This graph shows the relative difficulty of the items in the test. The questions are mapped by their scale scores, shown on the vertical ruler. The easiest questions are at the bottom and the most difficult questions are at the top. The greater the vertical distance between the questions the greater the difference in difficulty. The boxed questions were answered correctly by this student.

Students typically demonstrate the competencies described at or below their scale scores.

At this level, students typically deal with a range of text types on unfamiliar topics containing unfamiliar ideas as well as sophisticated vocabulary and challenging structures. For example, they identify a synonymous match to an explicitly stated piece of information where the text structure requires them to negotiate multiple references to related ideas; synthesise complex ideas across a text; construe meaning in a densely written text; use subtle clues to infer meaning; and make sophisticated analyses of style and tone to identify the likely source of a text (as well as tasks below this level).

At this level, students typically deal with a range of text types containing unfamiliar topics, ideas and vocabulary and some structural complexity. For example, they identify a synonymous match to an explicitly stated piece of information, dealing with some organisational complexity to locate the information; compare and combine information from different parts of one text or across several short texts; recognise an idea that is implied by scattered prominent clues; identify the likely context in which the text was produced using figurative language; identify the persuasive strategy an author has used; and deal with strongly competing information (as well as tasks below this level).

At this level, students typically deal with a range of text types containing some unfamiliar topics, ideas and vocabulary and some structural complexity. For example, they identify a synonymous match to an explicitly stated piece of information, dealing with some organisational complexity to locate the information; compare and combine information from different parts of one text or across several short texts; recognise an idea that is implied by scattered prominent clues; identify the likely context in which the text was produced using prominent clues; and deal with moderately competing information (as well as tasks below this level).

At this level, students typically deal with a few common text types containing familiar topics, familiar vocabulary and a simple structure. For example, they identify a direct match to explicitly stated information and make simple links between adjacent sentences and the illustrations or clear subheadings and a simple repetitive structure.

At this level, students typically deal with simple, explicit texts. The topics are highly familiar and the meaning is supported by illustrations or clear subheadings and a simple repetitive structure. They recognise the main idea when the heading and body text provide obvious clues. They identify a direct match to explicitly stated information and make simple links between adjacent sentences and the illustrations and the text.
The PAT-R questions have been categorised as four broad types. As shown in the graph above, questions within each type have been mapped by their scale scores. Descriptions of some questions are placed along side to describe the increasing complexity of skills necessary to answer the corresponding questions correctly.