Bringing Common Sense
to the Common Core State Standards

UNDERSTANDING TEXT COMPLEXITY

April 11 (Wednesday), 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. EST

An examination of the role of text complexity in the Common Core State Standards, with strategies for assessing and incorporating suitable text to boost literacy achievement for all students.

Presented by Karen Burke, Ed. D., Director of Academic Planning & Analysis, Scholastic Achievement Partners.

Click to register!

If you are using the telephone:
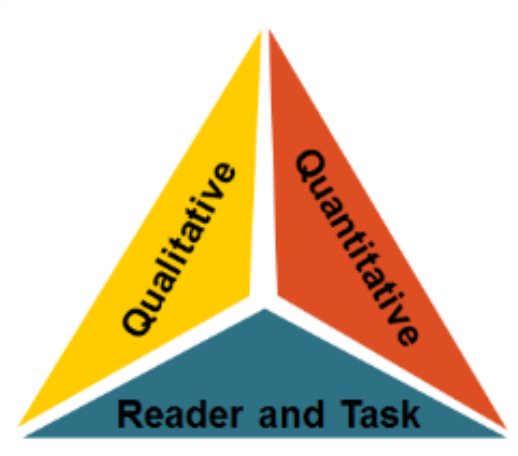Dial: +1 (470) 200-0302
Access Code: 228-182-441

Making Meaning

Reading is a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to produce meaning.

Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E.H., Scott, J.A., & Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985)

Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading Urbana, IL: University of Illinois

Reading Rigor Risk

NAEP scale equivalents of state grade 8 reading standards for proficient performance, by state: 2009
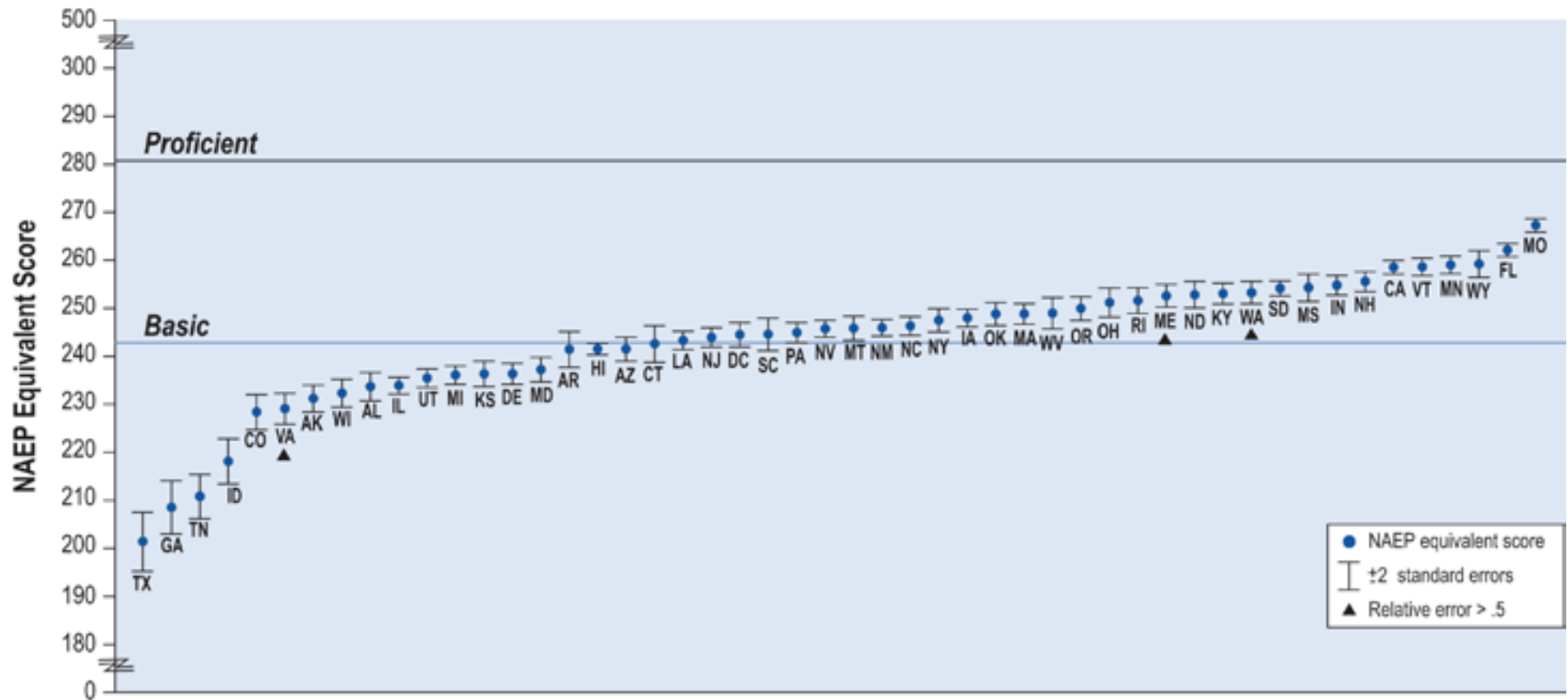
NAEP Reading Assessment

Table 3. 2011 NAEP Reading Assessment
Distribution of Questions By Cognitive Skill Across the Test

Field of Reading	Grade 4	Grade 8
Locate and Recall: locating or recalling information from what they have read, students may identify explicitly stated main ideas or may focus on specific elements of a story.	30%	20%
Integrate and Interpret: when integrating and interpreting what they have read, students may make comparisons, explain character motivation, or examine relations of ideas across the text.	50%	50%
Critique and Evaluate: when critiquing or evaluating what they have read, students view the text critically by examining it from numerous perspectives or may evaluate overall text quality or the effectiveness of particular aspects of the text.	20%	30%

Depth of Reading and Reacting

In NAEP, Proficient Level requires students in Grade 8 to:

- Provide relevant information,
- Summarize main ideas and themes,
- Make and support inferences about a text
- Connect parts of a text
- Analyze text features
- Substantiate judgments about content and presentation of content

Reading At the Advanced Level

In NAEP, Advanced Level requires students in Grade 8 to:

- **Make connections within and across texts and to explain causal relations**

- **Evaluate and justify the strength of supporting evidence and the quality of an author's presentation**

- **Manage the processing demands of analysis and evaluation by stating, explaining, and justifying.**

College and Career Ready

How do you know if a student is college-or career-ready?

According to ACT's *Reading Between the Lines*,

"what appears to differentiate those who are more likely to be ready from those who are less likely is their proficiency in understanding complex texts."
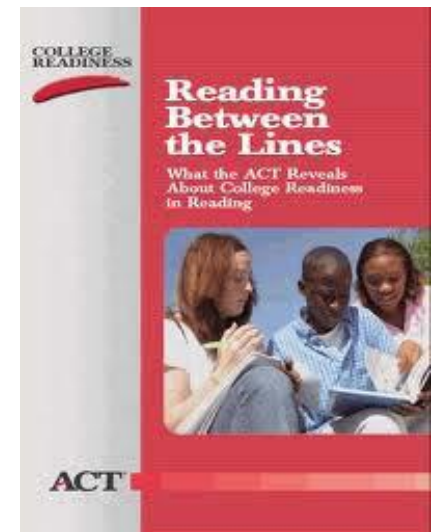
Text Complexity

- What is text complexity?
- Why is text complexity important?
- How can understanding text complexity help teachers with instruction?
- How can teachers employ more rigorous text on a regular basis?

English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

◆ **College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards**

- Overarching standards for each strand that are further defined by grade level specific standards

◆ **Grade-Level Standards in English Language Arts**

- K-8, grade-by grade
- 9-10 and 11-12 grade bands for high school
- Four Strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language

◆ **Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies , Science, and Technical Subjects**

- Standards are embedded at grade K-5
- Content-specific literacy standards are provided for grades 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12

Literacy Priorities

Among the highest priorities of the Common Core State Standards is that students must **read texts closely** and acquire knowledge.

At each grade level, 80 to 90 percent of the Reading standards require **text-dependent analysis**. Questions that expect student responses to be text-dependent and discipline-specific require students to demonstrate that they understand the text details and can provide accurate evidence.

Common Core State Standards

College and Career Readiness

Anchor Standards

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine <u>what</u> the text says <u>explicitly</u> and to <u>make logical inferences</u> from it; <u>cite</u> specific textual evidence when <u>writing</u> or <u>speaking</u> to support <u>conclusions drawn</u> from the text.

College and Career Ready Students

◆ **Demonstrate independence**

◆ **Build strong content knowledge**

◆ **Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline**

◆ **Comprehend as well as critique**

◆ **Value evidence**

◆ **Use technology and digital media strategically and capably**

◆ **Understand other perspectives and culture**

Transitioning to the CCSS

What will impact:

◆ **Curriculum development**

◆ **Classroom Practices**

◆ **Materials utilized**
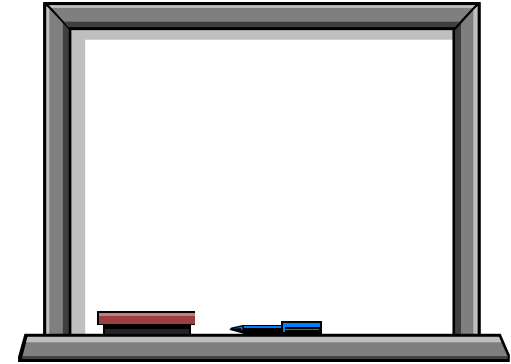
Big Shifts

ELA/Content Area Literacy

1. Text complexity

2. High-quality text dependent questions and tasks

3. Range and quality of texts

4. Focus on academic and domain-specific vocabulary

5. Writing and research that analyze sources and employ evidence

Text Complexity

Specifically, within reading standard #10:

Anchor Standard:

R.CCR.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Example Grade-level Standard (6th grade):

RI.6.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the **grades 6-8 text complexity band** proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Overview of Text Complexity

<u>Text complexity</u> is defined by:

Quantitative measures –readability and other scores of text complexity often best measured by computer software.

Qualitative measures –levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands often best measured by an attentive human reader.

Reader and Task
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.
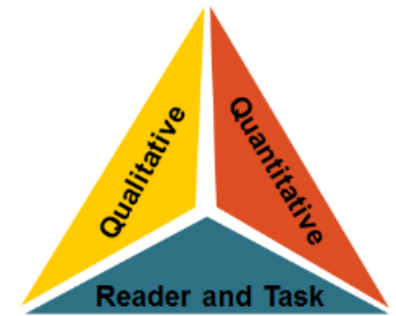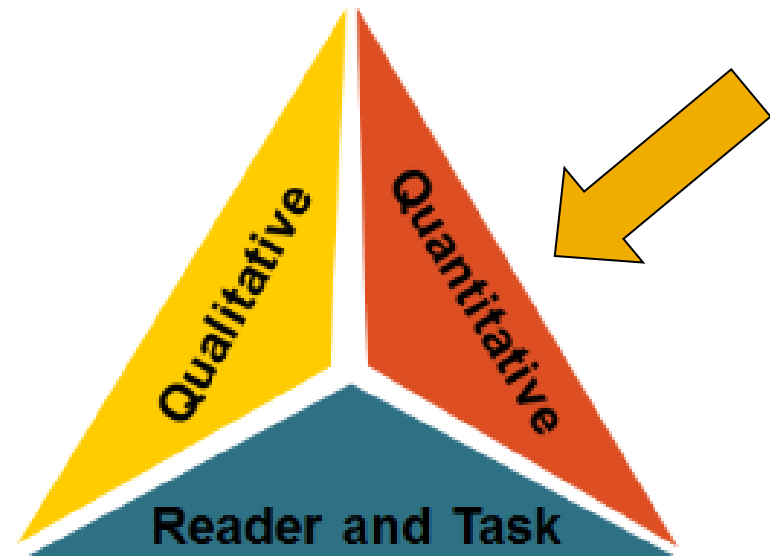
Quantitative Measure

<u>Measures such as:</u>

Word length

Word frequency

Word difficulty

Sentence length

Text length

Text cohesion

So What Is a Lexile?

Lexile units are based on word frequency and sentence length. Word frequency is calculated based on words in Lexile databank (almost one billion).

Lexiles range from 0 (beginning reading) to 2000 (highly technical texts).

www.lexile.com

Text Complexity Grade Bands

Text Complexity Grade Band in Standards	Previous Lexile Range	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450-725	450-790
4-5	645-845	770-980
6-8	860-1010	955-1155
9-10	960-1115	1080-1305
11-CCR	1070-1220	1215-1355

Qualitative Measures

Measures such as:

Levels of meaning

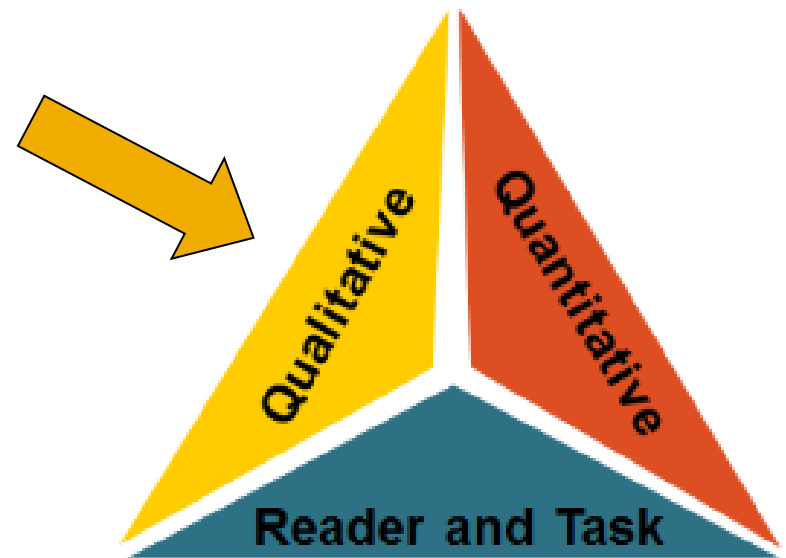**Levels of purpose**

Structure

Organization

Language conventionality

Language clarity

Prior knowledge demands

Rubric for Literary Texts

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
MEANING	O **Meaning:** Several levels 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 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 of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	O **Meaning:** One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
TEXT STRUCTURE	O **Organization:** Organization is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail O **Use of Graphics:** If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	O **Organization:** Organization may include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters O **Use of Graphics:** If used, a few illustrations that support the text	O **Organization:** Organization may have two or more storylines and occasionally difficult to predict O **Use of Graphics:** If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	O **Organization:** Organization of text is clear, chronological or easy to predict 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:** Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic 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:** Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic 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 complex, 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 **Life Experiences:** Explores themes of varying levels 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 **Life Experiences:** Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers O **Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** A few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	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

Rubric for Informational Texts

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately 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 an extensive range of ideas or events are deep, intricate and often implicit or subtle; organization of the text is intricate or specialized 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 an expanded range ideas, processes 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.

Assessing Text

Where on the Continuum?

Exceedingly Complex   **Slightly Complex**

Meaning

⟵――――――――――――――⟶

Structure

⟵――――――――――――――⟶

Language

⟵――――――――――――――⟶

Knowledge Demands

⟵――――――――――――――⟶
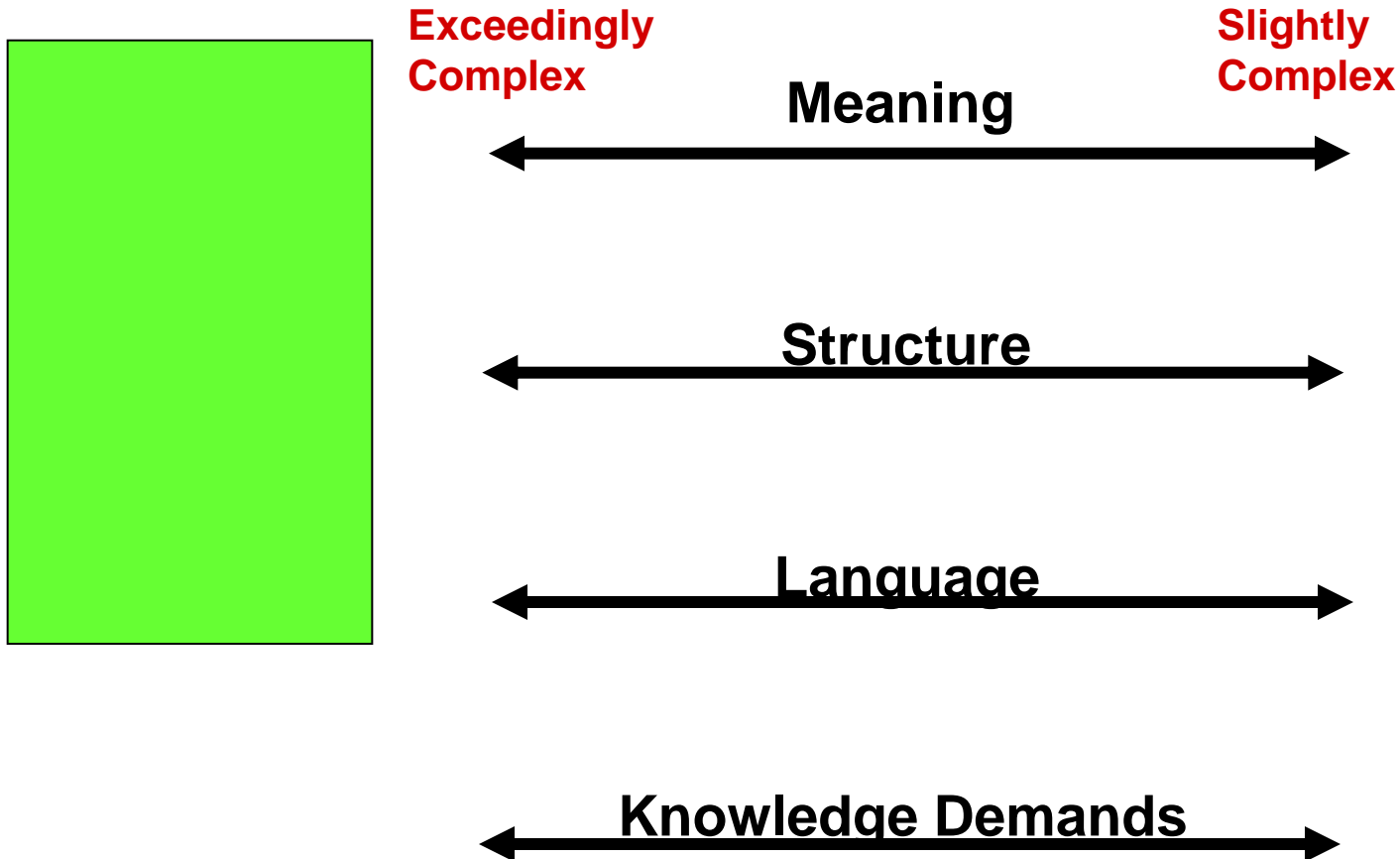
Qualitative Measures

Qualitative measures of text complexity have been described by the CCSS in Appendix A as

"best measured or only measurable by an attentive human reader, such as levels of meaning or purpose; structure; language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands."

Reader and Task

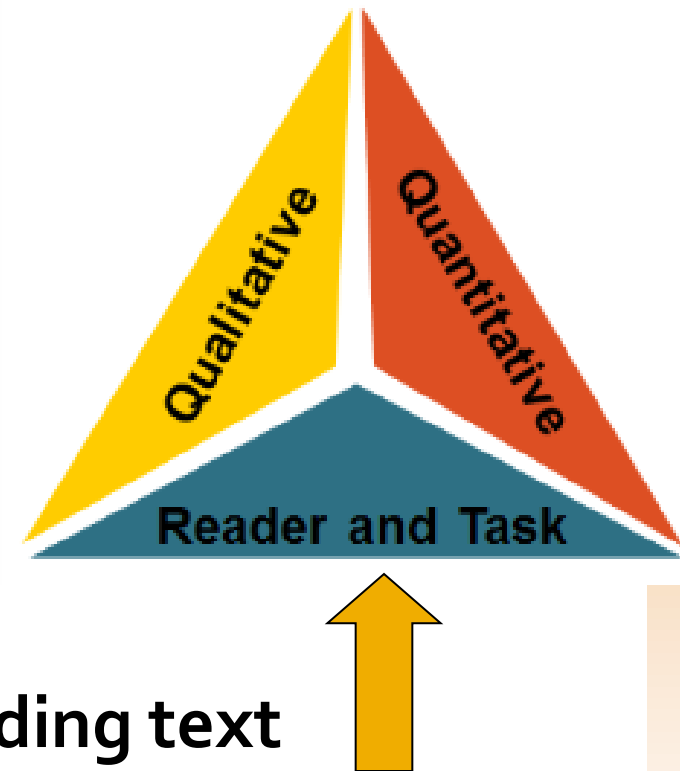**<u>Considerations such as:</u>**

Motivation

Knowledge and experience

Purpose for reading

Complexity of task assigned regarding text
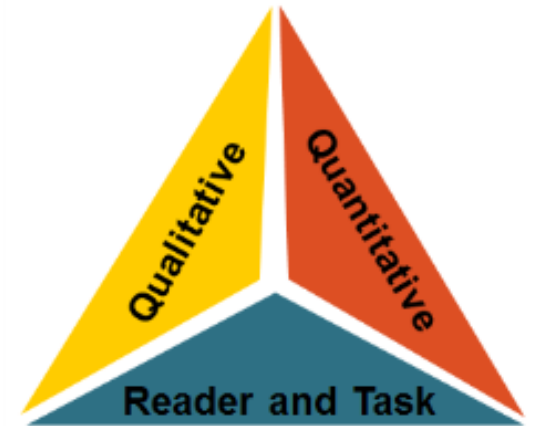
Complexity of questions asked regarding text

Complexity of task in test-based situations
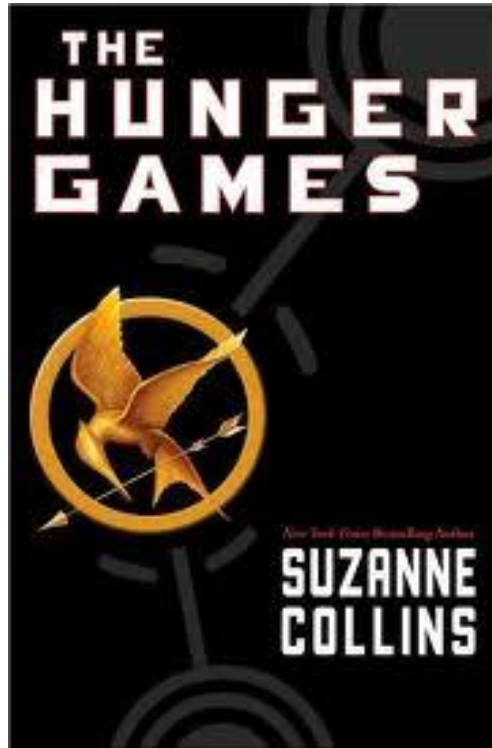
Determining Text Complexity

A Four-step Process:

1. Determine the quantitative measures of the text.

2. Analyze the qualitative measures of the text.

3. Reflect upon the reader and task considerations.

4. Recommend placement in the appropriate text complexity band.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Text Complexity Analysis

Qualitative Measures

Levels of Meaning:
The novel has a multiple levels of meaning. Literally, the story centers around Katniss, who lives in the not-too-distant future in the remains of what was once North America. As her home district's representative to the annual Hunger games, she competes for survival. The book is also a social commentary on reality television and social issues.

Structure:
A simple structure told by a first person narrator with foreshadowing and flashback, the book does require the reader to picture a future world with event and customs that may be unfamiliar.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:
Vivid description, figurative language and imagery is used to help the reader picture this world in the not-too-distant future. The voice of the narrator is conversational, familiar, and contemporary.

Knowledge Demands:
Higher level themes of moral dilemma, social criticism, government control, war and hunger. Events of the novel are unique to Katniss's world of the future and require a deeper level of thinking on the part of the reader.

Quantitative Measures

Various readability measures of The Hunger Games are largely in agreement that is of appropriate complexity for grades 7-adult. A Lexile measure for this novel is 810L .

Reader-Task Considerations
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.

Educators might want to examine the following elements or issues: the consequences of hunger, people's Constitutional rights, and links to other books such as 1984, The Giver, Fahrenheit 451, and others for student learning differentiation purposes.

Recommended Placement
Both the qualitative and quantitative measures support the novel's placement in the grades 7 and higher text complexity band. This book also ties into social studies and some science standard.

Text Complexity Analysis
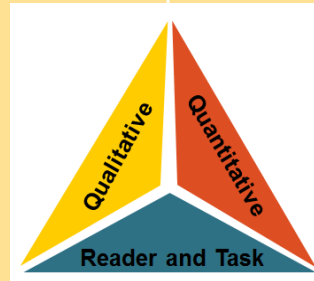
Qualitative Measures

Level of Meaning/Purpose:

Structure:

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

Knowledge Demands:

Quantitative Measures

Reader-Task Considerations

Recommended Placement

Assessing Text

Book Title: _____

Qualitative Measures

Levels of Meaning:

Structure:

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

Knowledge Demands:
Life
Culture

Quantitative Measures

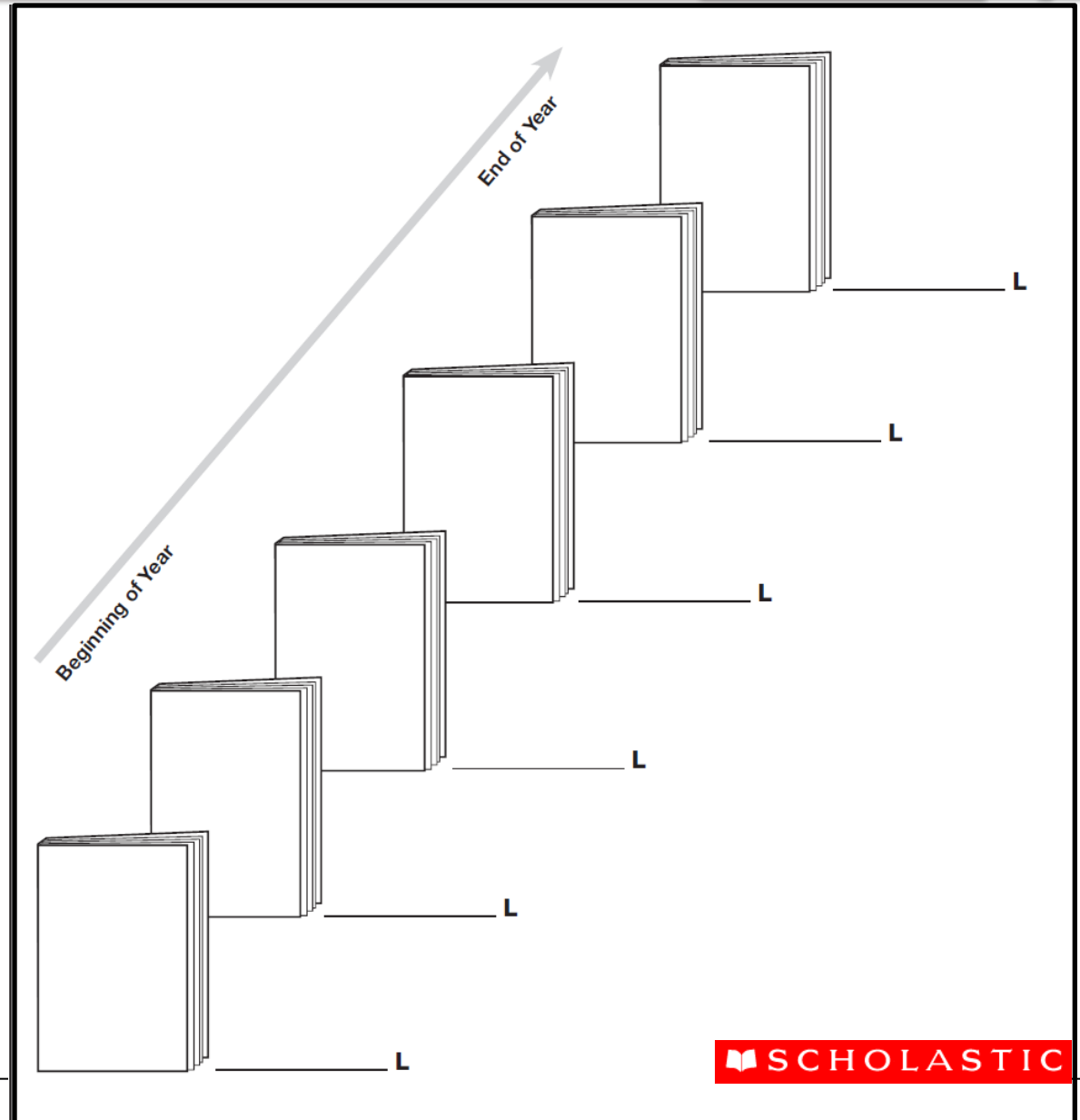## Reader-Task Considerations

Recommended Placement

Determining Suitability of Text

"Such assessments are best made by the teachers employing their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject."

Common Core

State Standards for English,

Appendix A, p. 4

Staircasing Complex Texts

Increasing Vocabulary

- **Direct vocabulary instruction (Pearson et al., 2007; Zwiers, 2007)**
  - **Engaging**
  - **Systematic**

- **Indirect acquisition through reading (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001; Nagy & Herman, 1985)**
  - **Wide reading**
  - **Conversations about what is read**

Tiers of Vocabulary

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Everyday Words	General Academic Words	Domain Specific Words
student continue number	interpret heroic recur	tibia cylinder socialism

Big Shifts

ELA/Content Area Literacy

1. **Text complexity**

2. **High-quality text dependent questions and tasks**

3. **Range and quality of texts**

4. **Focus on academic and domain-specific vocabulary**

5. **Writing and research that analyze sources and employ evidence**

Teaching Complex Text

- **Rich in content and ideas**
- **Discuss content and ideas using multiple levels of meaning**
- **Present text in unique and challenging text structures**
- **Utilize rigorous vocabulary and sophisticated sentence phrasing**
- **Require all readers access prior knowledge to comprehend sophisticated themes, subjects, and infer textual references**

Implications For Instruction

◆ **Begin now to bring more informational text into the curriculum and focus on "disciplinary" reading**

◆ **Make an effort to "bridge the gap" for students by making up to 20% of classroom reading grade-level texts with necessary levels of scaffolding**

◆ **Provide frequent opportunities to work "across" texts**

Source: KAREN WIXSON, PHD
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN/UNC

Engaging Students with Text

Students need to engage with:

Age/Grade appropriate materials for exposure to structures, content, vocabulary

Instructional level materials that allow them to progress

"Easy" materials that allow them to practice

Teaching and Learning

"Teaching is more than imparting knowledge, it is inspiring change.

Learning is more than absorbing facts, it is acquiring understanding."
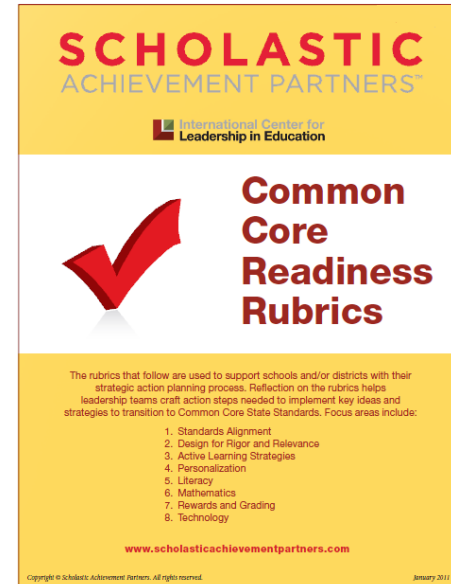
-William Arthur Ward

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

-Dr. Seuss

1. Understand your needs and develop a transition plan

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**Common
Core
Readiness
Rubrics**

The rubrics that follow are used to support schools and/or districts with their strategic action planning process. Reflection on the rubrics helps leadership teams craft action steps needed to implement key ideas and strategies to transition to Common Core State Standards. Focus areas include:

1. Standards Alignment
2. Design for Rigor and Relevance
3. Active Learning Strategies
4. Personalization
5. Literacy
6. Mathematics
7. Rewards and Grading
8. Technology

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next navigator

Prioritizing Instruction for Success
on the Next Generation Assessments

How Can You Prepare?

2. Create awareness among your staff

June 24 – 27 | ORLANDO
www.modelschoolsconference.com

How Can You Prepare?

3. Ongoing PD for teachers & leaders

General Staff Awareness

COURSE 1:
Driving Student Achievement With the Common Core

ELA Teachers

COURSE 1:
Putting Text First: A Focus on Complexity, Range, and Quality

COURSE 2:
Building Vocabulary: A Focus on Academic and Domain-Specific Words

COURSE 3:
Writing Arguments and Conducting Research: A Focus on Using Evidence

Content Area Teachers

COURSE 1:
Content Area Literacy: Engaging Students With Complex Text

COURSE 2:
Academic Language: Building a Bridge to Text-Based Writing

COURSE 3:
Rigor and Research: Building Writing Proficiency in the Content Areas

Math Teachers

COURSE 1:
Making Sense of Math: A Focus on Reasoning and Discourse

COURSE 2:
Mathematical Thinking: A Focus on Representation and Procedural Fluency

COURSE 3:
Problem Solving: A Focus on Developing Students' Disposition, Confidence, and Competence

How Can You Prepare?

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around your needs!

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Q & A

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