

Informational Texts Qualitative Analysis Tool

*This tool is organized around the four categories of qualitative complexity: purpose (chiefly informational)/meaning (chiefly literary), language, structure, and knowledge. Within each category, you will first analyze the complexity level of each category, drawing from the [Informational Text Qualitative Rubric](#), to determine what makes this text more or less complex. Then, you will identify relevant opportunities and cautions for culturally relevant pedagogy¹. Note **specific examples from the text** that support your determinations in each section. **Use these notes to plan for instruction.***

PURPOSE			
HIGH COMPLEXITY	MIDDLE HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW COMPLEXITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex, implied, and/or difficult to determine; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but can be inferred; may have multiple purposes	<input type="checkbox"/> Implied, but easy to identify based on context	<input type="checkbox"/> Explicitly stated
Opportunities		Cautions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Explores power, equity, justice, or injustice <input type="checkbox"/> Messages disrupt stereotypes /dominant ways of thinking. <input type="checkbox"/> Own stories are being told (consider shared identity markers of author and characters/content, lived experiences, etc.).		<input type="checkbox"/> Messages reinforce and accept the status quo (e.g., do not showcase ability to organize for change, do not challenge preconceived notions). <input type="checkbox"/> Messages (text/images) reinforce dominant ways of thinking or stereotypes .	
Additional questions to ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How might this text connect to experiences that lead students to take action in their lives and communities? How could it be used for critical conversation? - Whose perspective is presumed or centered in this text? How does this reflect students’ perspectives or identities? - For which students in my class could this text serve as a mirror to their own experiences/identity? For which students in my class could this text serve as a window to new experiences/identities?² 			
Text-Based Notes: ³			
STRUCTURE			
HIGH COMPLEXITY	MIDDLE HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW COMPLEXITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization: highly complex; implicit connections between ideas; conforms to the	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization: complex; some explicit connections between ideas; may	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization: may be complex; largely explicit connections between ideas;	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization: simple; explicit connections between ideas; conforms to the

¹ Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A. K. A. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.

² Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 1 (3), ix-xi.

³ Consider connections to text-specific questions to ask around particularly complex qualitative elements, the purpose for reading/re-reading, and other connections to lesson planning.

<p>conventions of a specific content area or discipline</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Text Features: if used, are essential in understanding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of Graphics: if used, interpretation of complex graphics essential to understanding the text; may also provide information not conveyed⁴</p>	<p>exhibit traits common to a specific content area or discipline</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Text Features: if used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of Graphics: if used, some graphics are complex and may occasionally be essential to the understanding</p>	<p>generally follows the conventions of the discipline</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Text Features: if used, enhance the reader's understanding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of Graphics: if used, graphics are mostly simple and supplementary to understanding the text</p>	<p>conventions of the discipline</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Text Features: if used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of Graphics: if used, graphics are simple and unnecessary to understanding the text</p>
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Opportunities	Cautions
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Text features and/or graphics have potential to build on students' understanding of themselves and their histories.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Text features and/or graphics have the opportunity to increase awareness, appreciation, and understandings of historically marginalized communities.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Text features and/or graphics contribute to stereotypical beliefs that have been constructed in society (e.g., strict gender roles).</p>

Additional questions to ask yourself:

- How might the identity/perspective of this author/illustrator influence the way in which they share this information?

Text-Based Notes:

LANGUAGE

HIGH COMPLEXITY	MIDDLE HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW COMPLEXITY
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Conventionality: contains abstract and/or figurative language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity: dense and complex language that is <i>generally unfamiliar,*</i> archaic, discipline specific, or overly academic; language may be ambiguous or purposely misleading</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Conventionality: occasionally contains abstract and/or figurative language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity: somewhat complex language that is <i>occasionally unfamiliar,*</i> archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Conventionality: largely <i>contemporary, conversational language*</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity: largely explicit, <i>familiar language;</i> <i>easy-to-understand*</i> and rarely archaic, discipline-specific, or overly academic</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Conventionality: contemporary, <i>conversational language*</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity: clear, explicit, literal, <i>easy-to-understand language*</i></p>

* In making these determinations, consider the students in the room. For whom is language conversational? From whom would it be "easy-to-understand?" How does this allow you, or not allow you, to center historically and/or currently marginalized students?

⁴ Note: Many books for the youngest students rely heavily on graphics to convey meaning and are an exception to this generalization.

Opportunities	Cautions
<input type="checkbox"/> Builds academic language <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities to connect to multilingual learners' home language, based on prior knowledge or topics under study	<input type="checkbox"/> Language makes generalizations or implies something is normal and absolute or a norm for all individuals and/or groups of people. Does not acknowledge or make space for different cultural norms. <input type="checkbox"/> Language makes assumptions about a specific culture or group of people

Additional questions to ask yourself:

- Is the language likely to be familiar to students and/or in language that represents the spoken language of students in the classroom? How so?
- Is there language or voice that's local to the people, culture, country, or topic? (e.g., firsthand account, includes spoken/home language)
- How complex is the sentence structure (e.g., rich vocabulary, complex syntax, or other elements of "[juicy sentences](#)")?⁵

Text-Based Notes:

KNOWLEDGE

HIGH COMPLEXITY	MIDDLE HIGH	MIDDLE LOW	LOW COMPLEXITY
<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps <i>specialized*</i> or even theoretical discipline-specific <i>content knowledge</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Intertextuality: many references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Matter Knowledge: requires <i>moderate levels*</i> of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Intertextuality: some references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Matter Knowledge: <i>everyday, practical*</i> knowledge is largely necessary; requires some discipline-specific content knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Intertextuality: few references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject Matter Knowledge: requires only <i>everyday, practical*</i> knowledge and familiarity with conventions of the genre <input type="checkbox"/> Intertextuality: no references to/citations of other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.

*In making these determinations, consider the students in the room. How much do you know about students' subject matter or content knowledge related to the content in this text? Whose knowledge are you considering as you think about what will be "specialized"? How does this allow you, or not allow you, to center historically and/or currently marginalized students?

⁵ [Juicy Sentence Guidance](#), based on the work of Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore

Opportunities	Cautions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expands students' worldview and/or understanding of different perspectives <input type="checkbox"/> Shows joy, agency, creativity or resilience of historically marginalized identities <input type="checkbox"/> Builds knowledge about a topic, perspective, or event <input type="checkbox"/> Connects to content knowledge of a unit of study <input type="checkbox"/> Connects to current events or topics that matter to students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Focuses on challenges/obstacles faced by historically marginalized identities <input type="checkbox"/> Omits or ignores historically marginalized voices, identities, or experiences
<p>Additional questions to ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the content of this text engage students in understanding the context or impact of real-world problems? - For which students does this text provide opportunities to leverage their existing funds of knowledge and language resources? For which students might this text build new knowledge of others and the world? 	
<p>Text-Based Notes:</p>	

Additional Student Considerations

Revisit your thinking about who you are, who students are, and how that intersects with this specific text. Are there other considerations for your students when engaging with this text (e.g., cultural considerations, students' lived experiences, etc.)?

Summarize Your Analysis

Consider whether this is a grade-level text⁶ (quantitative and qualitative complexity), and what opportunities and cautions are present for culturally relevant content and instruction. Also think about any connections to units/topics under study, class-specific instructional needs, and how the text's complexity may influence placement within the school year

This text is:

- Above grade level
- Below grade level
- Within grade level

And, has the following **opportunities** for culturally relevant pedagogy:

But, the following **cautions** for culturally relevant pedagogy need to be attended to:

Scaffolds: What [additional scaffolds](#) could support students when engaging with this text?

Paired Resources: What other texts, resources, or multimedia could be paired with this text (e.g., to connect to units/topics under study or present a more full depiction of the topic)?

⁶ To determine if a text is of grade-level complexity: Use the quantitative measures to place a text within a grade band. Use the qualitative measures to place the text at the top, middle, or bottom of the band. Finally, consider what to do with the qualities of the text through instruction so students within a grade can access it in a meaningful way (reader and task considerations). Note that qualitative demands may cause you to determine that a text that falls outside of a specific grade band's range is appropriate for the grade level.