**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-1) 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.*

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| **Text:** *The Proudest Blue*by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S. K. Ali; Art by Hatem Aly |

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| **Key Ideas of this Text:**  The book is about two young girls, Asiya and Faizah, and their experiences on the first day of school. Specifically, this is the first time Asiya (the older sister) has worn a hijab. The book shares the experiences of how both sisters navigate the first day of school while dealing with the many questions and comments received from their peers about Asiya’s hijab. |

**Move forward with analyzing this text and considering for use with students?**

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|  | ⛔ | Text contains harmful content, such as stereotypes and/or inaccurate representation. DO NOT USE. |
|  |  | 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: | | |

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

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

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| **Locating Myself within This Text:**  Are the identities,[[2]](#footnote-2) ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from my own?  The identity that is most prevalent that I connect with are the main characters’ race/ethnicity. (I identify as being a person of color—Black/African American.) The religious ideas and perspectives presented (Islam) are not close to my own. (I identify as being Christian.) The gender expressions of the main characters presented are female. (I identify as being a male.) | **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?  The identity that is most prevalent that my students may connect with are the main characters’ race/ethnicity. (90% of my students identify as being a person of color—Black/African American.) The religious ideas and perspectives presented (Muslim) are close to one student in my class. The gender expressions of the main characters presented will also connect with some of my students as well. (I have 8/22 students who identify as female.) |
| **Research & Reflection:**  💭 What do I need to know more about before engaging more deeply with this text?[[3]](#footnote-3)  I need to learn more about Muslim culture and the role/importance of hijabs in the Muslim community. I would ask myself questions such as, “What is the significance of the hijab in the Muslim community?” and “What are the experiences of those who wear hijabs, especially in schools?” Some resources that I can use to learn more about Hijabs and Muslim culture are: [What is a Hijab And Why is it Worn?](https://youtu.be/jSX8N9Yf8aE) (VIDEO), [A Brief History of the Veil in Islam](https://www.facinghistory.org/civic-dilemmas/brief-history-veil-islam) (READING), [World Hijab Day](https://worldhijabday.com/) (WEBSITE). | |

*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.*

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| **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:* Opportunities to connect with current sociopolitical issues (e.g., Islamophobia) | | **Quantitative Level[[4]](#footnote-4)**  *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:**   |  | | --- | | 500L, PK-2 Read-Aloud |   Note that in order to fully determine grade-level complexity, **qualitative** demands (meaning/purpose, knowledge, language, structure) must also be considered. |

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| **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 multiple reasons for reading this text with students. The text does fall within the quantitative grade band (PK-2 Read-Aloud) and presents ideas that can help students build academic language, teach students about other cultures, and can help them learn about sociopolitical issues related to hijabs and Islamophobia. Since this book has all of these functions, lessons and activities can be used to extend the text, helping students build knowledge around these topics through various modalities (e.g., audio, book, video) and from various perspectives (cultural insider and cultural outsider). |

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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-5) 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 like to consider how the books I currently have in my classroom can be used not only to support students’ understanding of the world around them, but also how they can be used to bring joy to all.  Specifically, what other opportunities will students have to encounter texts with characters or people who wear the hijab? How could these opportunities further contribute to/expand students' understanding? |

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

**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/file/824)*, 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-6)*

*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****.*

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| **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 |
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| **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? The book can help equip students with the knowledge and understanding to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate change in society as it relates to the oppression of Muslim culture (e.g., dismantling Islamophobia). * Whose perspective is presumed or centered in this text? How does this reflect students’ perspectives or identities? Muslim females who wear a hijab. Students will be engaged in learning about the hijab, its importance, and the pride that various females have in wearing them. * 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-7) The author and illustrator shared a narrative in the book that was based on a true experience that Ibtihaj Muhammad had. This lived experience, along with the author and illustrator being cultural insiders, had a direct influence in the narrative depicted in the story. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:[[8]](#footnote-8)  This text is middle high in complexity because there are multiple messages that students receive about the identities, cultures, activities, and places included in this text (ideas surrounding Muslim culture, the history, tradition, and pride that females have in wearing the hijab). The messages in the book do not reinforce stereotypes, but push against widely fixed and harmful beliefs about Muslim culture. There is also color symbolism used within the text as well (e.g., the color blue); see [Islam and Symbolism](https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20080630_art017.pdf) (READING). | | | |
| **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 |
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| **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? No. This book highlights a community and culture that historically has been marginalized. * How might the identity/perspective of this author or illustrator influence the way in which they tell this story? The book was created by Olympic medalist [Ibtihaj Muhammad](https://www.ibtihajmuhammad.com/) with [S. K. Ali](https://skalibooks.com/) and illustration by [Hatem Aly](https://www.metahatem.com/). Both Ibtihaj Muhammad with S. K. Ali are Muslim women who wear hijabs. The book was created so children like Muhammad and Ali can see themselves in a book, and to present a story about love and pride. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  The structure of the book is middle low in complexity and highlights a community and culture that historically has been marginalized. There is some opportunity for abstract thinking when the text and images do not explicitly connect (e.g., several times in the text the chronological story pauses and the narration shifts to Mama talking about the meaning of the hijab—the illustrations also shift to the hijab as the sky or the ocean). | | | |
| **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?  The students in my classroom are in kindergarten, so the use of figurative language may require more scaffolding and support because of where they are developmentally. The use of the subtle figurative language such as “Asiya’s hijab is like the sky on a sunny day” may require more scaffolding for students to understand. Beyond this, the language used in the book will be familiar to many of my students. For my students who are multi-language users, additional scaffolding and resources will be provided. I will also seek out translations of the book, or consider ways that the book can be translated into different languages (e.g., audio recording of parent reading the book in child’s home language). | | | |
| **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? The language printed in the book is in English. All 90% of the students in my classroom are English language users. 10% of the students in my classroom are multi-language users (e.g., Spanish). For the students who are English language users, the words in the book are likely to be familiar with children, but some words will require additional scaffolding. For the multi-language users in my classroom, additional scaffolding and support will also be beneficial. * Is there language or voice that’s local to the characters in the story (e.g., diary entries, dialogue, etc.)? The author and illustrator are both cultural insiders, and this book is based on the real experience that the author Ibtihaj Muhammad had (see authors’ note). * 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-9) The sentence structure in the book has middle-low complexity (e.g., frequent use of line breaks, some sentences with multiple clauses). | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  There is use of Tier 1 vocabulary (e.g., school, walking) and limited use of Tier 2 vocabulary (e.g., pounding, hand in hand). There is also use of both literal language (e.g., “we cross the road”) and figurative language (e.g., “Asiya’s hijab is like the sky on a sunny day”). The language used in the book assumes that the reader is an English language user as well. | | | |
| **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 |
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| \*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?  When it comes down to how much I know about my students’ cultural/literary knowledge related to this text (e.g., Muslim culture and hijabs), I currently do not know how much they know about this specific topic. I will use a [KWHL chart](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/ela/bank/RI.KID_K-W-H-L_Chart.pdf) before reading to capture this information. In terms of whose cultural/literacy knowledge is considered “dominant” and “marginalized,” this book does a great job centering the voices of a culture (Muslim culture) that has historically been marginalized. This book, and the extension activities, are a great way for me to center Muslim culture in our classroom. | | | |
| **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? Muhammad mentions and describes multiple identities of the characters in the story. For example, the author mentions “older sister” (age and family structure), “children of color, Muslims” (race/ethnicity and religion). The identities mentioned in the book convey ideas of strength and pride. * How can the content of this text engage students in understanding the context or impact of real world problems? The book can be used to help students critically analyze the social, political, and economic forces that impact Muslim culture. Specifically, those who wear hijabs. * 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? Because English is the only language used in the book, students who are multilingual learners/users may need additional language support. For students who may not have been exposed to Muslim culture and hijabs, this can be an opportunity to learn about another culture. Moving beyond the text, students may make connections to other cultural artifacts that are depicted (textually and visually) in the book that are reflective of their own religions and/or communities. | | | |
| Text-Based Notes:  There are multiple themes in this book, including understanding the cultural significance of the hijab, the first day of school, sibling relationships, teasing/othering, and more. The text explicitly explores the tradition, enthusiasm, and challenges of wearing a hijab in the school setting. It can be presumed that readers have some preconceived knowledge of what a hijab is and what it means when females begin wearing hijabs in Muslim culture. This text offers the opportunity to highlight joy by displaying the pride that Asiya has in wearing her hijab. Text and images come together throughout the book to show joy (e.g., Text: “She’s Smiling. Strong.”; Illustrations: Asiya in her hijab waving to another character). | | | |

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| **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.)?  After reflecting on the other considerations, one thing that I want to continue to consider is how the different experiences/depictions in the book would make students feel (those who are cultural insiders and those who are not). For example, for the one student in my classroom who is Muslim, I ask myself what feelings would the scene of Asiya being teased invoke in the child, especially when considering Islamophobia? |

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| **Summarize Your Analysis**  *Consider whether this is a grade-level text[[10]](#footnote-10) (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/building knowledge of Muslim culture and wearing a hijab (which will either be a window or mirror for my students) and a chance to connect to universal themes such as othering, teasing, and the importance of family. |
| **But,** the following **cautions** for culturally relevant pedagogy need to be attended to:  Need to thoughtfully support how students unpack the ideas of teasing around the hijab. How can this book support positive affirmations of Muslim identities, while also acknowledging the truth in experiences of othering? See more in Hijabi Librarians’ [Book Discussion: The Proudest Blue](https://hijabilibrarians.com/archives/416#:~:text=Mahasin%3A%20I%20struggled,to%20be%20difficult.%C2%A0). |
| **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?   * Connect to student funds of knowledge about hijabs while engaging with resources to build knowledge before, during, and after reading *The Proudest Blue* (see list below). * Plan to project the text so that students can attend to the nuances of the illustrations and the way the text is written (e.g., Mama’s advice in italics). * Chunking the text during rereads to focus on sections with figurative language, change in narration, etc.   **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)?   * [What is a Hijab And Why is it Worn?, Patheos](https://youtu.be/jSX8N9Yf8aE) * [Wearing Hijab](https://mainepublic.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/islam17.soc.hijab/wearing-hijab/), PBS Media * [Gallery: Types of Headscarves](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/gallery/types-headscarves), Facing History & Ourselves | |
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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-1)
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-2)
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-3)
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-4)
5. For example, how might you balance the perspectives offered in this text or ensure a variety of identities are represented? [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A. K. A. the remix. Harvard Educational Review, 84(1), 74–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Perspectives, 1 (3), ix–xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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-8)
9. [Juicy Sentence Guidance](https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Juicy%20Sentence%20Guidance.pdf), based on the work of Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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-10)