Delaware Department of Education

Text Complexity Training for ELA Elementary

Adapted from Matt Copeland's Presentation for Delaware in May, 2012

Theresa Bennett, ELA Education Associate
Delaware Department of Education
theresa.bennett@doe.k12.de.us

Outcomes

1. Understand reading standard #10.
2. Understand the CCSS text complexity model.
3. Practice using the quantitative measures tools.
4. Practice using the qualitative rubrics for both literary and informational texts.
5. Analyze reader and task considerations and scaffolding possibilities for texts.
6. Practice generating a final recommendation form (i.e., the “placemat”).
7. Generate a list of possible next steps

Materials

Electronic copies of all of today's materials, including the handouts and PowerPoint, are available at the following URL:

http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/admintoolkit/hqpd.shtml

Activity #1

The Old Red Barn

As a small group, read "The Old Red Barn" and answer the three questions provided at the bottom of the page…

The Old Red Barn

By Jane Ragains

1 The old red barn sat tall and proud in the farmyard. It had seen many cold snowy winters, and just as many hot, humid summers. The barn had known many families of animals over the years.

2 Now the red paint had worn to a grayish brown. The tin roof had a few holes…some larger than others. The large double doors hung unevenly on rusty hinges. There was a sadness to the barn's majesty.

3 Car doors slammed and a family with three children began to walk around. There was an old house that looked much like the barn. Several windows needed replacing. The doors were also hanging on their hinges. The big porch held several rockers that beckoned the mother and the smallest of the children to settle down for a short rest. The old red barn could see smiles on their faces.

4 At last, the barn thought. A family wants this place again. But, just then, the barn noticed the man walking around the house. A frown had settled on his face. He shook his head as he called out to the rest of the family, "This just won't do. There is too much work. This house is falling down. It wouldn't be safe. Besides, repairing it would take more money than we have right now."

5 The children urged, "Look a little more, Papa. Maybe you'll change your mind."

6 Reluctantly, Papa started toward the old red barn. He walked around the structure, poking at

Discussion

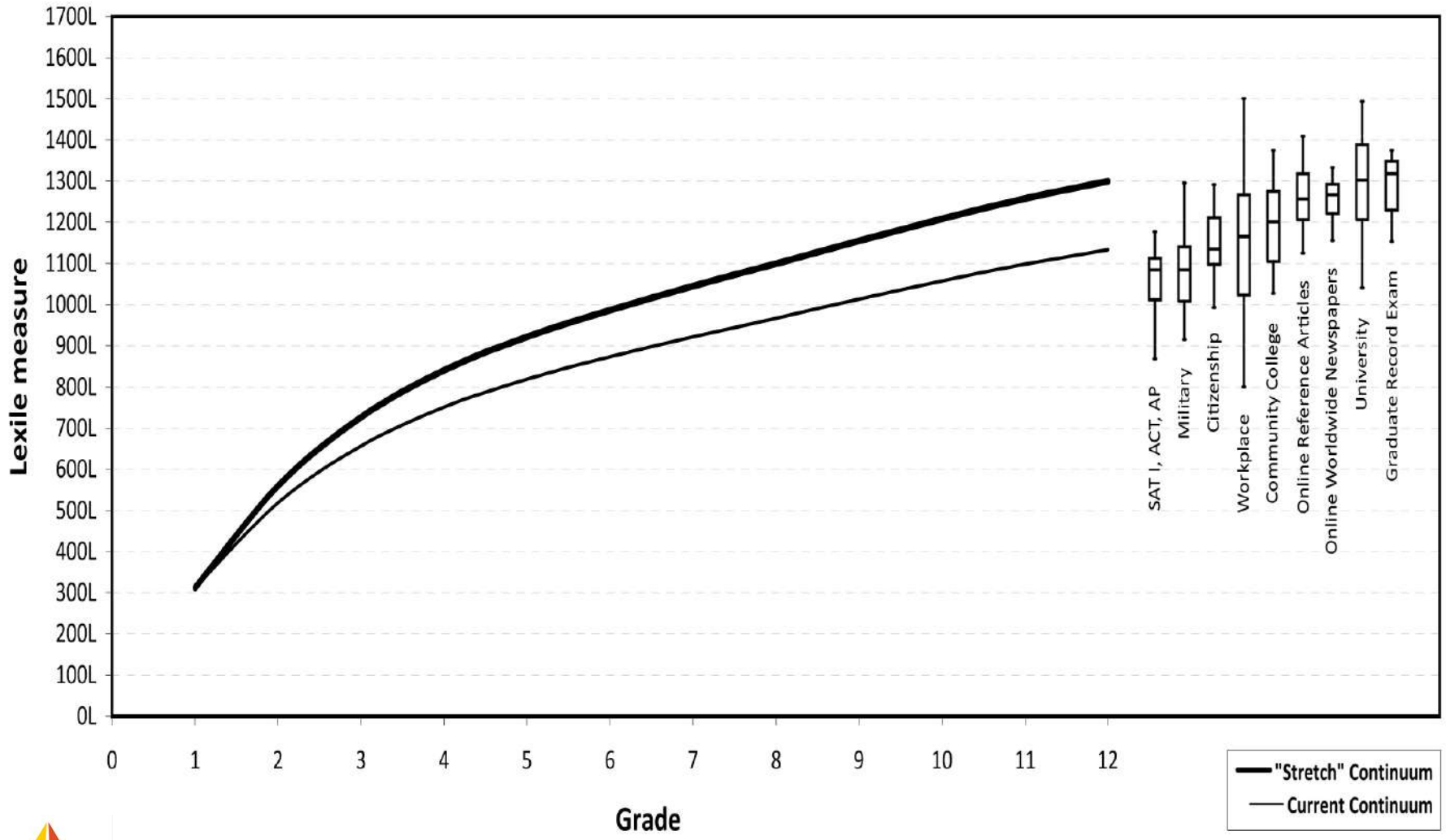
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall complexity of this text?
- What features of this text support your rating of its complexity?
- At what grade level might this text be appropriate for instruction? Why?

Video Overview of Text Complexity

Text Complexity – Why Is This Important?

- Complexity of texts students are expected to read is below what is required to achieve college and career readiness:
  - High school textbooks have *declined* in all subject areas over the last several decades
  - Average length of sentences in K–8 textbooks has *declined* from 20 to 14 words
  - Vocabulary demands have *declined* since the 1960s:
    - 8th grade textbooks = former 5th grade texts
    - 12th grade anthologies = former 7th grade texts
- Complexity of college and career texts has remained steady or increased, resulting in a gap

Text Complexity Gap



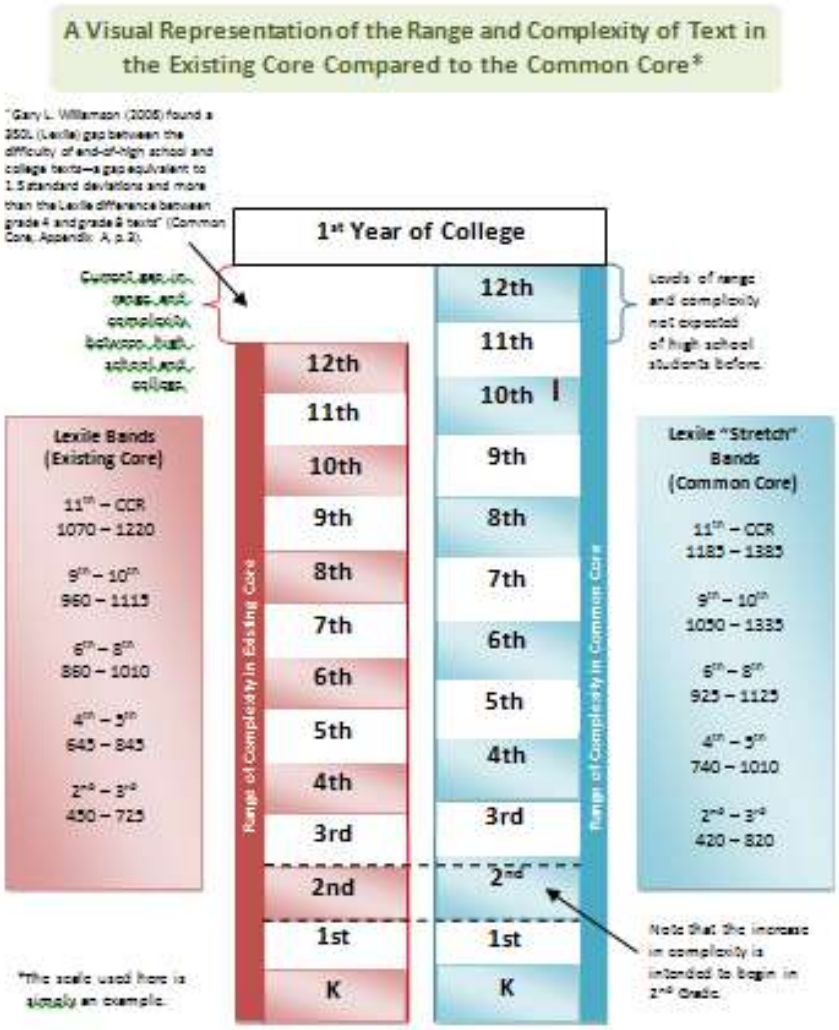
Why Should We Worry about This Gap?

- Too many students are reading at too low a level (<50% of high school graduates can read sufficiently complex texts)
- The complexity of what students can read and comprehend is the single greatest predictor of success in college (ACT study)
  - Question type (main idea, word meanings, details) is NOT the chief differentiator
  - Question level (higher order vs. lower order; literal vs. inferential) is NOT the chi differentiator either

Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges

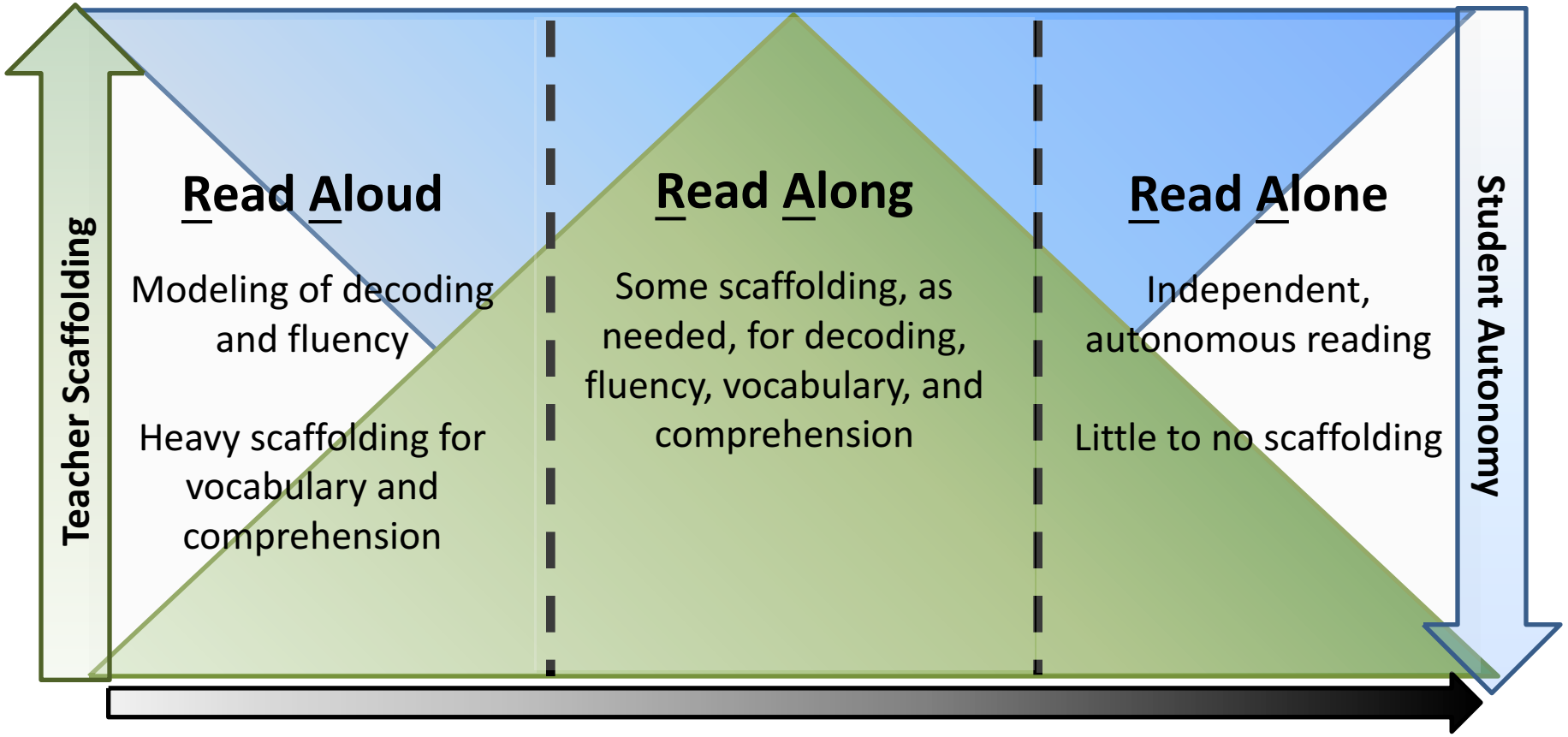
Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

How Do We Address This Gap?



How Should Instruction Address Text Complexity?

RA! RA! RA! Reading!



Gradual Release of Responsibility *(I do, we do, you do)…*

Areas of Emphasis for Instruction

1. **Building knowledge** through a balance of **literary and informational texts**.
2. Reading, writing, and discussion grounded in **evidence from text**, both literary and informational.
3. Regular practice ("productive struggle") with **complex text** and its **academic vocabulary**.

R.CCR.10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade
RI.K.10 – Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.	RI.1.10 – With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.	RI.2.10 – By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Activity #2: Discussion!

With an elbow partner, interpret these two standard statements:

- What does this mean to you?
- How does this affect instruction and student learning?

Be prepared to share your thoughts…

Guiding Questions

So…

What do the Common Core State Standards mean by **text complexity**?

What is a **text complexity band**?

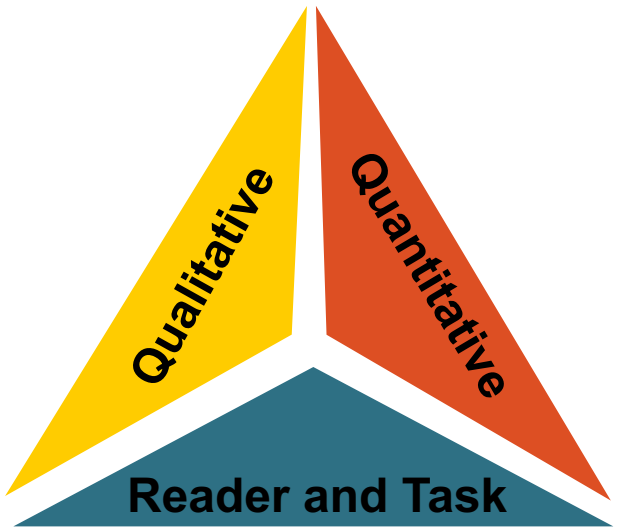
and

How do we ensure the texts our students are reading are in the appropriate **text complexity band**?

CCSS Text Complexity Model

Text complexity is defined by:

1. **Quantitative measures** – readability and other scores of text complexity often best measured by computer software.
2. **Qualitative measures** – levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands often best measured by an attentive human reader.
3. **Reader and Task considerations** – background knowledge of reader, motivation, interests, and complexity generated by tasks assigned often best made by educators employing their professional judgment.



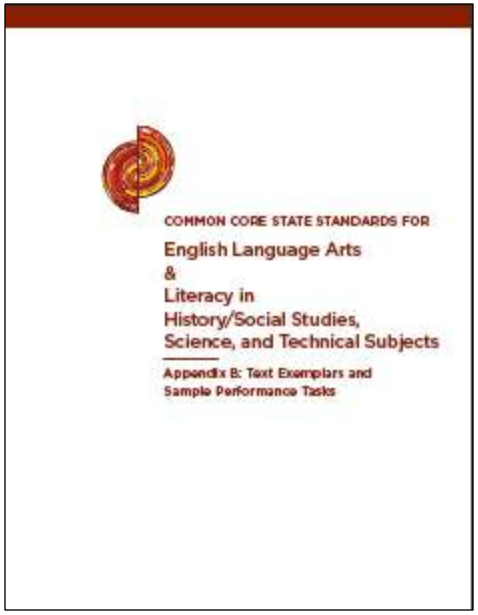
CCSS Text Complexity Model

Text Complexity Grade Bands
K-1
2-3
4-5
6-8
9-10
11-CCR

Where Do We Find Texts in the Appropriate Text Complexity Band?

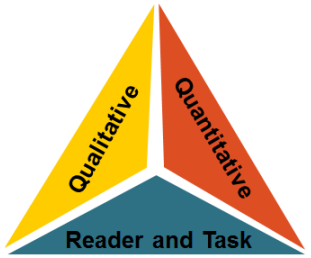
We could….

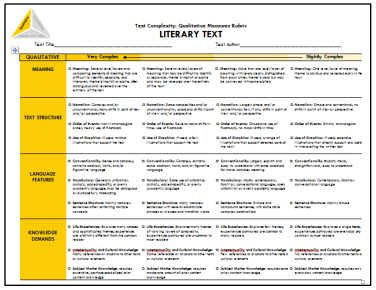
Choose an excerpt of text from Appendix B:



or…

Use available resources to determine the text complexity of other materials on our own.





Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

Determining Text Complexity

A Four-step Process:

Determine the quantitative measures of the text.

Analyze the qualitative measures of the text.

Reflect upon the reader and task considerations.

Recommend placement in the appropriate text complexity band.

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Measures such as:

- Word length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Sentence length
- Text length
- Text cohesion

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

The Quantitative Measures Ranges for Text Complexity:

This document outlines the suggested ranges for each of the text complexity bands using:

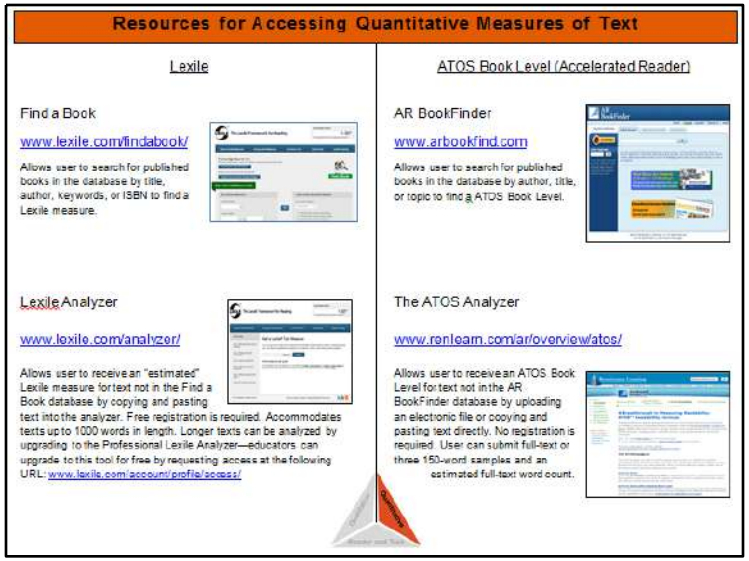
1. Lexile Text Measures

---or---

2. ATOS Book Levels (Accelerated Reader)

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

Step 1: Quantitative Measures



Resources for Accessing Quantitative Measures of Text

Lexile

Find a Book

www.lexile.com/findabook/

Allows user to search for published books in the database by title, author, keywords, or ISBN to find a Lexile measure.

Lexile Analyzer

www.lexile.com/analyzer/

Allows user to receive an "estimated" Lexile measure for text not in the Find a Book database by copying and pasting text into the analyzer. Free registration is required. Accommodates texts up to 1000 words in length. Longer texts can be analyzed by upgrading to the Professional Lexile Analyzer—educators can upgrade to this tool for free by requesting access at the following URL: www.lexile.com/account/profile/access/

ATOS Book Level (Accelerated Reader)

AR BookFinder

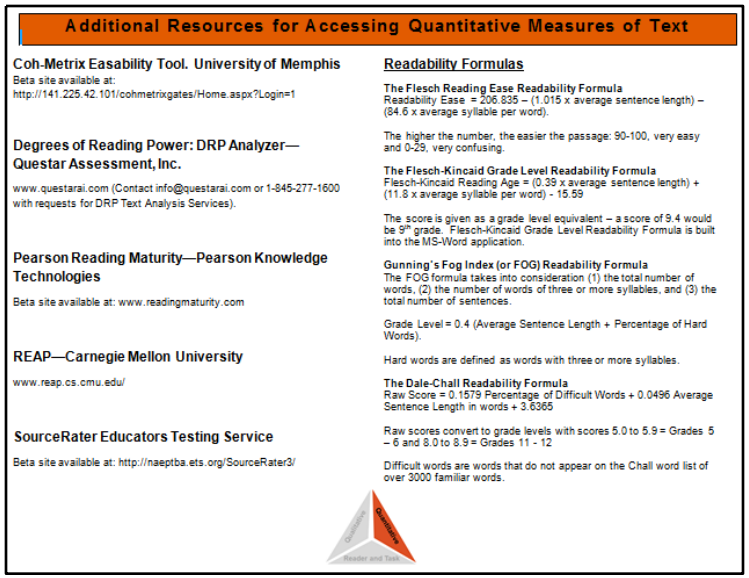
www.arbookfind.com

Allows user to search for published books in the database by author, title, or topic to find a ATOS Book Level.

The ATOS Analyzer

www.renlearn.com/ar/overview/atos/

Allows user to receive an ATOS Book Level for text not in the AR BookFinder database by uploading an electronic file or copying and pasting text directly. No registration is required. User can submit full-text or three 150-word samples and an estimated full-text word count.



Additional Resources for Accessing Quantitative Measures of Text

Coh-Metrix Easability Tool. University of Memphis
Beta site available at:
http://141.225.42.101/cohmetrixgates/Home.aspx?Login=1

Degrees of Reading Power: DRP Analyzer—Questar Assessment, Inc.

www.questarai.com (Contact info@questarai.com or 1-845-277-1600 with requests for DRP Text Analysis Services).

Pearson Reading Maturity—Pearson Knowledge Technologies

Beta site available at: www.readingmaturity.com

REAP—Carnegie Mellon University

www.reap.cs.cmu.edu/

SourceRater Educators Testing Service

Beta site available at: http://naeptba.ets.org/SourceRater3/

Readability Formulas

The Flesch Reading Ease Readability Formula
Readability Ease = 206.835 – (1.015 x average sentence length) – (84.6 x average syllable per word).

The higher the number, the easier the passage: 90-100, very easy and 0-29, very confusing.

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Age = (0.39 x average sentence length) + (11.8 x average syllable per word) - 15.59

The score is given as a grade level equivalent – a score of 9.4 would be 9th grade. Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability Formula is built into the MS-Word application.

Gunning's Fog Index (or FOG) Readability Formula
The FOG formula takes into consideration (1) the total number of words, (2) the number of words of three or more syllables, and (3) the total number of sentences.

Grade Level = 0.4 (Average Sentence Length + Percentage of Hard Words).

Hard words are defined as words with three or more syllables.

The Dale-Chall Readability Formula
Raw Score = 0.1579 Percentage of Difficult Words + 0.0496 Average Sentence Length in words + 3.6365

Raw scores convert to grade levels with scores 5.0 to 5.9 = Grades 5 – 6 and 8.0 to 8.9 = Grades 11 - 12

Difficult words are words that do not appear on the Chall word list of over 3000 familiar words.

Resources for Accessing Quantitative Measures of Text

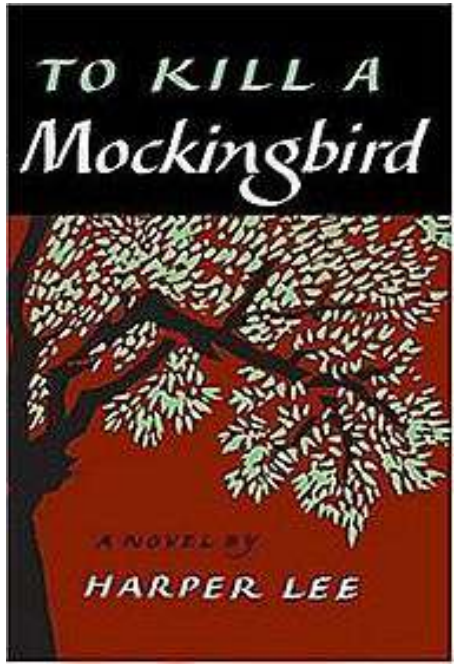
Quick handout documenting the availability of resources. Including:

- Lexile
- ATOS book level
- Additional measures
- Readability formulas

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Let's imagine we want to see where a text falls on the quantitative measures "leg" of the text complexity triangle, using either the Lexile text measure or the ATOS book level (or both).

For illustrative purposes, let's choose Harper Lee's 1960 novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Finding a Lexile Measure for Text:

LEXILE® The Lexile® Framework for Reading

Quick Book Search:

Advanced Search

Put an exact title or author in quotes (ex: "new moon")

About Lexile Measures | Using Lexile Measures | Common Core | Lexile Tools | Lexile Training

Find the Right Book for You!

Enter your Lexile measure, select your interests, and find books you'd like to read!

Looking for Spanish books?

Pledge to read some great books this summer!

Submit your Summer Reading Pledge

Find a Book

Step 1: Enter Lexile Measure or Grade

My Lexile measure is

Lexile Measure: L

Lexile Range: L to L

Or

I don't know my Lexile measure

My Current Grade is: Kindergarten

- I find the books I read for school difficult.
- I find the books I read for school just right.
- I find the books I read for school easy.

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

LEXILE® The Lexile® Framework for Reading

Quick Book Search:

To Kill a Mockingbird

Advanced Search

Put an exact title or author in qu… …ew moon")

About Lexile Measures | Using Lexile Measures | Common Core | Lexile Tools | Lexile Training

Find the Right Book for You!

Enter your Lexile measure, select your interests, and find books you'd like to read!

Looking for Spanish books?

Pledge to read some great books this summer!

Submit your Summer Reading Pledge

Find a Book

Step 1: Enter Lexile Measure or Grade

My Lexile measure is

Lexile Measure: L

Lexile Range: L to L

Or

I don't know my Lexile measure

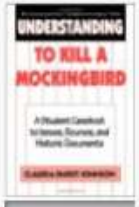
My Current Grade is: Kindergarten

- I find the books I read for school difficult.
- I find the books I read for school just right.
- I find the books I read for school easy.

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

5 available books results per page 20 sort by Search Relevance

To Kill a Mockingbird
by: Lee, Harper
The unforgettable novel o… hood in a sleepy Southern town an… of conscience …
Pages: 384
870L
FIND IN A LIBRARY WorldCat BUY FROM BARNES&NOBLE I LIKE IT
Create a New Reading List
ISBN13: 9780446310789



Understanding to Kill a Mockingbird
by: Johnson, Claudia D.
To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel of such profound power that it has affected the …
Pages: 248
1210L
FIND IN A LIBRARY WorldCat BUY FROM BARNES&NOBLE Google Preview I LIKE IT
Create a New Reading List
ISBN13: 9780313291937

Story Behind Harper Lee's To …
by: Giddens-White, Bryon
Pages: 56
1050L
FIND IN A LIBRARY WorldCat BUY FROM BARNES&NOBLE I LIKE IT
Create a New Reading List
ISBN13: 9780431081731

Story Behind Harper Lee's To …
by: Giddens-White, Bryon
Pages: 56
FIND IN A LIBRARY WorldCat BUY FROM BARNES&NOBLE I LIKE IT

Search Options

Age Range
Age(s): 0 to Adult

Lexile Filter
Lexile range: BR to 1700L

Bibliographic Filters
Keywords: To Kill a Mockingbird [remove]

Keywords
To Kill a Mockingbird

Book Type
- Juvenile fiction
- Juvenile nonfiction
- Fiction
- Award winners
- Books in series

Lexile Code
- AD (Adult Directed)
- GN (Graphic Novel)
- HL (High-Low)
- IG (Illustrated Guide)

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

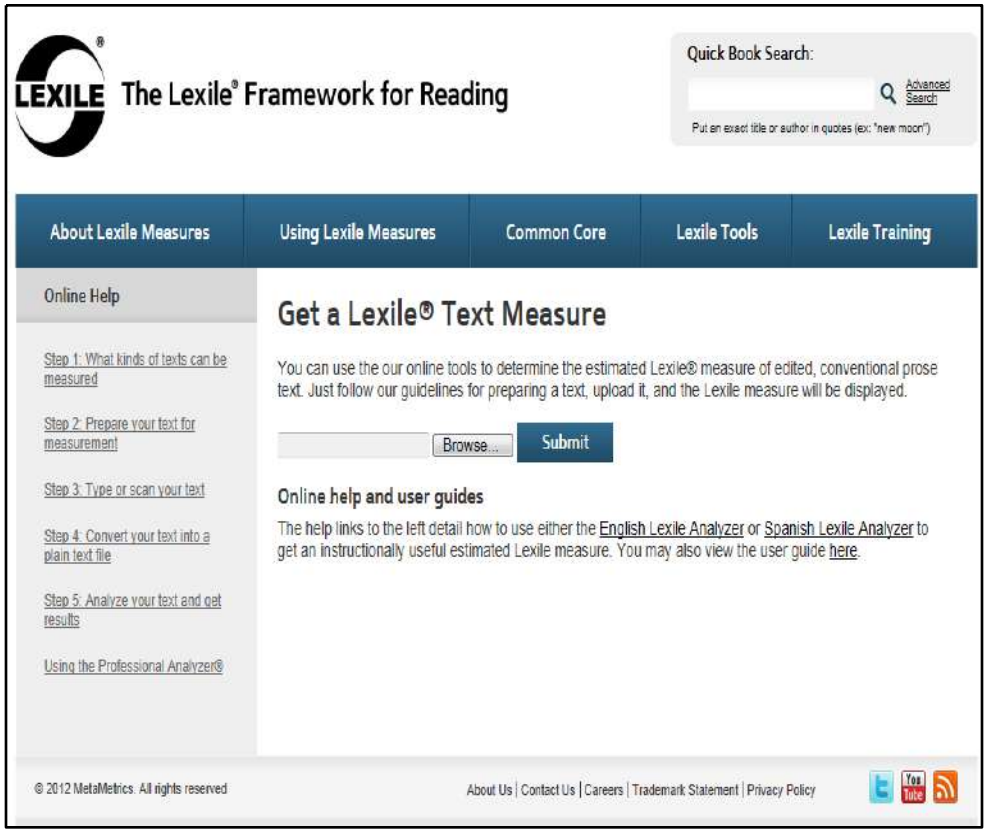
For texts not in the Lexile database, consider using the **Lexile Analyzer**: http://www.lexile.com/analyzer/

Registration is required (free)
http://www.lexile.com/account/register/

Allows user to receive an "estimated" Lexile score

Accommodates texts up to 1000 words in length

Texts of any length can be evaluated using the Professional Lexile Analyzer—educators can upgrade to this tool for free by requesting access
http://www.lexile.com/account/profile/access/



Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Finding a **ATOS Book Level** for Text: http://www.arbookfind.com/

AR BookFinder

Home | English - Español | About Us | Help

Teacher/Librarian

Quick Search | Advanced Search | Collections

AR BookBag

Enter Keycode

Go

You do not need a Keycode to search. However, if your child's teacher gave you a Keycode, enter it here to search the most relevant books for your child.

Go

You can search for book titles based on authors, topics, or titles of books. Just type what you want to search for in the blank field above and click **Go**. You will then be able to sort your search results, select book titles to add to your AR BookBag, print a list of your search results, or start a new search.

What Books Are Students in Grades 1–12 Reading?

Click here to learn more about the 2011 report that lists the top books being read by students.

What Kids Are Reading

Extraordinary Educators Newsletter

Get inspired.
Get the latest issue now! ►

EXTRAORDINARY Educators

©2010 Renaissance Learning, Inc. All rights reserved.
Link AR BookFinder to your school's Web page

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

AR BookFinder™

Home | English - Español | About Us | Help

Teacher/Librarian

Quick Search | Advanced Search | Collections

AR BookBag™

Enter Keycode

Go

You do not need a Keycode to search. However, if your child's teacher gave you a Keycode, enter it here to search the most relevant books for your child.

to kill a mockingbird

Go

You can search for book titles based on authors, topics, or title[s]. Just type what you want to search for in the blank field above and click **Go**. You will the[n] able to sort your search results, select book titles to add to your AR BookBag, print a list of yo[ur] search results, or start a new search.

What Books Are Students in Grades 1–12 Reading?

Click here to learn more about the 2011 report that lists the top books being read by students.

Extraordinary Educators Newsletter

Get inspired.
Get the latest issue now! ►

©2010 Renaissance Learning, Inc. All rights reserved.
Link AR BookFinder to your school's Web page

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

AR BookFinder

Home | English - Español | About Us | Help

Teacher/Librarian

Quick Search | Advanced Search | Collections

AR BookBag™

to kill a mockingbird Go

Enter Keycode

Go

You do not need a Keycode to search. However, if your child's teacher gave you a Keycode, enter it here to search the most relevant books for your child.

Refine Your Search

Interest Level
- Middle Grades Plus (1)
- Upper Grades (3)

Fiction/Nonfiction
- Fiction (2)
- Nonfiction (2)

Language
- ->English

Topic
- Adventure (1)
- Arts (1)
- Award Winners (1)
- Biographies/Autobi... (1)
- Careers (3)
- Classics (1)
- Community Life (1)
- Diaries/Journals/L... (1)
- Family Life (1)
- Mysteries (1)
- More...

Search Results Titles 1 - 4 of 4 Print

< Previous Page 1 of 1 Next > Go to Page Go Sort By Relevance

To Kill a Mockingbird
Bernard, Catherine
AR Quiz No. 73696 EN Nonfiction
IL: **UG** - BL: **8.6** - AR Pts: **4.0**
AR Quiz Types: **RP**
Rating:
This book is an introduction to Harp Lee's famous novel, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, discussing the a s life, the historical context of the novel, its plot, themes, characters t icism, and pertinence for today's audiences.

Add to AR BookBag™

To Kill a Mockingbird
Lee, Harper
AR Quiz No 20 EN Fict n
IL: **UG** - BL: **5.6** - AR Pts: **15.0**
AR Qui Types: **RP, LS VP**
Rating:
Two children witness the effects of racial prejudice, as their father courageously defends an innocent black man who has been accused of raping a white woman.

Add to AR BookBag™

In Search of Mockingbird
Ellsworth, Loretta
AR Quiz No. 114608 EN Fiction
IL: **UG** - BL: **4.2** - AR Pts: **5.0**
AR Quiz Types: **RP**
Rating:
On the eve of her sixteenth birthday, Erin receives her long-dead mother's diary, which reveals that she too revered Harper Lee's TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD and wanted to be a writer. Erin impulsively decides to visit the reclusive author

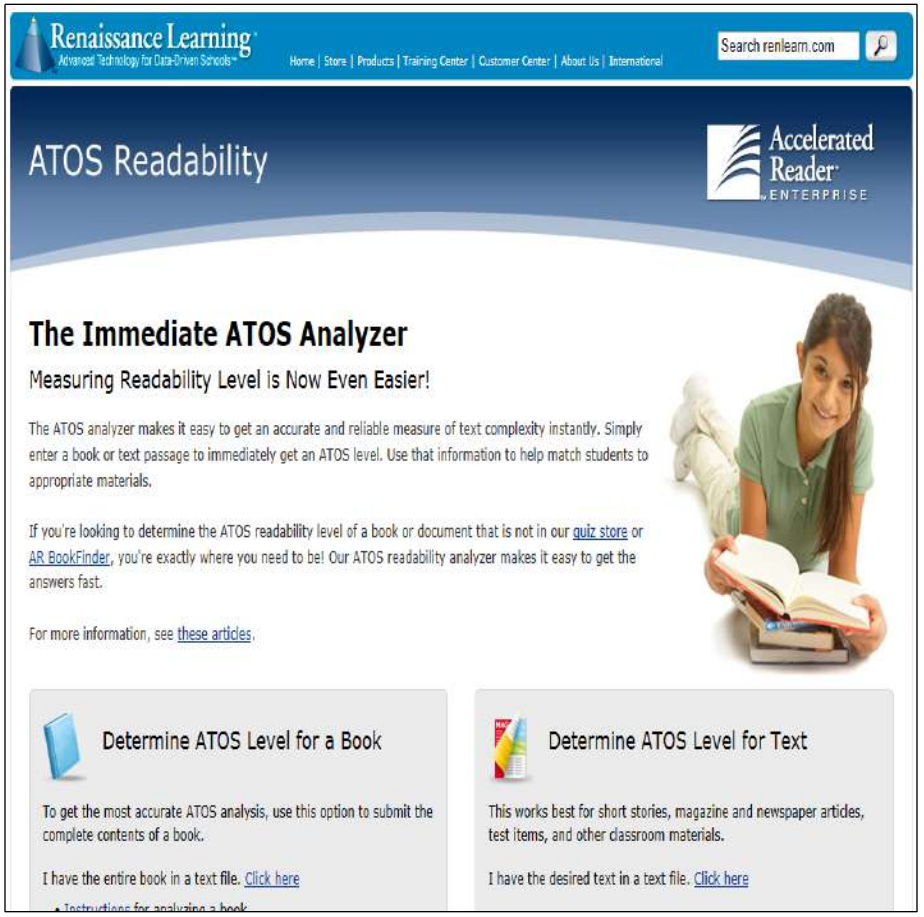
Add to AR BookBag™

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

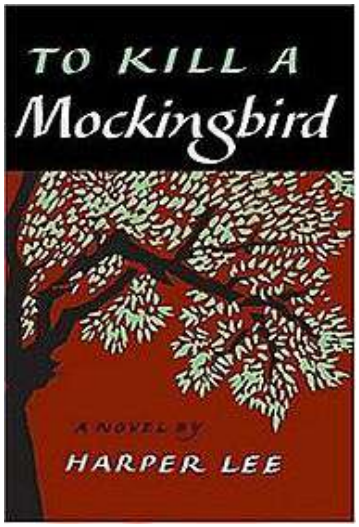
For texts not in the **AR Bookfinder** database, consider using **The ATOS Analyzer**: http://www.renlearn.com/ar/overview/atos/

No registration is required (however, you must provide an email address to receive results)

- Three methods of analysis are available:
  - ATOS for Books – for submitting complete text of a book
  - ATOS for Books with Estimated Word Count – does not require full text, just three 150-word passages
  - ATOS for Text– works well for short, full-text submissions (short stories, magazine/newspaper articles, etc.)



Step 1: Quantitative Measures



Lexile Text Measure: **870L**

ATOS Book Level: **5.6**

In which of the text complexity bands would this novel fall?

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

Remember, however, that the quantitative measures is only the first of three “legs” of the text complexity triangle.

Our final recommendation may be validated, influenced, or even over-ruled by our examination of **qualitative measures** and the **reader and task considerations**.

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

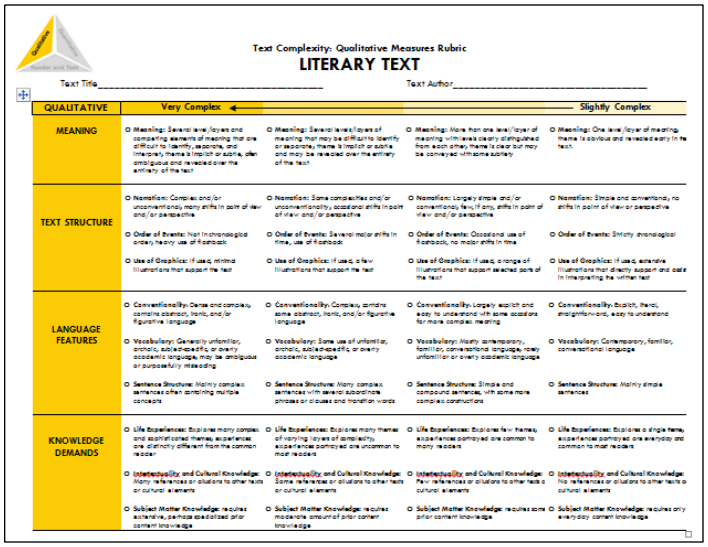
Measures such as:

- Levels of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

The Qualitative Measures Rubrics for Literary and Informational Text:

The rubric for literary text and the rubric for informational text allow educators to evaluate the important elements of text that are often missed by computer software that tends to focus on more easily measured factors.

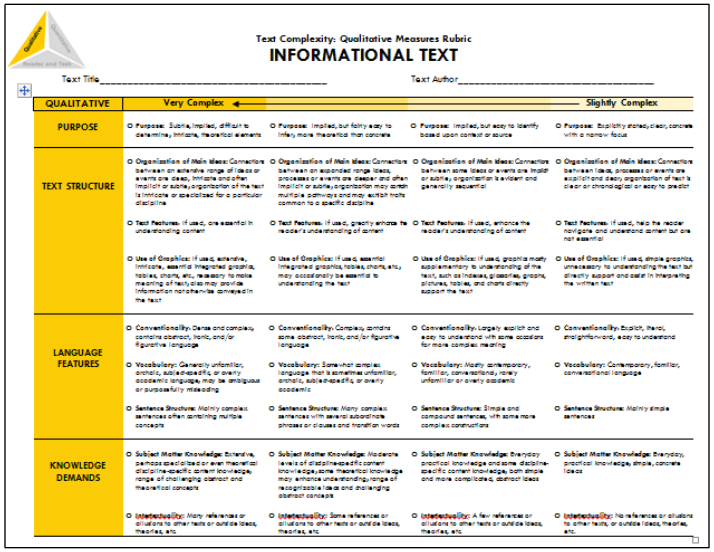


Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

LITERARY TEXT

Text Title_____ Text Author_____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex ←			→ Slightly Complex
MEANING	○ Meaning: Several level; layers and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and integrate; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	○ Meaning: Several levels; layers of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	○ Meaning: More than one level; layer of meaning with areas clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	○ Meaning: One level; layer of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text
TEXT STRUCTURE	○ Narration: Complex and/or unconventional; many shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Not in chronological order; heavy use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	○ Narration: Some complexities and/or unconventionality; occasional shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Several major shifts in time, use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a few illustrations that support the text	○ Narration: Largely simple and/or conventional; few, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Occasional use of flashback; no major shifts in time ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	○ Narration: Simple and conventional; no shifts in point of view or perspective ○ Order of Events: Strictly chronological ○ Use of Graphics: If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts	○ Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Some use of unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational language, rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	○ Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand ○ Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	○ Life Experiences: Explores many complex and sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge	○ Life Experiences: Explores many themes of varying layers of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate amount of prior content knowledge	○ Life Experiences: Explores few themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires some prior content knowledge	○ Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires only everyday content knowledge



Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

INFORMATIONAL TEXT

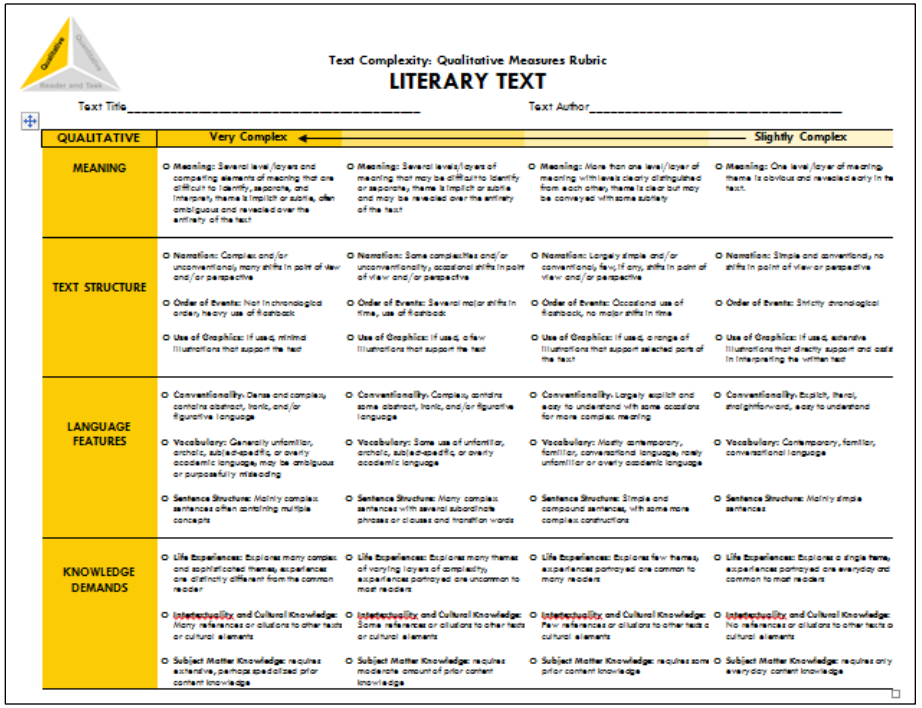
Text Title_____ Text Author_____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex ←			→ Slightly Complex
PURPOSE	○ Purpose: Subtle, implied, difficult to determine, intricate, theoretical elements	○ Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete	○ Purpose: Implied, but easy to identify; based upon context or source	○ Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear; concrete with a narrow focus
TEXT STRUCTURE	○ Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between ideas, processes or events are deep and often implicit or subtle; organization of the text is intricate or prescribed for a particular discipline ○ Text Features: If used, are essential in understanding content ○ Use of Graphics: If used, extensive, intricate, essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, etc., necessary to make meaning of text; also may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text	○ Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between some ideas or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways and may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline ○ Text Features: If used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content ○ Use of Graphics: If used, essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, etc., may occasionally be essential to understanding the text	○ Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential ○ Text Features: If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content ○ Use of Graphics: If used, graphics mostly supplementary to understanding of the text, such as indexes, glossaries, graphs, pictures, tables, and charts directly support the text	○ Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict ○ Text Features: If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential ○ Use of Graphics: If used, simple graphics, unnecessary to understanding the text but directly support and assist in interpreting the written text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language, may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts	○ Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	○ Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand ○ Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	○ Subject Matter Knowledge: Extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge; range of challenging abstract and theoretical concepts ○ Intertextuality: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts ○ Intertextuality: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas ○ Intertextuality: A few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	○ Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas ○ Intertextuality: No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

Because the factors for literary texts are different from information texts, these two rubrics contain different content. However, the formatting of each document is exactly the same.

And because these factors represent continua rather than discrete stages or levels, numeric values are not associated with these rubrics. Instead, four points along each continuum are identified: high, middle high, middle low, and low.



Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

LITERARY TEXT

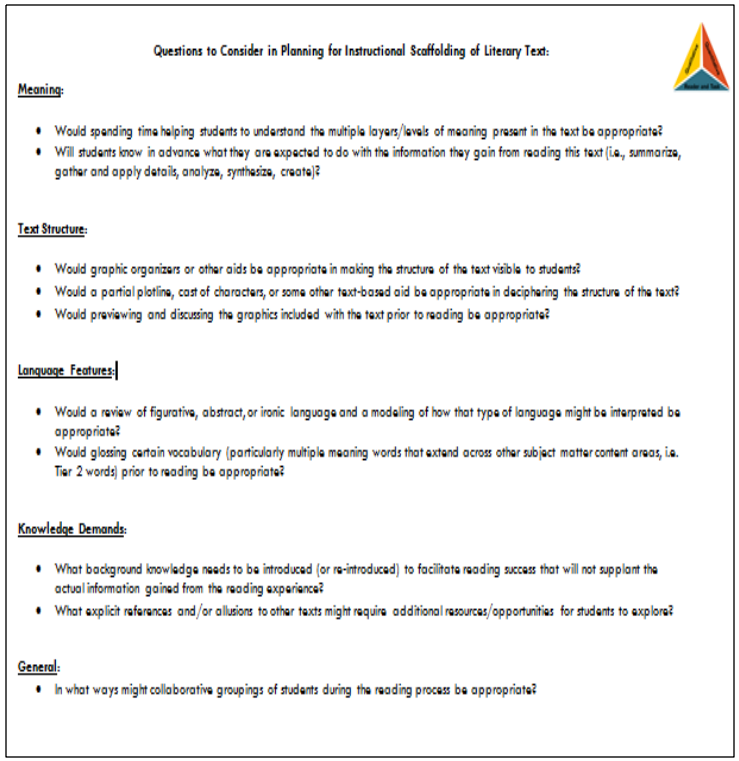
Text Title_____ Text Author_____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex ←			→ Slightly Complex
MEANING	O **Meaning:** Several levels/layers and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	O **Meaning:** Several levels/layers of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	O **Meaning:** More than one level/layer of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	O **Meaning:** One level/layer of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
TEXT STRUCTURE	O **Narration:** Complex and/or unconventional; many shifts in point of view and/or perspective O **Order of Events:** Not in chronological order; heavy use of flashback O **Use of Graphics:** If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	O **Narration:** Some complexities and/or unconventionality; occasional shifts in point of view and/or perspective O **Order of Events:** Several major shifts in time, use of flashback O **Use of Graphics:** If used, a few illustrations that support the text	O **Narration:** Largely simple and/or conventional; few, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective O **Order of Events:** Occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time O **Use of Graphics:** If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	O **Narration:** Simple and conventional; no shifts in point of view or perspective O **Order of Events:** Strictly chronological O **Use of Graphics:** If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	O **Conventionality:** Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language O **Vocabulary:** Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading O **Sentence Structure:** Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts	O **Conventionality:** Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language O **Vocabulary:** Some use of unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language O **Sentence Structure:** Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	O **Conventionality:** Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning O **Vocabulary:** Mainly contemporary, familiar, conversational language; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language O **Sentence Structure:** Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	O **Conventionality:** Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand O **Vocabulary:** Contemporary, familiar, conversational language O **Sentence Structure:** Mainly simple sentences
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	O **Life Experiences:** Explores many complex and sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader O **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements O **Subject Matter Knowledge:** requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge	O **Life Experiences:** Explores many themes of varying layers of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers O **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements O **Subject Matter Knowledge:** requires moderate amount of prior content knowledge	O **Life Experiences:** Explores few themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers O **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements O **Subject Matter Knowledge:** requires some prior content knowledge	O **Life Experiences:** Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers O **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements O **Subject Matter Knowledge:** requires only everyday content knowledge

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

Questions to Consider in Planning for Instructional Scaffolding

On the back side of each rubric is list of springboard questions to help educators begin thinking about the kinds of instructional scaffolding the text may also require.



Questions to Consider in Planning for Instructional Scaffolding of Literary Text:

Meaning:

- Would spending time helping students to understand the multiple layers/levels of meaning present in the text be appropriate?
- Will students know in advance what they are expected to do with the information they gain from reading this text (i.e., summarize, gather and apply details, analyze, synthesize, create)?

Text Structure:

- Would graphic organizers or other aids be appropriate in making the structure of the text visible to students?
- Would a partial plotline, cast of characters, or some other text-based aid be appropriate in deciphering the structure of the text?
- Would previewing and discussing the graphics included with the text prior to reading be appropriate?

Language Features:

- Would a review of figurative, abstract, or ironic language and a modeling of how that type of language might be interpreted be appropriate?
- Would glossing certain vocabulary (particularly multiple meaning words that extend across other subject matter content areas, i.e. Tier 2 words) prior to reading be appropriate?

Knowledge Demands:

- What background knowledge needs to be introduced (or re-introduced) to facilitate reading success that will not supplant the actual information gained from the reading experience?
- What explicit references and/or allusions to other texts might require additional resources/opportunities for students to explore?

General:

- In what ways might collaborative groupings of students during the reading process be appropriate?

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

So…

How is the rubric used?

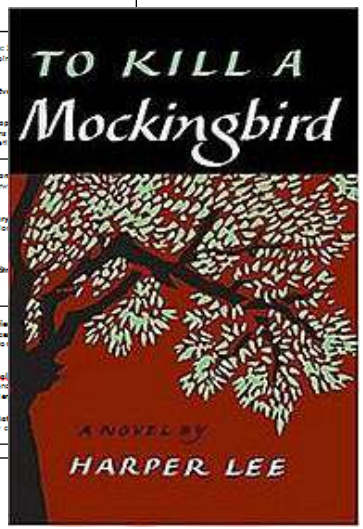
And how would To *Kill a Mockingbird* fare when analyzed through the lens of the Literary Text Rubric?

Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

LITERARY TEXT

Text Title_____ Text Author_____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex ←			→ Slightly Complex
MEANING	○ Meaning: Several level/layers and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	○ Meaning: Several levels/layers of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	○ Meaning: More than one level/layer of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	○ Meaning: One level/layer of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
TEXT STRUCTURE	○ Narration: Complex and/or unconventional; many shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Not in chronological order; heavy use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	○ Narration: Some complexities and/or unconventionality; occasional shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Several major shifts in time, use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a few illustrations that support the text	○ Narration: Largely simple and/or conventional; few, if any, shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	○ Narration: ○ Order of Ev ○ Use of Gra
LANGUAGE FEATURES	○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language, may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts	○ Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Some use of unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational language, rarely unfamiliar or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	○ Convention ○ Vocabulary ○ Sentence St
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	○ Life Experiences: Explores many complex and sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge	○ Life Experiences: Explores many themes of varying layers of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate amount of prior content knowledge	○ Life Experiences: Explores few themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires some prior content knowledge	○ Life Experie ○ Intertextual ○ Subject Mat

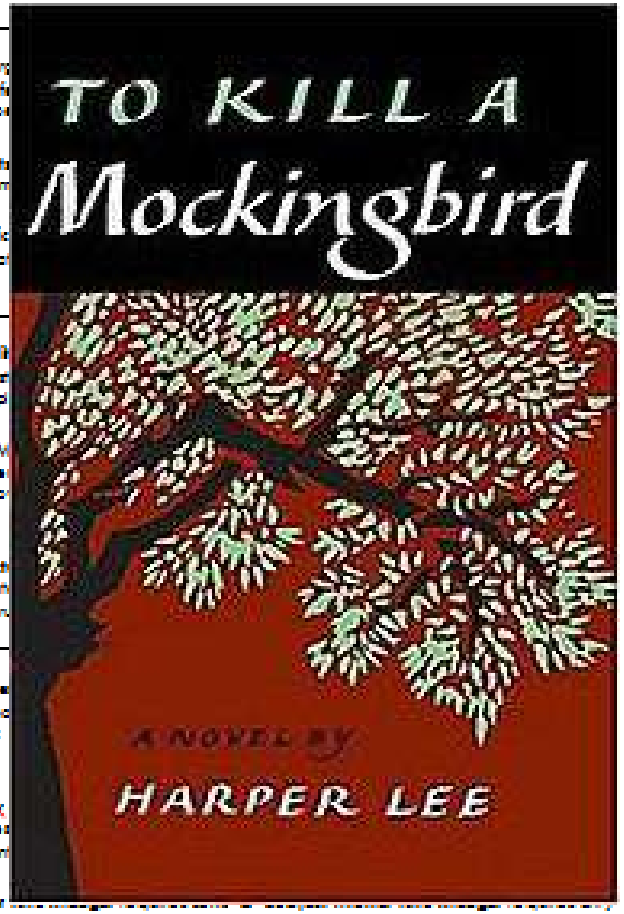


Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

LITERARY TEXT

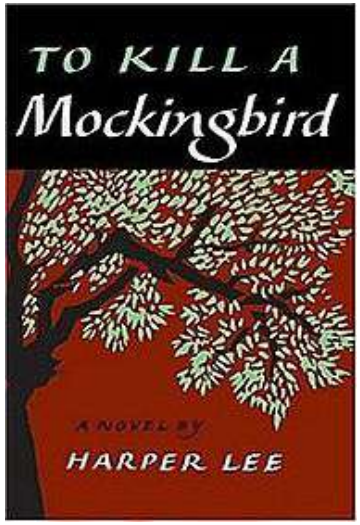
Text Title_____ Text Author_____

QUALITATIVE	Very Complex			Slightly Complex
MEANING	○ Meaning: Several level/layers and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret, theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	✗ Meaning: Several levels/layers of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate, theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	○ Meaning: More than one level/layer of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other, theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	○ Meaning: One level/layer of meaning, theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
TEXT STRUCTURE	○ Narration: Complex and/or unconventional, many shifts in point of view and/or perspective ○ Order of Events: Not in chronological order, heavy use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	✗ Narration: Some complexities and/or unconventionality, occasional shifts in point of view and/or perspective ✗ Order of Events: Several major shifts in time, use of flashback ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a few illustrations that support the text	○ Narration: Lar… conventional, f… view and/or p… ○ Order of Events… flashback, no m… ○ Use of Graphic… illustrations tha… the text	
LANGUAGE FEATURES	○ Conventionality: Dense and complex, contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language, may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences often containing multiple concepts	✗ Conventionality: Complex, contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ✗ Vocabulary: Some use of unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	○ Conventionali… easy to underst… for more compl… ○ Vocabulary: M… familiar, conve… unfamiliar or o… ✗ Sentence Struct… compound sent… complex constr…	
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	○ Life Experiences: Explores many complex and sophisticated themes, experiences are distinctly different from the common reader ✗ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge	✗ Life Experiences: Explores many themes of varying layers of complexity, experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements ○ Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate amount of prior content knowledge	○ Life Experience… experiences po… many readers ○ Intertextuality… Few references… cultural elemen… ✗ Subject Matter… prior content knowledge	…everyday content knowledge



Step 2: Qualitative Measures

From examining the quantitative measures, we knew:

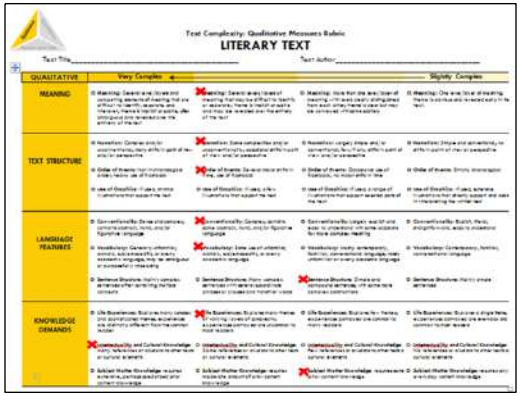


Lexile Text Measure: **870L**

ATOS Book Level: **5.6**

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

But after reflecting upon the qualitative measures, we believed:



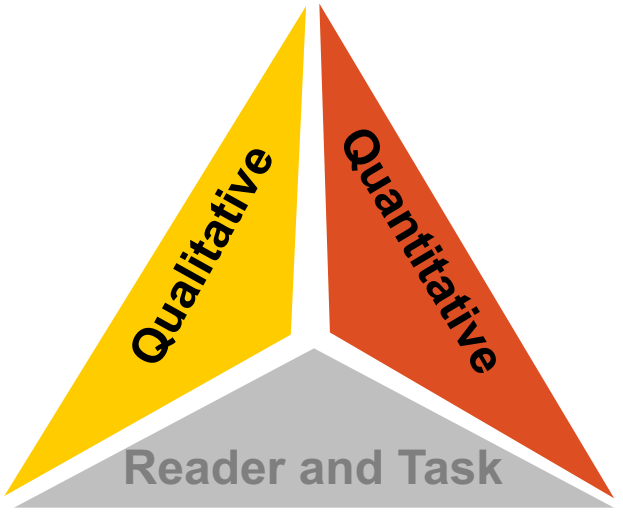
Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385

Step 2: Qualitative Measures

Our initial placement of *To Kill a Mockingbird* into a text complexity band changed when we examined the qualitative measures.

Remember, however, that we have completed only the first two legs of the text complexity triangle.

The **reader and task considerations** still remain.



Step 2: Qualitative Measures

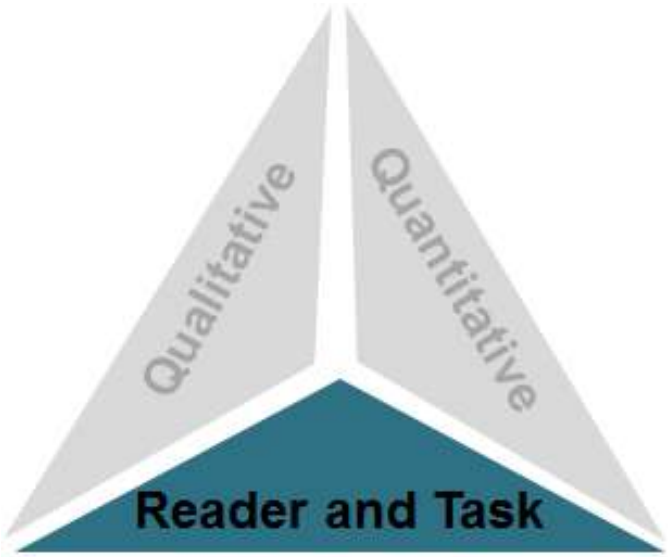
Activity #3: Your Turn!

Using the rubrics for literary and informational text, analyze the qualitative measures of the following titles:

- "The Old Red Barn" (literary text)—680L
- "The Desert" (informational text)— 790L

Discuss your results as a small group. Debrief large group.

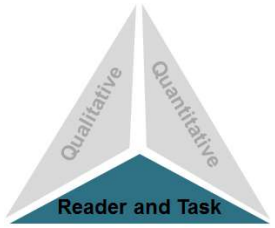
Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations



Considerations such as:

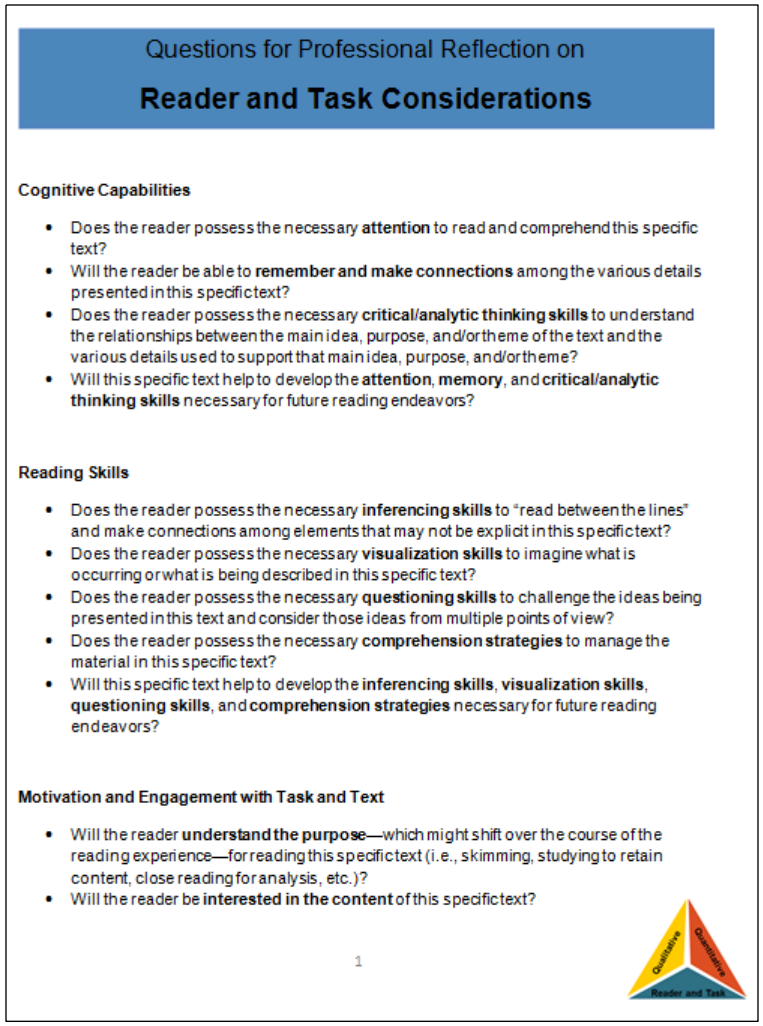
- Motivation
- Knowledge and experience
- Purpose for reading
- Complexity of task assigned regarding text
- Complexity of questions asked regarding text

Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations



Questions for Professional Reflection on Reader and Task Considerations:

The questions provided in this resource are meant to spur teacher thought and reflection upon the text, students, and any tasks associated with the text.



Questions for Professional Reflection on

Reader and Task Considerations

Cognitive Capabilities

- Does the reader possess the necessary **attention** to read and comprehend this specific text?
- Will the reader be able to **remember and make connections** among the various details presented in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **critical/analytic thinking skills** to understand the relationships between the main idea, purpose, and/or theme of the text and the various details used to support that main idea, purpose, and/or theme?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **attention**, **memory**, and **critical/analytic thinking skills** necessary for future reading endeavors?

Reading Skills

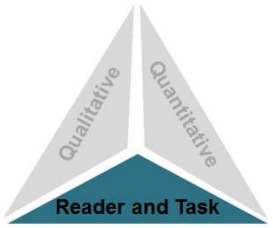
- Does the reader possess the necessary **inferencing skills** to "read between the lines" and make connections among elements that may not be explicit in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **visualization skills** to imagine what is occurring or what is being described in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **questioning skills** to challenge the ideas being presented in this text and consider those ideas from multiple points of view?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **comprehension strategies** to manage the material in this specific text?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **inferencing skills**, **visualization skills**, **questioning skills**, and **comprehension strategies** necessary for future reading endeavors?

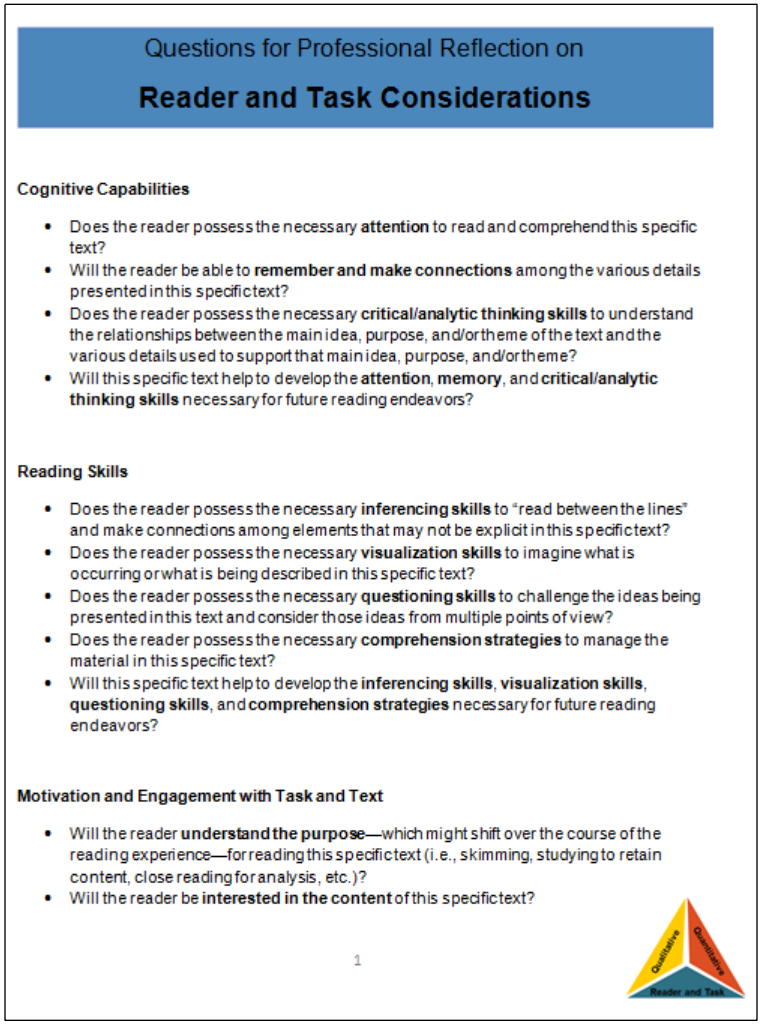
Motivation and Engagement with Task and Text

- Will the reader **understand the purpose**—which might shift over the course of the reading experience—for reading this specific text (i.e., skimming, studying to retain content, close reading for analysis, etc.)?
- Will the reader be **interested in the content** of this specific text?

1

Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations





Questions for Professional Reflection on

Reader and Task Considerations

Cognitive Capabilities

- Does the reader possess the necessary **attention** to read and comprehend this specific text?
- Will the reader be able to **remember and make connections** among the various details presented in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **critical/analytic thinking skills** to understand the relationships between the main idea, purpose, and/or theme of the text and the various details used to support that main idea, purpose, and/or theme?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **attention**, **memory**, and **critical/analytic thinking skills** necessary for future reading endeavors?

Reading Skills

- Does the reader possess the necessary **inferencing skills** to "read between the lines" and make connections among elements that may not be explicit in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **visualization skills** to imagine what is occurring or what is being described in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **questioning skills** to challenge the ideas being presented in this text and consider those ideas from multiple points of view?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **comprehension strategies** to manage the material in this specific text?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **inferencing skills**, **visualization skills**, **questioning skills**, and **comprehension strategies** necessary for future reading endeavors?

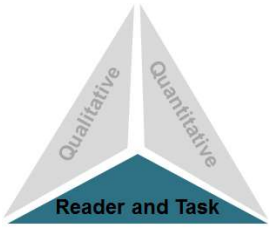
Motivation and Engagement with Task and Text

- Will the reader **understand the purpose**—which might shift over the course of the reading experience—for reading this specific text (i.e., skimming, studying to retain content, close reading for analysis, etc.)?
- Will the reader be **interested in the content** of this specific text?

1

The questions included here are largely open-ended questions without single, correct answers, but help educators to think through the implications of using a particular text in the classroom.

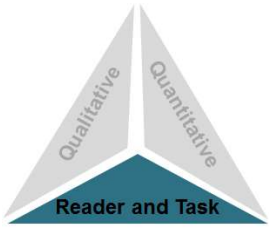
Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations



What aspects of the text will likely pose the most challenge for my students?

- Content or theme concerns or challenges?
- Text structure challenges?
- Language feature challenges?
- Knowledge and experience demands?
- Motivation for and interest in the text?

Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations



What Common Core State Standards should I focus on when teaching this text?

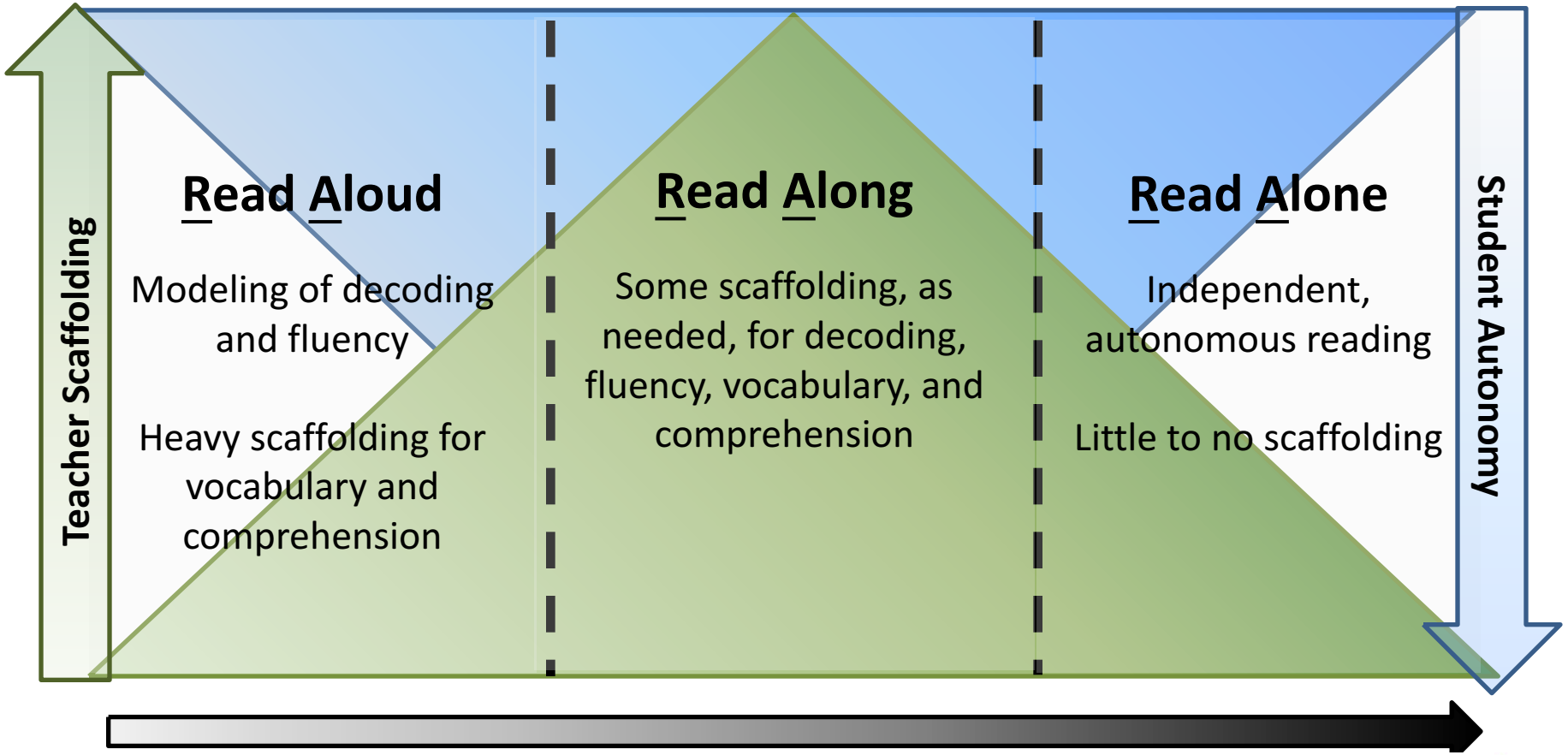
- What are natural areas of focus for this text?
- With what standards do my students need the most practice?

Will the complexity of any before, during and after reading tasks or the complexity of any questions asked about the text interfere with the reading experience?

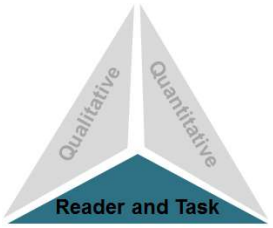
What supports do I need to provide so that all of my students (even those who are struggling readers) can access the text?

How Should Instruction Address Text Complexity?

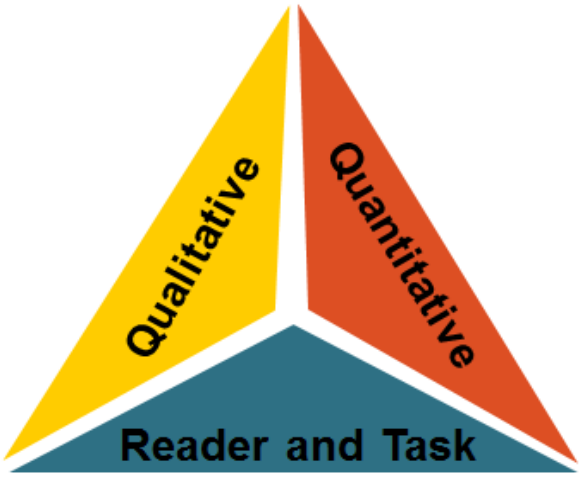
RA! RA! RA! Reading!



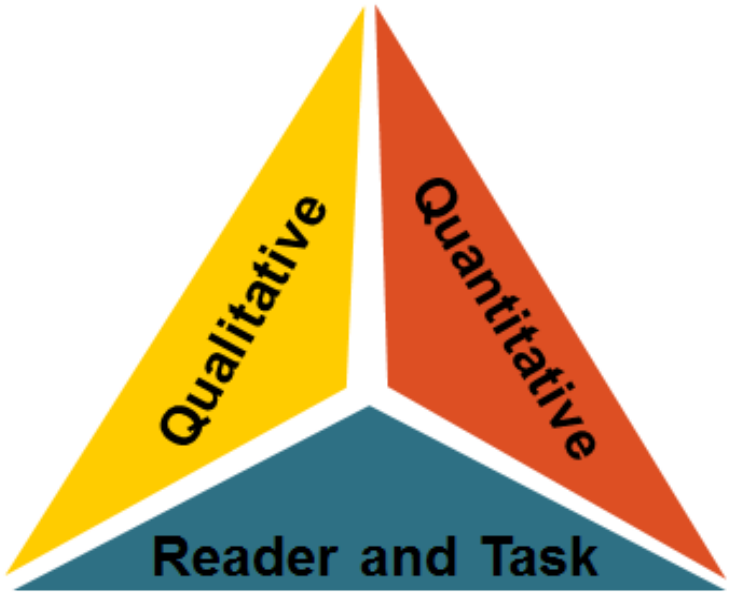
Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations



Based upon our examination of the Reader and Task Considerations, we have completed the third leg of the text complexity model and are now ready to recommend a final placement within a text complexity band.

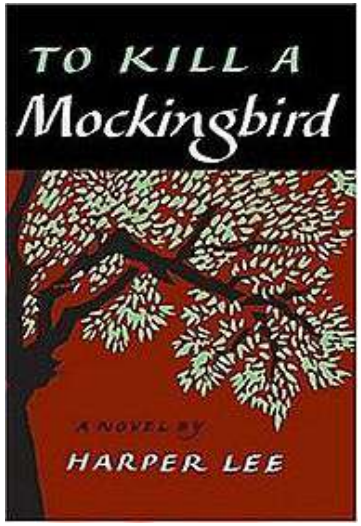


Step 4: Recommended Placement



After reflecting upon all three legs of the text complexity model we can make a final recommendation of placement within a text and begin to document our thinking for future reference.

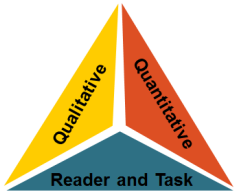
Step 4: Recommended Placement

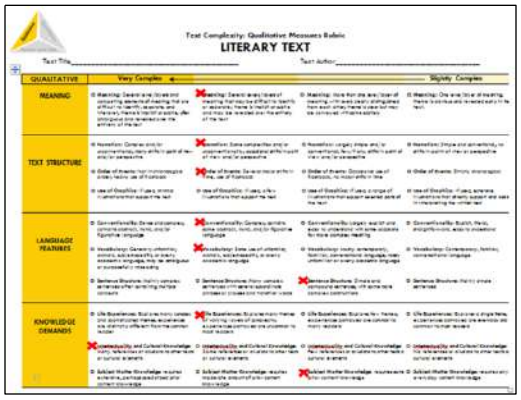


Lexile Text Measure: **870L**

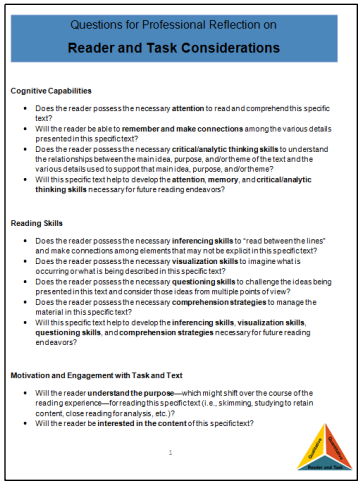
ATOS Book Level: **5.6**

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385





Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K – 1	N/A	N/A
2 – 3	450 – 725	420 – 820
4 – 5	645 – 845	740 – 1010
6 – 8	860 – 1010	925 – 1185
9 – 10	960 – 1115	1050 – 1335
11 – CCR	1070 – 1220	1185 - 1385



Questions for Professional Reflection on

Reader and Task Considerations

Cognitive Capabilities

- Does the reader possess the necessary **attention** to read and comprehend this specific text?
- Will the reader be able to **remember and make connections** among the various details presented in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **critical/analytic thinking skills** to understand the relationships between the main idea, purpose, and/or theme of the text and the various details used to support that main idea, purpose, and/or theme?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **attention, memory**, and **critical/analytic thinking skills** necessary for future reading endeavors?

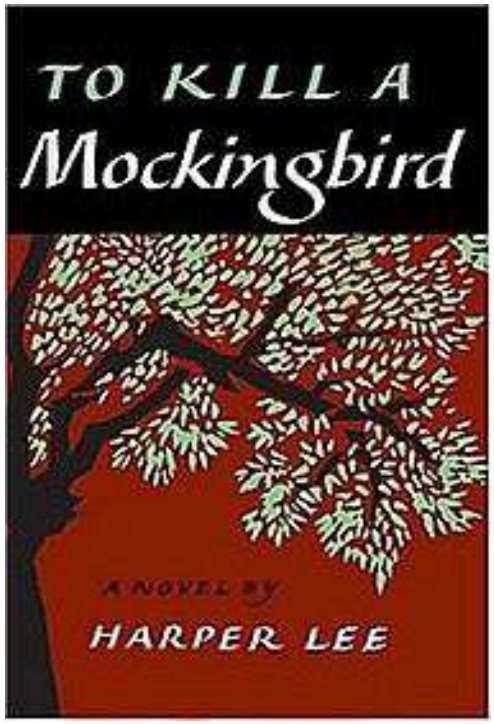
Reading Skills

- Does the reader possess the necessary **inferencing skills** to "read between the lines" and make connections among elements that may not be explicit in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **visualization skills** to imagine what is occurring or what is being described in this specific text?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **questioning skills** to challenge the ideas being presented in this text and consider those ideas from multiple points of view?
- Does the reader possess the necessary **comprehension strategies** to manage the material in this specific text?
- Will this specific text help to develop the **inferencing skills**, **visualization skills**, **questioning skills**, and **comprehension strategies** necessary for future reading endeavors?

Motivation and Engagement with Task and Text

- Will the reader **understand the purpose**—which might shift over the course of the reading experience—for reading this specific text (i.e., skimming, studying to retain content, close reading for analysis, etc.)?
- Will the reader be **interested in the content** of this specific text?

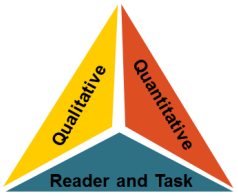
Step 4: Recommended Placement



Based upon all the information—all three legs of the model—the final recommendation for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Text Complexity Grade Bands
K-1
2-3
4-5
6-8
9-10
11-CCR

Step 4: Recommended Placement



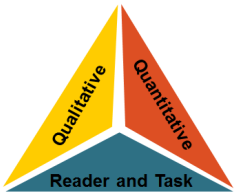
In this instance, Appendix B confirms our evaluation of the novel. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is placed within the grade 9-10 text complexity band.

Grades 9–10 Text Exemplars 101

Stories 101

Homer. *The Odyssey* 101
Ovid. *Metamorphoses* 101
Gogol, Nikolai. "The Nose." 102
De Voltaire, F. A. M. *Candide, Or The Optimist* 103
Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons* 104
Henry, O. "The Gift of the Magi." 104
Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis* 105
Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath* 105
Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451* 106
Olsen, Tillie. "I Stand Here Ironing." 106
Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart* 107
Lee, Harper. *To Kill A Mockingbird* 107
Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels* 108
Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club* 108
Álvarez, Julia. *In the Time of the Butterflies* 108
Zusak, Marcus. *The Book Thief* 109

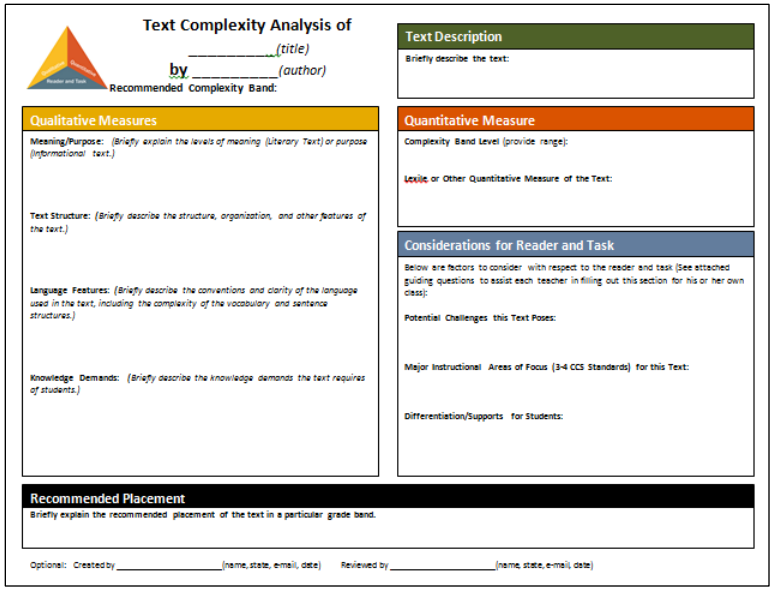
Step 4: Recommended Placement



Template for Text Complexity Analysis and Recommended Placement Form:

The one-page template provides an opportunity to record the thinking involved in recommending the placement of a specific text into a text complexity band.

Keeping a record of such analysis and thinking might be useful documentation in the case that any questions arise in the future.



Text Complexity Analysis of
_____(title)
by _____(author)
Recommended Complexity Band:

Text Description

Briefly describe the text:

Qualitative Measures

Meaning/Purpose: *(Briefly explain the levels of meaning (Literary Text) or purpose (Informational text.)*

Text Structure: *(Briefly describe the structure, organization, and other features of the text.)*

Language Features: *(Briefly describe the conventions and clarity of the language used in the text, including the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures.)*

Knowledge Demands: *(Briefly describe the knowledge demands the text requires of students.)*

Quantitative Measure

Complexity Band Level (provide range):

Lexile or Other Quantitative Measure of the Text:

Considerations for Reader and Task

Below are factors to consider with respect to the reader and task (See attached guiding questions to assist each teacher in filling out this section for his or her own class):

Potential Challenges this Text Poses:

Major Instructional Areas of Focus (3-4 CCS Standards) for this Text:

Differentiation/Supports for Students:

Recommended Placement

Briefly explain the recommended placement of the text in a particular grade band.

Optional: Created by _____(name, state, e-mail, date) Reviewed by _____(name, state, e-mail, date)

Text Complexity Analysis of

_____*(title)*

by _____*(author)*

Recommended Complexity Band:

Text Description

Briefly describe the text:

Qualitative Measures

Meaning/Purpose: *(Briefly explain the levels of meaning (Literary Text) or purpose (Informational text.)*

Text Structure: *(Briefly describe the structure, organization, and other features of the text.)*

Language Features: *(Briefly describe the conventions and clarity of the language used in the text, including the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures.)*

Knowledge Demands: *(Briefly describe the knowledge demands the text requires of students.)*

Quantitative Measure

Complexity Band Level (provide range):

Lexile or Other Quantitative Measure of the Text:

Considerations for Reader and Task

Below are factors to consider with respect to the reader and task (See attached guiding questions to assist each teacher in filling out this section for his or her own class):

Potential Challenges this Text Poses:

Major Instructional Areas of Focus (3-4 CCS Standards) for this Text:

Differentiation/Supports for Students:

Recommended Placement

Briefly explain the recommended placement of the text in a particular grade band.

Optional: Created by _____(name, state, e-mail, date) Reviewed by _____(name, state, e-mail, date)

Text Complexity Analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Recommended Complexity Band: 9-10

Text Description

Briefly describe the text:
To Kill a Mockingbird is a Pulitzer Prize winning novel set in Alabama in the 1930s; the novel explores racial injustice, moral integrity, and the destruction of innocence.

Qualitative Measures

Meaning/Purpose: *(Briefly explain the levels of meaning (Literary Text) or purpose (Informational text.)*
The book has multiple levels of meaning. Set in Alabama, the female main character Scout Finch struggles to understand issues of race and prejudice when her lawyer father defends a black man accused of raping a white woman.

Text Structure: *(Briefly describe the structure, organization, and other features of the text.)*
Although the story has a largely simple structure with a straightforward writing style, several issues complicate the narration and structure. Scout's narration is as an adult reflecting back on a few pivotal years of her childhood; flashback is used throughout. And at several points it seems as though the narration is from the point of view of a less-reliable Scout still in her childhood.

Language Features: *(Briefly describe the conventions and clarity of the language used in the text, including the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures.)*
The characters speak in easily readable, conversational language. Some slang is indicative of the time period in which the novel is set, and there is some dialect.

Knowledge Demands: *(Briefly describe the knowledge demands the text requires of students.)*
Higher level themes of justice, prejudice, and civil rights are implied. Thinking at deeper levels is required to contemplate the personal, moral, and ethical struggles of the characters as set against the culture and society of the time period.

Quantitative Measure

Lexile or Other Quantitative Measure of the Text:
The ATOS formula (used with the Accelerated Reader program) identifies this title as having a book level of 5.6. A Lexile measure for this novel is 870L. Although the Lexile and ATOS levels fall in the 4th-5th grade text complexity band, the complexity of the book's theme, the issue of rape, and the length of the book would indicate that higher level reading skills are necessary, along with a consideration for the maturity level of the reader regarding the book's subject matter.

Considerations for Reader and Task

Potential Challenges this Text Poses:
These are to be determined locally with reference to such variables as a student's motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the question posed. However, the complexity of the book's theme, the issue of rape, and the length of the book would indicate that higher level reading skills are necessary, along with a consideration for the maturity level of the reader regarding the book's subject matter.

Major Instructional Areas of Focus (3-4 CCS Standards) for this Text:
RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.5, RL.9-10.7

Differentiation/Supports for Students:
Educators might want to examine the following elements or issues: social and historical events of the late 50s, early 60s, and issues surrounding racial stereotyping and prejudice in the Deep South at this same time period.

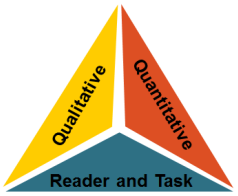
Recommended Placement

Briefly explain the recommended placement of the text in a particular grade band.
Although the quantitative measures suggest placement in the 4th-5th grade level text complexity band, the qualitative measures and reader and task considerations suggest that the novel is best placed at the **9th-10th grade complexity band**. The Common Core Standards Text Exemplars also places the novel in the 9th-10th grade complexity band.

Created by Julie Aikins, Chanute (KS) USD 413, aikinsj@usd413.org

Reviewed by _____ (name, state, e-mail, date)

Step 4: Recommended Placement

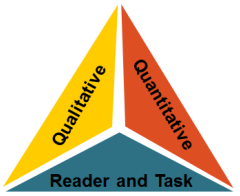


Activity #4: Your Turn!

As a small group…

- Review the text and qualitative rubric you worked on earlier.
- Begin documenting a rationale for the recommended placement of that text on the recommended placement template.
- Debrief whole group

Step 4: Recommended Placement and Next Steps



Activity #5: Discussion!

As a small group…

- How might classroom teachers make use of the recommended placement forms?
- How might administrators make use of the recommended placement forms?
- What steps can we take to ensure that students encounter appropriate grade-level complex text?

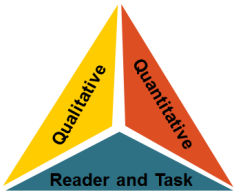
Be prepared to share your thoughts…

Final Thoughts
Sarah Wessling Brown

- How do we ramp up complexity?
  - Take a text that is used frequently and make the task more challenging.
  - Take a task that is typically challenging and scaffold it with more accessible (shorter) text.
  - Increase complexity by comparing text.

Final Thoughts
Sarah Wessling Brown

- Text complexity is relevant to all teachers, all readers.
- Text complexity is never determined by a single characteristic.
- Teachers must make purposeful matches between text, task, and reader.

Additional Resources

- http://www.ccsso.org/Navigating_Text_Complexity.html
- http://www.achievethecore.org/page/642/text-complexity-collection
- http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/683691