

# Determining Text Complexity

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# Text Complexity

*“The Common Core Standards hinge on students encountering appropriately complex texts at each grade level in order to develop the mature language skills and the conceptual knowledge they need for success in school and life” (p. 3).*

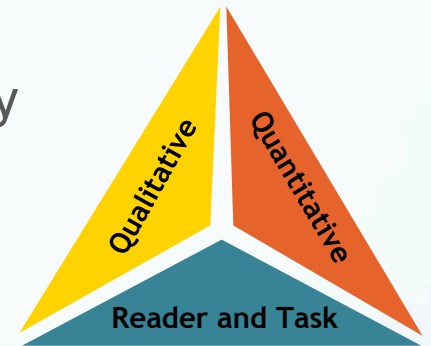
## Reading Anchor Standard

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

# Definition

**Text complexity** is defined by the CCSS as a three-part model consisting of quantitative and qualitative dimensions as well as reader and task consideration

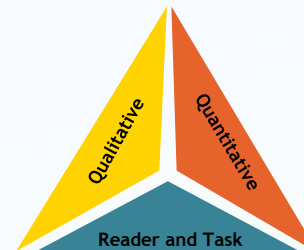
- **Quantitative measures** include analysis of word frequency and sentence length, which are typically best measured by computer software.
- **Qualitative** factors include levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality, clarity, and knowledge demands.
- **Reader and Task** considerations include students' motivation, knowledge, and background interests, and are best made by the teacher.



# Determining Text Complexity

## Four Step Process

1. Determine the quantitative measures of the text.
2. Analyze the qualitative measure of the text
3. Reflect upon the reader and task considerations.
4. Recommend placement in the appropriate text complexity band.

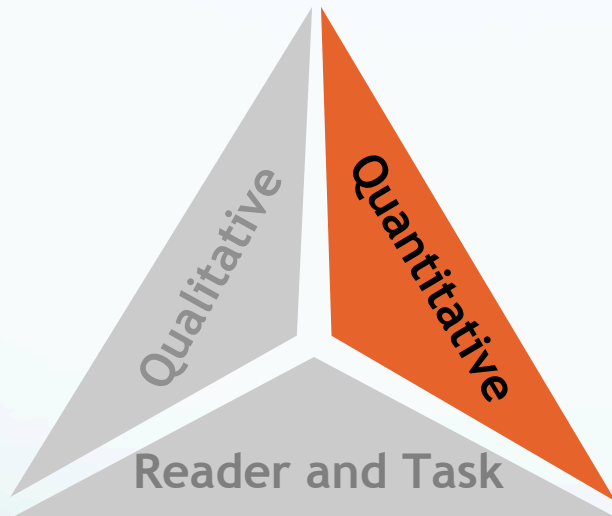


| Text Complexity Grade Bands | Suggested Lexile Range | Suggested ATOS Book Level Range** |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| K-1                         | 100L – 500L*           | 1.0 – 2.5                         |
| 2-3                         | 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                        |

| LEVELS OF PERSONS   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires subtle, implicit, abstract inferences</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires implicit, but more direct, inferences</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires direct, but more direct, inferences</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires explicit stated</li> </ul>   |
| STRUCTURE   |   |   |  |
| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of ideas, lines and details highly complex and explicit, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of ideas, lines and details complex but not highly explicit, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of ideas, lines and details complex but not highly explicit, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of ideas, lines and details simple and not complex, and readily discernible</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> <li>Text Features of text, such as text boxes, are used to enhance the text</li> </ul> |
| LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY  |   |   |  |
| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message, ideas and content are highly complex and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message, ideas and content are complex and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message, ideas and content are complex and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires implicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message, ideas and content are simple and readily discernible</li> <li>Requires explicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires explicit inferences, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  |
| KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS   |   |   |  |
| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires higher knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires lower knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires lower knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> <li>Requires lower knowledge, and not readily discernible</li> </ul>  |

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

# Step 1: Quantitative Measures



Measures such as the following:

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

Lexile Text Measures



# Resources for Selecting Texts

## Quantitative Measures

- Lexile Find a Book (Lexile measure)  
<http://lexile.com/findabook>
- The Accelerated Reader BookFinder (ATOS book level)  
<http://www.arbookfind.com/>
- Questar Degree of Reading Power - DRP Analyzer  
(Textbook readability score)  
[http://www.questarai.com/products/drpprogram/pages/textbook\\_readability.aspx](http://www.questarai.com/products/drpprogram/pages/textbook_readability.aspx)

# Grade Bands and Associated Ranges

Multiple Measures from different sources

| Common Core Band                   | ATOS          | Degrees of Reading Power® | Flesch-Kincaid <sup>8</sup> | The Lexile Framework® | Reading Maturity | SourceRater   |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 2.75 – 5.14   | 42 – 54                   | 1.98 – 5.34                 | 420 – 820             | 3.53 – 6.13      | 0.05 – 2.48   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 4.97 – 7.03   | 52 – 60                   | 4.51 – 7.73                 | 740 – 1010            | 5.42 – 7.92      | 0.84 – 5.75   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 7.00 – 9.98   | 57 – 67                   | 6.51 – 10.34                | 925 – 1185            | 7.04 – 9.57      | 4.11 – 10.66  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> | 9.67 – 12.01  | 62 – 72                   | 8.32 – 12.12                | 1050 – 1335           | 8.41 – 10.81     | 9.02 – 13.93  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> – CCR             | 11.20 – 14.10 | 67 – 74                   | 10.34 – 14.2                | 1185 – 1385           | 9.57 – 12.00     | 12.30 – 14.50 |

ATOS: Accelerated Reader - Renaissance Learning

Degrees of Reading Power: Questar

Flesch-Kincaid: Readability Formulas

The Lexile Framework: Meta Metrix

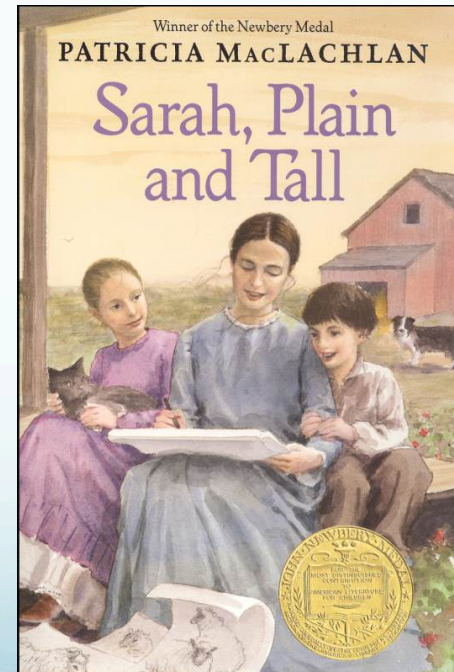
Reading Maturity: Pearson Reading Maturity Metric - Pearson Education

Source Rater: Educational Testing Service

# Example of Using the Lexile Analyzer

Imagine we want to see where a text falls on the quantitative measures “leg” of the text complexity triangle, using the Lexile text measures.

For illustrative purposes, let’s choose Patricia MacLachlan’s 1986 book, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.



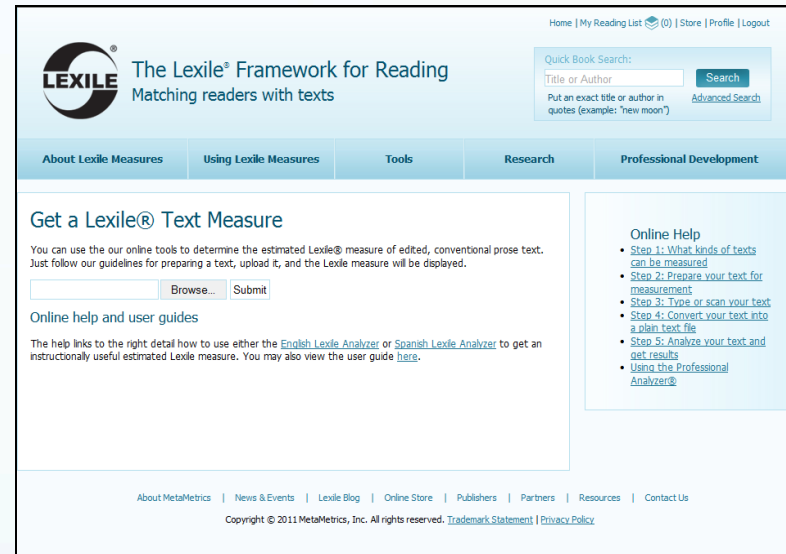


# Using the Lexile Analyzer

For texts with not in the Lexile database:

[www.lexile.com/analyzer/](http://www.lexile.com/analyzer/)

- Free registration is required. <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/>



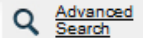
The screenshot shows the Lexile Framework for Reading website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, My Reading List (0), Store, Profile, and Logout. The main header features the Lexile logo and the text "The Lexile® Framework for Reading Matching readers with texts". Below this is a search bar with a "Quick Book Search" section containing a text input field for "Title or Author", a "Search" button, and a note to "Put an exact title or author in quotes (example: 'new moon')". A secondary "Advanced Search" link is also present. A horizontal menu below the header includes "About Lexile Measures", "Using Lexile Measures", "Tools", "Research", and "Professional Development". The main content area is titled "Get a Lexile® Text Measure" and contains instructions on how to use the online tools to determine the estimated Lexile measure of edited, conventional prose text. It includes a "Browse..." button and a "Submit" button. To the right, there is an "Online Help" section with a list of links: "Step 1: What kinds of texts can be measured", "Step 2: Prepare your text for measurement", "Step 3: Type or scan your text", "Step 4: Convert your text into a plain text file", "Step 5: Analyze your text and get results", and "Using the Professional Analyzer®". The footer contains links for "About MetaMetrics", "News & Events", "Lexile Blog", "Online Store", "Publishers", "Partners", "Resources", and "Contact Us", along with a copyright notice for 2011 MetaMetrics, Inc.

# Passage from *Sarah, Plain and Tall*



The Lexile® Framework for Reading

Quick Book Search:



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

About Lexile Measures

Using Lexile Measures

Common Core

Lexile Tools

Lexile Training

Lexile® Measure

**440L**

Mean Sentence Length

**8.68**

Mean Log Word Frequency

**3.86**

Word Count

**460**

## Lexile Analyzer: Results

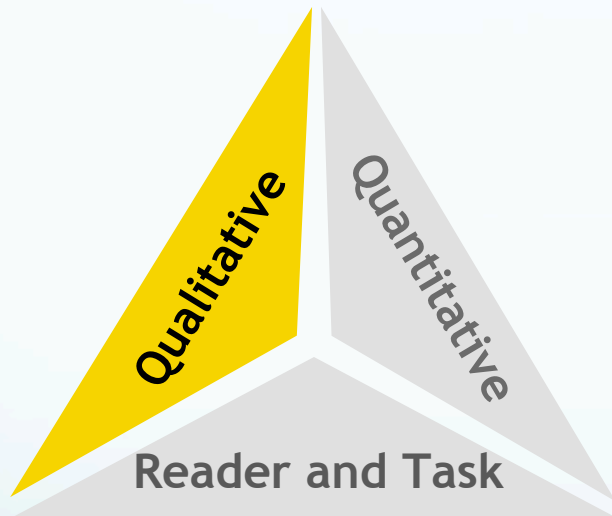
In order to measure your file we had to change some character formatting. [Please review the changes](#) to ensure that text was not corrupted or incorrectly changed.

These results are not saved in any retrievable way. You should print this screen and note your filename or the title of your [sample](#) text. If you do not print or record the results, you will have to re-analyze your sample text to know its Lexile measure.

### Submit another file

File to Analyze:

# Step 2: Qualitative Measures



Measures such as the following:

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

# Step 2: Qualitative Measures

## 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.

| TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC<br>LITERARY TEXTS  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| LEVELS OF MEANING   |  |  |  |
| High  | Middle High  | Middle Low   | Low  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple Levels of Complex Meaning</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple Levels of Meaning</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single Level of Complex Meaning</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single Level of Simple Meaning</li> </ul>   |
| STRUCTURE   |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Structure: complex, implicit, and unconventional</li> <li>Narration: many shifts in point of view</li> <li>Order of Events: not in chronological order</li> <li>Use of Graphics: sophisticated graphics, essential to understanding the text, may also provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Structure: some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventional</li> <li>Narration: occasional shifts in point of view</li> <li>Order of Events: several major shifts in time, use of flashback</li> <li>Use of Graphics: some sophisticated graphics, may occasionally be essential to understanding the text</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Structure: largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional</li> <li>Narration: few, if any, shifts in point of view</li> <li>Order of Events: occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time</li> <li>Use of Graphics: largely simple graphics, supplementary to understanding of the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrative Structure: simple, explicit, conventional, no shifts in point of view</li> <li>Narration: no shifts in point of view</li> <li>Order of Events: chronological</li> <li>Use of Graphics: use of simple graphics, unnecessary to understand the text</li> </ul>  |
| LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: implicit or inferred meaning, heavy use of figurative or ironic language, may be purposefully ambiguous or misleading at times</li> <li>Register: generally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: some implicit or inferred meaning, use of figurative or ironic language</li> <li>Register: occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: largely explicit and literal meaning, little use of figurative or ironic language</li> <li>Register: largely contemporary, familiar, conversational, rarely unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: explicit and literal meaning, little or no use of figurative or ironic language</li> <li>Register: contemporary, familiar, conversational</li> </ul>   |
| KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS   |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life Experiences: explores complex, sophisticated, multiple themes; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are distinctly different from the common reader</li> <li>Cultural/Literary Knowledge: many references allusions to other texts (intertextuality) and cultural elements</li> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized content knowledge</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life Experiences: explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are uncommon to most readers</li> <li>Cultural/Literary Knowledge: some references allusions to other texts (intertextuality) and cultural elements</li> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate levels of content knowledge</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life Experiences: explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers or are clearly fantasy</li> <li>Cultural/Literary Knowledge: few references allusions to other texts (intertextuality) and cultural elements</li> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires some content knowledge</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life Experiences: explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common or are clearly fantasy</li> <li>Cultural/Literary Knowledge: no references allusions to other texts (intertextuality) and cultural elements</li> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires only everyday content knowledge</li> </ul> |

| TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC<br>INFORMATIONAL TEXTS   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| LEVELS OF PURPOSE   |   |  |   |
| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low   | Low   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose: subtle, implied, difficult to determine</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose: implied, but fairly easy to infer</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose: implied, but easy to identify based upon context or source</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose: explicitly stated</li> </ul>  |
| STRUCTURE   |   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of Main Ideas and Details: highly complex; not explicit; must be inferred by the reader</li> <li>Text Features: if used, are essential in understanding content</li> <li>Use of Graphics: sophisticated graphics, essential to understanding the text, may also provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of Main Ideas and Details: complex but largely explicit; may exhibit traits common to a specific subject or discipline</li> <li>Text Features: if used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content</li> <li>Use of Graphics: some sophisticated graphics, may occasionally be essential to understanding the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of Main Ideas and Details: may be complex, but clearly stated and generally sequential</li> <li>Text Features: if used, enhance the reader's understanding of content</li> <li>Use of Graphics: largely simple graphics, supplementary to understanding of the text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization of Main Ideas and Details: clearly stated and sequential</li> <li>Text Features: if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential</li> <li>Use of Graphics: use of simple graphics, unnecessary to understand the text</li> </ul> |
| LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY  |   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: dense and complex; may be abstract, ironic, and/or figurative, language may be purposefully ambiguous or misleading</li> <li>Register: generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: somewhat complex; may occasionally be abstract, ironic, and/or figurative</li> <li>Register: occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: largely explicit and easy to understand with few occasions of more complex meaning</li> <li>Register: largely contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaning: explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand</li> <li>Register: contemporary, familiar, conversational</li> </ul>   |
| KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS   |   |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical subject-specific knowledge</li> <li>Intertextuality: many references allusions to other texts</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires moderate levels of subject-specific knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding</li> <li>Intertextuality: some references allusions to other texts</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: largely everyday, practical knowledge is necessary; requires some subject-specific knowledge</li> <li>Intertextuality: few references allusions to other texts</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject Matter Knowledge: requires only everyday, practical knowledge</li> <li>Intertextuality: no references allusions to other texts</li> </ul>  |



# TEXT COMPLEXITY: QUALITATIVE MEASURES RUBRIC

## LITERARY TEXTS



### LEVELS OF MEANING

| High   | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Multiple Levels of Complex Meaning</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Multiple Levels of Meaning</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Single Level of Complex Meaning</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Single Level of Simple Meaning</b> |

### STRUCTURE

| High  | Middle High   | Middle Low  | Low   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> complex, implicit, and unconventional<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> many shifts in point of view<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> not in chronological order<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> sophisticated graphics, essential to understanding the text, may also provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventionality<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> occasional shifts in point of view<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> several major shifts in time, use of flashback<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> some sophisticated graphics, may occasionally be essential to understanding the text | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional,<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> few, if any, shifts in point of view<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> largely simple graphics, supplementary to understanding of the text | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrative Structure:</b> simple, explicit, conventional, no shifts in point of view<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narration:</b> no shifts in point of view<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Order of Events:</b> chronological<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> use of simple graphics, unnecessary to understand the text |

### LANGUAGE CONVENTIONALITY AND CLARITY

| High  | Middle High  | Middle Low  | Low  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meaning:</b> implicit or inferred meaning, heavy use of figurative or ironic language, may be purposefully ambiguous or misleading at times<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Register:</b> generally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meaning:</b> some implicit or inferred meaning, use of figurative or ironic language<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Register:</b> occasionally unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meaning:</b> largely explicit and literal meaning, subtle use of figurative or ironic language<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Register:</b> largely contemporary, familiar, conversational, rarely unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meaning:</b> explicit and literal meaning, little or no use of figurative or ironic language<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Register:</b> contemporary, familiar, conversational |

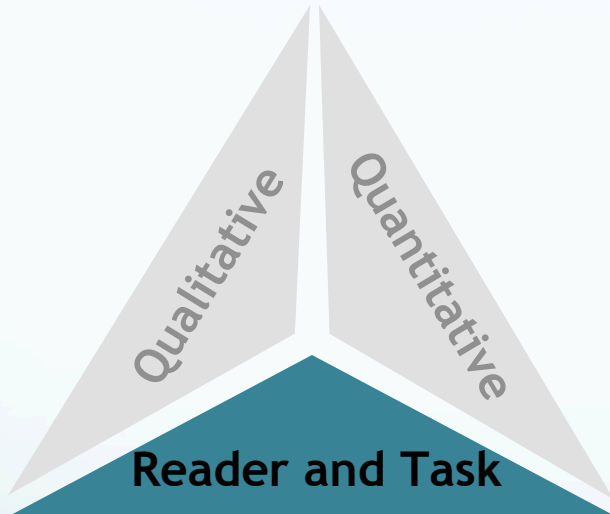
### KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

| High   | Middle High  | Middle Low   | Low   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores complex, sophisticated, multiple themes; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are distinctly different from the common reader<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> many references/allusions to other texts ( <i>intertextuality</i> ) and cultural elements<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires extensive, perhaps specialized content knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are uncommon to most readers<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> some references/allusions to other texts ( <i>intertextuality</i> ) and cultural elements<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires moderate levels of content knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single complex theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers or are clearly fantasy<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> few references/allusions to other texts ( <i>intertextuality</i> ) and cultural elements<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires some content knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Life Experiences:</b> explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common or are clearly fantasy<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cultural/Literary Knowledge:</b> no references/allusions to other texts ( <i>intertextuality</i> ) and cultural elements<br><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> requires only everyday content knowledge |

## Step 2: Qualitative Measures

- Our initial placement of *Sarah*, *Plain and Tall* 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



Considerations such as the following:

- 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

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4605>

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.

*(They 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.)*

### 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?

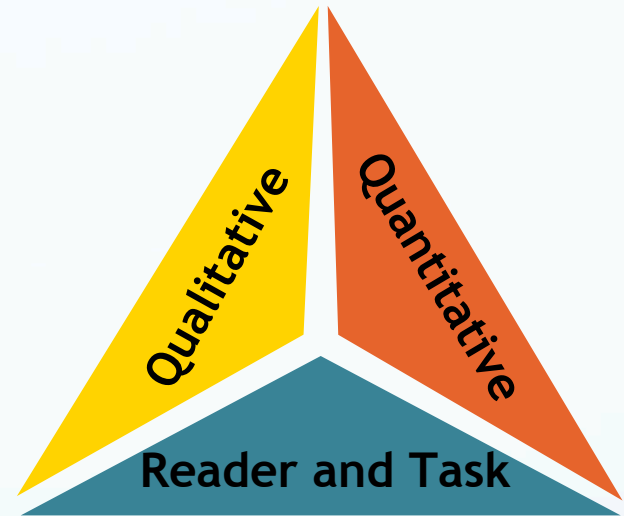
1



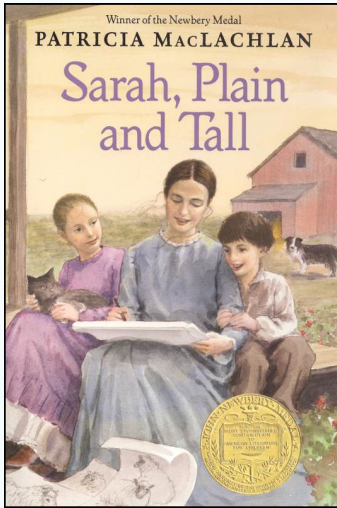


# Step 3: Reader and Task Considerations

Based on 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 3: Reader and Task Considerations



Lexile Text Measure:

**560L**

State or LEA System  
—Book Level:

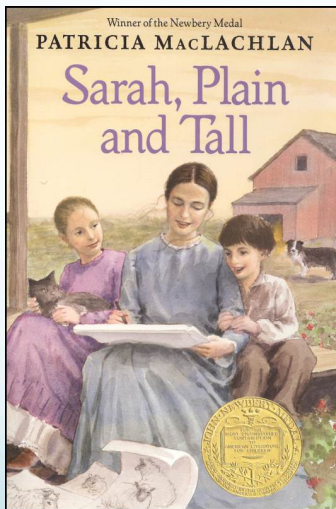
**2-3**

Reflecting on the questions posed for Reader and Task Considerations and both Quantitative and Qualitative measures, we have the following information to make a decision:

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

# Step 4: Recommended Placement

Based on all the information—*all three legs of the model*—the final recommendation for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* is ....



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

In this instance, Appendix B confirms our evaluation of the novel. *Sarah, Plain and Tall* is placed within the grade 2-3 text complexity band.

# Text Complexity Analysis of *Sarah, Plain and Tall*

## Qualitative Measures

### Levels of Meaning and Purpose:

Numerous levels of meaning: pioneer story but also story of a motherless family

### Structure:

Follows a fairly conventional narrative sequence

### Language Conventions and Clarity:

Use of language is simple but elegant. Some archaic words (e.g., *hearthstones*).

### Knowledge Demands:

High: Knowledge of pioneer life and effects on life of geography

### Reader and Tasks:

Appropriate for teacher-led discussions with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders (i.e., early Stage 2 readers)

## Quantitative Measures

A Lexile Measure for this book is 560L. Accelerated Reader (AR) identifies this title as a 2.8-3.4 grade level. Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) identifies this title as a 40 or 4.2 grade level. The complexity of the book's themes and knowledge of geographic differences would indicate a higher level of skills are necessary for an independent level of reading.

## Reader-Task Considerations

These are to be determined locally with reference to variables such as students' motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as purpose and complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed. Topics could include westward expansion, changes or new experiences, death/grief/loss, or blended families.

## Recommended Placement

Being mindful of the quantitative and qualitative measures and taking into consideration the Reader and task considerations, the Common Core Standards Text Exemplars also place this book at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level.

# Reader and Task Considerations about Cognitive Capabilities

- Does the reader possess
  - the necessary attention to read and comprehend this specific text?
  - 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 the reader be able to make connections among the various details presented in this specific text to remember them?

and/or

- Will this specific text help to develop the attention, memory, and critical/analytic thinking skills necessary for future reading endeavors?

# Reader and Task Considerations about 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?
  - the necessary visualization skills to imagine what is occurring or what is being described in this specific text?
  - the necessary questioning skills to challenge the ideas being presented in this text and consider those ideas from multiple points of view?

and/or

- Will this specific text help to develop the inferencing skills, visualization skills, questioning skills and comprehension strategies necessary for future reading endeavors?

# Reader and Task Considerations: 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?



# Considerations for English Language Learners (ELLs)

- With our ELL population, it is imperative to go to deeper levels when analyzing a text to identify the linguistic features that might provide additional difficulties.
- Advances in cognitive science, linguistics, and computer technology are opening new doors on the text-complexity front. The information provided can inform teachers and specialists of the factors that may need to be pretaught or in which mini-lessons will need to be developed for ELLs to access the text.



# Instructional Implications

1. Need for mini-lessons on specific grammar conventions prior to reading text
2. Building background before text exposure
3. Teaching vocabulary required
4. Considerations when creating questions to guide students through text
5. Helping students build meaning out of complex text

# Additional Resources

Fillmore, C. & Fillmore, L. (2012) *Understanding Language: What does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students*. University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved May 14, 2012 on the World Wide Web

[http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf).

Fisher, D., Drey, N. & Lapp, D. (2012) *Text Complexity: Raising Rigor in Reading*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Gewertz, G. (2011). *Teachers Tackle Text Complexity*. Educaiton Week, March 14, 2011. Retrieved May 14, 2012 on the World Wide Web

[http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/03/16/24text\\_ep.h30.html?tkn=PNOFOScSnVXvvXXsw%252FYb4r2qWJb7ezAbupao&cmp=clp-edweek](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/03/16/24text_ep.h30.html?tkn=PNOFOScSnVXvvXXsw%252FYb4r2qWJb7ezAbupao&cmp=clp-edweek).

Hiebert, E. (2011). *The Common Core State Standards and Text Complexity*. Text Project & Univeristy of California, Santa Cruz. Retrieved June 2, 2012 on the World Wide Web.

<http://textproject.org/assets/library/papers/Hiebert-2011-Text-Complexity-Lexiles.pdf>.

Kansas DOE CCSS Website: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4778#PPPres>.

Stevens, K. (2010)l. *Using Text Complexity in the Classroom*. United Federation of Teachers, November 11, 2010. Retrieved May 14, 2012 on the World Wide Web

<http://www.uft.org/teacher-teacher/using-text-complexity-classroom>.



For additional information, please contact

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