

**Textual Complexity
in the
Common Core
State Standards**



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AGENDA FOR TODAY

What realities about students does textual complexity address?

What is textual complexity, as defined in the Common Core State Standards?

**SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS
(ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS)**

What are the expectations of CCSS?
What are not the expectations of CCSS?
How do we build a synergetic context between CCSS, curriculum, and assessment?

Textual Complexity

What makes a text complex?

What are factors that can make a text challenging for students?

Reading Standards for Literature 6-12

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Grade 6 students:	Grade 7 students:
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
Grade 8 students:	
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	

Determining Textual Complexity is focused on these three areas:

- Qualitative Measures*
- Quantitative Dimensions*
- Reader Considerations*

Qualitative Measures

Levels of Meaning (literary texts) or Purpose (informational texts)

Structure

Language Conventionality and Clarity

Knowledge Demands

Quantitative Dimensions

Are aspects that are difficult or impossible for a person to evaluate efficiently.

Examples include word length or frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These are typically measured by computer software.

Reader Considerations

include motivation, knowledge, and experiences, while tasks to be considered take into account purpose, complexity, and questions.

Assessments made on reader and task considerations are best done by the teacher who understands the student's knowledge and experiences.

LEVELS OF MEANING
(LITERARY TEXTS) OR PURPOSE (INFORMATIONAL TEXTS)

INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Single level of meaning	Multiple levels
Explicitly stated purpose	Implicit purpose; may be hidden or obscure

STRUCTURE

INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Simple	Complex
Explicit	Implicit
Conventional	Unconventional
Events related in chronological order	Events unrelated in chronological order
Traits of a common genre	Traits specific to a particular discipline
Simple graphics	Sophisticated graphics
Graphics unnecessary for understanding	Graphics essential to understanding

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY

INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Literal	Figurative or iconic
Clear	Ambiguous or purposely misleading
Contemporary, familiar	Archaic or otherwise unfamiliar
Conversational	General academic and domain-specific

**KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS:
LIFE EXPERIENCES (Literary Texts)**

INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Simple theme	▶ Complex or sophisticated theme
Single themes	▶ Multiple themes
Common, everyday experiences	▶ Experiences distinctly different from own
Single perspective	▶ Multiple perspectives
Perspective(s) like one's own	▶ Perspective(s) unlike or in opposition to one's own

**KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS:
CULTURAL/LITERARY KNOWLEDGE**

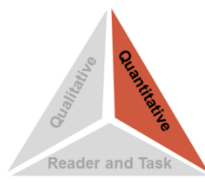
INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required	▶ Cultural and literary knowledge useful
Low intertextuality	▶ High intertextuality

**KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS:
CONTENT/DISCIPLINE KNOWLEDGE**

INFORMATIONAL	LITERARY
Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required	▶ Extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge required
Low intertextuality	▶ High intertextuality

LET'S PRACTICE

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

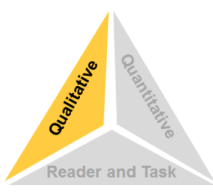


- Measures such as:
 - Word length
 - Word frequency
 - Word difficulty
 - Sentence length
 - Text length
 - Text cohesion

Text Complexity Grade Bands	Suggested Lexile Range	Suggested ATOS Book Level Range**
K-1	100L – 500L*	1.0 – 2.5
2-3	450L – 790L	2.0 – 4.0
4-5	770L – 980L	3.0 – 5.7
6-8	955L – 1155L	4.0 – 8.0
9-10	1080L – 1305L	4.6 – 10.0
11-CCR	1215L – 1355L	4.8 – 12.0

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Step 2: Qualitative Measures



Measures such as:

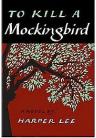
- Levels of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands

Here's an example

The Qualitative Measures Rubrics for Literary and Informational Text:
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4605>

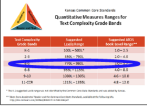
The rubric for literary text and the rubric for informational text allow educators to evaluate the important elements of text that are often missed by computer software that tends to focus on more easily measured factors.

From examining the quantitative measures, we knew:


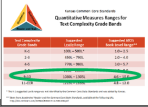


Lexile Text Measure: **870L**

ATOS Book Level: **5.6**

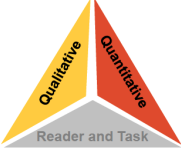


But after reflecting upon the qualitative measures, we believed:

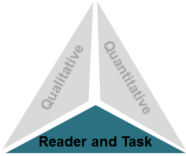
Our initial placement of *To Kill a Mockingbird* into a text complexity band changed when we examined the qualitative measures.

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



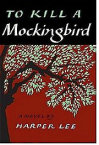
The **reader and task considerations** still remain.

Step 3: Reader and Task




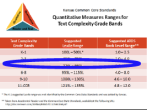
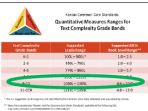

Considerations such as:

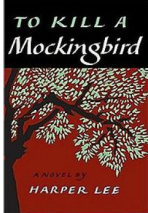
- Motivation
- Knowledge and experience
- Purpose for reading
- Complexity of task assigned regarding text
- Complexity of questions asked regarding text



Lexile Text Measure: **870L**

ATOS Book Level: **5.6**



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

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

COMMON CORE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
TEXT COMPLEXITY RUBRIC

HOW TO USE THIS RUBRIC

Overview

The text complexity rubric is intended to assist educators in evaluating multiple dimensions of a text in order to determine the proper placement of that text within the curriculum. The rubric addresses the three aspects of text complexity required for consideration in Common Core Appendix B: qualitative, quantitative, and reader/task match. Each of these three dimensions includes specific relevant categories, each of which is listed with a short explanation to assist users in making the best possible determination.

Scoring

There are 10 dimensions to be scored on the rubric, each of which can receive a score between 0 and 10. The best possible score within a dimension is 10 points, indicating that the text would be of optimal benefit to students. The best possible overall score for a text is 100 points. The aggregate text score is interpreted as follows:

80-100 POINTS: EXTREMELY APPROPRIATE TEXT CHOICE
 50-79 POINTS: ACCEPTABLE TEXT CHOICE
 25-49 POINTS: RECONSIDER OR CHANGE GRADE/PURPOSE OF THIS TEXT CHOICE
 0-24 POINTS: ELIMINATE OR CHANGE GRADE/PURPOSE OF THIS TEXT CHOICE

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 For more materials and updated powerpoint, see my blog at www.KatherineMcKnight.com
