

## What Makes this Text Complex? “A Game of Catch”, by Richard Wilbur

### 1. Quantitative Measure

**1040**

2-3 band	420 – 820L
4-5 band	740 – 1010L
6-8 band	925 – 1185L
9 -10 band	1050 – 1335L
11 – CCR	1185 – 1385L

### 2. Qualitative Features

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

#### Moderately/Very Complex

The theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text. This is a story about teasing, but not in the overt and direct way students may immediately recognize. Scho is being manipulative and attempting to exert power to compensate for feeling pain and being left out.

#### Meaning/Purpose

#### Slightly/Minimally Complex

The story follows a clear, chronological, narrative structure.

#### Structure

#### Fairly/Very Complex

Contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language; vocabulary is sometimes unfamiliar, subject-specific, and academic

*“...he would burn the ball straight toward Monk, and it would spank into the round mitt and sit, like a still-life apple on a plate, until Monk flipped it over into his right hand and, with a negligent flick of his hanging arm...”*

#### Language

#### Knowledge

#### Slightly/Moderately Complex

Experiences portrayed are every day and common to most readers (playing catch, teasing) with some references or allusions to cultural elements (specific baseball terms and concepts) - “burn the ball,” “grounder,” “put-out”.

### 3. Reader and Task Considerations

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

- Some students may not immediately recognize the subtle and intentional nature of the teasing and the back and forth between all three boys; text-based discussion with other students who do recognize will help.
- It will not be clear whether or not Scho made himself fall or it was an accidental by-product of Monk climbing the tree.
- Some vocabulary, both academic and domain-specific, will need to be taught/explained/discussed so students can recognize and appreciate the specificity, subtlety, and imagery of Wilbur’s descriptive language
- Understanding the language used by the author will also help reveal the nature of the teasing

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

Students will begin to understand that behaviors that exclude or lessen others can be hurtful and have harmful consequences for themselves and those they hurt as well.

*(This single text is rather limited in its ability to build knowledge, but the general understanding listed here could be a starting point)*