

Reference: Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Appendix 1, pp. 4-9; and Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Author: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bibliographic Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Placement: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION:

Lexile Level \_\_\_\_\_ Other Level \_\_\_\_\_

### Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures

Common core band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework	Reading Maturity	SourcerRater
2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.75-5.14	42-54	1.98-5.34	420-820	3.53-6.13	0.05-2.48
4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	740-1010	5.42-7.92	0.84-5.75
6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.51-10.34	925-1185	7.04-9.57	4.11-10.66
9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	1050-1335	8.41-10.81	9.02-13.93
11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	1185-1385	9.57-12.00	12.30-14.50

## QUALITATIVE EVALUATION — Rate text on these continua, from low to high complexity

### Levels of Meaning

Single level of meaning \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple levels of meaning \_\_\_\_\_  
 Explicitly Stated Purpose \_\_\_\_\_ Hidden or Obscure purpose \_\_\_\_\_

### Structure

Simple \_\_\_\_\_ Complex \_\_\_\_\_  
 Explicit \_\_\_\_\_ Implicit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Conventional \_\_\_\_\_ Unconventional \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chronological \_\_\_\_\_ Not Chronological \_\_\_\_\_  
 Common genre/subgenre \_\_\_\_\_ Specific to discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
 Simple graphics \_\_\_\_\_ Complex graphics \_\_\_\_\_

### Language Conventions and Clarity

Literal \_\_\_\_\_ Figurative or ironic \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clear \_\_\_\_\_ Ambiguous, deliberately misleading \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contemporary, familiar \_\_\_\_\_ Archaic or otherwise unfamiliar \_\_\_\_\_  
 Conversational \_\_\_\_\_ General academic & domain specific \_\_\_\_\_

### Knowledge Demands: Life Experiences

Simple Theme \_\_\_\_\_ Complex theme \_\_\_\_\_  
 Single Theme \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple themes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Common, everyday \_\_\_\_\_ Experiences distinctly \_\_\_\_\_

Experiences of fantasy \_\_\_\_\_ different from own situation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Single perspective \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple perspectives \_\_\_\_\_  
 Perspectives different or in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Perspectives similar to own \_\_\_\_\_ opposition to own.

### Knowledge Demands: Cultural & Literary Knowledge

(Use for fiction.)  
 Everyday knowledge and \_\_\_\_\_ Cultural and literary familiarity \_\_\_\_\_  
 with genre conventions \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge useful \_\_\_\_\_  
 Low intertextuality \_\_\_\_\_ High intertextuality \_\_\_\_\_

### Knowledge Demands: Content & Discipline Knowledge

(Use for nonfiction.)  
 Everyday knowledge and \_\_\_\_\_ Cultural and literary familiarity \_\_\_\_\_  
 with genre conventions \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge useful \_\_\_\_\_  
 Low intertextuality \_\_\_\_\_ High intertextuality \_\_\_\_\_

## READER AND TASK

High interest \_\_\_\_\_ Low interest \_\_\_\_\_  
 Easy text \_\_\_\_\_ Stretch text \_\_\_\_\_  
 Task allows easy text \_\_\_\_\_ Task demands complex text \_\_\_\_\_  
 No support needed \_\_\_\_\_ Needs support or scaffolding \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Using the Evaluating Texts for Common Core Tool

www.commoncorestandards.com



*The English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects Appendix A* discusses the criteria for selecting texts to use when teaching the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Page 4 explains the CCSS approach to Text Complexity. There are three considerations: Qualitative, Quantitative and Reader & Task.

**Qualitative considerations** take into account levels of meaning, purpose, structure, language conventions and demands and knowledge demands.

**Quantitative considerations** refer to measurable differences in text such as sentence length, word length or frequency and text cohesion. The CCSS allows one of six measurements of reading level: ATOS (Accelerated Learning), Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), Flesch-Kincaid, Lexile, Reading Maturity, and SourceRater. (See the Supplement to the Appendix for more information: [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813\\_Appendix\\_A\\_New\\_Research\\_on\\_Text\\_Complexity.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf))

**Reader and Task considerations** turns from a strict observation of the text to considering your lesson plan, your purposes for this text and the needs of the student. Quoting the Appendix A, "Such assessments are best made by teachers employing their professional judgment, experience and knowledge of their students and the subject."

Example: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

*The Grapes of Wrath* is usually taught in high school because of the demands of the story, understanding the time period and the difficult choices made by the story's characters. However, the text itself is only a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level. Qualitative measures put it in the high school curriculum, while quantitative measure put it in the elementary curriculum. The deciding factor would be the Reader and Task considerations. A lesson teaching dialogue for 4<sup>th</sup> grade could draw excerpts from *The Grapes of Wrath*; however a comprehensive study of the plot, character and themes of the story is best done in high school.

## Using the Evaluate Texts for CCSS Tool

1. Determine the quantitative level of the text.
2. Evaluate the text for qualitative features
3. Consider how well this text is suited to your lesson plan, purposes for the text and your students.
4. Decide if the text meets the needs of this lesson and the needs of your overall curriculum. Write a justification for using this text, if needed.

The CCSS gives equal weight to these three criteria as you decide which text to use. However, overall, over the course of a semester or year, the CCSS requires you to raise the level of text complexity to encourage students to read at more sophisticated levels. It's a balance between individual texts, where you consider each by looking at the three measures, and the overall curriculum, where you should increase overall text complexity and the amount of nonfiction read. See Appendix A for full discussion.

# FAQ: Evaluating Texts for Common Core

## **Is there a list of required reading texts or books for the Common Core State Standards?**

No. There are Exemplar Texts, which are examples of texts, but they are simply examples.

## **But I keep hearing that there are lists.**

Yes, you'll hear that. Many vendors are putting together lists of exemplar books as a convenience for you, if you choose to use them; and each vendor will have a slightly different list. But the texts mentioned in the Common Core Standards are not required, unless your particular school board or administrator makes them mandatory. The books listed in the CCSS are "exemplar texts," or examples of good choices of books.

## **Can I use books that I have already been using?**

Quite probably. The CCSS provides three criteria for deciding on which texts are appropriate for a grade level or learning task: quantitative, qualitative and reader & task. Notice: each criteria is equally weighted. The TOOL lets you look at all three of these criteria at a glance.

## **I thought the Lexile score was the most important element in choosing a text?**

No, quantitative, qualitative and reader& task criteria each receive equal weight.

The Lexile score is just one of the ways to measure reading level under the CCSS; the Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity has aligned six tests of reading complexity and you are free to choose which one you want to use. The standards also emphasize the need to give students more complex reading material, which means rethinking how we use the reading levels. However, the CCSS already realigned the reading scores for you. Merely use their recommended reading ranges for grade levels and you'll be fine.

Notice that these new reading levels will push some texts toward lower grades. However, some texts may be pushed higher or lower by the other considerations. For example, *The Grapes of Wrath* receives a 2-3rd grade reading level on the Lexile scores, but the qualitative and reader & task considerations place it at a high school level.

## **Qualitative considerations? What's that?**

Appendix A of the Common Core Standards lists the qualitative considerations. For a one-page, at-a-glance tool, use the CommonCoreStandards.com tool for evaluating texts. You'll need to consider text structure, levels of meaning or purpose, language conventions and clarity, and knowledge demands.

## **Reader & Task considerations? What's that?**

Appendix A lists the qualitative considerations. For a one-page, at-a-glance tool, use the CommonCoreStandards.com tool for evaluating texts. You should consider whether the reader has high or low interest, whether the reader needs support or scaffolding, whether this is an easy text or a stretch text and whether the task demands an easy or complex text.

This also takes into consideration the purpose of choosing this text. For example, [My Name is Sangoel](#) is a story about an African immigrant. When he begins his new school, he insists that others say his name correctly and that he will not take an American name. You could use this on the first day of kindergarten to introduce students and emphasize the importance of using someone's name correctly; or you read it during a social studies class about Africa or immigration. The reading level and qualitative factors

haven't changed; but the student's required task has changed drastically and this overrides other factors letting you read it to a kindergarten class for one purpose, but a fifth grade class for a different purpose.

**Are you saying that I can choose texts myself?**

Of course. Teachers, please have confidence in your choices! Don't let the CCSS intimidate you or make you question your judgment. You know how to choose texts that work for your students and your subject matter. Overall, you should make two adjustments: more non-fiction and push the complexity levels. But basically, you know how to choose texts. Don't blindly follow a published list of CCSS "approved books." No such list exists. Instead, the CCSS merely recommends texts that are exemplar. Use their recommendations when you want, but make alternate choices when you want.

Or, to cite the source:

*"Such assessments are best made by the teachers employing their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject."*

Common Core State Standards for English, Appendix A, p. 4

**But—I'm not sure I have confidence in my abilities to choose texts for the CCSS.**

What you need is a tool that allows you to evaluate a particular text according the CCSS criteria. That's what our one-page Evaluation Tool does. It puts the decision process into a simple-to-use format. You decide on a text you want to use; you use the Tool to evaluate the book/text according to the CCSS criteria. Later, if there's any question about the book, you can easily justify its use with this Tool.

**Can a book be used at more than one grade level?**

Absolutely. Many books are complex enough to be use for different purposes. You may evaluate a text differently depending on the required tasks. As an example, a picture book biography of Abraham Lincoln could be used in a K-2 classroom just as a great story; but social studies teachers in 4-6 may use the text to introduce this President. The text would be considered more complex for the older grades because the qualitative measures would require more knowledge of content and culture and the reader & task requirements are different.

**Does my lesson plan make a difference?**

Yes. Any particular text might be used in a variety of content units and grade levels. Your lesson plan will determine if a text is appropriate or not under the Reader & Task criteria.

**Is there a place for easy, simple texts?**

Absolutely. Some tasks will demand simplicity. Sometimes, students need to read for fun.

**But I want to use the list of exemplar text given in the CCSS. Can I still do that?**

Yes, it's an option. But you also have flexibility to choose your own texts if you want.

**Wait. If each teacher chooses his/her own reading list, then what happened to the "common" part of the standards?**

The goal of the Common Core State Standards is to produce a high school graduate who is ready for college and/or a career. The CCSS lays out standards for the end product, the high school graduate. But it cannot, nor will it ever be feasible for every classroom of first graders across the nation to read the exact same books. We have a common goal: a high school graduate who can compete in the world's work force or is college-ready. Getting there can be and will be accomplished through a variety of texts.

**Do students ever read for fun under the CCSS?**

It's never mentioned in the CCSS. Reading for pleasure, writing humor or compelling fiction—these tasks never appear in the standards. However, educators know the importance of providing fun reading. Balance the need for more stringent complexity and a student's sense of fun.

**UPDATED IN 2012.**

In August, 2012, CoreStandards.org released a new document, "Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity." (Download here.

[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813\\_Appendix\\_A\\_New\\_Research\\_on\\_Text\\_Complexity.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/E0813_Appendix_A_New_Research_on_Text_Complexity.pdf))

The new research on text complexity centers on two key features, quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative test measure updates, six products were evaluated and aligned with the goals of the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards. The following chart shows the new quantitative measures. It has been placed on the Text Evaluation Tool for your convenience.

**Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures**

Common core band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework	Reading Maturity	SourcerRater
2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.75-5.14	42-54	1.98-5.34	420-820	3.53-6.13	0.05-2.48
4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	740-1010	5.42-7.92	0.84-5.75
6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.51-10.34	925-1185	7.04-9.57	4.11-10.66
9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	1050-1335	8.41-10.81	9.02-13.93
11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	1185-1385	9.57-12.00	12.30-14.50

A second update is the simplified chart for use in evaluating a text's qualitative measures. As in our chart here, the main categories are structure, language clarity and conventions, knowledge demands and levels of meaning/purpose. The new chart just lists these four categories. We saw no reason to change our chart, which provides prompts for each of the criteria under the four main categories. Our chart keeps the specifics within each category and allows you to chart a book for each measure.

## Qualitative dimensions of Text Complexity

Category	Notes & Comments on Text, support for placement in this band	Where to place within band				
		Beg of lower grade	End of lower grade	Beg of upper grade	End of lower grade	Not suitable
Structure (both story structure or form of piece)		_____				
Language clarity and conventions (including vocabulary load)		_____				
Knowledge Demands (life, content, cultural/literary)		_____				
Levels of Meaning/Purpose		_____				
Overall placement	Justification					

Finally, the update acknowledges the teacher’s role in evaluating reader and task and makes no changes in this area.

Overall recommendations include (p. 7-8 of Supplement):

1. It is recommended that quantitative measures be used to locate a text within a grade band because they measure dimensions of text complexity.
2. It is further recommended that qualitative measures be used to then locate a text in a specific grade level.
3. There will be exceptions to using quantitative measure to identify the grade band; sometimes, qualitative considerations will trump quantitative measures in identifying the grade band of a text, particularly with narrative fiction in later grades.
4. Certain measures are less valid or not applicable for certain kinds of texts.

For full details, see the Supplement to Appendix A.

# Common Core Lesson Plans from Darcy Pattison

A school year includes many odd sorts of days.

You unexpectedly finish a unit on Thursday and don't want to start a new one until Monday.

Holidays or special events make regular lessons difficult.

You're sick and need a substitute teacher for a day.

This group of seasonal ELA and writing lessons is designed to fill in those odd days with fun, easy, lessons which require a minimum of preparation and yet still meet the needs of the Common Core State Standards. We suggest activities for each month, but most activities are flexible enough for any season.

## Meets Common Core Curriculum Needs

Each lesson is correlated to appropriate Common Core curriculum maps.

The Common Core State Standards (corestandards.com) include ten anchor standards each for writing and reading and six anchor standards for language. Each ELA activity in this book will list the anchor standards addressed, thus making them flexible enough to fit any grade level.

Each activity is meant to be:

- Flexible
- Fast and easy preparation
- Fun for students
- Aligned to the CCSS
- Correlated to CCSS curriculum maps

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

August 26 National Dog Day (argument)
September 3 Skyscraper Day (informative/expository)
October 2 – Write a Comic Strip (comic strip/narrative)
November 21 – World Hello Day (letter writing/optional argument)
December – Rudolph's Top 5 Writing Tips (narrative)
January- Frosty the Snowman (narrative)
February- Evaluate a Website (argument)
March – Gingerbread Man (folk tale/narrative)
April 5 – National Read a Road Map Day (Reading/Creating maps as informational text)
May 20 – Endangered Species Day (Informative/expository)



**ORDER  
NOW:**  
[Amazon](#)  
[B&N](#)  
[iBookstore](#)