









What are the features of complex text?

- Subtle and/or frequent transitions
- Multiple and/or subtle themes and purposes
- Density of information
- Unfamiliar settings, topics or events
- Lack of repetition, overlap or similarity in words and sentences
- Complex sentences
- Uncommon vocabulary
- Lack of words, sentences or paragraphs that review or pull things together for the student
- Longer paragraphs
- Any text structure which is less narrative and/or mixes structures
- Use of passive voice

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Qualitative Measures of Complexity

- Qualitative Features of Text Complexity Chart
- Qualitative Features Explained
- Tool vs. Rubric: you decide!

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Quantitative Measures of Complexity

- “Measures of Text Difficulty” Nelson, Perfetti, Liben and Liben (in press)
- Choosing texts using a variety of quantitative measures

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Common Scale for Band Level Text Difficulty Ranges

Common Core Bands:	Text Analyzer Tools					
	ATOS	DRP	FK	Lexile	SR	RM
2nd-3rd	2.75-5.14	42-54	1.98-5.34	420-820	0.05 - 2.48	3.53 - 6.13
4th-5th	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	740-1010	0.84 - 5.75	5.42 - 7.92
6th-8th	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.51-10.34	925-1185	4.11 - 10.66	7.04 - 9.57
9th-10th	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	1050-1335	9.02 - 13.93	8.41 - 10.81
11th-CCR	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	1185-1385	12.30 - 14.50	9.57 - 12

Key:

- ATOS - ATOS® (Renaissance Learning)
- DRP - Degrees of Reading Power™ (Questar)
- FK - Flesch Kincaid (public domain, no mass analyzer tool available)
- Lexile - Lexile Framework™ (MetaMetrics)
- SR - Source Rater™ (Educational Testing Service)
- RM - Pearson Reading Maturity Metric® (Pearson Education)

Measures not in concordance table:
 Coh-Metrix (Univ of Memphis)
 REAP® (Carnegie Mellon University)

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What is the relationship between complexity and difficulty?

- How this was determined
- The features that determine text *complexity* are very uneven, and not equally important, in their effect on text *difficulty*

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Vocabulary and Syntax Trump

- **Uncommon Vocabulary**
- **Complex Sentences**

- Subtle and/or frequent transitions
- Multiple and/or subtle themes and purposes
- Density of information
- Unfamiliar settings, topics or events
- Lack of repetition, overlap or similarity in words and sentences
- Complex sentences
- Uncommon vocabulary
- Lack of words, sentences or paragraphs that review or pull things together for the student
- Longer paragraphs
- Less narrative and/or mixed structures

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Implications

- ACT Study points out role of complexity in determining student performance
- Nelson et al study reveals that the features of complexity most predictive of student performance are vocabulary and syntax

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Transitioning to the common core requires a careful evaluation of Vocabulary Program.

- School wide, systematic, coherent, intensive
- Includes word study
- Includes volume and range of reading
- Includes word play to develop word awareness
- Addresses 30 million word gap
- See recent Fisher and Fray work, Biemiller's *Words Worth Teaching*

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Transition to the common core requires focus on syntax

- Begin with read aloud in early grades
- More informational text will help
- Use “complexity spikes” in narrative text
- Lilly Wong Fillmore’s “juicy sentences”

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Close reading addresses syntax and vocabulary

- Uses only complex text
- Focuses on questions about word meaning, word choice, and the role the word/sentence plays in the text
- Targets difficult syntax
- Currently 10 middle school examples on our website, elementary examples on site for today
- Develops standard of coherence

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How to integrate close reading into curriculum

- More time per book in K-2 read alouds
- 3 times a month in upper elementary school alternating social studies, science, ELA
- In middle school and high school each subject area teacher does one a month
- Questions and assignments all include writing

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Where to find close reading samples:

- Close analytic reading exemplars on www.achievethecore.org more coming soon.
- New videos at America Achieves; more coming at this fall at LearnZillions
- Vermont Department of Education Website

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Bringing students to complex text will take more than close reading

- Foundational Skills
- Fluency
- Volume of reading
- Writing to sources
- Growing background knowledge

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Conclusion

- Use the time of transition to the standards wisely
- Don't disregard K-2 and foundational skills
- Use the "common" in Common Core
 - Basal Alignment Project
 - Great tools developed by others

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