

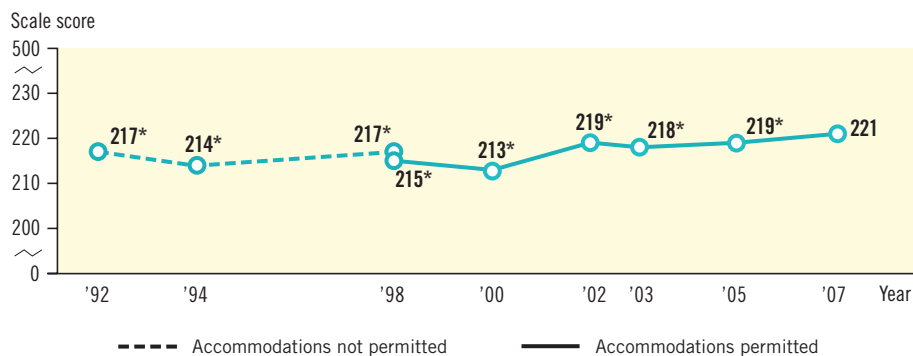
# 4th Grade



## Fourth-graders reading at higher levels

Fourth-graders' reading comprehension skills have risen compared to 15 years ago. As shown in figure 1, the average score of 221 in 2007 was higher than in any of the previous assessment years. Fourth-graders in 2007 scored 2 points higher than in 2005 and 4 points higher than in 1992.

Figure 1. **Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores**



\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

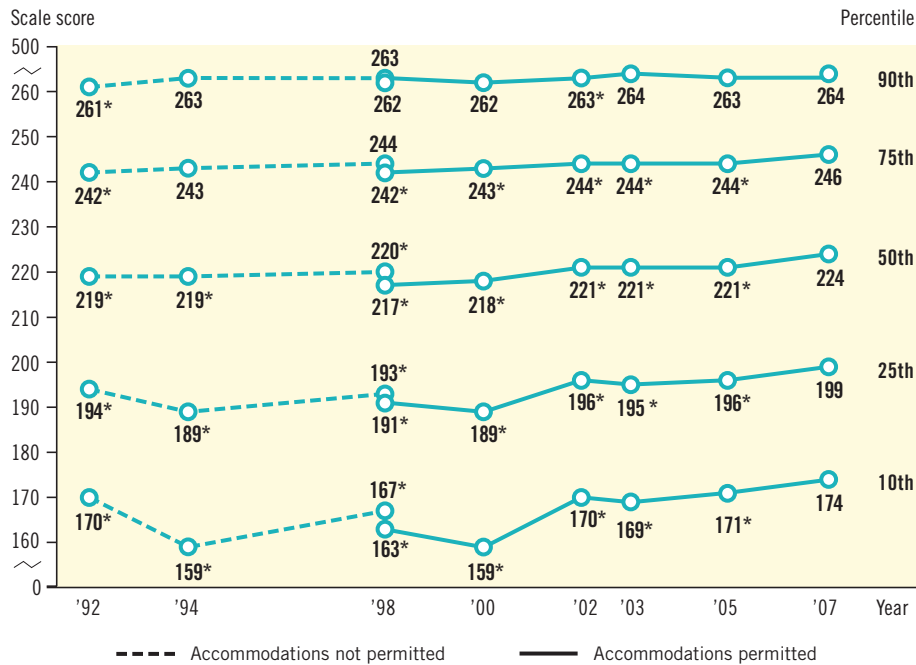
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

### Gains in reading contexts

Although not shown here, gains were also made in each of the two reading contexts assessed at grade 4. The score in reading for literary experience increased from 219 in 1992 to 223 in 2007. The score in reading for information increased from 214 in 1992 to 219 in 2007.

## Improvement for lower- and middle-performing students

Figure 2. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading percentile scores



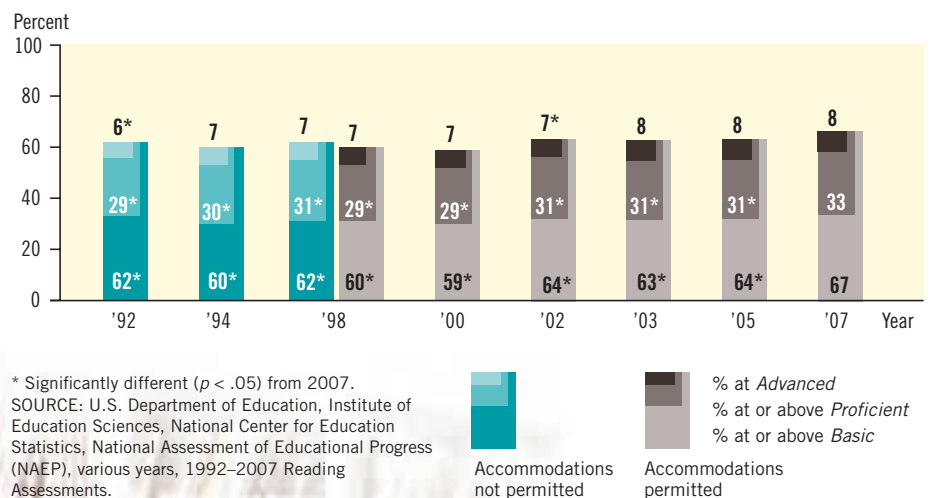
\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

Higher reading scores were seen particularly among lower- and middle-performing students (at the 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles). The score at each of these percentiles was higher in 2007 than in all previous assessments (figure 2). While the score in 2007 for students at the 75th percentile was higher than in both 2005 and 1992, the score for students at the 90th percentile showed no significant change in comparison to 2005 but was higher than in 1992.

The performance increases were reflected in higher percentages of students performing at or above the *Basic* level and the *Proficient* level.

The percentage of fourth-graders performing at or above *Basic* increased from 62 percent in 1992 to 67 percent in 2007 (figure 3). The percentage at or above *Proficient* increased from 29 to 33 percent over the same period.

Figure 3. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading achievement-level performance



\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

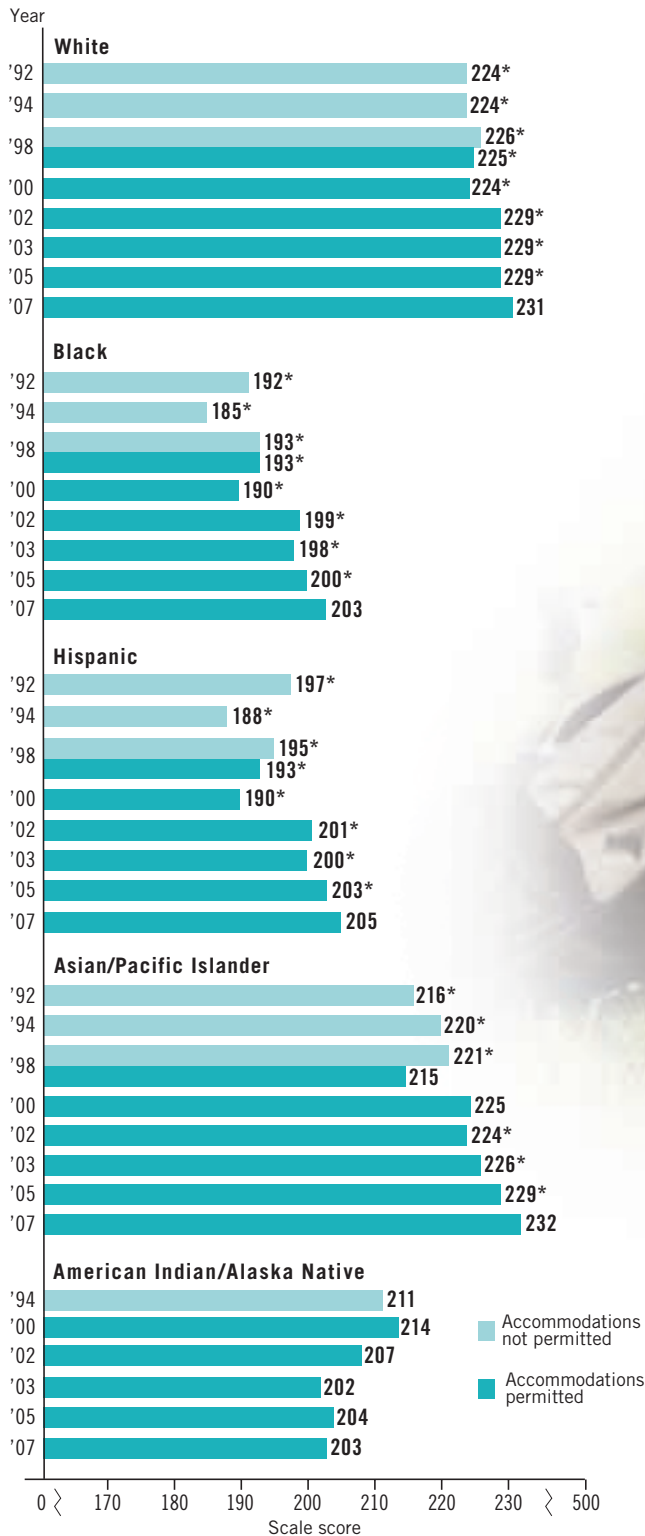
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

Accommodations not permitted

Accommodations permitted

# Most racial/ethnic groups show improvement

Figure 4. **Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores, by race/ethnicity**



Reading performance improved for four of the five racial/ethnic groups over the last 15 years. White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students all showed higher average reading scores in comparison to 2005 and 1992 (figure 4). Since 1992, Black and Asian/Pacific Islander students made greater gains (increases of 11 and 16 points, respectively) than White students (a gain of 6 points<sup>1</sup>).

There was no significant change in the average reading score for American Indian/Alaska Native students compared to all previous assessment years for which data were available.

<sup>1</sup> The score-point gain is based on the difference of the unrounded scores as opposed to the rounded scores shown in the figure.



## ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL RESULTS...

Information is available on achievement-level results for racial/ethnic groups and other reporting categories at [http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2007/data.asp](http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2007/data.asp).

\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

NOTE: Sample sizes were insufficient to permit reliable estimates for American Indian/Alaska Native fourth-graders in 1992 and 1998. Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

## White – Black score gap narrows

The increase in the score for Black fourth-graders contributed to the narrowing of the score gap with their White peers. While there was a 27-point gap between White and Black students in 2007, the gap was smaller than in all previous assessments (figure 5).

The 26-point score gap between White and Hispanic students in 2007 was not significantly different from the gaps in 2005 or 1992.

Figure 5. Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores and score gaps, by selected racial/ethnic groups

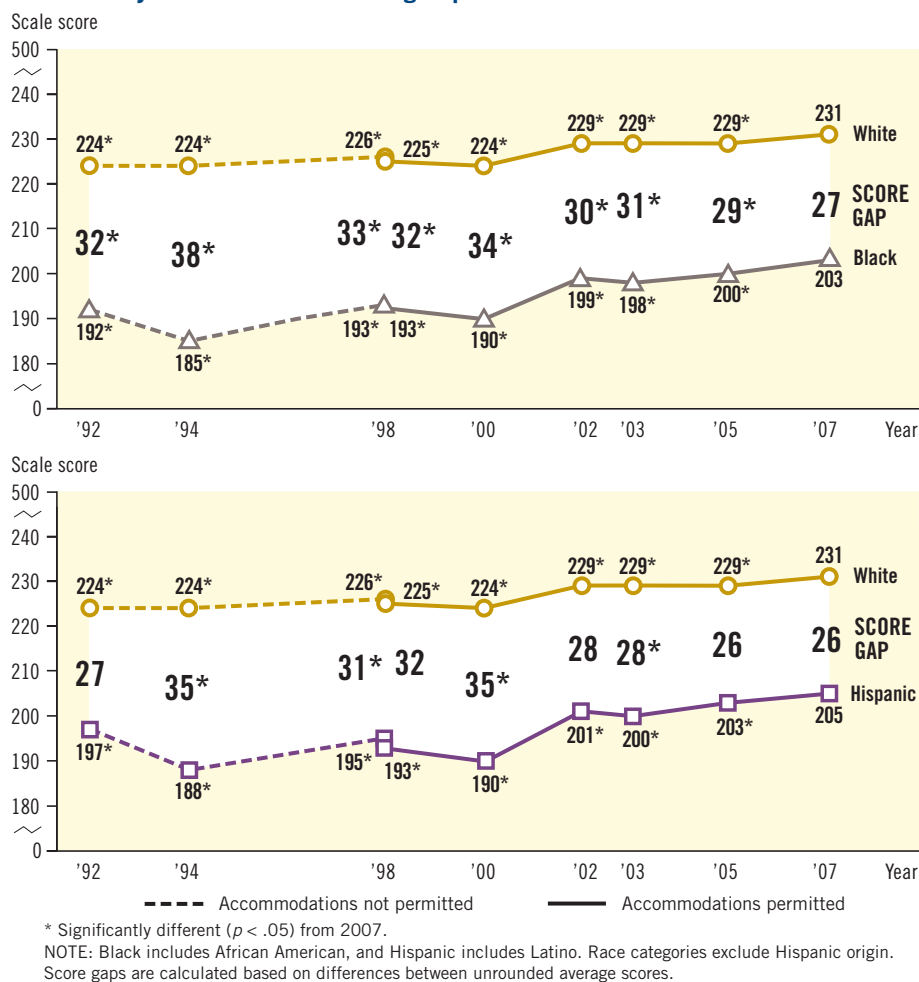


Table 3. Percentage of students assessed in fourth-grade NAEP reading, by race/ethnicity: Various years, 1992–2007

Race/ethnicity	1992	1994	1998	2000	2002	2003	2005	2007
White	73*	72*	66*	63*	61*	60*	59	58
Black	17	17	15	17	17*	17	16	16
Hispanic	7*	7*	14*	14*	16*	17*	18	19
Asian/Pacific Islander	2*	3*	4	4	4*	4*	5	5
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

In each assessment year, NAEP collects information on student demographics. As shown in table 3, there have been no significant changes since 2005 in the percentages of students in any of the five racial/ethnic groups. In comparison to 1992, the percentage of White students in the population has declined, while the percentages of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students have increased.

\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Detail may not sum to totals because results are not shown for the “unclassified” race/ethnicity category.

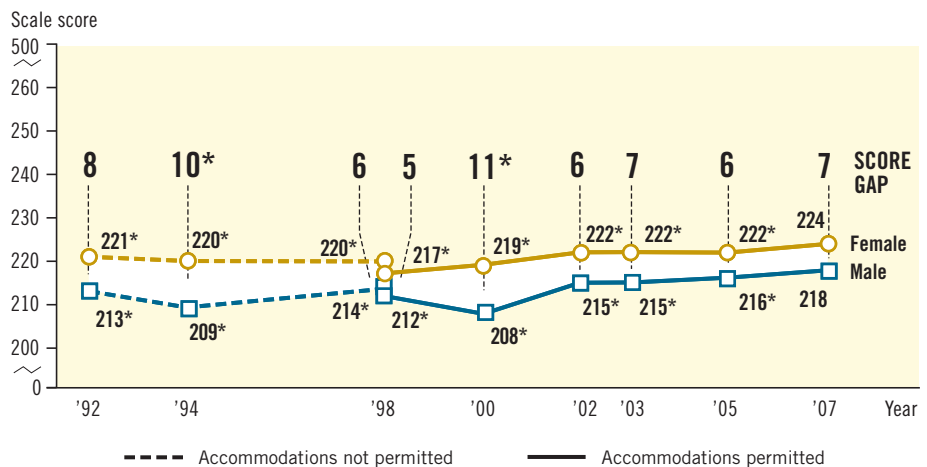
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

# Females outperform males

The overall improvement in reading at grade 4 was seen in the performance of both male and female students. Reading scores were higher in 2007 than in all previous assessment years for both groups (figure 6).

In 2007, female fourth-graders scored higher on average in reading than their male counterparts. The 7-point score gap between the two groups was not significantly different from the gaps in 2005 or in 1992.

Figure 6. **Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores and score gaps, by gender**



\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

NOTE: Score gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

Table 4. **Average scores in fourth-grade NAEP reading, by reading context and gender: 2007**

Gender	Reading for literary experience	Reading for information
Male	219*	216*
Female	227	221

\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from female students in 2007.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

Average reading scores remained higher for female students than for male students when results were examined by each context for reading. Female students scored 8 points higher in reading for literary experience and 5 points higher in reading for information (table 4).

## Public school students score lower than private school students

Ninety percent of fourth-graders attended public schools in 2007, and 10 percent attended private schools. The average reading score for fourth-graders in public schools (220) was lower than for students in private schools overall (234) and lower than for students in Catholic schools specifically (232).

Sample sizes for private schools as a whole were not always large enough to produce reliable estimates of student performance in some of the previous assessments,

limiting the comparisons that can be made in performance over time (see the section on School and Student Participation Rates in the Technical Notes for more information). Trend results for public and Catholic school students, and for private school students in those years in which sample sizes were sufficient, are available at: [http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading\\_2007/r0038.asp](http://nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2007/r0038.asp).



# Both higher- and lower-income level students make gains

A student's eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch is used as an indicator of socioeconomic status; students from low-income families are typically eligible (eligibility criteria are described in the Technical Notes), while students from higher-income families typically are not.

Students who were not eligible continued to score higher on average

than students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; however, average reading scores were higher in 2007 than in 2005 for all three groups (figure 7). When comparing the performance of the two eligible groups in 2007, those students eligible for reduced-price lunch scored higher on average than students eligible for free lunch.

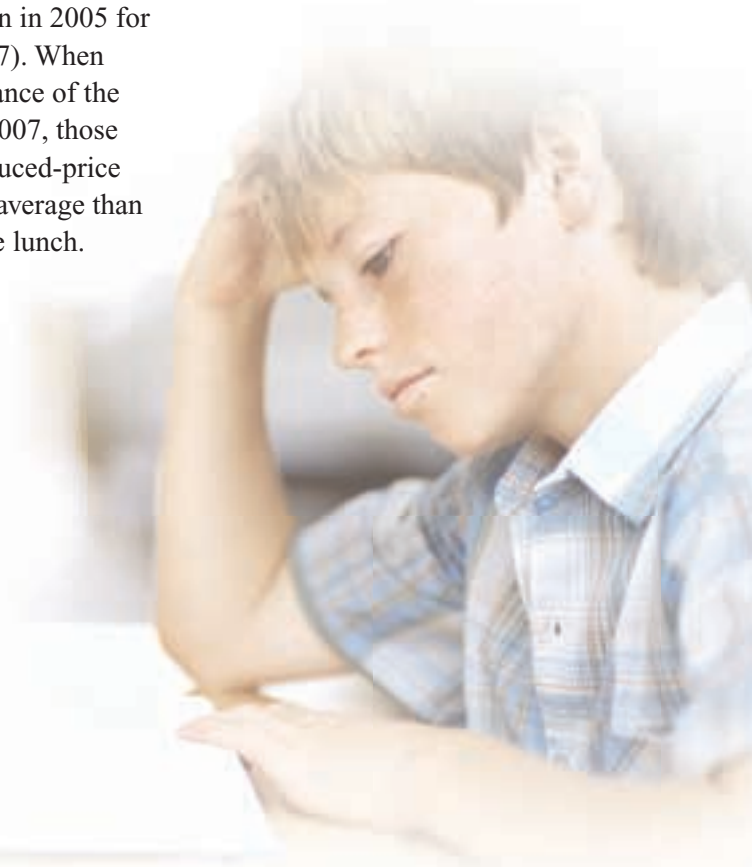
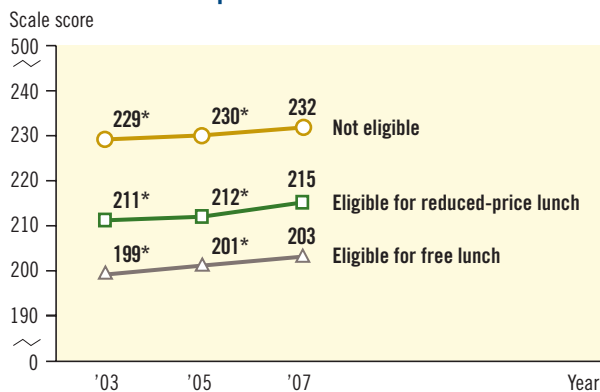


Figure 7. **Trend in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch**



\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007.

Table 5. **Percentage of students assessed in fourth-grade NAEP reading, by eligibility for free or reduced-price school lunch: 2003, 2005, and 2007**

Eligibility status	2003	2005	2007
Eligible for free lunch	32*	34	35
Eligible for reduced-price lunch	8*	7*	6
Not eligible	50*	50*	52
Information not available	10*	8*	7

\* 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), 2003, 2005, and 2007 Reading Assessments.

More than one-third of fourth-graders assessed were eligible for free lunch in 2007 (table 5).

Changes in these percentages may reflect not only a shift in the population but also changes in the National School Lunch Program and improvements in data quality. See the Technical Notes for more information.

# State Performance at Grade 4

State results for public school students make it possible to compare each state's performance to other states and to the nation. All 50 states and 2 jurisdictions (i.e., the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) participated in the 2007 reading assessment. These 52 states and jurisdictions are all referred to as "states" in the following summary of state results. All states also participated in 2005, and 42 participated in the 1992 assessment, allowing for comparisons over time.

## Scores increase since 2005 in one-third of states

The map on the right highlights the 18 states that showed an increase in their overall average reading score from 2005 to 2007 (figure 8). Of these 18 states, scores also increased for White students in 6 states, Black students in 8 states, and Hispanic students in 2 states. Scores increased for all three racial/ethnic student groups in New Jersey.

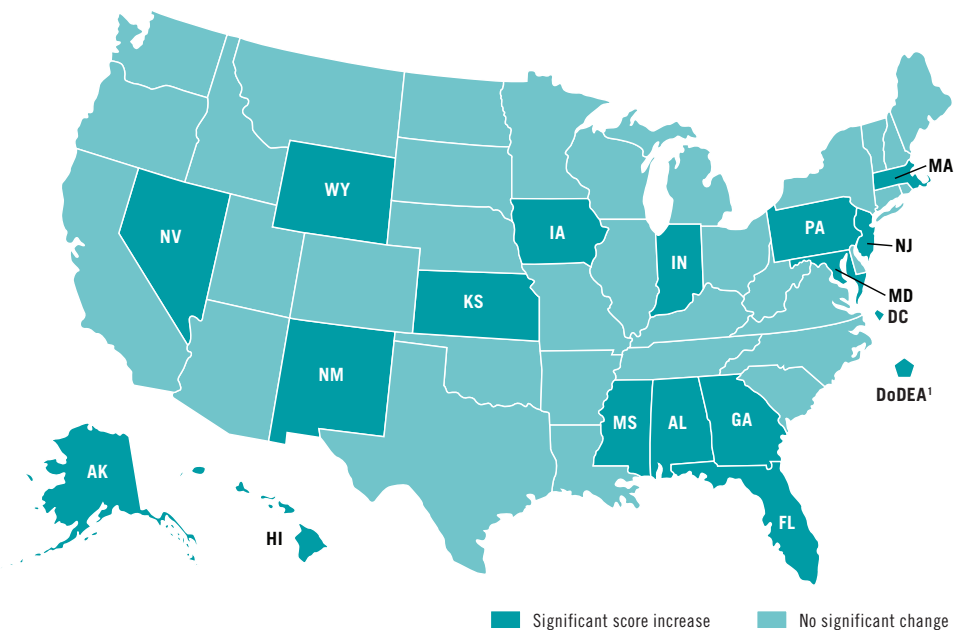
In no state did scores decline since 2005 for public school students overall or for any of the racial/ethnic student groups.

When making state comparisons, it is important to remember that performance results may be affected by differences in demographic makeup and exclusion and

accommodation rates for students with disabilities and English language learners. Differences in performance could be affected if exclusion rates are comparatively

high or vary widely over time. See appendix tables A-3 through A-5 for state exclusion and accommodation rates.

Figure 8. **Changes in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores between 2005 and 2007**

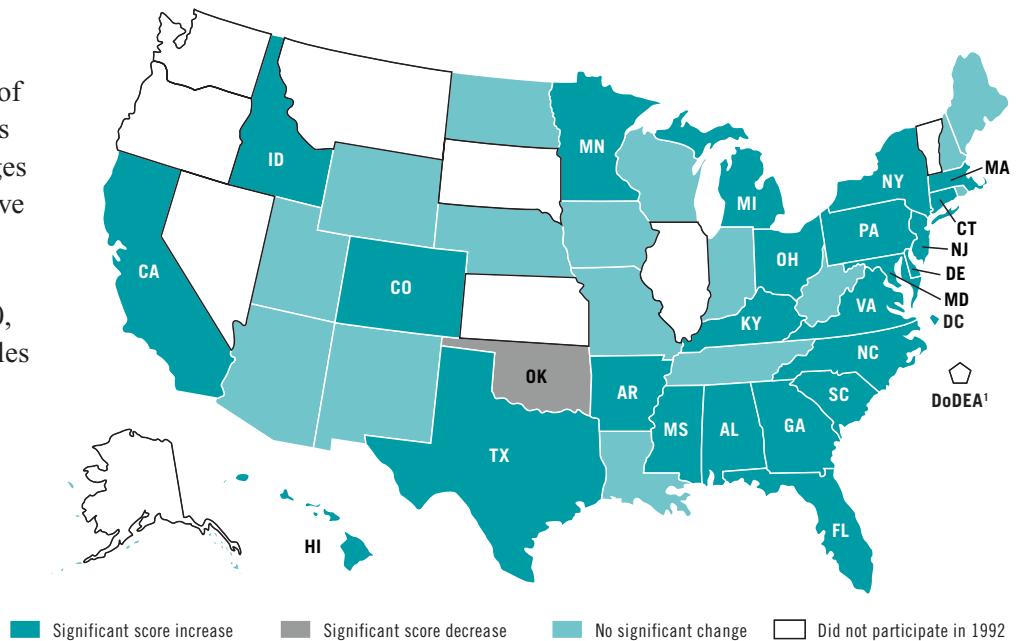


<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005 and 2007 Reading Assessments.

## Scores higher than in 1992 for 25 states

Of the 42 states that participated in both the 1992 and 2007 assessments, 25 showed increases in average scores, and 1 state showed a decrease (figure 9). Twenty-one of the 25 states with score increases also showed increased percentages of students performing at or above *Basic* and at or above *Proficient*. These and other state results for grade 4 are provided in figure 10, tables 6 and 7, and appendix tables A-7 through A-13.

Figure 9. **Changes in fourth-grade NAEP reading average scores between 1992 and 2007**



<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 and 2007 Reading Assessments.

## States' progress varies by context for reading

All of the texts used to measure reading comprehension at grade 4 are classified within the framework dimension of context for reading: reading for literary experience and reading for information. Reading for literary experience is measured with fictional texts that include stories and folktales. Reading for information is measured with articles from children's magazines or from textbooks.

Nationally, students improved their performance overall and in both reading contexts from 2005 to 2007. States' overall performance was not always consistent with their performance in each reading context. Some states improved overall and in both reading contexts. Others did not improve in their overall performance, but did improve in one of the reading contexts. Even states that experienced an overall decline in reading performance may not have declined in both reading contexts.

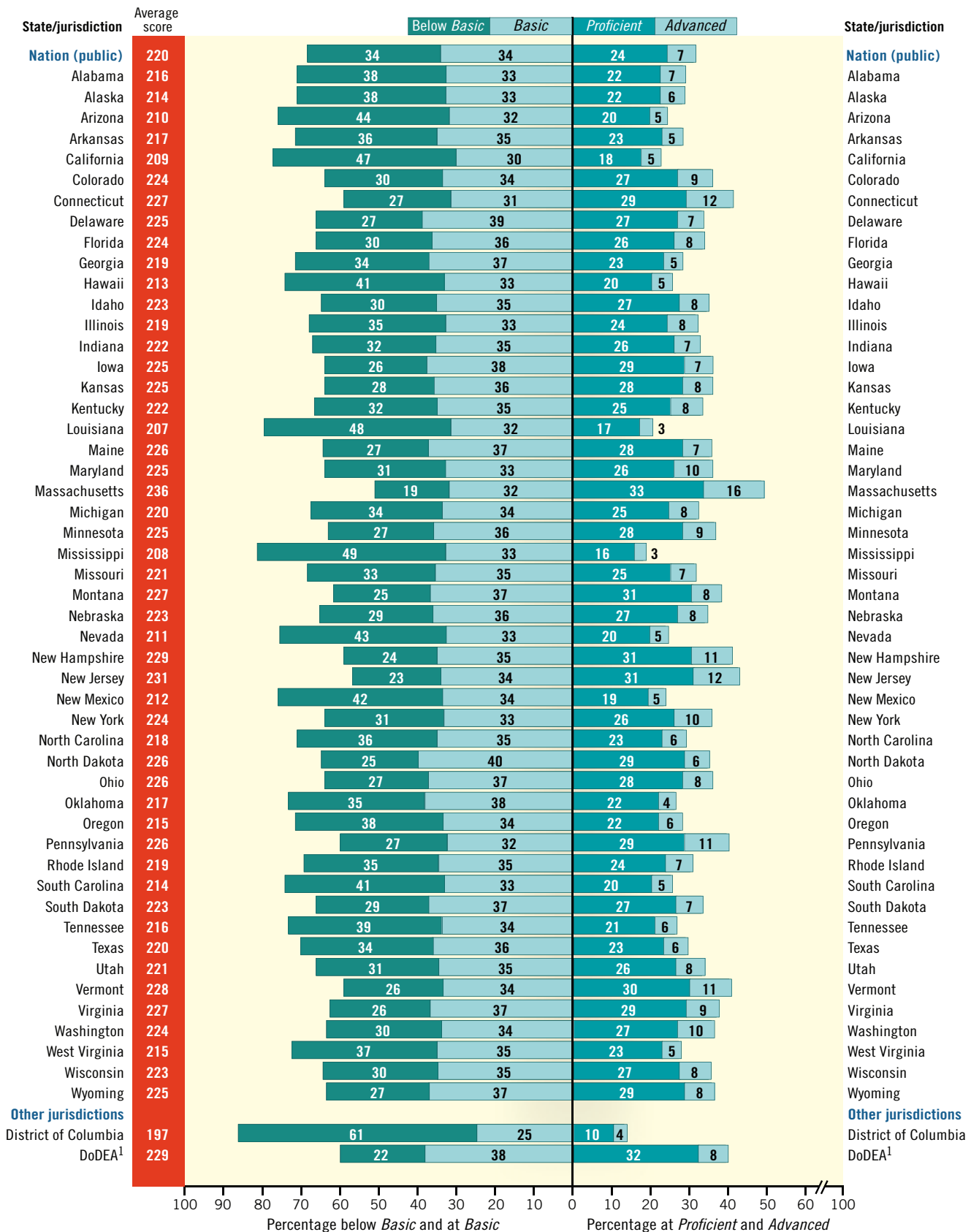
When compared to 2005...

...6 of the 18 states that posted overall gains also showed gains in both reading contexts. They were Alabama, the District of Columbia, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. Twelve states showed gains in either reading for information or reading for literary experience but not both.

...9 of the 34 states that showed no significant change in overall performance showed gains in reading for information. None of these 34 states improved in reading for literary experience.



Figure 10. Average scores and achievement-level results in NAEP reading for fourth-grade public school students, by state: 2007



<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

NOTE: The shaded bars are graphed using unrounded numbers. 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), 2007 Reading Assessment.

Table 6. Average scores in NAEP reading for fourth-grade public school students, by state: Various years, 1992–2007

State/jurisdiction	Accommodations not permitted			Accommodations permitted				
	1992	1994	1998	1998	2002	2003	2005	2007
<b>Nation (public)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>215*</b>	<b>212*</b>	<b>215*</b>	<b>213*</b>	<b>217*</b>	<b>216*</b>	<b>217*</b>	<b>220</b>
Alabama	207*	208*	211*	211*	207*	207*	208*	216
Alaska	—	—	—	—	—	212	211*	214
Arizona	209	206	207	206	205	209	207	210
Arkansas	211*	209*	209*	209*	213*	214	217	217
California	202*	197*	202	202*	206	206	207	209
Colorado	217*	213*	222	220	—	224	224	224
Connecticut	222*	222*	232	230	229	228	226	227
Delaware	213*	206*	212*	207*	224	224	226	225
Florida	208*	205*	207*	206*	214*	218*	219*	224
Georgia	212*	207*	210*	209*	215*	214*	214*	219
Hawaii	203*	201*	200*	200*	208*	208*	210*	213
Idaho	219*	—	—	—	220*	218*	222	223
Illinois	—	—	—	—	—	216	216	219
Indiana	221	220	—	—	222	220	218*	222
Iowa	225	223	223	220*	223	223	221*	225
Kansas	—	—	222	221	222	220*	220*	225
Kentucky	213*	212*	218*	218*	219*	219	220	222
Louisiana	204	197*	204	200*	207	205	209	207
Maine	227	228	225	225	225	224	225	226
Maryland	211*	210*	215*	212*	217*	219*	220*	225
Massachusetts	226*	223*	225*	223*	234	228*	231*	236
Michigan	216*	—	217	216*	219	219	218	220
Minnesota	221*	218*	222	219*	225	223	225	225
Mississippi	199*	202*	204	203*	203*	205	204*	208
Missouri	220	217*	216*	216*	220	222	221	221
Montana	—	222*	226	225	224	223*	225	227
Nebraska	221	220	—	—	222	221	221	223
Nevada	—	—	208	206*	209	207*	207*	211
New Hampshire	228	223*	226*	226	—	228	227	229
New Jersey	223*	219*	—	—	—	225*	223*	231
New Mexico	211	205*	206*	205*	208*	203*	207*	212
New York	215*	212*	216*	215*	222	222	223	224
North Carolina	212*	214*	217	213*	222*	221*	217	218
North Dakota	226	225	—	—	224*	222*	225	226
Ohio	217*	—	—	—	222	222*	223	226
Oklahoma	220*	—	220	219	213*	214*	214	217
Oregon	—	—	214	212	220*	218	217	215
Pennsylvania	221*	215*	—	—	221*	219*	223*	226
Rhode Island	217	220	218	218	220	216	216	219
South Carolina	210*	203*	210	209*	214	215	213	214
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	222	222	223
Tennessee	212	213	212	212*	214	212	214	216
Texas	213*	212*	217	214*	217	215*	219	220
Utah	220	217*	215*	216*	222	219	221	221
Vermont	—	—	—	—	227	226	227	228
Virginia	221*	213*	218*	217*	225	223*	226	227
Washington	—	213*	217*	218*	224	221	223	224
West Virginia	216	213	216	216	219*	219*	215	215
Wisconsin	224	224	224	222	—	221	221	223
Wyoming	223	221*	219*	218*	221*	222*	223*	225
Other jurisdictions								
District of Columbia	188*	179*	182*	179*	191*	188*	191*	197
DoDEA <sup>2</sup>	—	—	222*	220*	224*	224*	226*	229

— Not available. The jurisdiction did not participate or did not meet the minimum participation guidelines for reporting.

\* Significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) from 2007 when only one jurisdiction or the nation is being examined.

<sup>1</sup> National results for assessments prior to 2002 are based on the national sample, not on aggregated state samples.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools). Before 2005, DoDEA overseas and domestic schools were separate jurisdictions in NAEP. Pre-2005 data presented here were recalculated for comparability.

NOTE: State-level data were not collected in 2000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

Table 7. **Percentage of fourth-grade public school students and average scores in NAEP reading, by selected student groups and state: 2007**

State/jurisdiction	Race/ethnicity									
	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific Islander		American Indian/ Alaska Native	
	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score
<b>Nation (public)</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>206</b>
Alabama	58	227	37	201	3	197	1	‡	#	‡
Alaska	54	228	4	207	4	206	6	217	26	188
Arizona	44	224	5	206	44	197	2	229	4	187
Arkansas	70	226	20	195	8	202	1	‡	1	‡
California	28	227	7	200	52	195	11	228	#	‡
Colorado	62	234	5	210	28	204	4	233	1	‡
Connecticut	64	238	14	203	16	203	4	244	#	‡
Delaware	53	233	34	213	9	218	3	246	#	‡
Florida	47	232	21	208	25	218	2	241	#	‡
Georgia	48	230	39	205	8	212	2	232	#	‡
Hawaii	16	227	3	212	4	205	65	210	1	‡
Idaho	81	227	1	‡	13	204	2	‡	2	202
Illinois	55	230	20	201	20	205	3	240	#	‡
Indiana	80	226	10	201	6	207	1	‡	#	‡
Iowa	86	227	5	205	6	208	2	235	#	‡
Kansas	73	229	8	208	13	209	3	229	2	‡
Kentucky	84	225	11	203	1	‡	1	‡	#	‡
Louisiana	49	220	48	194	2	213	1	‡	1	‡
Maine	96	226	2	‡	1	‡	1	‡	#	‡
Maryland	52	236	34	208	8	213	5	243	#	‡
Massachusetts	75	241	8	211	10	209	6	241	#	‡
Michigan	71	227	20	197	4	210	3	233	1	‡
Minnesota	78	231	8	198	6	200	6	218	2	205
Mississippi	47	222	51	195	2	‡	1	‡	#	‡
Missouri	75	226	20	200	3	213	2	‡	#	‡
Montana	83	230	1	‡	3	220	1	‡	12	204
Nebraska	76	230	8	194	13	203	2	‡	1	‡
Nevada	44	224	9	202	37	196	8	220	2	‡
New Hampshire	92	230	2	215	3	209	2	235	#	‡
New Jersey	59	238	15	212	18	214	8	245	#	‡
New Mexico	32	228	3	208	55	204	2	‡	8	197
New York	53	234	19	208	19	206	8	236	#	‡
North Carolina	56	228	27	202	10	205	2	228	2	202
North Dakota	88	229	2	‡	2	‡	1	‡	8	204
Ohio	75	231	17	204	2	214	1	‡	#	‡
Oklahoma	60	223	10	204	8	198	2	221	20	213
Oregon	69	222	3	198	18	190	6	218	2	206
Pennsylvania	76	233	15	200	6	200	3	228	#	‡
Rhode Island	68	227	9	198	18	198	4	219	1	‡
South Carolina	56	224	36	199	4	205	1	‡	#	‡
South Dakota	84	228	2	‡	2	209	1	‡	12	196
Tennessee	70	224	25	192	3	208	2	‡	#	‡
Texas	37	232	16	207	43	212	4	236	#	‡
Utah	81	226	1	‡	13	201	3	217	2	‡
Vermont	94	229	2	‡	1	‡	2	‡	1	‡
Virginia	60	233	26	213	7	216	5	237	#	‡
Washington	66	229	6	206	15	206	11	232	3	205
West Virginia	93	216	6	202	1	‡	1	‡	#	‡
Wisconsin	79	229	11	191	7	208	2	222	1	‡
Wyoming	84	228	2	‡	10	210	1	‡	4	200
Other jurisdictions										
District of Columbia	6	258	86	192	7	206	1	‡	#	‡
DoDEA <sup>1</sup>	49	235	19	218	14	223	7	228	1	‡

See notes at end of table.

Table 7. **Percentage of fourth-grade public school students and average scores in NAEP reading, by selected student groups and state: 2007—Continued**

State/jurisdiction	Eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch				Gender			
	Eligible		Not eligible		Male		Female	
	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score	Percentage of students	Average scale score
<b>Nation (public)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>223</b>
Alabama	55	203	45	232	51	213	49	219
Alaska	42	197	58	227	51	210	49	219
Arizona	51	196	46	224	52	206	48	214
Arkansas	56	205	44	232	50	213	50	221
California	53	195	44	225	51	204	49	213
Colorado	38	206	62	235	51	221	49	226
Connecticut	30	201	70	239	51	224	49	231
Delaware	38	214	61	232	50	222	50	228
Florida	49	213	50	234	51	220	49	227
Georgia	50	207	49	231	49	216	51	222
Hawaii	42	203	58	221	51	208	49	219
Idaho	43	212	56	232	51	221	49	226
Illinois	44	204	56	232	51	217	49	222
Indiana	40	209	59	231	50	219	50	224
Iowa	32	212	68	231	50	222	50	228
Kansas	40	212	60	233	49	221	51	228
Kentucky	52	212	48	234	49	219	51	226
Louisiana	69	200	31	225	51	203	49	212
Maine	36	213	64	233	51	223	49	228
Maryland	33	207	67	234	50	221	50	228
Massachusetts	26	214	73	243	50	233	50	238
Michigan	36	204	64	229	50	216	50	224
Minnesota	28	206	72	233	50	223	50	227
Mississippi	69	200	29	225	50	204	50	212
Missouri	42	208	57	230	51	216	49	225
Montana	37	215	60	234	51	225	49	228
Nebraska	39	208	61	232	51	221	49	225
Nevada	42	197	55	222	50	208	50	214
New Hampshire	18	212	80	233	50	226	50	232
New Jersey	27	210	71	238	51	228	49	234
New Mexico	65	203	35	228	49	210	51	213
New York	47	209	52	237	49	220	51	227
North Carolina	47	205	51	229	50	214	50	222
North Dakota	31	215	69	231	51	224	49	229
Ohio	36	211	64	234	51	223	49	228
Oklahoma	54	209	46	227	50	214	50	220
Oregon	44	200	54	228	51	212	49	218
Pennsylvania	35	207	65	237	50	223	50	230
Rhode Island	40	202	60	230	51	215	49	223
South Carolina	52	201	48	228	53	210	47	218
South Dakota	36	209	64	231	51	220	49	227
Tennessee	48	202	52	229	50	213	50	219
Texas	54	209	44	232	50	217	50	223
Utah	36	208	63	229	50	217	50	225
Vermont	31	212	69	235	51	225	49	232
Virginia	29	213	71	233	50	224	50	230
Washington	38	210	58	234	51	221	49	227
West Virginia	52	206	48	225	52	211	48	220
Wisconsin	32	205	67	232	51	222	49	224
Wyoming	34	214	65	231	50	222	50	228
Other jurisdictions								
District of Columbia	66	188	34	216	48	194	52	200
DoDEA <sup>1</sup>	#	‡	#	‡	50	226	50	233

# Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools).

NOTE: Black includes African American, Hispanic includes Latino, and Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin. Results are not shown for students whose race/ethnicity was "unclassified" and for students whose eligibility for free/reduced-price school lunch was not available.

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

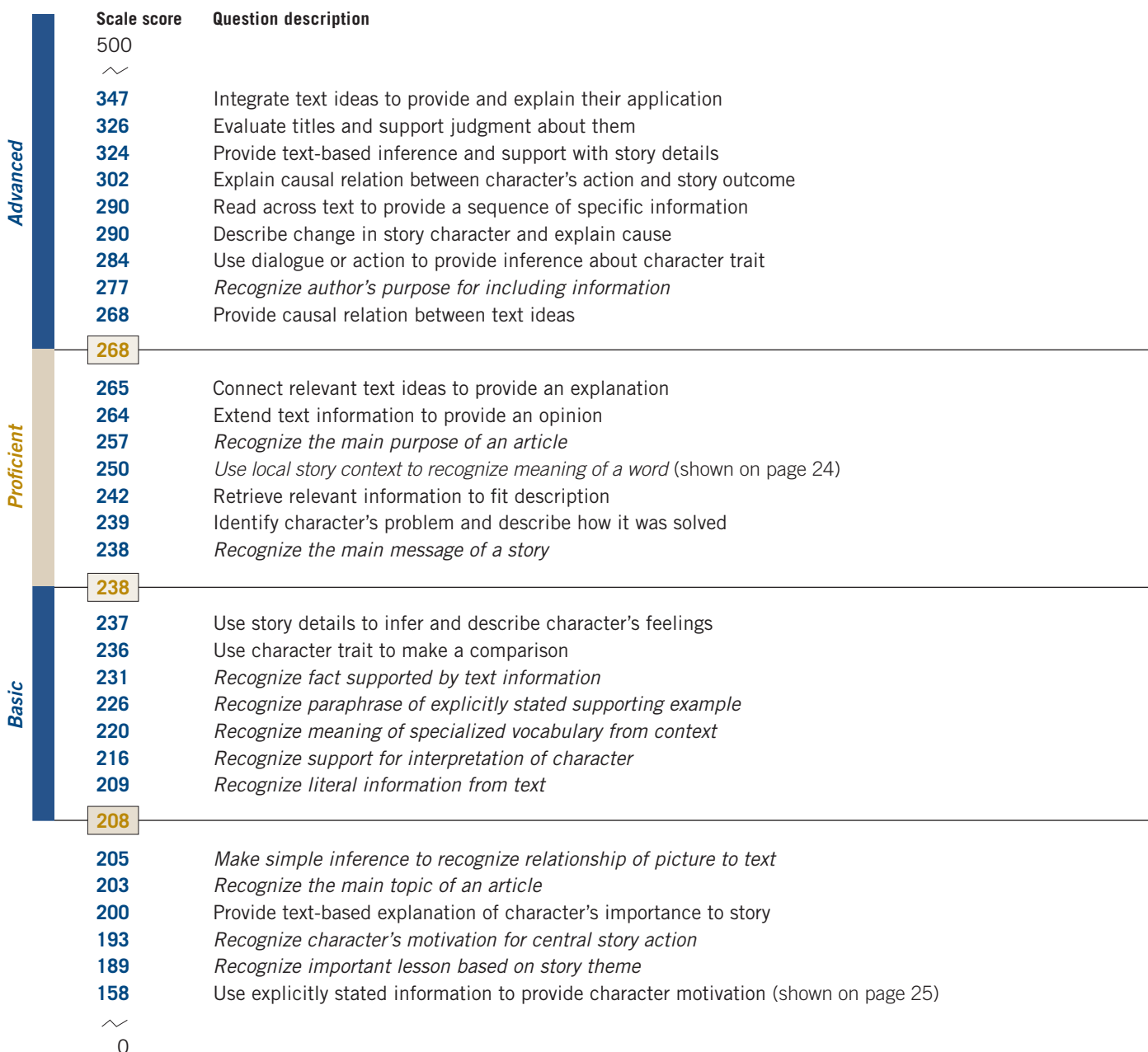
The full descriptions can be found at [http://www.nagb.org/frameworks/reading\\_07.pdf](http://www.nagb.org/frameworks/reading_07.pdf).

## 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



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.

## 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.

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*.

Fifty-two percent of fourth-graders 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. Of the incorrect answers, choices C and D, which are ordinary functions of the eyes, were selected by 41 percent of fourth-graders.

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

- Ⓐ Yelling
- Ⓒ Looking
- Ⓑ Begging
- Ⓓ Blinking

### Percentage of fourth-grade students in each response category in 2007

Choice A	Choice B	Choice C	Choice D	Omitted
7	52	21	20	1

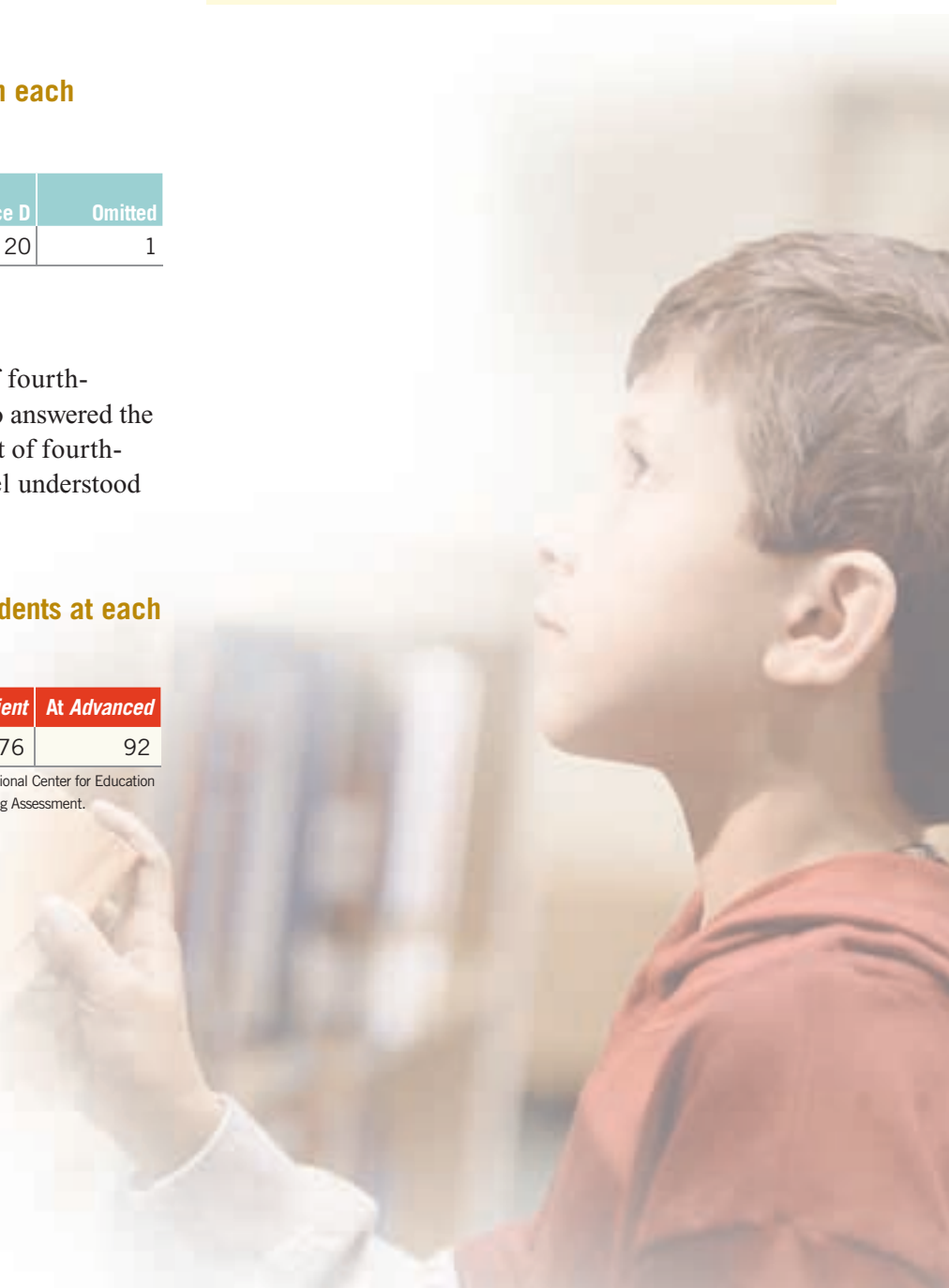
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

The table below shows the percentage of fourth-graders within each achievement level who answered the question correctly. For example, 76 percent of fourth-graders performing at the *Proficient* level understood the meaning of the word.

### Percentage correct for fourth-grade students at each achievement level in 2007

Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At Proficient	At Advanced
52	23	51	76	92

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

Missing responses were considered intentional omissions.

The first student response on the right 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. Fifty-four percent of fourth-graders provided a response rated as “Full comprehension.” The second response was rated as “Partial” because it provides a story detail related to Rosa visiting the ducks at the beginning of the story. Thirty-four percent of fourth-graders provided a response rated as “Partial.”

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

**Response rated as “Full comprehension”**

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 “Partial comprehension”**

Rosa visits the ducks because she liked them and her mama wouldn't be home.

### Percentage of fourth-grade students in each response category in 2007

Full comprehension	Partial or surface comprehension	Little or no comprehension	Omitted
54	34	11	1

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because a small percentage of responses that did not address the assessment task are not shown.

The table below shows the percentage of fourth-graders within each achievement level whose answer to the question above was rated as “Full comprehension.” For example, 56 percent of fourth-graders performing at the *Basic* level were able both to provide a reason and support it with details to demonstrate full comprehension.

### Percentage rated as “Full comprehension” for fourth-grade students at each achievement level in 2007

Overall	Below Basic	At Basic	At Proficient	At Advanced
54	34	56	69	78

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