

**Figure 5.3 Qualitative scale of informational texts.**

Score	1 point (comfortable) Texts that are comfortable and/or build background, fluency, and skills	2 points (grade level) Texts that require grade-appropriate skills	3 points (stretch) Texts that would stretch a reader and/or require instruction
Levels of Meaning and Purpose			
Density and Complexity	Single and literal levels of meaning are present; meaning is explicitly stated.	Multiple layers of specific content are present. Some information must be inferred or integrated with previous content.	Significant density and complexity, with multiple layers of content topics, are present. The reader is expected to critique or evaluate information.
Analogies and Abstract Comparisons	There is limited use of analogous statements. Language relies on literal interpretations.	Analogies and metaphors are used to help the reader make connections between new concepts and the reader's knowledge.  These associations draw on familiar processes and phenomena.	The metaphors and analogies used are more abstract and require sophistication and depth of knowledge from the reader. The process or phenomenon used to make a comparison itself requires prior knowledge.
Purpose	The purpose is directly and explicitly stated at the beginning of the text and is in evidence throughout the text.	The text serves both explicit and implicit purposes, which become evident with close inspection of the text.	The text may involve multiple purposes, some of which may be implicit; it requires the reader to critically analyze across texts to discern implicit purposes.
Structure			
Genre	The text exemplifies conventional characteristics of one familiar genre.	The text exemplifies one genre but deviates from typical characteristics of that genre.	The text is presented as being in a specific genre, but it includes other embedded genres.
Organization	One conventional organizational pattern predominates throughout the text. Signal words and phrases are overt and numerous.	More than one conventional organization pattern is included in the text. Signal words and phrases are present.	The text may include a variety of conventional organizational patterns, which are dictated by text content but with little notification or guidance to the reader.
Text Features	The text contains familiar access features such as a table of contents, headings/subheadings, a glossary, and an index.	The text contains conventional access features but also includes detailed information in sidebars, insets, and bulleted lists.	The text contains access features that require the reader to integrate extratextual information, such as preface/prologue, afterword/epilogue, and author/illustrator notes.

Graphic Elements	The text contains familiar graphic elements such as simple diagrams, maps, timelines, photographs, and illustrations with captions. Graphic elements repeat information in the text.	The text contains graphic elements that require interpretation, such as graphs and tables, scale diagrams, and webs. Graphic elements have additional information that supplements the text.	The text contains graphic elements that are less familiar to students and require interpretation, such as cross sections, cutaways, and range and flow maps. Graphic elements have information that complements and is integrated with text.
Language Conventuality and Clarity			
Language Level	The language used is appropriate to the developmental and experiential level of the student.	There is some distance between the text language and the developmental and experiential language level of the student.	The text language uses language conventions and structures unfamiliar to the student, especially those that reflect voices found in specific content areas.
Register	The register is casual and familiar. Humorous language may be used throughout to engage the reader in the information.	The register is consultative or formal, and may be academic, but acknowledges the developmental level of the reader. Humorous or casual language may be used in titles and headings/subheadings.	The register is domain specific, formal, and/or scholarly.
Voice	Information in the text is presented in a straightforward way. Text may use second-person language and a personal tone to draw the reader into the text.	Vocabulary and diction invite the reader's curiosity about the text content while presenting information with an authoritative tone.	Strong authoritative voice dominates the text. Text language is used to impart knowledge to the reader and makes little effort to engage the reader on a personal level.
Knowledge Demands			
Background Knowledge	The content closely matches the reader's primary lived experiences and secondary experiences gained through other media.	The content represents a distance between the reader's primary and secondary experiences, but the text provides explanations to bridge the gap between what is known and unknown.	The content demands specialized knowledge beyond the primary and secondary experiences of the reader and provides no bridge or scaffolding between known and unknown.
Prior Knowledge	Prior knowledge is needed to understand the text, which is familiar and draws on a solid foundation of practical, general, and academic learning.	Subject-specific knowledge is required but is augmented with review or summary of information.	Specialized or technical content knowledge is presumed; little review or explanation of these concepts is present in the text.
Vocabulary Knowledge	The vocabulary is controlled and uses the most commonly held meanings; multiple-meaning words are used in a limited fashion.	The vocabulary draws on domain-specific, general academic, and multiple-meaning words, with text supports to guide the reader's correct interpretations of their meanings; it represents familiar concepts and ideas.	The vocabulary demand is extensive, domain specific, and representative of complex ideas; little is offered in the way of context clues.

Source: Adapted by Sherrye Dee Garrett, Jeannette Gomez, and Lindsay Bingaman from Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2016). *Text complexity*, pp. 72–74. Corwin.