**This sample text analysis was completed by Zach Chan.**

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: *Alejandria Fights Back! La lucha de Alejandria!*** by Leticia Hernández-Linares |
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| **Key Ideas of This Text:**  This text is about a young girl, Alejandria, and how her community works to stand up for themselves and to try to keep their homes when rent prices go up. The text explores ideas around gentrification, housing and the impact on community, as well as how civic engagement can give people the chance to organize for change.  The text shows the concept of community, and how a community is made up of a diverse network of people who can support and care for one another. |
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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. |
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|  |  | 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. |
| **X** | ✅ | 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: Connections around struggling to find affordable housing could be challenging for some 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?  First, I thought about how rising rent forced me and my family out of our apartment. We did not reach out to organize, as Alejandria did.  I do come from a very diverse background and have always lived in diverse communities, recognizing strength through friendship amongst neighbors.  As a middle-class, financially-comfortable individual, I was able (with my family) to comfortably find new housing though, which was not an option for the protagonist’s family. | **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?  We do have many Spanish-speaking families in our community. Many will use translanguaging when talking.  Many of my students struggle with consistent housing. However, given their age, Alejandria’s story might not immediately be relevant to kids who don’t know the details of the financial struggles their families may have.  This text may be far from many students in that San Antonio does not have a strong “community organizing” tradition. We also have primarily suburban and urban housing, and “building” communities are not common.  All of my students are girls, 90% are black or hispanic, and Alejandria will be instantly cheered for in this story.  Alejandria would resonate well with several of the Centroamericanos in my class. |
| --- | --- |
| **Research & Reflection:**  💭 What do I need to know more about before engaging more deeply with this text?[[3]](#footnote-2)   * Nicaragua reference on pp. 16-17—more background knowledge needed for Tita’s experience. * Who is our local council person? More information on how city council works, direct connections to local politics. * Local eviction law/policy around how this scenario can happen. * Is there information that can be gathered around students' experience with renting homes in a way that is not intrusive to families? Will want to consider how to engage without doing harm here. | |

*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:* Alejandria as a female protagonist for students to “cheer for”. | | **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:**   | **650** | | --- |   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.*  This text is within the quantitative grade band! The text lends itself very well to teach about community organizing, financial systems, and civic engagement. The people featured in this text will also provide both windows and mirrors for certain students. |
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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.  This text centers on an urban community. While the setting varies (my students mostly do not live in apartments) my students are also from an urban area. I will want to be sure students see a range of communities in fiction texts over the course of the school year. |
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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? While the text explores complex issues, it does so in a simple and accessible way. One of the central messages is that Alejandria is just a little girl who hasn’t spoken up before, but has the power and ability to do so, and this impacted change. * Whose perspective is presumed or centered in this text? How does this reflect students’ perspectives or identities? This concept could empower my girls to speak up in their school community. I think the girls in my class will be cheering for Alejandria. * 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?[[7]](#footnote-6) See above. While I don’t know for sure which students might relate to housing insecurity, students will likely relate to the idea of fighting for a cause. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:[[8]](#footnote-7) The text itself is very straightforward with a clear message and one level of meaning (using your voice to push for change in your community). | | | |
| **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? The text and illustrations are very typical in terms of realistic fiction texts where the child protagonist is the hero (she overcomes her doubts about speaking in front of people, etc.). * How might the identity/perspective of this author or illustrator influence the way in which they tell this story? The author/illustrator note clearly shows how the Rise-Home Stories Project, the author, and the illustrator were invested in telling this story based on their goals around activism and advocacy. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  The structure is low complexity, first-person narration, and is told in chronological order—will not need questions or tasks to attend to this. All of the people represented are people of color, from what appears to be varied cultural backgrounds. The landlords are never seen or given a face. When talking about the problem in the story, it might be interesting for kids to consider why the author and illustrators chose to never show the landlord.  There is one use of flashback at the start of the text, and the text closes with a direct address to the reader. Other than that, the structure is relatively low complexity. | | | |
| **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? Mostly familiar * Is there language or voice that’s local to the characters in the story (e.g., diary entries, dialogue, etc.)? There is some very occasional use of Spanish (see below) * 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))?[[9]](#footnote-8) There are limited complex sentences—primarily simple syntax. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  Language is likely to be familiar to my students, including most of the Spanish words: barrio, abuela/Tita, hija, hormiguitas. Some possibly unfamiliar words are picos, raspado (not common in Mexican Spanish). There are less translanguaging opportunities than expected embedded in the text—a missed opportunity that could be attended to in planning. | | | |
| **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? Characters are intentionally described in a range of ways- background/ethnicity, community role, relationships, age, gender, etc. * How can the content of this text engage students in understanding the context or impact of real world problems? This text could boost students’ confidence to feel empowered to speak up for injustice, challenge power and authority, and work with a collective for a cause. * 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’ve had students who have gone to city hall, speaking up for more girl’s community clubs- they can share this experience. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  Two experiences that may be explored in terms of complexity of knowledge: one around gentrification, housing insecurity, and financial implications for renting, and the other around civic engagement and community organizing. Both may be unfamiliar to many students (or, even if students have experienced the former, they may not have the language or background knowledge). | | | |

| **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.)?  The conversations this text will bring forth may shed light on students’ experiences with housing and other connections to this text. Will want to listen/monitor this during lessons. |
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| **Summarize Your Analysis**  *Consider whether this is a grade-level text[[10]](#footnote-9) (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:  Connecting to civic empowerment and how to engage with people in power and organize with the community, as well as shedding light on housing insecurity and gentrification. |
| **But,** the following **cautions** for culturally relevant pedagogy need to be attended to: Alejandria’s experience progressed very easily and may not match real-world experiences. The text follows a problem/solution narrative that is oversimplified, making it less realistic for real-world issues.  If engaging in conversations around housing insecurity, will want to be very thoughtful about how to approach the conversation in a way that is affirming of students and not invasive. |
| **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?  Pre Teaching vocabulary (consider Spanish words)  Might want to give a synopsis to set up some of the unfamiliar content (e.g, Alejandria lives in an apartment).  A few students will need to read this text in chunks, reading a small part and then checking in/summarizing with me.  **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)?  **Resources for understanding local government:**  Generic: look up your local info <https://www.usa.gov/state-tribal-governments>  San Antonio: <https://directory.tml.org/profile/city/842>  County Government Infographic:  <https://www.icivics.org/sites/default/files/County%20Contributions.pdf>  School Board or Trustees and Meeting Schedule:  <https://www.saisd.net/page/dis-board>  How Government Works:  <https://newsela.com/read/elem-govt-local-power/id/29765/>  Difference between City, County, and State Government (Texas, but can be applicable to other states):  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7us7syDw88>  Understanding Local Government: <https://www.democracyandme.org/who-runs-the-show-understanding-your-local-government/>  Mock City Council Meeting: <https://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/readers2leaders/mock-city-council-for-elementary-school-students.pdf?sfvrsn=d2f9d4d5_0>  Mobilizing for Change:  <https://www.dosomething.org/us>  <https://www.dosomething.org/us/articles/11-young-black-activists-changing-the-world> | |

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. Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Perspectives, 1 (3), ix–xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. 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-7)
9. [Juicy Sentence Guidance](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Juicy%20Sentence%20Guidance.pdf), based on the work of Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. 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-9)