**This sample text analysis was completed by Elexis Mann.**

See the full Text Analysis Toolkit resources [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3369/text-analysis-toolkit).

**Initial Considerations for Complexity and Cultural Relevance**

*This tool is intended to support your analysis of anchor texts for both complexity and opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy[[1]](#footnote-0) to determine whether/how to use a text and to prepare for instruction. First, read to yourself the full text you are considering (or the text included in your instructional materials you are required to teach), all the way through.*

| **Text: *The Name Jar*** by Yangsook Choi |
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| **Key Ideas of This Text:** This book follows a young girl named Unhei as she moves from Korea to America and joins a new school. The story focuses on her journey to find a new name after several students struggle to pronounce her own. The text highlights her challenges with her culture and identity in a new place and her path to once again love her name. |
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**Move forward with analyzing this text and considering for use with students?**

|  | ⛔ | Text contains harmful content, such as stereotypes and/or inaccurate representation. DO NOT USE. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **X** |  | Text has one or more cautions about the way this content is presented or how this story is told that will take careful teacher planning. MOVE TO ANALYSIS, TENDING CAREFULLY TO PLANNING FOR CAUTIONS THROUGH TASKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. |
|  | ✅ | No initial concerns about the way this content is presented or how this story is told; for example, this text is affirming of the characters/topics it portrays. MOVE TO ANALYSIS; USE WITH INTENTIONAL PLANNING. |
| Notes: Unhei’s classmate, Joey, seems to reflect a white male in the story. During the story, he pushes Unhei to use her birth name and takes on his own Korean name in the end. This can be viewed as cultural appropriation, and there will need to be proper communication of this action to students. | | |

**Consider what you bring to this text, what your students could bring,**

**and how you’ll prepare for instruction.**

| **Locating Myself within This Text:**  Are the identities,[[2]](#footnote-1) ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from my own?  I can Identify with the text primarily through the challenge with name pronunciation and spelling. I have a less-common name, and even as an adult, it is consistently mispronounced. At times as a child, I would allow others to pronounce it in whatever way because it seemed so challenging for others, yet so simple for me.  I do not identify as Korean/Korean-American, and I have not moved to a place where my name is not of that culture. | **Locating Students within This Text:**  Are the identities, ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from students? In what ways and for which students?  Most students in my class identify as Black and are from America. About 50% of the class has names that are often deemed as unconventional and are easily mispronounced by others. Within class, because unconventional names are so common, students do not have to struggle with mispronunciations from other students as much. However, with new teachers and outside of school, I can foresee students relating to the text. |
| --- | --- |
| **Research & Reflection:**  💭 What do I need to know more about before engaging more deeply with this text?[[3]](#footnote-2)  I need to review Korean culture prior to engaging deeply in the text. I specifically need to learn more about the process of going to a name master and the significance behind names in Korean culture. I must research questions such as “What is the significance of a name master in Korea?” and “What are the experiences of immigrants who choose to change their names?”  [“Naming a Child”](https://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/365)  [“What’s in a Name”](https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/2021/05/27/hidden-history-behind-asian-americans-anglicized-names/4892915001/) | |

*Now that you have read through the text once, identify 1) potential rationales for using this text with your students and 2) the quantitative level (e.g., Lexile) as an initial gauging of this text’s grade-level complexity.*

| **Why Read This Text with These Students?**  *Identify the potential rationales for reading this text by highlighting any of the possible relevant purposes in the table. Add additional rationales as needed. Read more about these three pillars of culturally relevant pedagogy from Gloria-Ladson Billings* [*here*](https://www.cue.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/images/Source%205%20-%20ladson-billings%20culturally%20relevant%20pedagogy%20-%20the%20remix.pdf)*.*   | **Academic Success** | **Cultural Competence** | **Critical Consciousness** | | --- | --- | --- | | Builds academic language | Connects to (some) students’ identities or lived experiences | Provides accurate representation | | Reads text with rich thought and/or ideas | Teaches (some) students about other cultures, identities, or experiences | Connects to current events and/or topics that matter to students | | Builds knowledge about a topic, perspective, or event | Shows joy, agency, creativity and/or resilience of non-dominant or historically marginalized identities | Explores power, equity, justice, or injustice | | Connects to content knowledge of a unit of study | Provides opportunity for multilingual learners to leverage their existing language resources and/or vocabulary from content under study | Sparks critical conversation | | *Other:* | *Other:* | *Other:* | | **Quantitative Level[[4]](#footnote-3)**  *Will this text give students the chance to interact with a complex, grade-level text?*   | Grade Band | Lexile Ranges | | --- | --- | | PK–2 Read-Aloud | 420–1010 L | | 2–3 | 420–820 L | | 4–5 | 740–1010 L | | 6–8 | 925–1185 L | | 9–10 | 1050–1335 L | | 11–12 | 1185–1385 L |   **Quantitative Measurement &**  **Associated Grade Band:**   | **590L (K-2 Read-Aloud)** | | --- |   Note that in order to fully determine grade-level complexity, **qualitative** demands (meaning/purpose, knowledge, language, structure) must also be considered. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| **Initial Text Reflections**  Based on your initial read, do you see **potential rationales** for reading this text with students? Is this text **within the quantitative grade band**? If not, does it have another relevant purpose for reading with your students?  *Note: Don’t reject a text for simply not being within the grade-level quantitative band, but be thoughtful about the purpose for reading. Consider the fact that over the course of a school year, all students should have ample learning opportunities with rich and complex text and language.*  There are a variety of reasons why this text should be used. First, the text falls within the K-3 grade band, which makes it appropriate for a K-2 read-aloud or 2-3 assisted-read. There is a variety of academic language that will challenge students and aid in building knowledge. The ideas presented in the book do a great job of teaching students about different cultures beyond those of their own or that they have experienced. |
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| **Notes for Future Planning**  If using this text, what do you want to keep in mind for future text selection?[[5]](#footnote-4) Consider how this text contributes to the [volume of texts students will read](https://www.leeandlow.com/educators/grade-level-resources/classroom-library-questionnaire) with you over the course of the school year.  I would use this text along with other supporting texts in order to explore a variety of identifiers in other cultures and the importance of them. There are some texts in our school library that would pair perfectly with this text to explore a module on “Identity.”  After reading this text, specifically, I would wonder, “How will this text shape some students' responses moving forward when their name is deemed uncommon or commonly mispronounced?” and “How would this text further expand students' knowledge of Korean culture?” |
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**Literary 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* [*Literary Text Qualitative Rubric*](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SCASS_Text_Complexity_Qualitative_Measures_Lit_Rubric_2.8.pdf)*, to determine what makes this text more or less complex. Then, you will also identify relevant opportunities and cautions for culturally relevant pedagogy.[[6]](#footnote-5)*

*To use the tool on a computer, consider highlighting levels of complexity and relevant opportunities/cautions. Take care to* ***note specific examples from the text*** *that support your determinations in each section.* ***Use these notes to plan for instruction****.*

| **MEANING** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HIGH COMPLEXITY** | **MIDDLE HIGH** | **MIDDLE LOW** | **LOW COMPLEXITY** |
| * Multiple levels/layers of complex meaning | * Multiple levels/ layers of meaning | * Single level/layer of complex meaning | * Single level/layer of simple meaning |
|
| **Opportunities** | | **Cautions** | |
| * Explores **power, equity**, **justice**, or **injustice** * Messages **disrupt stereotypes**/dominant ways of thinking. * **Own stories** are being told (consider shared identity markers of author and characters/content, lived experiences, etc.). | | * Messages **reinforce and accept the status quo** (e.g., do not showcase ability to organize for change, do not challenge preconceived notions). * Messages (text/images) **reinforce dominant** ways of thinking or **stereotypes.** | |
| Additional questions to ask yourself:   * 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?   This text can encourage students and teachers to learn the names of students and the pronunciations throughout the school year. Additionally, it can develop a sense of pride within students, especially those with names that could be perceived as uncommon or names often mispronounced. We can have conversations around the importance of names and the impact they have on our lives as individuals.   * Whose perspective is presumed or centered in this text? How does this reflect students’ perspectives or identities?   Korean Immigrant; does not reflect identities within the classroom. Once Unhei moves to America, there is a part of American culture centered through names her classmate provided. These are some names that could be present within our classroom.   * 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?   This text can serve as a mirror for students with unconventional names or students who have wanted to change their names to fit in with others. It can also serve as a mirror for students who have multiple identities/cultural backgrounds. This text can serve as a window to all students who have not experienced immigration or assimilating to a different culture. It can also serve as a window to students who have common names and have never experienced mispronunciation with their name. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:[[7]](#footnote-6)  The text is middle high and focuses on the challenges of immigration and assimilation through the story of names. The illustrations allow students to make clear inferences on character feelings and the story overall which are important for the grade level being served. | | | |
| **STRUCTURE** | | | |
| **HIGH COMPLEXITY** | **MIDDLE HIGH** | **MIDDLE LOW** | **LOW COMPLEXITY** |
| * **Narrative Structure:** complex, implicit, and unconventional * **Narration:** many shifts in point of view * **Order of Events:** frequent manipulations of time and sequence (not in chronological order) | * **Narrative Structure:** some complexities, more implicit than explicit, some unconventionality * **Narration:** occasional shifts in point of view * **Order of Events:** several major shifts in time, use of flashback | * **Narrative Structure:** largely simple structure, more explicit than implicit, largely conventional * **Narration:** few, if any, shifts in point of view * **Order of Events:** occasional use of flashback, no major shifts in time | * **Narrative Structure:** simple, explicit, conventional * **Narration:** no shifts in point of view * **Order of Events:** chronological |
|
| **Opportunities** | | **Cautions** | |
| * Narration and/or images have potential to **expand on students’ notions of themselves** and their histories. * Narration and/or images have the opportunity to increase **awareness**, **appreciation, and understandings** of historically marginalized communities. | | * Narration and/or images contribute to **stereotypical beliefs** that have been constructed in society (e.g., gender roles). | |
| Additional questions to ask yourself:   * Does this text uphold dominant representations of certain genres (e.g., European fairy tales) or disrupt those notions? This book is fiction and is primarily structured in beginning, middle, end with the ending being positive. The story told is not that of a dominant culture. * How might the identity/perspective of this author or illustrator influence the way in which they tell this story? The author reflects the story being told through their Korean background however the experience of Unhei is one that she pulled from her own childhood classmate who immigrated from China. The author was intentional with ensuring that Unhei’s classmates were supportive of her in the text | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  The text is middle-low and is structured in a conventional way that is appropriate for its audience. The text has a beginning-middle-end and includes one flashback (remembering her Grandmother at the airport) and a break in the narrative structure to include Unhei’s grandmother’s letter. The author of the text was intentional about structuring a text around her own and other’s experiences around her. | | | |
| **LANGUAGE** | | | |
| **HIGH COMPLEXITY** | **MIDDLE HIGH** | **MIDDLE LOW** | **LOW COMPLEXITY** |
| * **Conventionality:** heavy use of abstract and/or figurative language or irony * **Clarity:** generally *unfamiliar,\** archaic, domain-specific, and/or academic language; dense and complex; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading | * **Conventionality:** contains abstract and/or figurative language or irony * **Clarity:** somewhat complex language that is occasionally *unfamiliar,\** archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic | * **Conventionality:** subtle use of figurative language or irony * **Clarity:** largely contemporary, *familiar, conversational\* language* that is explicit and literal; rarely unfamiliar, archaic, domain-specific, or overly academic | * **Conventionality:** little or no use of figurative language or irony * **Clarity:** contemporary, *familiar, conversational\* language* that is explicit and literal; easy-to-understand |
|
| **\*** 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? | | | |
| **Opportunities** | | **Cautions** | |
| * Builds **academic language** * Provides opportunities to connect to **multilingual learners’** home language, based on prior knowledge or topics under study | | * 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. * 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? Most of the language in the text is familiar to students, as it is relatively simple. There is some language that is derived from Korean culture like “kimchi,” however, the book gives a brief explanation of the word within the text. * Is there language or voice that’s local to the characters in the story (e.g., diary entries, dialogue, etc.)? * How complex is the sentence structure (e.g., rich vocabulary, complex syntax, or other elements of [“juicy sentences"](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Juicy%20Sentence%20Guidance.pdf))? There is some dialogue that takes place between characters, often between Unhei and her mother or Unhei and her classmates. The sentences contain simple vocabulary (for read-aloud comprehension). Most juicy sentences are ones which contain dialogue which aids in students' understanding. Teachers can adjust their voice while reading those sentences which will help students better comprehend. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  This text is middle-low in vocabulary. There is some figurative language used in the text such as “...garbage truck roared like a lion.” Most language in the text is familiar and literal. Most conversational text is familiar as well in that students have likely spoken in this way or have been spoken to in this way. | | | |
| **KNOWLEDGE** | | | |
| **HIGH COMPLEXITY** | **MIDDLE HIGH** | **MIDDLE LOW** | **LOW COMPLEXITY** |
| * **Life Experiences:** explores multiple complex, sophisticated themes; multiple perspectives presented; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are distinctly different to *the common reader\** * **Cultural/Literary Knowledge:** requires an *extensive depth of literary/cultural knowledge;\** many references/ allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements. | * **Life Experiences:** explores multiple themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are not fantasy but are *uncommon to most readers\** * **Cultural/Literary Knowledge:***requires moderate levels of cultural/literary knowledge;\** some references/ allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements | * **Life Experiences:** explores a single complex theme; experiences portrayed are *common to many readers\** or are clearly fantasy * **Cultural/Literary Knowledge:***requires some cultural/literary knowledge;\** few references/ allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements | * **Life Experiences:** explores a single theme; single perspective presented and *everyday experiences\** are portrayed that are *common to most readers\** or experiences are clearly fantasy * **Cultural/Literary Knowledge:** requires only *common, everyday cultural/literary knowledge;\** no references/allusions to other texts and/or cultural elements |
|
| \*In making these determinations, consider the students in the room. How much do you know about students’ cultural/literary knowledge related to the content in this text? Whose cultural/literary knowledge are you considering as you think about what will be “common”? How does this allow you, or not allow you, to center historically and/or currently marginalized students? | | | |
| **Opportunities** | | **Cautions** | |
| * Opportunity to **center historically marginalized** identities, experiences, or knowledge * Shows **joy, agency, creativity or resilience** of historically marginalized identities * Builds knowledge about a **topic, perspective, or event** * Connects to content knowledge of a **unit of study** * Connects to current events ortopics that **matter to students** | | * Focuses **on challenges/obstacles** faced by historically marginalized identities * Portrays characters as **race/culture/identity neutral** or without depth | |
| Additional questions to ask yourself:   * How does the author describe the character(s) and their identities? Yangsook Choi describes the main character Unhei as a Korean girl. She just immigrated to America with her immediate family. We don’t get very much background on Unhei and her family; however, it can be inferred that they are a fairly traditional family. * How can the content of this text engage students in understanding the context or impact of real world problems? This text highlights one of the many challenges one can face when immigrating to a new country. With Unhei trying to choose a new name, it shows that she is trying to assimilate to American culture. This is often a struggle for immigrants because some feel as though they are being stripped of their own culture. The text does a great job of showing how one can stay true to their culture and identity while assimilating into a new culture. * 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? I serve a class of English speakers, and the book uses common English vocabulary, which will allow students to easily comprehend the text. There is some information in the text that may be new to students in the classroom, but the text does a good job of explaining in the moment to alleviate any confusion while reading. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  This text is middle-high in that the cultural experiences displayed throughout the text are not common to most readers in the class. Additionally, it references some cultural elements that may be new to students (Korean naming practices, use of a name stamp), but also provides clarity through context clues and explicit defining. | | | |

| **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.)?  With most of my students being from the same place, I wonder how this text would shape students' responses if they encounter a new student from a different country. Would this book change how they interact for the better? Additionally, the analysis makes me think about students who may have even moved from different states. In my experience with those students, their transition can also be a challenge. Would the text help those students feel more comfortable moving to a new place? Would the text make the students around them more empathetic to their experience? |
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| **Summarize Your Analysis**  *Consider whether this is a grade-level text[[8]](#footnote-7) (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:   * Building knowledge of Korean Culture * Building knowledge of immigrant experiences * Building empathy towards a nondominant culture/experience |
| **But,** the following **cautions** for culturally relevant pedagogy need to be attended to:   * Cultural appropriation vs appreciation |
| **Scaffolds:** What [additional scaffolds](https://docs.google.com/gview?url=https%3A%2F%2Fachievethecore.org%2Fpeersandpedagogy%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2016%2F08%2FSupporting-All-Learners-with-Complex-Text-1.pdf&embedded=true) could support students when engaging with this text?   * Ask about student experiences as it relates to the text before, during, and after reading. * Provide each student with a copy of the text so they can follow along effectively and clearly see the illustrations. This will help build their own understanding since many of them are early readers. * After reading, have students do a name activity writing their name in a creative way. Then they will practice saying each other's name in a respectful way. * Connect text to home by having students ask their families about the origin of their own names.   **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)?   * Expanding on some of the Korean cultural elements from the text, knowledge about immigration, connection to power of names and naming traditions. | |

1. Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that’s just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy*.* *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159–165. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. In considering identity, you might think about any of the following: ability, age, body type, ethnicity, gender, home language, immigration status, socio-economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. For more, see [Let’s Talk, Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students, Learning for Justice](https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/TT-Let-s-Talk-Publication-January-2020.pdf#page=8), p. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. For example, you may want to learn more about a historical event, a cultural practice that is unfamiliar to you, or accurate pronunciations of proper nouns. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. A [quantitative tool](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/CCSS_Grade_Bands_and_Quantitative_Measures%20updated%202015.pdf), such as a Lexile level, is one piece of information to gauge a text's overall complexity. This computer-generated numerical value is based on features such as sentence length and vocabulary complexity and is one way of ensuring that your students are regularly interacting with rich reading material. To find a text’s Lexile, visit <https://hub.lexile.com/find-a-book/search>; you may also [paste in portions of a text](https://hub.lexile.com/analyzer) to get an approximation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. For example, how might you balance the perspectives offered in this text or ensure a variety of identities are represented? [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A. K. A. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 74–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. 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 to the grade level. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)