

Qualitative Text Complexity Rubric - Literary¹

Text Title _____

Text Author _____

	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
TEXT STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: Is intricate with regard to such elements as point of view, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail ○ Use of Graphics: If used, illustrations or graphics are essential for understanding the meaning of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: May include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters ○ Use of Graphics: If used, illustrations or graphics support or extend the meaning of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: May have two or more storylines and occasionally be difficult to predict ○ Use of Graphics: If used, a range of illustrations or graphics support selected parts of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization: Is clear, chronological or easy to predict ○ Use of Graphics: If used, either illustrations directly support and assist in interpreting the text or are not necessary to understanding the meaning of the text
LANGUAGE FEATURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases; sentences often contain multiple concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language ○ Vocabulary: Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning ○ Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic ○ Sentence Structure: Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand ○ Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language ○ Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
MEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple competing levels of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: Multiple levels of meaning clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meaning: One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores complex, sophisticated or abstract themes; experiences portrayed are distinctly different from the common reader ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores themes of varying levels of complexity or abstraction; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores several themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers ○ Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements

Originally developed by Student Achievement Partners in collaboration with state education leaders through CCSSO's SCASS initiative. Updated and maintained by Student Achievement Partners.

¹ Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).