

4 Text Complexity Worksheet

Worksheet for Analysis of Text Complexity of a Literary Text

Title of the Text: _____

Quantitative Measures: Lexile (Other) Score _____ Grade level suggested by quantitative measures: _____

Qualitative Dimensions:

Complexity of Levels of Meaning								
EASIER	Simple, single meaning. Literal, explicit, and direct. Purpose or stance clear.	▶	Much is explicit but moves to some implied meaning. Requires some inferential reasoning.	▶	Multiple levels, use of symbolism, irony, satire. Some ambiguity. Greater demand for inference.	▶	Multiple levels, subtle, implied meanings and purpose. Abstract, difficult ideas. Use of symbolism, irony, satire.	DEMANDING
EVIDENCE:								

Complexity of Structure								
EASIER	Clear, chronological, conventional. May support through subheads, definitions, glossary.	▶	Primarily explicit. Perhaps several points of view. May vary from simple chronological order. Largely conventional.	▶	More complex. Narrow or perhaps multiple perspectives. More deviation from chronological or sequential order.	▶	Complex, perhaps parallel, plot lines. Deviates from chronological or sequential. Narrator may be unreliable.	DEMANDING
EVIDENCE:								

Complexity of Language Conventionality and Clarity								
EASIER	Explicit, literal, contemporary, familiar language. Vocabulary simple. Mostly Tier One words.	▶	Mostly explicit, some figurative or allusive language. Perhaps some dialect or other unconventional language.	▶	Meanings are implied but support is offered. More figurative or ironic language. More inference is demanded.	▶	Implied meanings. Allusive, figurative, or ironic language, perhaps archaic or formal. Complex sentence structures.	DEMANDING
EVIDENCE:								

Complexity of Knowledge on Demands								
EASIER	Requires no special knowledge. Situations and subjects familiar or easily envisioned.	▶	Some references to events or other texts. Begins to rely more on outside knowledge.	▶	More complexity in theme. Experiences may be less familiar to many. Cultural or historical references may make heavier demands.	▶	Explores complex ideas. Refers to texts or ideas that may be beyond students' experiences. May require specialized knowledge.	DEMANDING
EVIDENCE:								

Qualitative dimensions indicate text makes demands that are: Mostly easier _____ Mostly more demanding _____

Grade level suggested by qualitative assessment _____

Reader-Task Considerations

This is perhaps the most important element in judging the complexity of the text, and the most subtle. At issue is the suitability of a particular text for a particular reader. What follows are some questions to consider in making such a judgment. As you think about these questions with students in mind, make comments in the space provided.

Interest

- Is the student/class likely to be interested in the character, theme, topic, issue, subject matter, or genre?

Background and Ability

- Does the student/class have background knowledge or experience necessary to deal with the text and the task?

- Is the student/class intellectually capable of dealing with the issues presented in the text and the task?

- Does the student/class have vocabulary and inferential skills necessary for this text and the task?

Attitudes and Maturity

- Is the student/class sufficiently mature and sophisticated to deal with the subject matter?

- Does the book raise issues that might embarrass readers or be in some other way problematic?

Potential for Stimulating Thought, Discussion, and Further Reading

- Is there potential in the reading of this text for good conversation among readers?

- Does this text raise issues or questions likely to inspire the student/class to further reading, research, and writing?

Comments Summarizing the Assessments on the Three Dimensions

- How much support will be needed with this text at grade _____?

- Final recommendation for use and placement of text: _____
Grade level? Early or late in the year? For independent reading, guided group instruction, full class?