

# Qualitative Complexity:

What is it? How can I use it to inform instruction?

Part 2 of 3: Text Complexity and Diverse Readers in Grades 6-12

# Part Two Learning Goals

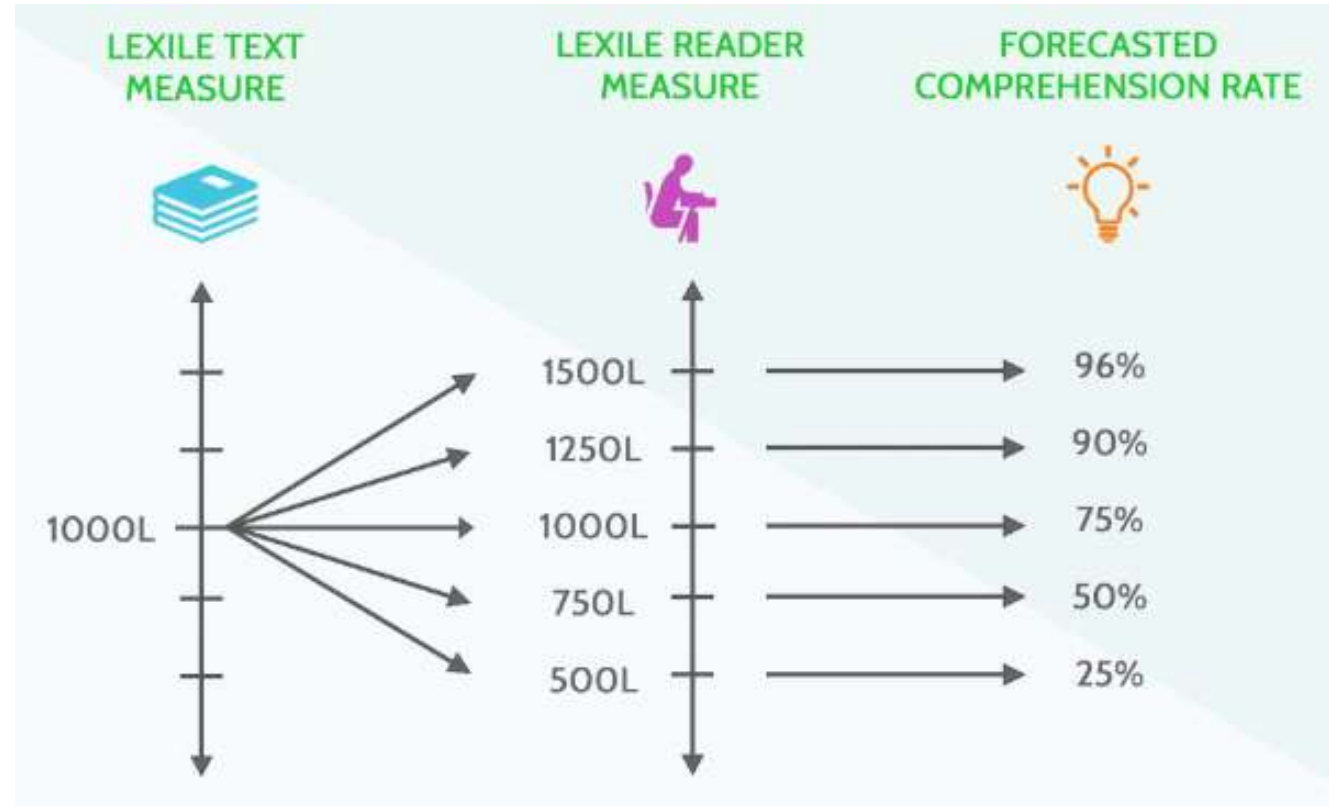
- Gain a clearer understanding of qualitative complexity as it relates to texts.
- Gain a clearer understanding of how qualitative complexity informs instructional decision-making.

# Review: Text Complexity



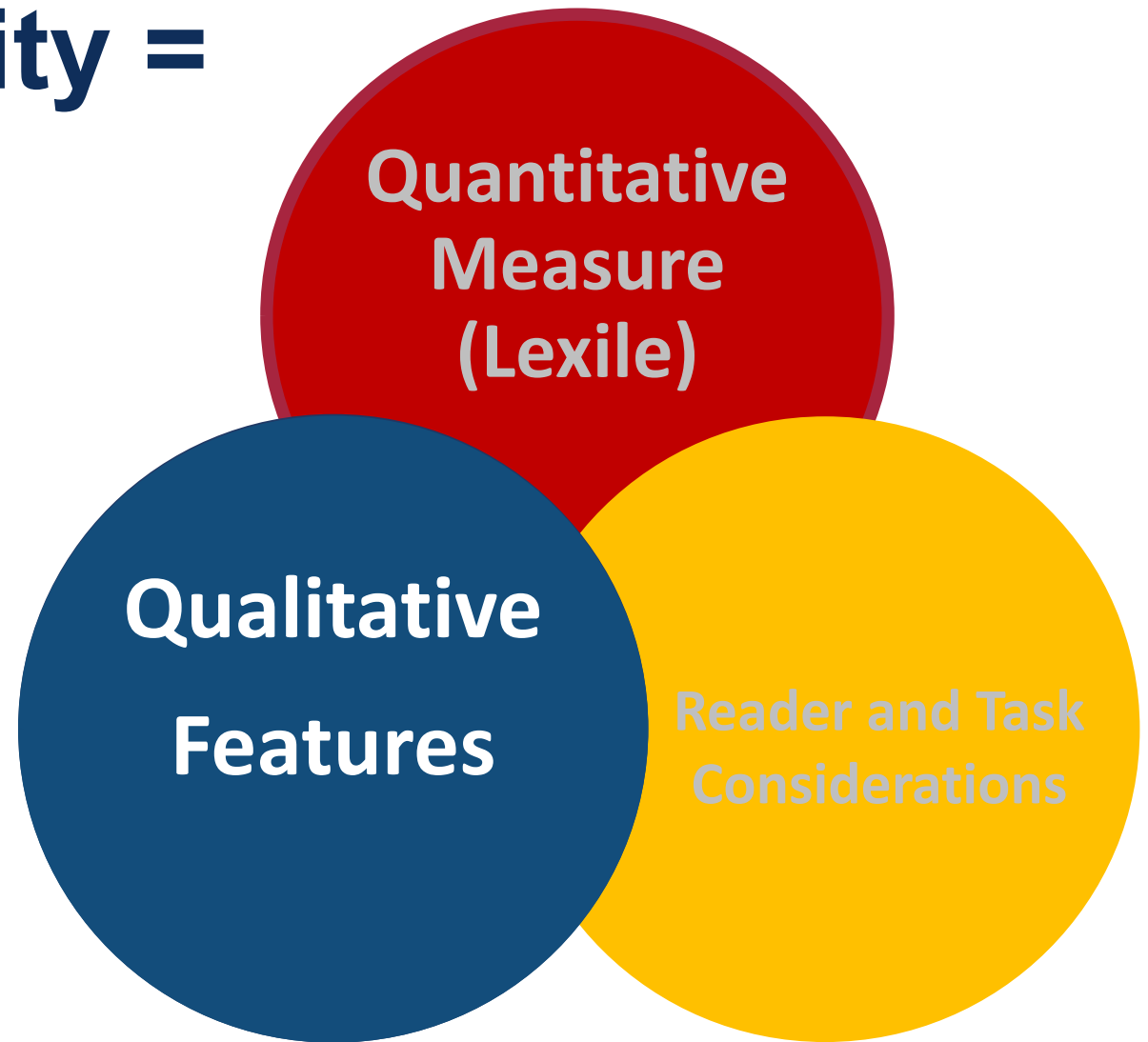
# Review: Quantitative Measure (Lexile) =

- Sentence Length
- Word Length
- Unknown Words



# Qualitative Complexity =

- Author's Purpose
  - Central Idea(s)
  - Layers of Meaning
- Craft and Structure
  - Figurative Language
  - Language Conventions
- Knowledge Demands
  - Vocabulary
  - Concepts
  - Context/History



"Now then, Pooh," said Christopher Robin, "where's your boat?"  
"I ought to say," explained Pooh as they walked down to the shore of the island, "that it isn't just an ordinary sort of boat. Sometimes it's a Boat, and sometimes it's more of an Accident. It all depends."  
"Depends on what?"  
"On whether I'm on the top of it or underneath it."

620L (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade)



"Sir Winston, if you were my husband, I would poison your tea."

"Madame, if you were my wife, I would drink it."

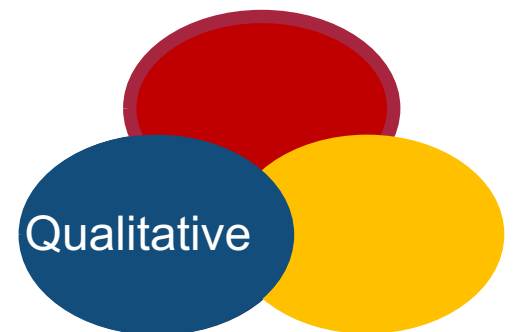
— Conversation between Lady Astor and Sir Winston Churchill

390L (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)



...When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

2030L (Graduate School +)





# Critical Consideration for Instructional Design:

Consideration #1: How do I know if the text I've selected is complex?



# TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC

## LITERARY TEXT



Text Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Author: \_\_\_\_\_

MEANING			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple levels/layers of complex meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple levels/layers of meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Single level/layer of complex meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Single level/layer of simple meaning
STRUCTURE			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> complex, implicit, and unconventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> many shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> frequent manipulations of time and sequence (not in chronological order)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventionality  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> occasional shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> several major shifts in time, use of flashback	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> few, if any, shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> simple, explicit, conventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> no shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> chronological
LANGUAGE			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> heavy use of abstract and/or figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> generally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, and/or academic language; dense and complex; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> somewhat complex language that is occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> subtle use of figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> largely contemporary, familiar, conversational language that is explicit and literal; rarely unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> little or no use of figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> contemporary, familiar, conversational language that is explicit and literal; easy-to-understand
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores multiple complex, sophisticated themes; multiple perspectives presented; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are distinctly different to the common reader  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires an extensive depth of literary/cultural knowledge; many references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are uncommon to most readers  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires moderate levels of cultural/literary knowledge; some references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single complex theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers or are clearly fantasy  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires some cultural/literary knowledge; few references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single theme; single perspective presented and everyday experiences are portrayed that are common to most readers or experiences are clearly fantasy  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires only common, everyday cultural/literary knowledge; no references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements



# TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC

## INFORMATIONAL TEXT



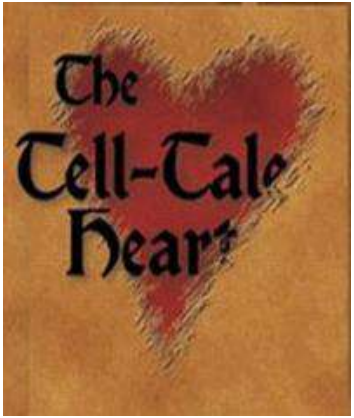
Text Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Author: \_\_\_\_\_

PURPOSE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex, implied, and/or difficult to determine; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but can be inferred; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but easy to identify based on context	<input type="checkbox"/> Explicitly stated
STRUCTURE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> highly complex; implicit connections between ideas; conforms to the conventions of a specific content area or discipline <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, are essential in understanding content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, interpretation of complex graphics essential to understanding the text; may also provide information not conveyed in the text*	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> complex; some explicit connections between ideas; may exhibit traits common to a specific content area or discipline <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, some graphics are complex and may occasionally be essential to the understanding of the text	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> may be complex; largely explicit connections between ideas; generally follows the conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, enhance the reader's understanding of content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, graphics are mostly simple and supplementary to understanding the text	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> simple; explicit connections between ideas; conforms to the conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, graphics are simple and unnecessary to understanding the text
LANGUAGE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> dense and complex language that is generally unfamiliar, archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic; language may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> occasionally contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> somewhat complex language that is occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> largely contemporary, conversational language <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> largely explicit, familiar language; easy-to-understand and rarely archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contemporary, conversational language <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> clear, explicit, literal, easy-to-understand language
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> many references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> some references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> everyday, practical knowledge is largely necessary; requires some discipline-specific content knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> few references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires only everyday, practical knowledge and familiarity with conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> no references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.

\*NOTE: Many books for the youngest students rely heavily on graphics to convey meaning and are an exception to this generalization.

# Considering Overall Text Complexity: *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe



**Lexile:** 820

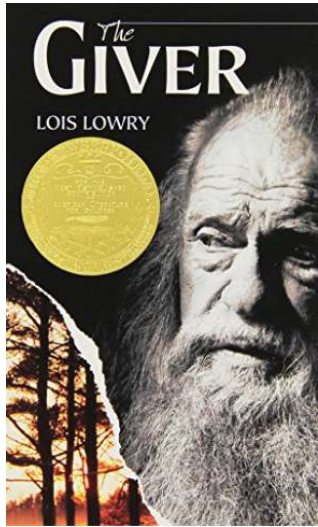
## Qualitative Features:

- Layers of Meaning
- Figurative Language
- Author's Purpose
- Craft and Structure
- Language Conventions
- Knowledge Demands

## Reader Considerations:

- Prior knowledge
- Interests or motivation to read
- Age/Maturity
- Cultural/Societal

# Considering Overall Text Complexity: The Giver by Lois Lowry



**Lexile:** 760

## Qualitative Features:

- Layers of Meaning
- Figurative Language
- Author's Purpose
- Craft and Structure
- Language Conventions
- Knowledge Demands

## Reader Considerations:

- Prior knowledge
- Interests or motivation to read
- Age/Maturity
- Cultural/Societal



# Task One: Determine the central idea of the passage below and provide a summary distinct from personal opinion.

- “The former render possible *theoretical* cognition according to principles *a priori*; the latter in respect of this theoretical cognition only supplies in itself a negative principle (that of mere contrast), but on the other hand it furnishes fundamental propositions which extend the sphere of the determination of the will and are therefore called practical.”
- Passage taken from **pg. 1** of Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*

**Task Two: Read the following passage, then write a brief argument either defending or countering Fern's point of view in regard to her father's approach to raising farm animals.**

"Where's Papa going with that ax?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

"Out to the hog house," replied Mrs. Arable. "Some pigs were born last night."

"I don't see why he needs an ax," continued Fern, who was only eight.

"Well," said her mother, "one of the pigs is a runt. It's very small and weak, and it will never amount to anything. So your father has decided to do away with it."

"Do away with it?" shrieked Fern. "You mean kill it? Just because it's smaller than the others?"

# Table Discussion

Which task was  
more challenging?

- Why?





# Table Discussion

Would a lesson on finding main idea or summarizing prepare you to more effectively tackle Task 1?

- Why or why not?



# How does this activity shape our thinking when designing instruction?



# Key Take-Aways

- Quantitative measures and qualitative features both factor into the overall complexity of a text.
- Addressing grade-level standards requires the study of texts that are quantitatively and qualitatively complex.
- Quantitative measures help us forecast what scaffolds may be necessary to meet our instructional goals with a text.
- Qualitative features help us align the study of a text to specific grade-level standards.

# Reader and Task Considerations:

What are they? How do they round out text complexity?

Part 3 of 3: Text Complexity and Diverse Readers in Grades 6-12

# Part Three Learning Goals

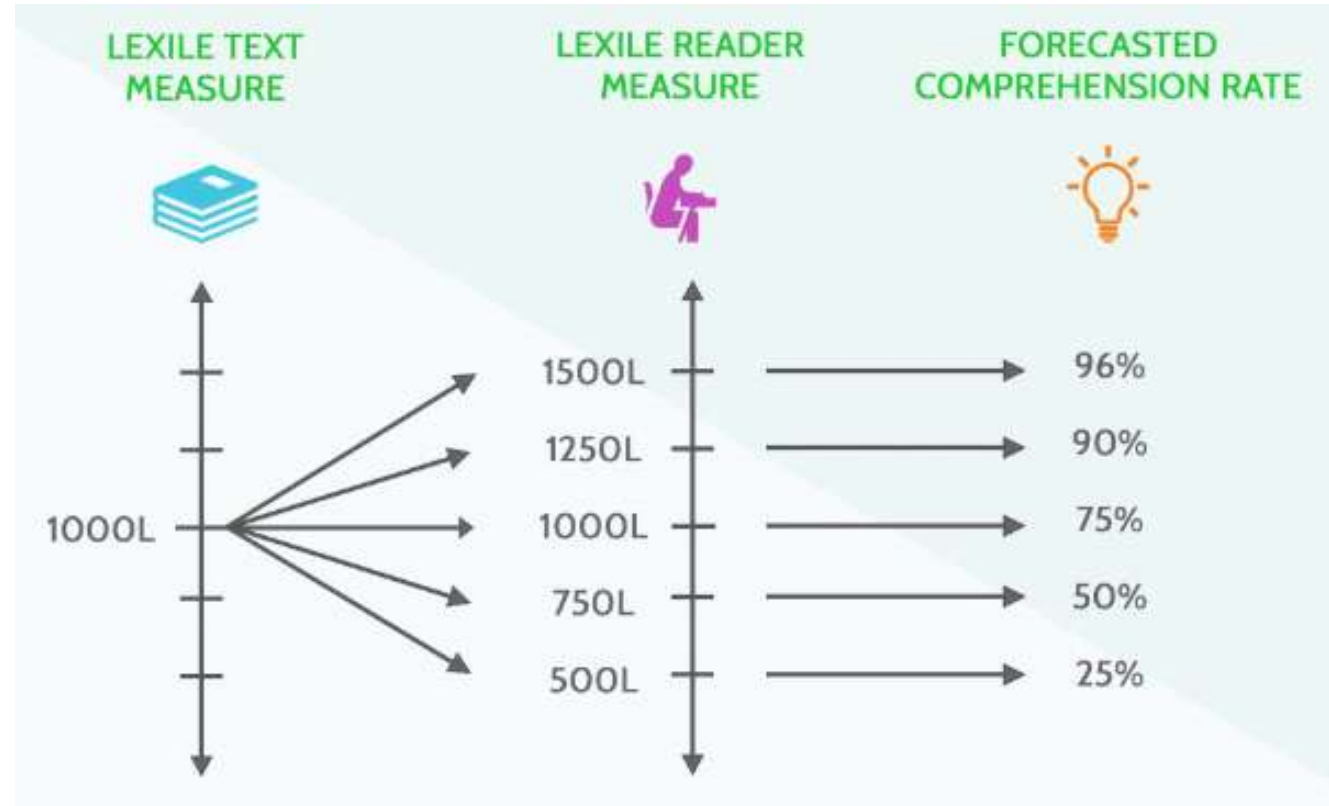
- Gain a clearer understanding of reader and task considerations and their role in determining text complexity.
- Gain a clearer understanding of the relationship between standards-aligned tasks and text complexity.

# Review: Text Complexity



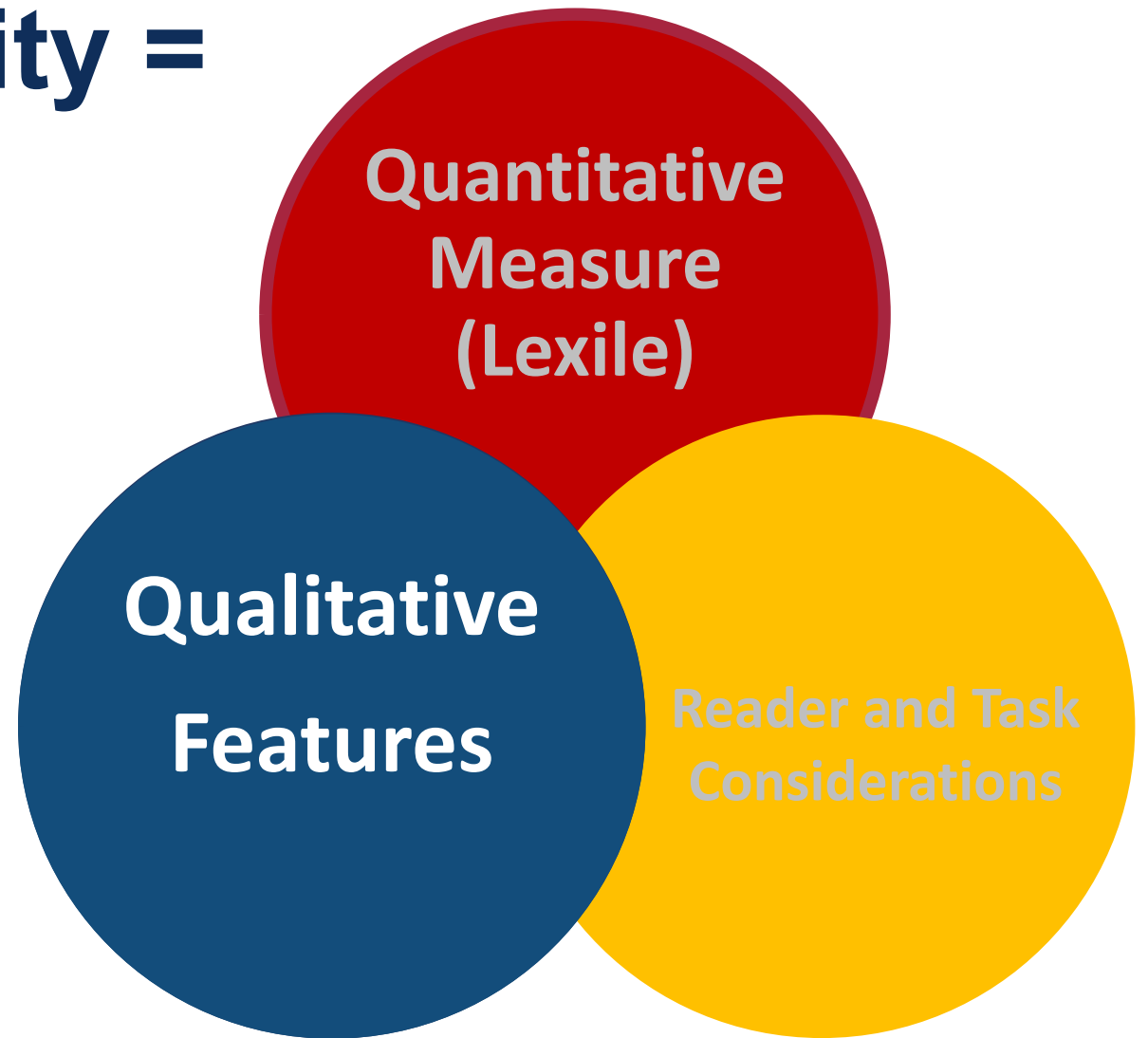
# Review: Quantitative Measure (Lexile) =

- Sentence Length
- Word Length
- Unknown Words



# Qualitative Complexity =

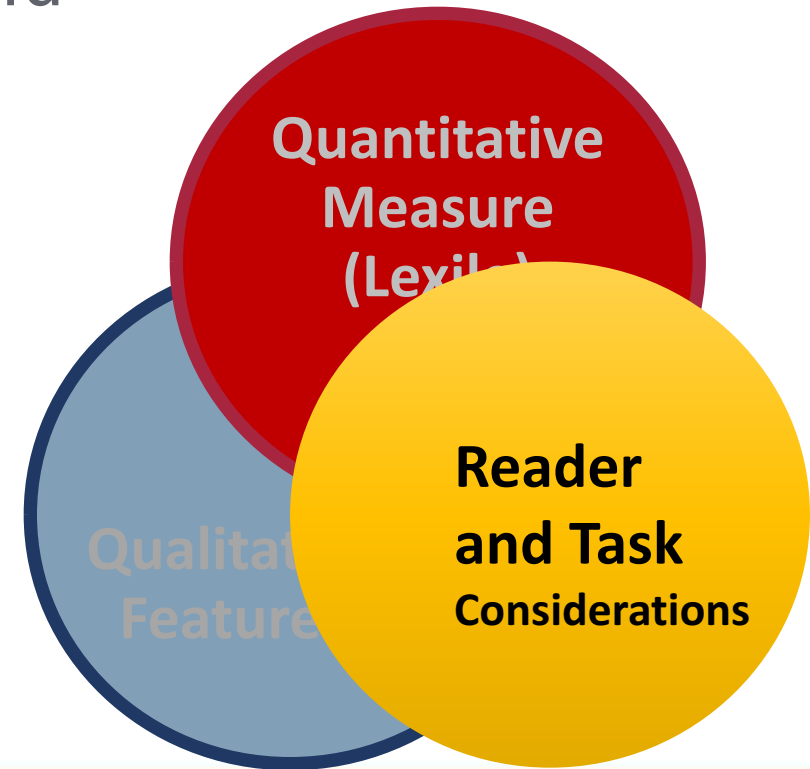
- Author's Purpose
  - Central Idea(s)
  - Layers of Meaning
- Craft and Structure
  - Figurative Language
  - Language Conventions
- Knowledge Demands
  - Vocabulary
  - Concepts
  - Context/History





# Reader and Task Considerations=

- Qualities the reader brings to the text and to the nature of the task being undertaken
- Attention, short term working memory, critical and analytical skills
- Reader's skillfulness w/ inferring, predicting, visualizing, etc...
- Engagement, motivation, prior knowledge and experience
- Maturity and sensitivity
- Expectation of the task (aka standard(s) being addressed



# Critical Consideration for Instructional Design:

Consideration #2: How will I provide students with on-grade level, standards-aligned learning activities and tasks?

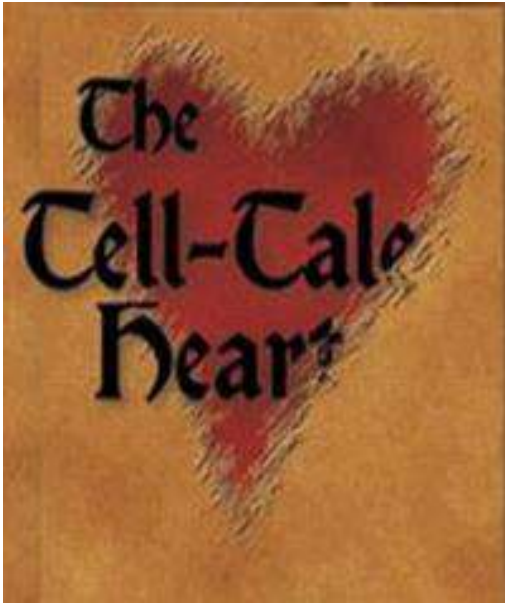
# Reader and Task Considerations: Reader's Lexile Measure Lower than the Text's

- When the reader's Lexile measure is lower than the measure of the text, the reader will often struggle with the task if left unsupported.
  - Use the Lexile Framework to help identify additional supports students may need with vocabulary and sentence structure.
  - Address complex sentence structures and challenging phrases explicitly as part of an overall study of the text's theme/central idea.
  - Address discipline specific and other challenging vocabulary explicitly and in context to the text.

# Reader and Task Considerations: Comprehension and Retention

- Specific learning disabilities as well as social/emotional factors may impede a student's ability to comprehend or retain what they read complicating their ability to complete on-grade level, standards-aligned tasks.
  - Work with counselors and special educators to identify student needs
  - Utilize chunking, note-taking, mnemonics, and other supports
  - Be mindful of social/emotional factors when selecting texts and topics of study

# Considering Overall Text Complexity: *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe



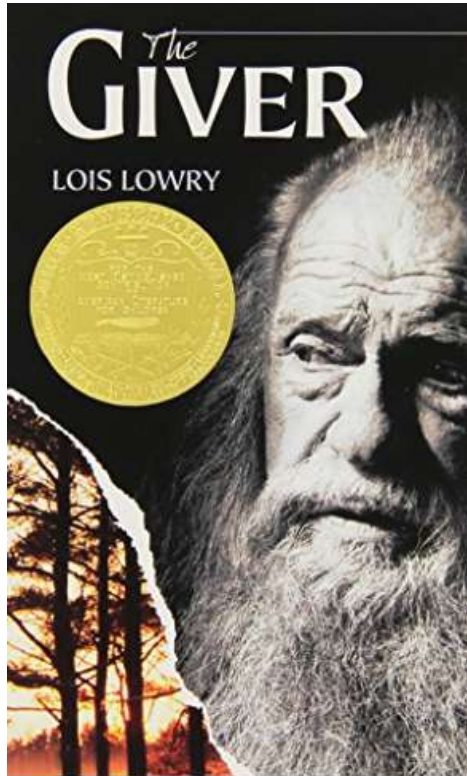
## Lexile

- 820L
- Lexile Range:
  - Grades 3-5
- **Suggested for:**
  - **Grades 6-8**

## Qualitative Features

- Unreliable narrator
- Difficult content like murder and insanity
- 1843 –archaic language
- Unconventional sentence structure and punctuation

# Considering Overall Text Complexity: The Giver by Lois Lowry



## Lexile

- 760L
- Lexile Range:
  - Grades 3-5
- **Suggested for:**
  - **Grades 7-9**

## Qualitative Features

- Narrative contains several flashbacks
- Difficult content like loss of free will and death of loved ones
- Use of euphemism requires inference making

# Reader and Task Considerations: Reader's Level of Skillfulness

- When readers struggle with comprehension skills like inferencing, predicting, and/or visualizing, explicit support is often needed to support them with on-grade level, standards-aligned tasks.
  - Analyze a text's qualitative features to help identify sections where students may struggle: complex ideas, themes, or text organization as well as figurative language and literary techniques.
  - Design sets of standards-based text-dependent questions to scaffold students from part-to-whole, including "support" TDQs targeting a standard in a lower grade level to give students the step they need to reach the current standard on the "focus" TDQ.





# TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC

## LITERARY TEXT



Text Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Author: \_\_\_\_\_

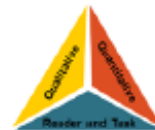
MEANING			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple levels/layers of complex meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple levels/layers of meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Single level/layer of complex meaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Single level/layer of simple meaning
STRUCTURE			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> complex, implicit, and unconventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> many shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> frequent manipulations of time and sequence (not in chronological order)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventionality  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> occasional shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> several major shifts in time, use of flashback	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> few, if any, shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> simple, explicit, conventional  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> no shifts in point of view  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> chronological
LANGUAGE			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> heavy use of abstract and/or figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> generally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, and/or academic language; dense and complex; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> somewhat complex language that is occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> subtle use of figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> largely contemporary, familiar, conversational language that is explicit and literal; rarely unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> little or no use of figurative language or irony  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> contemporary, familiar, conversational language that is explicit and literal; easy-to-understand
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS			
High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores multiple complex, sophisticated themes; multiple perspectives presented; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are distinctly different to the common reader  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires an extensive depth of literary/cultural knowledge; many references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are uncommon to most readers  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires moderate levels of cultural/literary knowledge; some references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single complex theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers or are clearly fantasy  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires some cultural/literary knowledge; few references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single theme; single perspective presented and everyday experiences are portrayed that are common to most readers or experiences are clearly fantasy  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> requires only common, everyday cultural/literary knowledge; no references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements





# TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC

## INFORMATIONAL TEXT



Text Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Author: \_\_\_\_\_

PURPOSE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex, implied, and/or difficult to determine; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but can be inferred; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but easy to identify based on context	<input type="checkbox"/> Explicitly stated
STRUCTURE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> highly complex; implicit connections between ideas; conforms to the conventions of a specific content area or discipline <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, are essential in understanding content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, interpretation of complex graphics essential to understanding the text; may also provide information not conveyed in the text*	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> complex; some explicit connections between ideas; may exhibit traits common to a specific content area or discipline <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, some graphics are complex and may occasionally be essential to the understanding of the text	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> may be complex; largely explicit connections between ideas; generally follows the conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, enhance the reader's understanding of content <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, graphics are mostly simple and supplementary to understanding the text	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organization:</b> simple; explicit connections between ideas; conforms to the conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Text Features:</b> if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> if used, graphics are simple and unnecessary to understanding the text
LANGUAGE			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> dense and complex language that is generally unfamiliar, archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic; language may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> occasionally contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> somewhat complex language that is occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> largely contemporary, conversational language <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> largely explicit, familiar language; easy-to-understand and rarely archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conventionality:</b> contemporary, conversational language <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Clarity:</b> clear, explicit, literal, easy-to-understand language
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS			
<b>High</b>	<b>Middle High</b>	<b>Middle Low</b>	<b>Low</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> many references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> some references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> everyday, practical knowledge is largely necessary; requires some discipline-specific content knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> few references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires only everyday, practical knowledge and familiarity with conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> no references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.

\*NOTE: Many books for the youngest students rely heavily on graphics to convey meaning and are an exception to this generalization.

# Determining Text Complexity

Analyze a classroom text for three aspects of text complexity:

- Central ideas
- Structure
- Vocabulary

Step 1: Text Analysis			
Text Title:			
Lexile:		Grade Level:	
Reading and Book Talk			
<i>First, read the text, discuss, explicate, identify tricky parts, structure &amp; academic/domain specific vocabulary. Use the space below to capture your high-level thinking and group discussion.</i>			
Thought catcher			
Central ideas			
Structure			
Vocabulary			

# Sample of Completed Text Complexity Analysis

Thought catcher
<b>Central ideas</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gordon Low was radical/progressive for her time.</li><li>• Her endeavors made a lasting impact on girls of all backgrounds long after her death.</li><li>• <i>Gordon Low's life experiences and personality led her to create Girl Scouts providing an outlet for girls to challenge themselves, set goals, and experience personal growth for over 100 years. (best one?) (values driven organization)</i></li></ul>
<b>Structure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The tone of the piece is very positive.</li><li>• Words like "quirky" and "funny fairy godmother" are much kinder terms than what was likely applied to her by some people of her time period.</li><li>• Flow of the piece emphasizes how each of her life experiences led to her decision to create the Girl Scouts as well as her vision for what Girl Scouts themselves should be.</li></ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Words focusing on her character:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Southern belle</li><li>○ aristocratic</li><li>○ quirky</li></ul></li><li>• Words focusing on Girl Scouts:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ independent</li><li>○ proficient – defined in the text (next sentence)</li><li>○ inclusive – defined by example in the text both after use and before (girls from Georgia, US, World)</li></ul></li></ul>

# Standards-Aligned Practice: TDQs

Start Small



Day: 1

**ELA.7.4**

1. Based on textual evidence throughout "Crawling Around with Baltimore Street Rats," explain what Mr. Glass's job is and for how long he's been doing it.

Address Challenging Portions



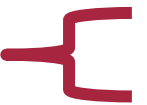
**ELA.7.10**

2. Reread the second paragraph on p. 1. What does "urban ecosystem" mean?

3. What do the words "ubiquity," "thrived," and "subsisting," in the second and third complete paragraphs of p. 2, tell us about Glass's work?

**ELA.7.10**

Address Central Ideas



4. What problem is Mr. Glass trying to solve through his work? What evidence from the text supports the fact that this is a big problem?

**ELA.7.6**

Analysis



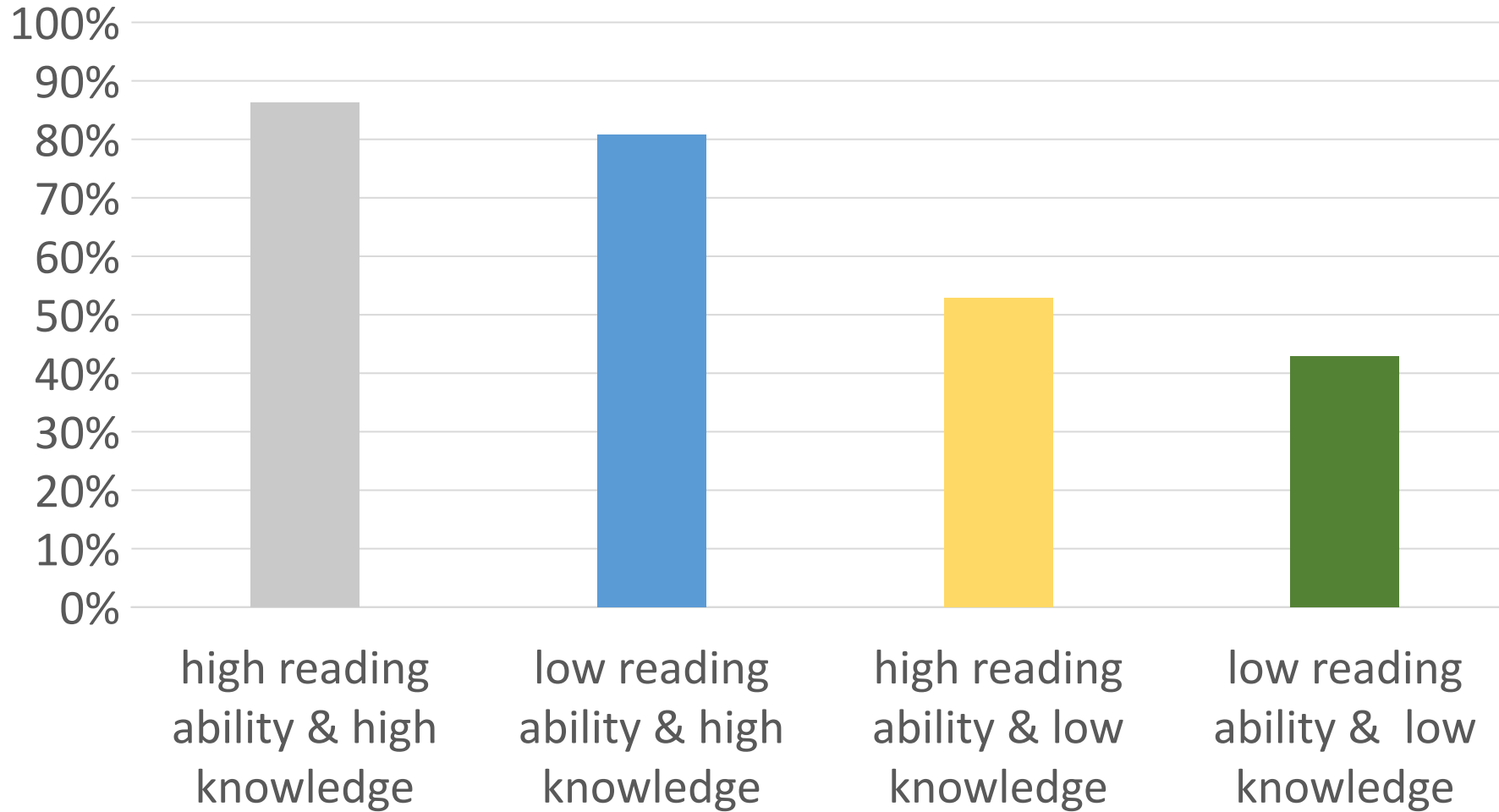
**Focus question:** What is the purpose of Mr. Glass's work? Which details from the article lead you to make this determination?

**ELA.7.5, ELA.7.6**

# Reader and Task Considerations: Reader's Prior Knowledge and Experiences

- A reader's prior knowledge of a topic can be a barrier or a blessing.
  - Determine how much students already know about the topics, vocabulary, and concepts in the text.
  - Help students with higher levels of knowledge/experience leverage their familiarity to strengthen their comprehension and overcome other areas where they may be weaker.
  - Help students with lower levels of knowledge/experience close their knowledge or experience gaps by addressing vocabulary and content necessary to understand the text explicitly remembering to ***always bring the learning back into context*** with the text.

# Impact of Knowledge Demands on Comprehension



“The Baseball Study” –  
Recht & Leslie (1988)



# Ensuring All Students Success with On-Grade Level, Standards-Aligned Learning Activities and Tasks

- Do the questions mirror the language and the skills in the standard itself?
- Is the focus passage(s) appropriate to answer the focus question?
- Do the scaffolding questions help gather the evidence necessary to answer the focus question?
- Are there more than 3 or 4 scaffolding questions per focus question?
  - If there are more than four, the size and scope of the focus TDQ/lesson is likely too big and it needs to be reevaluated.

# Key Take-Aways

- Quantitative Measures, Qualitative Features, and Reader and Task Considerations all factor into the overall complexity of a text for students.
- Quantitative measures help us forecast what scaffolds may be necessary to meet our instructional goals with a text.



# Key Take-Aways

- Qualitative features help us align the study of a text to specific grade-level standards.
- Intentionally sequenced learning activities and tasks support student mastery of standards and student perseverance with complex texts.

# **Dr. Andrea N. Lemon**

Lead Coordinator

Office of Middle/Secondary Learning

[alemon@k12.wv.us](mailto:alemon@k12.wv.us)

304-558-5325

