade public school students in the nation provided a response rated as "Full comprehension." The percentages of student responses rated as "Full comprehension" in the districts ranged from 39 percent in the District of Columbia and Los Angeles to 56 percent in Austin.

Percentage rated as "Full comprehension" for fourth-grade public school students in 2007, by jurisdiction



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Explain why Rosa visits the ducks at the beginning of the story. Use details from the story in your answer.


Rosa goes because she feels safer alone so she goes to the creek. She feels better because she could talk to the ducks in her language and they understand her.

Response rated as "Full comprehension"

8th Grade

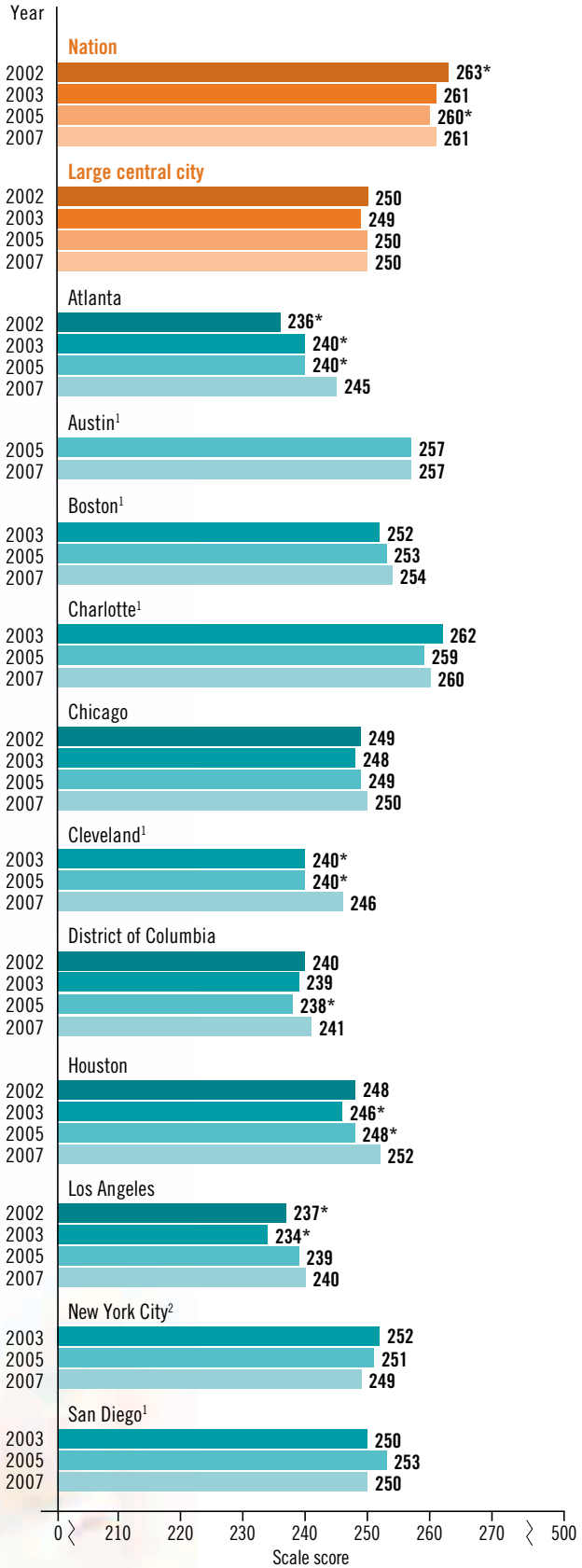
Scores higher in some districts since 2005

Compared to 2005, Atlanta gained 5 points, Cleveland gained 7 (based on the calculation using unrounded numbers), the District of Columbia gained 3, and Houston gained 4 (figure 6). The average score was up 1 point nationally, with no significant change over the same period in large central cities. Atlanta and Los Angeles had higher scores in 2007 than in 2002.

Many districts perform at least as well as large central cities, most lower than the nation

On average, eighth-graders in 8 of the 11 participating districts had scores that were higher than or not significantly different from those of public school students in large central cities nationwide. The average scores for students in Austin and Charlotte were higher than in large central cities. However, the average scores for all the districts except Charlotte were below the average score for public school students across the nation (figure 8).

Figure 6. **Trend in average scores for eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction**



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2007.
[1] District did not participate in 2002 and/or 2003.
[2] Data for eighth-graders in New York City were not available in 2002 because the district did not meet minimum participation guidelines for reporting.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2002–07 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments.

Some districts improve in percentages at or above *Basic*

The percentages of students performing at NAEP achievement levels provide a broader look at the range of student performance. For example, although average scores may have been low compared to the nation, there were students in all districts who scored at or above the *Proficient* level and in most districts at the *Advanced* level (table 3).

Comparing the district percentages at or above *Basic* over time shows that Atlanta and Cleveland improved in 2007 compared with 2005. Atlanta and Los Angeles improved compared with 2002. Percentages at or above *Proficient* did not change significantly over time, except in Atlanta when comparing 2007 with 2002.

Compared to public schools nationally, all of the 11 participating districts had lower percentages of students at or above *Basic*. The percentages of students at or above *Proficient* in Austin and Charlotte were not significantly different from the nation; the percentages were lower than the nation for the 9 remaining districts. In seven districts, the percentages of students performing at or above *Proficient* were higher than or not significantly different from those of students in large central cities nationally. When looking at the percentages of students scoring at or above *Basic*, eight districts performed higher than or not significantly different from the percentage in large central cities.

Table 3. **Achievement-level results for eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction: Various years, 2002–07**

Jurisdiction	Percentage of students															
	Below *Basic*				At or above *Basic*				At or above *Proficient*				At *Advanced*			
	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007	2002	2003	2005	2007
Nation	26***	28	29***	27*	74***	72	71***	73*	31***	30***	29	29*	2	3***	3	2*
Large central city	40	42	40	40**	60	58	60	60**	20	19	20	20**	1	1	2	1**
Atlanta	58***	53***	54***	47*,**	42***	47***	46***	53*,**	8***	11	12	13*,**	#	#	1	1
Austin	—	—	35	34*,**	—	—	65	66*,**	—	—	27	28*	—	—	3	3
Boston	—	39	39	37**	—	61	61	63**	—	22	23	22**	—	2	2	3
Charlotte	—	29	31	31*,**	—	71	69	69*,**	—	30	29	29*	—	3	3	3
Chicago	38	41	40	39**	62	59	60	61**	15	15	17	17**	1	1	1	1**
Cleveland	—	52***	51***	44**	—	48***	49***	56**	—	10	10	11*,**	—	#	#	#*,**
District of Columbia	52	53	55	52*,**	48	47	45	48*,**	10	10	12	12*,**	#	1	1	1**
Houston	41	45***	41	37**	59	55***	59	63**	17	14	17	18**	1	1	1	1
Los Angeles	56***	57***	53	50*,**	44***	43***	47	50*,**	10	11	13	12*,**	#	1	1	1**
New York City	‡	38	39	41**	‡	62	61	59**	‡	22	20	20**	‡	2	1	1
San Diego	—	40	37	40**	—	60	63	60**	—	20	23	23**	—	2	2	2

— Not available. District did not participate in 2002 and/or 2003.
Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from large central city public schools in 2007.
** Significantly different ($p < .05$) from nation (public schools) in 2007.
*** Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2007.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 2002–07 Trial Urban District Reading Assessments.

Percentile rankings for districts vary by demographic groups

Figure 7 on the opposite page shows how groups of students within each participating district compared with the NAEP national public school percentiles. The average score for the group was used to determine its percentile rank compared with public schools nationally. The scores for the nation and large central cities are also plotted. For example, the average score for Hispanic students in Chicago was at the 40th percentile. This means that these students performed as well as or better than 40 percent of students nationwide, including their Hispanic counterparts in large central cities whose average score was at the 27th percentile.

The percentile range for the four selected student groups is wide—from the 74th percentile for White students in Austin to the 17th percentile for Black students in Los Angeles. The relative rankings of student groups versus same-category peers in large central cities can be seen in the figure. For example, Black eighth-graders in Boston and Houston outscored their peers in the nation and large central cities. Similarly, Hispanic students in Chicago had higher average scores and percentile rankings than their counterparts in the nation and large central cities.

Additional results for racial/ethnic groups are provided in the district profiles beginning on page 32 and in the appendix in tables A-5 and A-6 and figures A-1 and A-2.

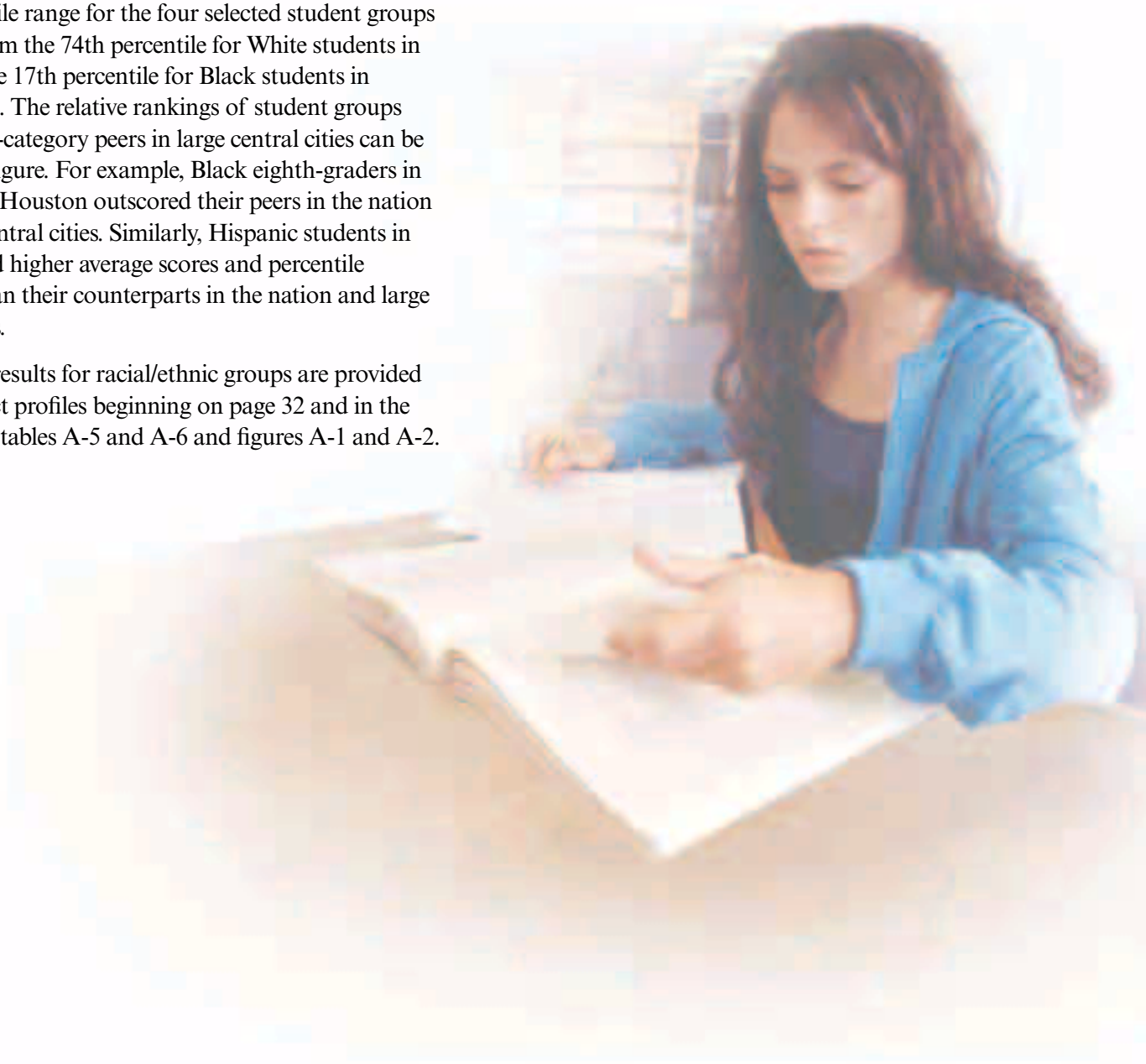
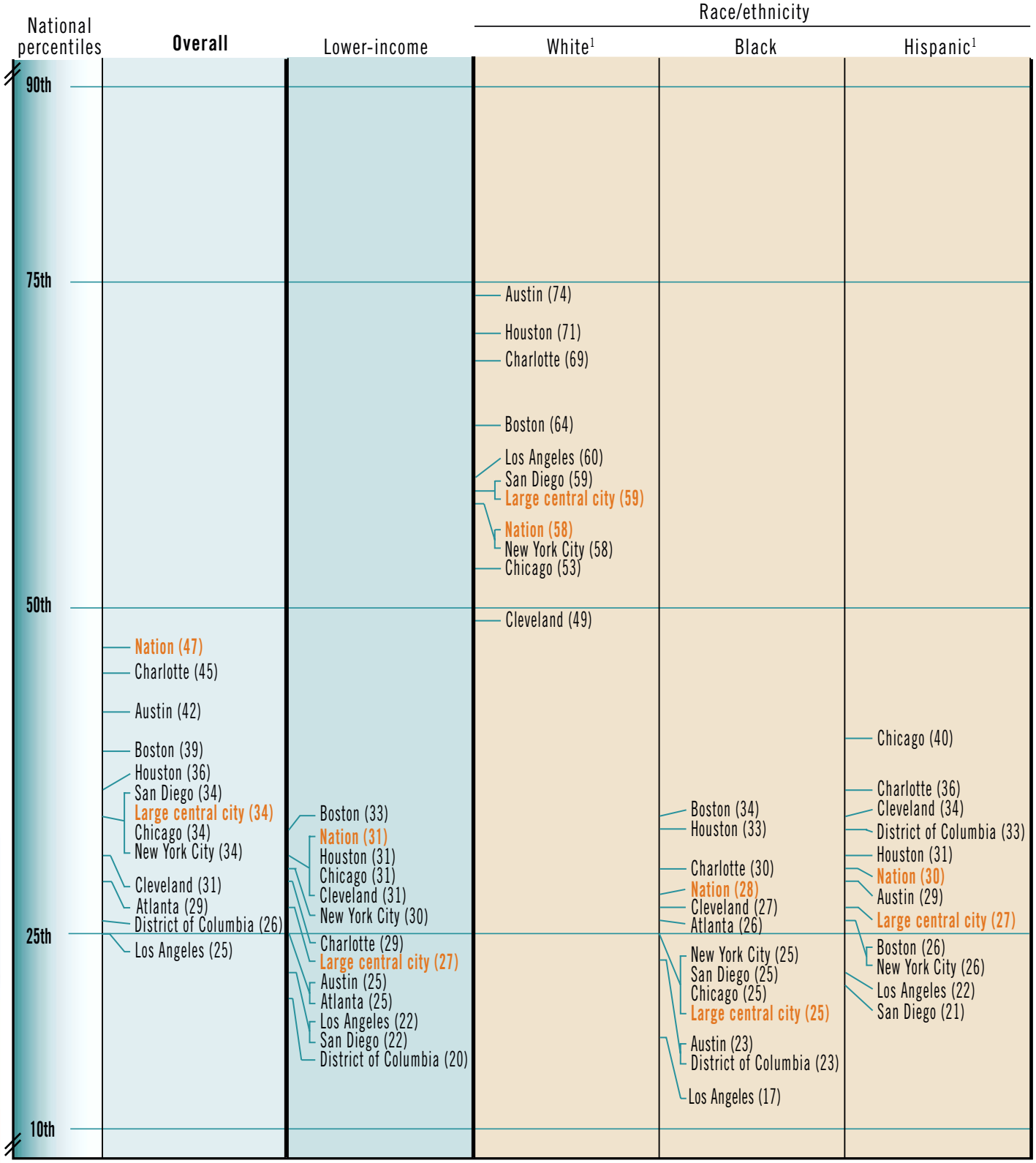


Figure 7. **National percentile rankings for urban districts based on average scores for eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by lower-income status and selected race/ethnicity categories: 2007**



[1] Sample sizes were insufficient to permit reliable estimates for White and Hispanic students in Atlanta and White students in the District of Columbia.
NOTE: Groups not shown are included in overall scores. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Black includes African American, and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The 50th percentile represents the middle score in the distribution of scores for public school students nationally. The average score for these students, however, fell below that point at the 47th percentile because there was a greater concentration of scores toward the lower end of the scale compared to the higher end.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

For lower-income students, fewer performance differences among districts

Performance across districts varies as shown in the figures below depending on whether all students or only lower-income students are compared. Figure 8 identifies significant differences when comparing the average scores for all students in participating districts, as well as the nation and large central cities.

Participating districts typically have greater percentages of students from lower-income families than public schools nationally (see table 5, page 31). NAEP uses students' eligibility for the National School Lunch Program as an indicator of poverty. Eligible students (see note on page 12) are typically from lower-income families and have average scores that are significantly below those of students from families with higher incomes.

When all public school students are considered, the highest-scoring districts have some of the smallest percentages of lower-income students. The lowest-performing districts, however, have some of the largest percentages of lower-income students. This contrast helps in understanding why the overall average scores for most participating districts are below that of the nation.

Figure 9 shows the cross-district comparisons for lower-income students only. Here, similar to the pattern for lower-income students in grade 4, the score ranking among districts changes from the ranking for all students. For example, Boston, Houston, Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City move up in the rankings, and fewer differences are seen in performance among the other districts.

Read across each district's row to determine whether the average score of that district was higher than, not significantly different from, or lower than the jurisdiction in the column heading. The direction of the arrow indicates whether the district in the row is higher than (up arrow), lower than (down arrow), or not significantly different from (no arrow) the jurisdiction in the column heading.

Figure 8. **Cross-district comparison of average scores for all eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading: 2007**

DISTRICT (Average score)	Nation	Large central city	Charlotte	Austin	Boston	Houston	San Diego	Chicago	New York City	Cleveland	Atlanta	District of Columbia	Los Angeles
Charlotte (260)		▲			▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Austin (257)	▼	▲					▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Boston (254)	▼		▼							▲	▲	▲	▲
Houston (252)	▼		▼							▲	▲	▲	▲
San Diego (250)	▼		▼	▼							▲	▲	▲
Chicago (250)	▼		▼	▼							▲	▲	▲
New York City (249)	▼		▼	▼								▲	▲
Cleveland (246)	▼		▼	▼	▼	▼						▲	▲
Atlanta (245)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼				▲	▲
District of Columbia (241)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		
Los Angeles (240)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		

▲ District had higher average scale score than the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

No statistically significant difference detected from the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

▼ District had lower average scale score than the jurisdiction listed at the top of the column.

Comparison not made.

Figure 9. **Cross-district comparison of average scores for lower-income eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading: 2007**

DISTRICT (Average score)	Nation	Large central city	Boston	Houston	Chicago	Cleveland	New York City	Charlotte	Austin	Atlanta	Los Angeles	San Diego	District of Columbia
Boston (249)		▲							▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Houston (247)		▲							▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Chicago (247)		▲							▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Cleveland (246)		▲							▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
New York City (246)		▲								▲	▲	▲	▲
Charlotte (245)											▲	▲	▲
Austin (240)	▼		▼	▼	▼	▼							▲
Atlanta (240)	▼		▼	▼	▼	▼	▼						▲
Los Angeles (237)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼					
San Diego (236)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼					
District of Columbia (234)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼			

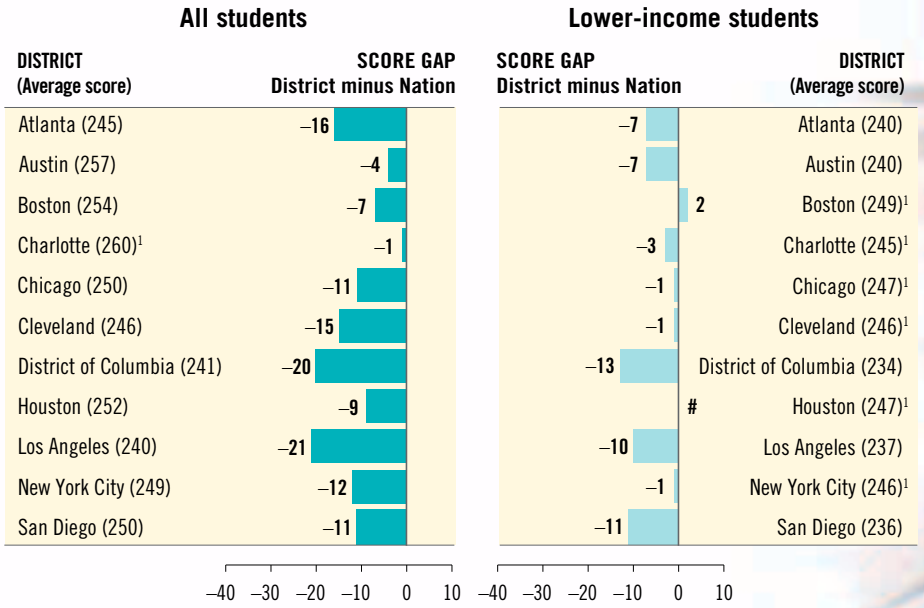
NOTE: The average score for all students in the nation was 261 and for students from lower-income families was 247. The average score for all students in large central cities was 250 and for students from lower-income families was 242. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Nation – district gaps narrower for lower-income students

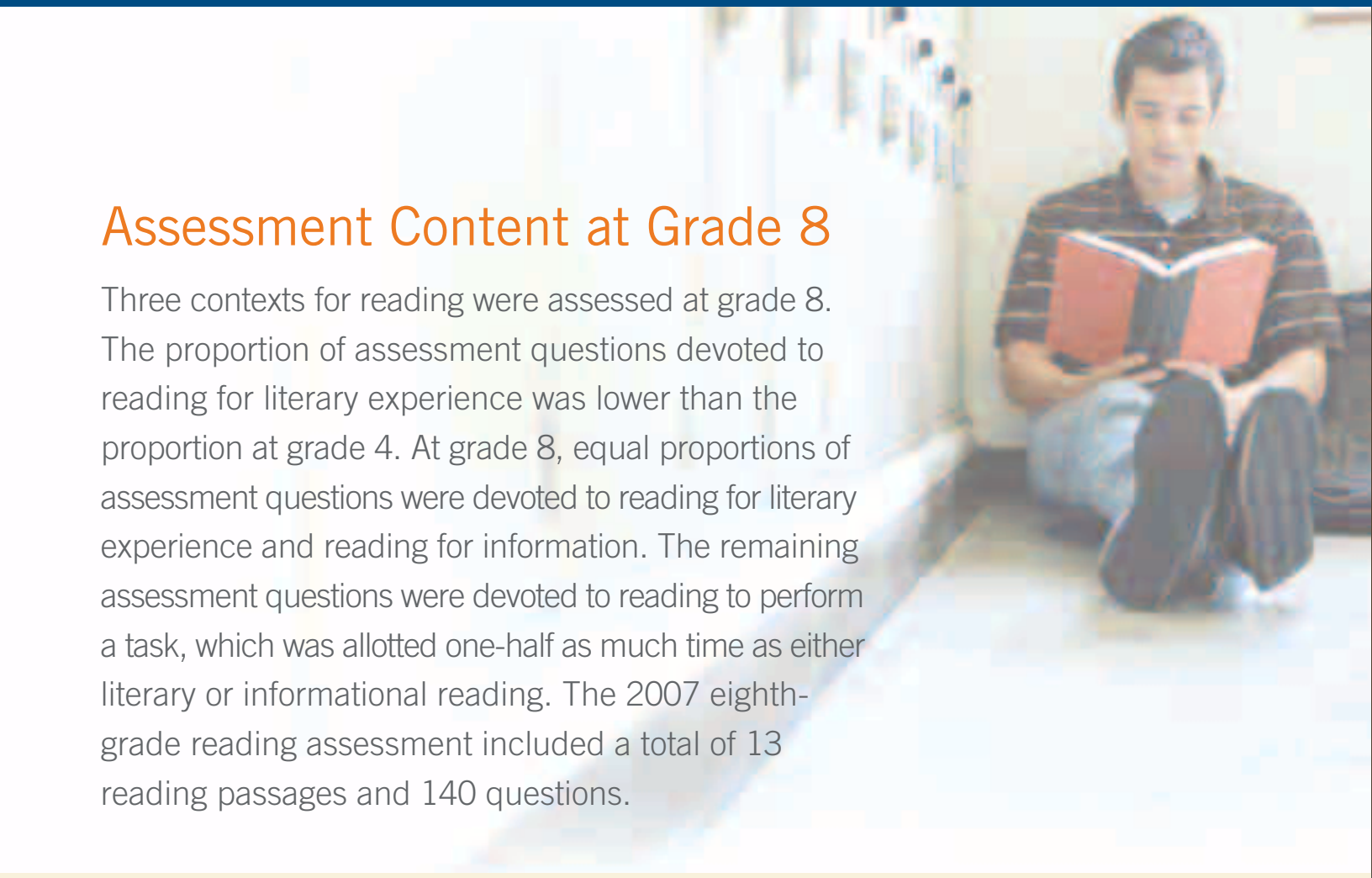
Gaps in average scores between the nation and the districts for all students ranged from –1 point for Charlotte to –21 points for Los Angeles (shown by the bars on the left side of figure 10). These gaps in overall scores may be associated with the greater percentages of lower-income students in the districts who usually have lower reading performance.

The right side of the figure shows the score gaps between lower-income students in the nation and in each district. Using Cleveland as an example, the district's average score was 15 points lower than the national average. When only lower-income students are considered, however, the apparent 1-point score difference between Cleveland and the nation was not statistically significant. For trend results of lower-income students in each district and their peers nationwide, see the section on individual districts later in this report.

Figure 10. **Average scores and score gaps between the nation and districts for all students and lower-income eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by urban district: 2007**



Rounds to zero.
[1] The score-point difference between this district and the nation was not statistically significant.
NOTE: The average score for all students in the nation was 261 and for students from lower-income families was 247. In NAEP, lower-income students are students identified as eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.



Assessment Content at Grade 8

Three contexts for reading were assessed at grade 8. The proportion of assessment questions devoted to reading for literary experience was lower than the proportion at grade 4. At grade 8, equal proportions of assessment questions were devoted to reading for literary experience and reading for information. The remaining assessment questions were devoted to reading to perform a task, which was allotted one-half as much time as either literary or informational reading. The 2007 eighth-grade reading assessment included a total of 13 reading passages and 140 questions.

Reading Achievement Levels at Grade 8

The following descriptions are abbreviated versions of the full achievement-level descriptions for grade 8 reading. The cut score depicting the lowest score representative of that level is noted in parentheses.

Basic (243): Eighth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should demonstrate a literal understanding of what they read and be able to make some interpretations. When reading text appropriate to eighth grade, they should be able to identify specific aspects of the text that reflect the overall meaning, extend the ideas in the text by making simple inferences, recognize and relate interpretations and connections among ideas in the text to personal experience, and draw conclusions based on the text.

Proficient (281): Eighth-grade students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to show an overall understanding of the text, including inferential as well as literal information. When reading text appropriate to eighth grade, they should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making clear inferences from it, by drawing conclusions, and by making connections to their own experiences—including other reading experiences. *Proficient* eighth-graders should be able to identify some of the devices authors use in composing text.

Advanced (323): Eighth-grade students performing at the *Advanced* level should be able to describe the more abstract themes and ideas of the overall text. When reading text appropriate to eighth grade, they should be able to analyze both meaning and form and support their analyses explicitly with examples from the text, and they should be able to extend text information by relating it to their experiences and to world events. At this level, student responses should be thorough, thoughtful, and extensive.

The full descriptions can be found at http://www.nagb.org/frameworks/reading_07.pdf.

Sample Reading Passage

The article below is an example of what an eighth-grader might read for information. The article uses a human interest approach to relate the investigative efforts of a middle school student and how her efforts helped her community. The two sample questions that follow were based on this reading passage.

KID FIGHTS CHEATER METERS AND WINS!

The true story of a girl with a stopwatch and a bag of nickels who uncovered a local parking scandal and helped change the laws of her state . . .

Ellie Lammer wasn't trying to spark a revolt, she just wanted a haircut. That was in the fall of 1997. Ellie was 11 years old at the time, and she was getting her tresses trimmed in her hometown of Berkeley, California. When Ellie and her mom returned to their car, they found a parking ticket stuck to the windshield. It didn't seem possible: Less than an hour earlier, Ellie had pumped an hour's worth of coins into the meter. But now the needle was at zero, and Ellie's mom owed $20.

Feeling cheated, Ellie dropped another nickel in the meter and twisted the knob. The needle clicked over to the four-minute mark. Ellie stared at her watch while her mom watched the meter. Less than three minutes later, all of the time had expired. There it was: proof that they'd been cheated. The city tore up the ticket when Ellie's mom complained about the meter.

But the experience left Ellie wondering how many other meters were inaccurate. Six months later, she decided to find out. She'd been looking around for a good science-fair project—and that meter in Berkeley still bothered her. So armed with a bag of nickels and a stopwatch, she hit the streets.

Ellie didn't have the time or money to test every meter, so she focused on a sample of 50 meters located in different parts of the city. To avoid inconveniencing motorists, she did her research after 6 P.M. and on Sundays, when the meters were not in use. She put in eight minutes' worth of nickels in each meter, then measured how much time it really gave.

The results were not pretty. Ellie's findings suggested that more than nine out of every ten meters in the city were inaccurate—and that every fourth parking meter was running out of time too quickly. With 3,600 parking meters in the city, that meant a lot of undeserved tickets. As Ellie wrote in her science-project report, "I learned which meters cheat you and which meters cheat the City of Berkeley. But I learned that almost all meters cheat someone, so beware."

When the science fair rolled around, Ellie presented her findings with computer-generated charts and graphs. Her classmates weren't very interested in her project. "It's not like they have to drive a car or put money in a parking meter," she explains. But her project was a huge hit with parents. More than 50 of them lined up that night to share their own parking-meter horror stories with Ellie.

After that, word about Ellie's meter project spread fast. Within a few weeks, Ellie got a call from local politician Diane Woolley. At the time, Berkeley was considering replacing its meters with more accurate digital ones. Ellie shared her findings at city hall, and the politicians were impressed. "We don't get reports this thorough when we pay consultants hundreds of thousands of dollars," one remarked. Based on Ellie's study, they decided to purchase 2,000 new meters.

The California state legislature also decided to crack down on cheater meters. After Ellie presented her findings, they enacted "Lammer's Law," which requires California's 26 counties to test the accuracy of parking meters. Any meter found to be inaccurate must be fixed or dismantled.

California Governor Pete Wilson signed the law on November 1, 1998. At the time, he commented, "Ellie's ingenuity and dedication has earned her the gratitude of those Californians who've dug through their purses and pockets in search of exact change to feed the meters, only to return to find their cars bearing the dreaded green envelope of a parking ticket."

continued...

Ellie became a celebrity. She was in newspapers all over the country and featured on local television news during the summer and fall of 1998. CNN did a story about her. She was even a guest on the *Late Show* with David Letterman. "It was kind of a weird moment of being a celebrity," she says.

Ellie, who's now an eighth-grader at Martin Luther King Middle School, is proud of the work she's done. But she doesn't see meter monitoring as her life's work: "Right now I don't mind being known as the parking-meter girl, but I'm sure that later in life I'll want something different."

Sample Question on Supporting Idea

This sample question asked students to take a critical perspective on a sentence from the article. The focus is not on the information itself, but on how that information functions in relation to other information in the article. This question was classified under the reading aspect, *Examining Content and Structure*.

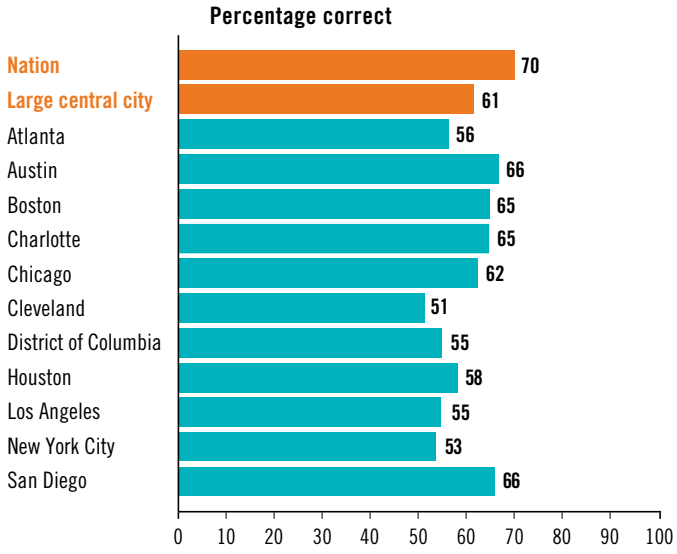
"We don't get reports this thorough when we pay consultants hundreds of thousands of dollars."

The author included this information to

- (A) **show how the city saves money**
- (B) **describe the city budget**
- (C) **emphasize Ellie's achievement**
- (D) **criticize the city of Berkeley**

Seventy percent of eighth-grade public school students in the nation selected the correct answer (choice C), recognizing that this supporting information was included to highlight the main subject of the article. The percentages of correct responses in each of the districts ranged from 51 percent in Cleveland to 66 percent in Austin and San Diego.

Percentage correct for eighth-grade public school students in 2007, by jurisdiction



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Sample Question on Drawing Conclusions

This sample question asked students to consider specific information provided in the article and to draw a conclusion from this information about the character of the person discussed in the article. This question was classified under the reading aspect, *Developing Interpretation*.

Student responses to this question were rated using the following four-level scoring guide:

Extensive—Responses use information in the article to provide a description of Ellie Lammer. Responses at this level provide at least two specific text-based things that she did and explain what those things say about her character.

Essential—Responses at this level provide one example of something Ellie Lammer did and explain what that says about her character. Responses at this level may provide a generalization about Ellie's actions without providing a specific example from the article; however, these responses do explain what her actions say about her character.

Partial—Responses at this level may focus on Ellie's actions without explaining what the actions tell about her character.

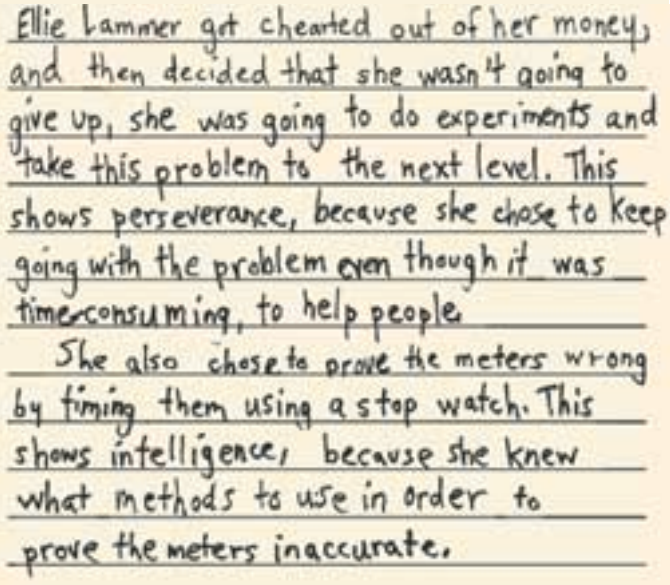
Unsatisfactory—Responses at this level demonstrate no understanding of Ellie's actions as described in the article or what those actions say about her character.

The student response shown here was rated "Extensive" because it uses two things that Ellie did as the bases for explaining two different aspects of her character.

The figure below shows the percentages of eighth-graders whose answers to the question were rated as "Extensive." Thirty-one percent of eighth-grade public school students in the nation provided a response rated as "Extensive." The percentages of student responses rated as "Extensive" in the districts ranged from 18 percent in Los Angeles to 32 percent in Chicago.

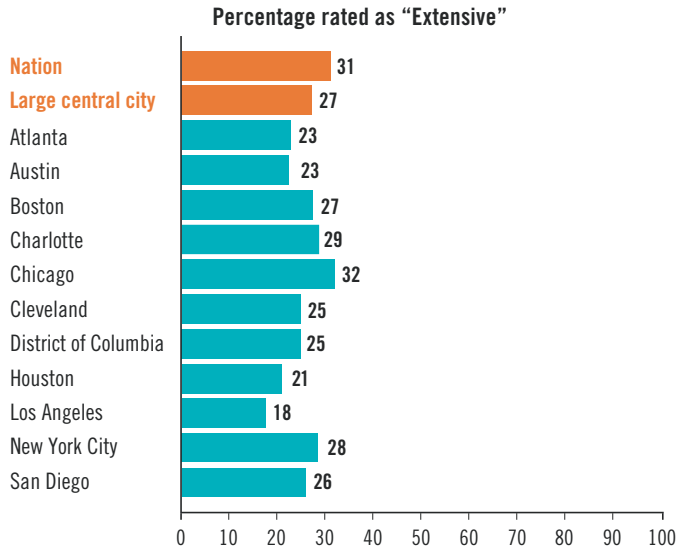
Choose two things Ellie Lammer did and explain what those things tell about her. Use examples from the article to support your answer.

Response rated as "Extensive"


Ellie Lammer got cheated out of her money, and then decided that she wasn't going to give up, she was going to do experiments and take this problem to the next level. This shows perseverance, because she chose to keep going with the problem even though it was timeconsuming, to help people.

She also chose to prove the meters wrong by timing them using a stop watch. This shows intelligence, because she knew what methods to use in order to prove the meters inaccurate.

Percentage rated as "Extensive" for eighth-grade public school students in 2007, by jurisdiction



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

What Fourth-Graders Know and Can Do in Reading

The item map below is useful for understanding performance at different levels on the scale. The scale scores on the left represent the average scores for students who were likely to get the items correct or complete. The lower-boundary scores at each achievement level are noted in boxes. The descriptions of selected assessment questions are listed in the right column and indicate what students needed to do to answer the question successfully. For example, the map on this page shows that fourth-graders performing near the middle of the *Basic* range (students with an average score of 220) were likely to be able to recognize the meaning of specialized vocabulary from context. Students performing near the lower end of the *Proficient* range (with an average score of 239) were likely to be able to identify a character's problem and describe how it was solved.

GRADE 4 NAEP READING ITEM MAP

	Scale score	Question description
	500	
	~	
Advanced	347	Integrate text ideas to provide and explain their application
	326	Evaluate titles and support judgment about them
	324	Provide text-based inference and support with story details
	302	Explain causal relation between character's action and story outcome
	290	Read across text to provide a sequence of specific information
	290	Describe change in story character and explain cause
	284	Use dialogue or action to provide inference about character trait
	277	*Recognize author's purpose for including information*
	268	Provide causal relation between text ideas
	268	
Proficient	265	Connect relevant text ideas to provide an explanation
	264	Extend text information to provide an opinion
	257	*Recognize the main purpose of an article*
	250	*Use local story context to recognize meaning of a word* (shown on page 16)
	242	Retrieve relevant information to fit description
	239	Identify character's problem and describe how it was solved
	238	*Recognize the main message of a story*
	238	
Basic	237	Use story details to infer and describe character's feelings
	236	Use character trait to make a comparison
	231	*Recognize fact supported by text information*
	226	*Recognize paraphrase of explicitly stated supporting example*
	220	*Recognize meaning of specialized vocabulary from context*
	216	*Recognize support for interpretation of character*
	209	*Recognize literal information from text*
	208	
	205	*Make simple inference to recognize relationship of picture to text*
	203	*Recognize the main topic of an article*
	200	Provide text-based explanation of character's importance to story
	193	*Recognize character's motivation for central story action*
	189	*Recognize important lesson based on story theme*
	158	Use explicitly stated information to provide character motivation (shown on page 17)
	~	
	0	

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of successfully answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct. Scale score ranges for reading achievement levels are referenced on the map.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Reading Assessment.

What Eighth-Graders Know and Can Do in Reading

The item map below illustrates the range of reading ability demonstrated by eighth-graders. For example, students performing in the middle of the *Basic* range (with an average score of 261) were likely to be able to identify the appropriate text recommendation for a specific situation. Students performing near the top of the *Proficient* range (with an average score of 318) were likely to be able to infer and explain traits of a character using specific examples.

GRADE 8 NAEP READING ITEM MAP

	Scale score	Question description
	500	
Advanced	365	*Use understanding of character to interpret author's purpose*
	357	Use examples to explain importance of setting to plot
	337	Search dense text to retrieve relevant explanatory facts
	329	Recognize narrative device and explain function in story
	326	Follow directions to fully complete task
	323	
Proficient	321	Integrate story details to explain central conflict
	318	Use specific examples to infer and explain character traits (shown on page 27)
	315	Apply text information to real life situation
	312	Infer and provide lesson based on historical biography
	308	Describe difficulty of a task in a different context
	299	*Recognize explicit information from highly detailed article*
	298	Use metaphor to interpret character
	293	*Recognize author's device to convey information related to a task*
	288	*Identify genre of story*
	284	*Recognize what story action reveals about a character*
	281	
Basic	279	Use task directions and prior knowledge to make a comparison
	278	Infer character's action from plot outcome
	272	Describe central problem faced by the main character
	265	*Recognize author's purpose for including a quotation* (shown on page 26)
	262	*Identify causal relation between historical events*
	261	*Use context to identify meaning of vocabulary*
	261	*Identify appropriate text recommendation for a specific situation*
	259	Provide specific text information to support a generalization
	253	Read across text to provide explanation
	248	*Recognize information included by author to persuade*
	244	Support opinion with text information or related prior knowledge
	243	
	235	*Recognize explicitly stated reason for action in an article*
	230	*Recognize reason for character's central emotion*
	218	*Identify inference based on part of the document*
	215	*Recognize an explicitly stated embedded detail*
	206	*Identify appropriate description of character's feelings*
	205	Use global understanding of the article to provide explanation
	0	

NOTE: Regular type denotes a constructed-response question. *Italic* type denotes a multiple-choice question. The position of a question on the scale represents the average scale score attained by students who had a 65 percent probability of successfully answering a constructed-response question, or a 74 percent probability of correctly answering a four-option multiple-choice question. For constructed-response questions, the question description represents students' performance rated as completely correct. Scale score ranges for reading achievement levels are referenced on the map.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Reading Assessment.

A Closer Look at Individual Districts

To set the context for a closer look at individual districts, an understanding of the different socio-demographic characteristics of the districts is important when making comparisons to the nation and among the districts. Table 4 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participating districts at grade 4. Generally, the districts had higher percentages of minority (races other than White) students, lower-income students, and English language learners than the nation. For example, the percentages of minority fourth-graders ranged from about 64 percent to 94 percent in the participating districts, compared to about 44 percent nationally in public schools. The percentage of fourth-graders eligible for the National School Lunch Program, used as an indicator of poverty, ranged from 48 percent to 100 percent in the districts compared with 45 percent in the nation. The urban districts, particularly those located in California and Texas, educate a substantially higher percentage of fourth-graders identified as English language learners than do public schools in the nation.

Table 4. **Selected characteristics of fourth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction: 2007**

Student characteristics	Nation	Large central city	Atlanta	Austin	Boston	Charlotte	Chicago	Cleveland	District of Columbia	Houston	Los Angeles	New York City	San Diego
Number of fourth-graders	3,441,000	546,000	4,000	6,000	4,000	10,000	30,000	4,000	5,000	15,000	54,000	67,000	10,000
Number of students assessed	183,400	35,000	1,400	1,600	1,300	1,700	2,300	1,100	1,800	2,400	2,700	2,500	1,700
Percentage of White students	56	21	14	28	13	36	10	20	6	7	9	17	24
Percentage of Black students	17	31	83	13	44	42	49	66	86	29	11	29	11
Percentage of Hispanic students	20	38	4	54	33	13	39	9	7	60	75	39	47
Percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students	5	7	#	4	9	4	3	2	1	3	5	14	17
Percentage eligible for National School Lunch Program	45	70	75	61	81	48	86	100[1]	66	84	77	85	65
Percentage identified as students with disabilities	14	13	10	14	21	12	12	18	15	11	11	15	14
Percentage identified as English language learners	11	22	3	32	29	11	21	7	9	37	48	18	42

Rounds to zero.
[1] In Cleveland, all students were categorized as eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
NOTE: The number of fourth-graders is rounded to the nearest 1,000. The number of students assessed is rounded to the nearest 100. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The race/ethnicity categories listed do not sum to 100 percent because the percentages for American Indian/Alaska Native and unclassified students are not shown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

Table 5 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participating districts at grade 8. As with grade 4, the participating urban districts predominantly serve students of races other than White, compared with public schools in the nation where about 42 percent of eighth-graders belong to races other than White. The urban districts, particularly those located in California, educate a higher percentage of eighth-graders identified as English language learners than do public schools in the nation. The percentages of students in the districts eligible for the National School Lunch Program, used as an indicator of poverty, ranged from 47 to 100 percent, and were higher than the 40 percent of eighth-graders in this category nationally.

In the next section, profiles of selected NAEP results from the 2007 Trial Urban District Assessment in reading are presented for each participating district. The profiles present a closer look at some key results for each district: comparison with its home state, comparison with the nation for lower-income students, trends for student groups by race/ethnicity, and trends in achievement levels.

Table 5. **Selected characteristics of eighth-grade public school students in NAEP reading, by jurisdiction: 2007**

Student characteristics	Nation	Large central city	Atlanta	Austin	Boston	Charlotte	Chicago	Cleveland	District of Columbia	Houston	Los Angeles	New York City	San Diego
Number of eighth-graders	3,553,000	536,000	3,000	5,000	4,000	9,000	25,000	4,000	5,000	13,000	52,000	69,000	9,000
Number of students assessed	154,700	28,500	900	1,500	1,200	1,400	1,800	1,100	1,800	2,000	2,100	2,000	1,400
Percentage of White students	58	23	6	31	16	35	9	15	3	9	9	16	26
Percentage of Black students	17	31	90	13	41	47	49	75	88	31	10	33	12
Percentage of Hispanic students	18	37	3	53	32	11	39	8	8	57	74	37	45
Percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander students	5	8	#	3	11	4	3	1	1	3	7	15	16
Percentage eligible for National School Lunch Program	40	64	75	55	70	47	85	100[1]	65	77	76	85	57
Percentage identified as students with disabilities	13	13	12	17	21	11	19	20	18	13	11	15	12
Percentage identified as English language learners	7	13	3	15	11	9	7	5	4	13	30	10	21

Rounds to zero.
[1] In Cleveland, all students were categorized as eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
NOTE: The number of fourth-graders is rounded to the nearest 1,000. The number of students assessed is rounded to the nearest 100. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. The race/ethnicity categories listed do not sum to 100 percent because the percentages for American Indian/Alaska Native and unclassified students are not shown.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2007 Trial Urban District Reading Assessment.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2007 TRIAL URBAN DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

For general information and results, see http://nationsreportcard.gov.

For an interactive database including student, teacher, and school variables for all participating districts, the nation, and large central city schools, see the NAEP Data Explorer at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/.

All released NAEP sample test questions with associated performance results by nation, state, and district are available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls/.