



# GRADIENTS IN COMPLEXITY:

## Text Complexity Rubric for **Literary** Texts



Literary Text Analyzed (author, date): \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Complexity Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Simple Text [1]</b>	<b>Somewhat Complex Text [2]</b>	<b>Complex Text [3]</b>	<b>Very Complex Text [4]</b>
<b>Format Layout</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font <input type="checkbox"/> Numerous illustrations that directly support and help interpret the written text <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive signposting (e.g., chapter heading) and enhancements	<input type="checkbox"/> May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font <input type="checkbox"/> A range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced signposting and enhancements	<input type="checkbox"/> Longer passages of uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller, more elaborate font <input type="checkbox"/> A few illustrations that support the text OR include images that require some interpretation <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal signposting or enhancements	<input type="checkbox"/> Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small, densely packed print <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal or no illustrations that support the text OR includes images or text layout that require deeper interpretation (e.g., symbolism or recursive reading) <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated signposting conforming to literary devices; no enhancements
<b>Purpose and Meaning</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose usually stated explicitly in the title or in the beginning of the text (this is a story about . . . ) <input type="checkbox"/> One intended level of meaning or lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Theme is obvious and revealed early in the text <input type="checkbox"/> Common themes	<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose tends to be revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety <input type="checkbox"/> More than one level of meaning, with levels clearly distinguished from each other <input type="checkbox"/> Theme is clear and revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety <input type="checkbox"/> More than one possible theme	<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose is implicit and may be revealed over the entirety of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate <input type="checkbox"/> Theme(s) may be implicit or subtle, sometimes ambiguous, and revealed over the entirety of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Universal themes or archetypes (e.g., the hero's journey)	<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify or separate and interpret <input type="checkbox"/> Theme(s) implicit or subtle, often ambiguous, and revealed over the entirety of the text <input type="checkbox"/> Universal themes or competing archetypes (e.g., warrior vs. hero)
<b>Structure &amp; Discourse</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Discourse style and organization of the text is clear, chronological, and/or easy to predict or follow <input type="checkbox"/> Connections between events or ideas are explicit and clear <input type="checkbox"/> One primary text structure is evident (e.g., chronology)	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization of text may have two or more story lines or additional characters and is occasionally difficult to predict <input type="checkbox"/> Connections among events or ideas are sometimes implicit or subtle <input type="checkbox"/> Includes a main text structure with 1–2 embedded structures	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization of text may include subplots, time shifts, and more complex characters <input type="checkbox"/> Connections among events or ideas are often implicit or subtle (e.g., flashback establishes chronology) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes different text types (diary entry or news story within narrative) of varying complexity	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization of text is intricate with regard to elements (e.g., narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, story lines/subplots, detail) <input type="checkbox"/> Connections among events or ideas are implicit or subtle throughout the text <input type="checkbox"/> Includes sustained complex text types and hybrid or nonlinear texts (story within a story)
<b>Language Features</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mainly short, simple sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Simple, literal language; predictable <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary is mostly familiar for grade level; frequently appearing words	<input type="checkbox"/> Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions <input type="checkbox"/> Mainly literal, common-use language <input type="checkbox"/> Some unfamiliar or context-dependent, multiple meaning or precise words	<input type="checkbox"/> Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses <input type="checkbox"/> Some figurative language or literary devices <input type="checkbox"/> Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain-specific (content) vocabulary, precise language	<input type="checkbox"/> Many complex sentences, often containing nuanced details or concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Much figurative language-or use of literary devices (metaphor, analogy, connotative language, literary allusion, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes extensive academic and domain-specific (content) vocabulary, and possibly archaic language
<b>Bk Knowledge Demands</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minimal assumed personal experience or background knowledge needed <input type="checkbox"/> Simple, straightforward ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Some assumed personal experience and/or knowledge (e.g., cultural or historical) or ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Both simple and more complex ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Much assumed personal experience and/or explicit references to cultural, historical, literary, or political knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> A range of recognizable ideas and challenging concepts or themes	<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive, demanding, assumed personal experience and implied cultural, historical, literary, or political knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Many new ideas, perspectives, and/or complex, challenging concepts

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