

Tool for Measuring Text Complexity

Directions: Use this tool to determine whether or not a text meets rigor demands when considering the qualitative, quantitative, and reader-task information available.

Text to consider: _____

Author: _____

Unit of instruction: _____

Priority standard (or standards) to be instructed with this text:

Students to use this text:

Step 1: Analyze the quantitative measures for second- and third-grade text.

Use multiple measures listed here. Place a check on the measures that indicate the text is within the second- or third-grade band. (Step 1 is not applicable to poetry and drama.)

ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power®	FleschKincaid	The Lexile Framework®	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2.75–5.14	42–54	1.98–5.34	420–820	3.53–6.13	0.05–2.48

Quantitative Recommendation

Various readability measures indicate the chosen text is:

Appropriate for the grade-level complexity band

Or

Not appropriate for the grade-level complexity band

STEP 2: Analyze the qualitative measures for second- and third-grade text.

Analyze the following features. Circle the items that describe the features of the text. Use the analysis to make a qualitative recommendation.

Features	High Complexity	Low Complexity
Structure	<p>Uses complex, implicit, and (in literary texts) unconventional structures</p> <p>Contains frequent use of flashbacks, flashforwards, multiple points of view, and other manipulations of time and sequence</p> <p>Includes similarly complex graphics that provide an independent source of information and are essential to understanding a text</p>	<p>Uses simple, well-marked, and conventional structures</p> <p>Relates events in chronological order</p> <p>Includes graphics that tend to be simple and either unnecessary or merely supplementary to the meaning of texts</p>
Language Conventinality and Clarity	Relies on figurative, ironic, ambiguous, purposefully misleading, archaic, or otherwise unfamiliar language (such as general academic and domain-specific vocabulary)	Relies on literal, clear, contemporary, and conversational language, which tends to be easier to read.
Knowledge Demands	Makes assumptions about the extent of readers' life experiences and the depth of their cultural, literary, and content knowledge	Makes few assumptions about the extent of readers' life experiences and the depth of their cultural, literary, and content knowledge
Levels of Meaning (Literary Texts) or Purpose (Informational Texts)	<p>Has multiple levels of meaning (literary text)</p> <p>Has a purpose that is partially implicit, hidden, or obscure (informational texts)</p>	<p>Has a single level of meaning (literary text)</p> <p>Has an explicitly stated purpose (informational text)</p>

Qualitative Recommendation

Analysis of the features indicate the chosen text is:

- Appropriate for the grade-level complexity band
- Or*
- Not appropriate for the grade-level complexity band

STEP 3: Combine quantitative and qualitative data to determine if the text is complex.

Analysis of combined quantitative and qualitative data indicate:

- Both measures indicate the text is complex; we will use it after we consider the readers and task.
- Or*
- One or neither of the measures indicate the text is complex; we will not use it.

STEP 4: Apply reader–task considerations to make a final determination of whether to use the text.

After determining if the text is complex enough for your readers, and to make a professional determination if this complex text is appropriate for your readers, use this section to compare the text to the following.

- Your students’ knowledge and experiences
- Your students’ motivation relative to the topic
- The purpose and complexity of the task assigned or questions posed

	Will Use This Text	May Not Use This Text
Student Knowledge and Experiences	Text aligns with content that students have some knowledge of or experience with, therefore creating a comprehensible opportunity for the reader.	Students have no knowledge of or experience with this topic, therefore, this text is likely inappropriate at this time.
Motivation About This Topic	Students have some motivation and interest in this topic and, therefore, will engage with the complex text.	Students are not as interested in this topic and, therefore, might reluctantly engage with this complex text.
Purpose, Task or Questions Assigned (Consider the specific students that will be using this text. It might be the whole group or with a small group of students.)	Text aligns with the purpose for reading being assigned (such as close reading, studying to learn new material, or independently practicing a skill or strategy). Text aligns with the type of reading students need to do (such as skim text features to gain new information or follow step by step directions). Text aligns with the intended outcomes (such as acquiring knowledge, finding the solution to a problem, or reading for enjoyment).	Text <i>does not</i> align with the purpose for reading being assigned (such as being too long or too short to fully meet the purpose or not having multiple characters to analyze). Text <i>does not</i> align with the type of reading students need to do (such as having no text features to analyze when that is the target). Text <i>does not</i> align with the intended outcomes (such as not enabling students to find the answer to a problem they are researching).

Step 5: Make your final recommendation.

Text to consider: _____

Author: _____

Unit of instruction: _____

Priority standard (or standards) to be instructed with this text:

Students to use this text:

Our recommendation is to:

Use this text to instruct these students for this purpose

Or

Not use this text for this purpose

Optional

Save this text to use during an alternate unit of instruction

Source: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (n.d.b). Supplemental information for appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy: New Research on text complexity. Washington, DC: Authors. Accessed at www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf on April 10, 2020.