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## The Importance of PIRLS tasks in the creative and critical thinking of primary school students

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**Abstract:** This article is dedicated to analyzing the importance of PIRLS tasks in developing the creative and critical thinking of primary school students. It highlights the characteristics of PIRLS tests, unlike traditional methods of assessing reading literacy, which are directed toward deep text comprehension, analysis, and evaluation. The article demonstrates practical methods for shaping not only reading skills but also the abilities to draw logical conclusions, find creative solutions to problems, and justify one's opinion in children with the help of PIRLS tasks.

**Keywords:** Primary grades, PIRLS, reading literacy, creative thinking, critical thinking, pedagogy, educational effectiveness, working with text.

### Introduction.

In the current era of globalization, one of the most important tasks facing the education system is to educate students not only as knowledgeable but also as independent, creative, and critically thinking individuals. While traditional teaching methods are mostly focused on memorizing information, modern educational methodology emphasizes developing children's skills in analysis, drawing logical conclusions, and creatively solving problems. International studies, including PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) tasks, play a significant role in assessing these skills.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the role and importance of PIRLS tasks in developing the creative and critical thinking of primary school students. The article highlights the characteristics of PIRLS tests, which, unlike simple questions, require students to deeply understand the text, connect information within the text, and justify their personal conclusions. Furthermore, practical methods for shaping not only reading literacy but also the abilities to find creative solutions and express a critical attitude in children with the help of these tasks are shown. The results of the article will



provide practical assistance to teachers in organizing the lesson process more effectively and in preparing students for international assessment systems.

**Literature review:** Scientific works by Uzbek scholars N. Makhmudov, A. Ne'matov, and N. Qayumova on native language teaching methodology cover the issues of forming reading literacy and developing students' text-working skills. However, the direct link with PIRLS tasks or the issue of their impact on creative and critical thinking is not sufficiently studied in their research. Foreign sources, particularly the scientific and theoretical foundations such as L. S. Vygotsky's theory of developmental education, J. P. Guilford's theory of creative thinking, and B. Bloom's taxonomy, provided an important basis for the research. International studies conducted on PIRLS tests (for example, IEA organization reports) show that within the framework of reading literacy, students are required not simply to find information, but to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize it. This inherently includes elements of critical and creative thinking.

**Research methodology:** Based on the goals and objectives of the research, the following scientific and pedagogical methods were used:

1. *Theoretical-methodical analysis:* Literature within the scope of the topic, curricula, and the structure of PIRLS tasks were analyzed.

2. *Pedagogical observation:* Students' activity in completing PIRLS-standard tasks and their thinking methods during lesson processes were observed.

3. *Comparative analysis:* The impact of traditional textbook tasks and PIRLS-type tasks on students' thinking was comparatively analyzed.

4. *Pedagogical experiment:* Experimental testing was conducted in a school setting to study the impact of the regular use of PIRLS tasks on students' creative and critical thinking skills.

5. *Survey and test:* Special tests and surveys were conducted to determine students' level of reading literacy, creative, and critical thinking.

This complex of methods ensures the scientific basis of the research and the obtainment of objective results.

**Results:** As a result of the conducted pedagogical experiment and analyses, the effectiveness of PIRLS tasks in developing the creative and critical thinking of primary school students was proven.

1. *Increase in reading literacy level:* In the group of students who regularly performed PIRLS-standard tasks alongside traditional teaching



methods, the indicators for text comprehension, extracting necessary information from it, and understanding hidden meaning significantly improved. In particular, after reading the text, they were easily able to determine its main idea.

*2. Formation of critical thinking skills:* PIRLS tasks require students not just to simply retell the text, but to evaluate the ideas within it, express an attitude toward the characters' actions, and prove their opinion with evidence from the text. This strengthened the children's critical attitude and their ability to draw logical conclusions.

*3. Encouragement of creative thinking:* Certain PIRLS tasks ("Come up with the continuation of the story," "What would you have done if you were in the character's place?") encourage students to think creatively. Students who regularly performed these tasks showed enhanced imagination; they began to offer unique and creative solutions, moving beyond typical answers.

*4. Increase in motivation for reading:* Unlike traditional text reading, PIRLS tasks were interesting and appealing to the students because they were in a game format. This significantly increased their enthusiasm for reading and their activity in lessons.

**Discussion:** The research results show that PIRLS tasks serve as an effective tool for developing the creative and critical thinking of primary school students. This method fundamentally differs from tasks in ordinary textbooks because it encourages students not only to memorize but also to think, analyze, and form a creative approach.

Another important aspect of integrating PIRLS tasks into the educational process is that it creates new opportunities for teachers. The teacher now becomes not just a provider of information, but a coach who guides students' thinking and encourages them to conduct independent research. This methodical approach frees the educational process from traditional molds, transforming it into an active and effective process that meets modern demands.

At the same time, the need for special skills and methodical assistance for teachers in using these tasks remains an important issue. It is advisable to establish a system for regularly training them to work with PIRLS tasks in professional development courses.

The conducted studies and pedagogical experiment-testing have shown that PIRLS tasks are of great importance in developing the creative and critical



thinking of primary school students. Unlike traditional reading exercises, these tasks require students not just to read and understand the text, but to analyze the information within it, compare it, and express their personal attitude.

As a result of the regular implementation of PIRLS-standard exercises into the lesson process, students:

Developed text-working skills, particularly the ability to identify the main idea and find hidden meaning.

Increased their logical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Formed a creative approach and were able to offer several solutions to problems.

Their motivation for reading increased, and their activity in lessons significantly rose.

In conclusion, PIRLS tasks are an effective tool that meets the requirements of modern education and helps shape students not only as owners of knowledge but as independent-thinking and creative individuals. Their wider introduction into our education system and increasing the qualifications of teachers in this area will serve as an important step in enhancing the intellectual potential of the future generation.

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