

# Text Complexity Analysis Worksheet Guidance Document

## Purpose

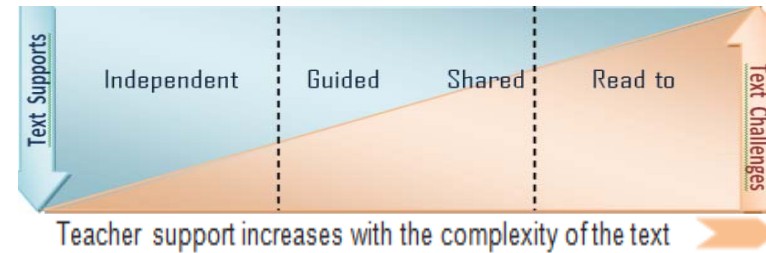
This document serves as a tool to assist teachers in selecting texts that are supportive of established learning objectives for lessons and units. The process of text analysis is meant to be collaborative, where groups of teachers work together rather than in isolation. Similar to the experience using the 6-Trait Writing Rubric, it is expected that over time, inter-rater reliability will be established among groups that engage in this work.

## Three Part Model of Text Complexity

The Common Core Standards introduce a three-part model for measuring text complexity. Teachers need to use their professional judgment as they draw on information from all three sources when determining the complexity of text.

1. **Quantitative measures** – readability such as: word difficulty, sentence length and syntax, and text cohesion (grammatical links with a text or sentence) 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 (see examples on the next page).
3. **Reader and Task considerations** professional judgment based on:

- **The teacher’s knowledge of students as readers**
- **The teacher’s understanding of text complexity**
- **The teacher’s ability to use instructional supports/scaffolds** *For example, a close read, a graphic organizer, multiple opportunities to read and discuss*
- **The teacher’s consideration of matching the text to the task the students are expected to complete, a teacher may ask, “Does this text lend itself to the expected task?”** *For example, purpose for reading: to gain knowledge, skim for information, identify text structure, compare and contrast across texts*



## Balancing the supports and the challenges

The more complex the text, the more support students will need. Students should be introduced to increasingly complex texts through middle school and high school. This is done through a gradual release of responsibility where complex texts are introduced in a supportive context that facilitates higher levels of independence.

## Directions

1. Determine the **Quantitative** measure of the selected text, noting that a book/text may fit into a few different grade bands.
2. Carefully compare the **Qualitative criteria** and **descriptors** on the Text Complexity Analysis Worksheet with selected text.
3. Place an X in the appropriate column for each criteria listed. Utilize the **Notes** column to support decisions.
4. After considering each of the criteria, notice where the majority of the X’s occurred. Determine if the text is **Readily Accessible**, **Moderately Complex** or **Very Complex**.
5. Apply the **Reader and Task considerations**. Determine which grade band is most appropriate for the selected text when considering what students **should** be able to do.
6. With the understanding that text complexity is important and students should continually be exposed to increasingly complex text, determine which sections or passages may be difficult for students. Consider the **instructional supports or scaffolds** that might be necessary for students when they are first exposed to complex texts.

-Of course, an introduction.

A beginning.

Where are many manners?

I could introduce myself properly, but it's not really necessary.

You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables.

It suffices to say that at some point in time, I will be standing over you, as genially as possible.

Your soul will be in my arms.

A color will be perched on my shoulder.

I will carry you gently away.

Narrator is not identified until part way through the text.

Figurative Language

At that moment, you will be lying there

(I rarely find people standing up).

You will be caked in your own body.

There might be a discovery, a scream will dribble down the air.

The only sound I'll hear after that will be my own breathing,

and the sound of the smell, of my footsteps.

Personification reference to death

Figurative Language

The question is, what color will everything be at that moment when I come for you? What will the sky be saying?

Personally, I like a chocolate-colored sky.

Dark, dark chocolate. People will say it suits me.

I do, however, try to enjoy every color I see the whole spectrum.

A billion or so flavors, none of them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge of the stress. It helps me relax.

\*\*\*A Small Theory\*\*\*

People observe the colors of day only at its beginning and ends. But to me it's quite clear that a day merges through a multitude of shades and intonations, with each passing moment. A single hour can consist of thousands of different colors. Waxy yellows, cloud-spat blues. Murky darkness.

In my own line of work, I make it a point to notice them.

Innovative stylistic techniques are used. The narrator's use of bold print to rely information

Exemplar Text for Grades 9-10 730 Lexile

Students are likely to find the following characteristics challenging

- Historical Setting
- Extensive use of Figurative Language
- Stylistic Technique
- Intertwining, multiple themes
- 552 pages

## The Amateur Scientist

Thinking about physics while scared to death (on a falling roller coaster) by Jearl Walker

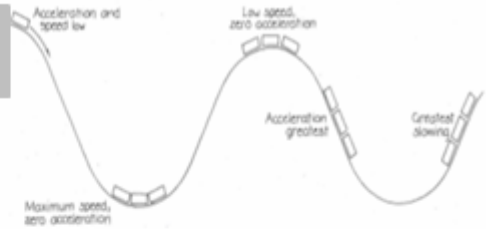
The rides in an amusement park not only are fun but also demonstrate principles of physics. Among them are **rotational dynamics and energy conservation**. I have been exploring the rides at Geauga Lake Amusement Park near Cleveland and have found that nearly every ride offers a memorable lesson.

To me the scariest rides at the park are the roller coasters. The Big Dipper is similar to many of the roller coasters that have thrilled passengers for most of this century. The cars are pulled by chain to the top of the highest hill along track. Released from the chain as the front car begins its descent, the unpowered cars have almost no speed and only a small **acceleration**. As more cars get onto the downward slope the acceleration increases. It peaks when all the cars are headed downward. The peak value is the product of the acceleration generated by gravity and the sine of the slope of the track. A steeper descent generates a greater acceleration, but packing the coaster with heavier passengers does not.

When the coaster reaches the bottom of the valley and starts up the next hill, there is an instant when the cars are **symmetrically** distributed in the valley. The acceleration is zero. As more cars ascend, the coaster begins to slow, reaching its lowest speed just as it is symmetrically positioned at the top of the hill.

A roller coaster functions by means of transfer of energy. **When the chain hauls the cars to the top of the first hill, it does work on the cars, endowing them with gravitational potential energy, the energy of a body in a gravitational field with respect to the distance of the body from some reference level such as the ground.** As the cars descend into the first valley much of the stored energy is transferred into **kinetic** energy, the energy of motion.

Challenging abstract



Nominalization

Exemplar Text for Grades 9-10 Text Complexity Band  
 Flesch-Kincaid: 8<sup>th</sup> grade

Students are likely to find the following challenging:

- Domain-Specific vocabulary
- Knowledge demands of physics and motion and force
- Small, densely packed print
- Nominalization
- Little or no use of diagrams to illustrate directions of forces

Many complex sentences with phrases and clauses

Domain-Specific Vocabulary

### Informational Text Complexity Analysis Worksheet for Instruction

Title:	Author:
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**Quantitative Measures and Grade Bands**

ACCS Grade Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	Lexile	Reading Maturity	Source Rater
2-3	2.75-5.14	42-52	1.98-5.34	420-820	3.53-6.13	0.05-2.48
4-5	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	740-1010	5.42-7.92	0.84-5.75
6-8	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.61-10.43	925-1185	7.04-9.57	4.11-10.66
9-10	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	1050-1335	8.41-10.81	9.02-13.93
11-12	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	1185-1385	9.57-12.00	12.30-14.50

Text Description-

**Quantitative Measure and Recommended Grade Band Placement**

**2-3**

**Qualitative Analysis**

Criteria	Very Complex	Mark (if present)	Moderately Complex	Mark (if present)	Readily Accessible	Mark (if present)	Notes/Evidence
Purpose	The text contains multiple purposes, and the primary purpose is subtle, intricate and /or abstract.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The primary purpose of the text is not stated explicitly but is easy to infer based upon the context or source; the text may include multiple perspectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The primary purpose of the text is clear, concrete, narrowly focused, and explicitly stated; the text has a singular perspective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Text Structure	Connections among an expanded range of ideas, processes or events are often implicit, subtle or ambiguous; organization exhibits some discipline-specific traits; any text features are essential to the comprehension of content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Connections between some ideas, processes, or events are implicit or subtle; organization is generally evident and sequential; any text features help facilitate comprehension of content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Connections between ideas, processes, and events are explicit and clear; organization is chronological, sequential, or easy to predict because it is linear; any text features help readers navigate content but are not essential to understanding content.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language Features	Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and archaic and academic vocabulary and domain-specific words that are not otherwise defined; text uses many complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Language is often explicit and literal but includes some academic, archaic, or other words with complex meaning; text uses some complex sentences with subordinate phrases or clauses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary; text uses mostly simple sentences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Knowledge Demands	The subject matter of the text relies on specialized, discipline-specific knowledge; the text makes many references or allusions to other texts or outside areas; allusion or references have no content and require inference.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The subject matter of the text involves some discipline-specific knowledge; the text makes some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas; the meaning of references or allusions may be partially explained in the context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The subject matter of the text relies on little or no discipline-specific knowledge; if there are any references or allusions, they are fully explained in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of Graphics (Optional)	Graphics are essential to understanding the text; they may clarify or expand information in the text and may require close reading and thoughtful analysis in relation to the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graphics are mainly supplementary to understanding the text; they generally contain or reinforced information found in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graphics are simple and may be unnecessary to understanding the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Qualitative Complexity Level (Very Complex, Moderately Complex, Readily Accessible)**

<b>Reader and Task Considerations</b>			<b>Professional Judgment: 1. Knowledge of Students as Readers 2. Understanding Text Complexity 3. Ability to use a range of instructional approaches/scaffolds 4. Does the text match the task?</b>		
<b>Potential Challenges this text poses</b>	<b>Instructional Supports/Scaffolds</b>	<b>Text/Task Match</b>			

<b>Placement Recommendation –Grade Level Band and Complexity Level</b>	<b>Briefly explain recommended placement</b>

**Literary Text Complexity Analysis Worksheet for Instruction**

Title:	Author:
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**Quantitative Measures and Grade Bands**

ACCS Grade Bands	ATOS	Degrees Of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	Lexile	Reading Maturity	Source Rater
2-3	2.75-5.14	42-52	1.98-5.34	420-820	3.53-6.13	0.05-2.48
4-5	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	740-1010	5.42-7.92	0.84-5.75
6-8	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.61-10.43	925-1185	7.04-9.57	4.11-10.66
9-10	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	1050-1335	8.41-10.81	9.02-13.93
11-12	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	1185-1385	9.57-12.00	12.30-14.50

Text Description-

**Quantitative Measure and Recommended Grade Band Placement**

**2-3**

**Qualitative Analysis**

Criteria	Very Complex	Mark (if present)	Moderately Complex	Mark (if present)	Readily Accessible	Mark (if present)	Notes
Meaning	Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit, subtle, or ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple levels of meaning that are relatively easy to identify; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Text Structure	Prose or poetry includes more intricate elements such as subplots, shifts in point-of-view, shifts in time, or non-standard text structures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prose includes two or more storylines or has a plot that is somewhat difficult to predict (e.g.; in the case of a non-linear plot); poetry has some implicit or unpredictable structural elements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prose or poetry is organized clearly and/or chronologically; the events in a prose work are easy to predict because the plot is linear; poetry has explicit and predictable structural elements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language Features	Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and regularly includes archaic, unfamiliar, and academic words; text uses a variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Language is often explicit and literal but includes academic, archaic, or other words with complex meaning (e.g.; language); text uses a variety of sentence structures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary; text uses mostly simple sentences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Knowledge Demands	The text explores complex, sophisticated, or abstract themes; text is dependent on allusions to other texts or cultural elements; allusions or references have no context and require inference and evaluation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The text explores several themes; text makes few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements; the meaning of references or allusions may be partially explained in context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The text explores a single theme; if there are any references or allusions, they are fully explained in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of Graphics (Optional)	The visual presentation is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the text with which it is paired; it may provide additional information not otherwise conveyed in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The visual presentation is mainly supplemental to understanding the text with which it is paired; it is fairly easy to understand but not entirely predictable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The visual presentation is easy to understand; it engages the reader more than it enhances understanding of the text with which it is paired.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Qualitative Complexity Level (Very Complex, Moderately Complex, Readily Accessible)**

**Reader and Task Considerations Professional Judgment: 1. Knowledge of Students as Readers 2. Understanding the Complexity of Texts 3. Ability to use a range of instructional approaches/scaffolds 4. Does the text match the task?**

Potential Challenges this text poses	Instructional Supports/Scaffolds	Text/Task Match

Placement Recommendation-Grade Level Band and Text Complexity Level	Briefly explain recommended placement