



TOOL 7

GRADIENTS IN COMPLEXITY:

Text Complexity Rubric for **Informational** Texts



Informational Text Analyzed (author, date):

Overall Complexity Rating:

Notes:

	Simple Text [1]	Somewhat Complex Text [2]	Complex Text [3]	Very Complex Text [4]
Format Layout	Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font Graphics, captioned photos, labeled diagrams that directly support and help interpret the written text Simple indexes, short glossaries Supportive signposting and/or enhancements	May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font Graphs, photos, tables, charts, diagrams directly support the text Indexes, glossaries, occasional quotes, references Reduced signposting and enhancements	Longer passages, uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller more elaborate font Essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, formulas (necessary to make meaning of text) Embedded quotes, concluding appendices, indexes, glossaries, bibliography Minimal signposting and/or enhancements	Very long passages, uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small densely packed print Extensive or complex, intricate, essential integrated tables, charts, formulas necessary to make connections or synthesize concepts presented Abstracts, footnotes, citations and/or detailed indexes, appendices, bibliography Integrated signposting conforming to disciplinary formats. No enhancements
Purpose and Meaning	A single or simple purpose conveying clear or factual information Meaning is clear, concrete with a narrow focus	Purpose involves conveying a range of ideas with more detailed information or examples Meaning is more involved with a broader focus	Purpose includes explaining or interpreting information, not just presenting it Meaning includes more complex concepts and a higher level of detail	Purpose may include examining or evaluating complex, sometimes theoretical and contested information Meaning is intricate, with abstract theoretical elements
Structure & Discourse	Discourse style and organization of the text is clear or chronological and/or easy to predict Connections between ideas, processes, or events are explicit and clear One primary text structure is evident (e.g., sequence, description)	Organization of the text may include a thesis or reasoned explanation in addition to facts Connections between some ideas, processes, or events are implicit or subtle Includes a main text structure with 1-2 embedded structures	Organization of the text may contain multiple pathways, more than one thesis and/or several genres Connections between an expanded range ideas, processes, or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle Includes different text structure types of varying complexity	Organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline or genre Connections between an extensive range ideas, processes, or events are deep, intricate and often implicit or subtle Includes sustained complex text structure types and/or specialized, hybrid text types, including digital texts
Language Features	Mainly simple sentences Simple language style, sometimes with narrative elements Vocabulary is mostly familiar or defined in text	Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions Increased objective style and passive constructions with higher factual content Includes some unfamiliar, context-dependent or multiple meaning words	Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses or transition words Objective/passive style with higher conceptual content and increasing nominalization Includes much academic (nuanced) vocabulary and/or some domain specific (content) vocabulary	Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts Specialized disciplinary style with dense conceptual content and high nominalization Includes extensive academic (nuanced, precise) and/or domain specific (content) vocabulary
Bk Knowledge Demands	General topic is familiar, with some details known by reader Simple, concrete ideas	General topic is familiar, with some details new to reader (cultural, historical, literary, political, legal, etc.) Both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas	General topic is somewhat familiar but with many details unknown to reader (cultural, historical, literary, political, legal, etc.) A range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts	General topic is mostly unfamiliar with most details unknown to reader (cultural, historical, literary, political, legal, etc.) Many new ideas, perspectives and/or complex, challenging, abstract and theoretical concepts