

TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE RUBRIC

LITERARY TEXT

	High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
MEANING	Text has multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify, separate, and interpret. The text explores multiple sophisticated or abstract themes. Theme is implicit, subtle, or ambiguous; it is revealed over the entirety of the text.	Text has multiple levels of meaning that are relatively easy to identify. The text explores several themes of varying levels of complexity. Theme may be subtle and is revealed over the entirety of the text.	Text has a single, complex level of meaning. The text explores a single complex theme. Theme is clear, but may be conveyed with some subtlety.	Text has a single, simple level of meaning. The text explores a single theme. Theme is obvious and is revealed early in the text.
STRUCTURE	Text has a complex storyline that may have an ambiguous ending or subplots that are not fully developed. Text has an unfamiliar point of view and sophisticated narration.	Text has shifts in point of view, a complex storyline or unpredictable plot, and unique narration.	Text has mostly familiar structural elements as well as some shifts in storyline or point of view.	Text is easy to follow, is likely chronological, and has familiar structural elements.
LANGUAGE	Diction: Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and includes archaic and/or academic words. Sentence structure: Text uses a variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences with subordinate phrases/clauses.	Diction: Language is sometimes complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and includes some academic or archaic words. Sentence structure: Text uses a variety of sentence structures, including some unfamiliar or complex structures.	Diction: Language is often explicit and literal, but includes some academic words or figurative language. Sentence structure: Text uses a variety of sentence structures that are mostly familiar and simple.	Diction: Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary. Sentence structure: Text uses mostly simple sentences.
KNOWLEDGE	Subject Matter: Experiences portrayed are distinctly different to many readers. Intertextuality: Text is dependent on references to other texts or cultural elements; References have no context and require inference and evaluation.	Subject Matter: Experiences portrayed may be uncommon to many readers. Intertextuality: Text makes few references to other texts or cultural elements, the meaning of which may be partially explained in context and may require some inference.	Subject Matter: Experiences portrayed are common to most readers or are clearly fantasy. Intertextuality: If there are any references to other texts or cultural elements, they are fully explained in the text.	Subject Matter: Experiences portrayed are common to readers or are clearly fantasy. Intertextuality: There are no references to other texts or cultural elements, or any slight references require no explanation.
USE OF GRAPHICS* (optional)	Graphics connect to the text in a complex way and add new information requiring interpretation.	Graphics support interpretation of the written text and may introduce some new and relevant information.	Graphics support interpretation of selected parts of the written text but do not introduce new information.	Graphics are not necessary for comprehension, but may help clarify an aspect of the text.
AUDIO/VIDEO STIMULI (optional)	Audio: Language is academic, abstract, archaic, and/or implicit. The content seldom overlaps with the content in the accompanying text; the relationship between the two is subtle and intricate. Video: The visual provides supplemental information that builds on nuanced details in the text with which it is paired; it may provide additional information not otherwise conveyed in the text.	Audio: Language is archaic and/or academic and dialogue includes meaning that is sometimes implicit; the content introduces some ideas not present in the text with which it is paired. Video: The visual provides supplemental information that connects to the text with which it is paired; it is fairly easy to understand but not entirely predictable.	Audio: Language is mostly familiar and simple, with few archaic or academic words. Unfamiliar words are mostly explained or clearly defined through context. Content supports and/or clarifies ideas present in the paired text. Video: The visual is representative of the information in the paired text. It is easy to understand, is largely predictable, and develops/clarifies reader's understanding.	Audio: Language is simple, conversational, and/or familiar, and the dialogue establishes meaning that is highly explicit, straightforward, and easy to understand; the content bears a clear relationship to content in the text with which it is paired and may even repeat the same language. Video: The visual is easy to understand; it engages the reader more than it enhances understanding of the text with which it is paired.

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

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INFORMATIONAL TEXT

	High	Middle High	Middle Low	Low
PURPOSE	The text contains multiple purposes. The primary purpose is subtle, intricate, and/or abstract.	The text may contain multiple purposes. The primary purpose of the text is not stated explicitly, but can be inferred based upon context.	The primary purpose of the text is mostly explicit, but may require some inference.	The primary purpose of the text is clear, concrete, narrowly focused, and explicitly stated.
STRUCTURE	Organization: Connections among an expanded range of ideas, processes, or events are often implicit or subtle; organization exhibits some discipline-specific traits. Text features: Any text features are essential to comprehension of content.	Organization: Connections between some ideas, processes, or events are implicit or subtle; organization is complex and may exhibit discipline-specific traits. Text features: Any text features greatly help facilitate comprehension of content.	Organization: Connections between ideas, processes, or events are largely explicit; organization is easy to follow and likely sequential. Text features: Any text features somewhat help enhance comprehension of content, but are not essential to understanding.	Organization: Connections between ideas, processes, and events are explicit and clear; organization is chronological, linear, or easy to predict. Text features: Any text features are helpful but are not essential to understanding.
LANGUAGE	Diction: Language is complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language; archaic, academic, and domain-specific words may not be otherwise defined. Sentence structure: Text uses many complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.	Diction: Language includes academic, figurative, archaic, and/or domain-specific words with complex meaning. Sentence structure: Text uses some complex sentences with subordinate phrases or clauses.	Diction: Language is mostly explicit and literal, but may include a few academic, figurative, archaic, or domain-specific words. Sentence structure: Text uses some complex sentences with subordinate phrases or clauses.	Diction: Language is explicit, clear, and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar words. Sentence structure: Text uses mostly simple sentences and is easy to understand.
KNOWLEDGE	Knowledge: The subject matter of the text includes specialized, discipline-specific knowledge. Intertextuality: Text makes numerous references or allusions to other texts or ideas without providing context.	Knowledge: The subject matter of the text includes moderate levels of discipline-specific knowledge. Intertextuality: Text makes some references or allusions to other texts or ideas, the meaning of which may be partially explained in context.	Knowledge: The subject matter of the text may include some discipline-specific knowledge. Intertextuality: If there are references or allusions to other texts or ideas, the meaning is mostly explained in context.	Knowledge: The subject matter of the text includes little or no discipline-specific knowledge. Intertextuality: There are no references or allusions to other texts or ideas, or any slight references require no explanation or are fully explained in context.
USE OF GRAPHICS* (optional)	Graphics connect to the text in a complex way and add new information requiring interpretation.	Graphics support interpretation of the written text and may introduce some new and relevant information.	Graphics support interpretation of selected parts of the written text but do not introduce new information.	Graphics are not necessary for comprehension, but may help clarify an aspect of the text.
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