

Reading Level Bands of Difficulty – Teachers College Reading and Writing Project 2010 DRAFT

<i>Characteristics</i>	<p align="center"><u>KLM</u> <i>Lower End: Nate the Great</i> <i>Higher End: Freckle Juice</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>NO PQ</u> <i>Lower End: Amber Brown</i> <i>Higher End: Fudge-a-Mania</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>RST</u> <i>Lower End: Because of Winn Dixie</i> <i>Higher End: Bridge of Terabithia</i></p>	<p align="center"><u>UVW</u> <i>Lower End: Loser</i> <i>Higher End: Walk Two Moons</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure/ Plot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One clear, central problem and a solution (He wants a bike, he gets a bike. <i>Try, try, and try again.</i>) Or one clear, central problem and solution or resolution (He wants a bike, but he gets friends which is what he really wanted anyway.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters encounter not just one concrete problem but a blend of pressures, or a multidimensional problem. Between the character’s motivation and the story’s resolution there will be a few subplots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories are layered with meaning Only part of the problem is labeled and discussed; the other parts of the problem have to be extracted. Problems are too big and too layered for all to be solved. There are multiple problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple plotlines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of dialogue between several main characters which isn’t always tagged Characters are static Characters have a few dominant characteristics which are explicitly and repeatedly labeled Feelings change over the course of the story, but traits are fairly consistent (and these are usually related to the main problem) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters are multi dimensional. Characters are conflicted and therefore more ambivalent. Struggles are internal not external. What characters want is usually more complex or complicated Character traits are often explicitly told Change from beginning to end Narrator or character will tell the reader about the character’s complexities. Reader can pay attention to what characters do, say and think to get a full understanding of the character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character traits are not explicitly stated Characters encounter problems and work to respond to those problems, changing and learning in the process Characters are gray; good and bad; more than one way as a result of complex internal emotions (which the characters or the narrator does not come right out and say as in the preceding band) Reader often knows more about the character than the character knows about them Minor characters become important. Reader has to pay attention to how the minor characters influence and teach the reader about the main character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characters continue to become more complex and nuanced Characters are increasingly teenagers CAUTION: If the reader isn’t a teenager it can be hard to empathize with the characters and therefore can miss out on a huge part of the story The point-of-view of each character

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trickiness</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tricky words (number of 2 syllable words increases dramatically, a few 3 syllable words, irregular spelling patters, picture support can be useful) • More and more words in these books that are not used conversationally and many are subject specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now, there are also tricky phrases and passages • Figurative language that sometimes matters; impt. to teach readers how to handle this language because eventually it is important to understand in later bands • Readers need to be able to self-correct erroneous interpretations if, as they read on, they are not borne out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now, there are also tricky chapters (Readers need to expect that at times books are hard on purpose. Readers are not supposed to entirely get what is going on. Instead, readers read and say, “Huh?” Then they read on, expecting things will become clearer in the end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts in time: Backstory is increasingly prevalent. Backstory is revealed through the text. Usually not a flashback, but instead a character telling or discovering some background information. • Shifts in voice (sometimes there is a new narrator at the start of a new chapter signaling a new plot line unfolding.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader has to hold onto the problem for a longer period of time because the text is longer than in previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less picture support than the preceding band 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting plays an important role; can be considered a character – setting influences the characters and the plot • Reader must be willing to learn content • Symbolism is sometimes used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism is important (Theme is important) • Stories in this band are statements about the world and life and the social issues both carry