Text Complexity in the ELA CCSS
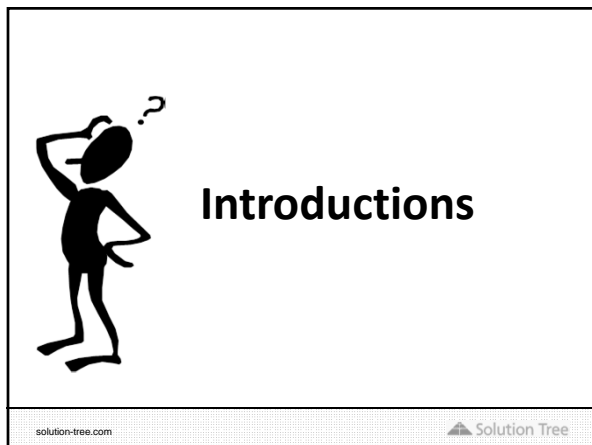
Jeanne M. Spiller
Jspiller@distric96.k12.il.us
Kildeer Countryside CCSD 96

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Introductions

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Today's Focus

- Understand the importance of text complexity in the ELA CCSS.

- Learn how to determine the complexity of a piece of text.

- Learn how to ensure that text complexity is considered in your system.

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Six Major Shifts in the ELA CCSS
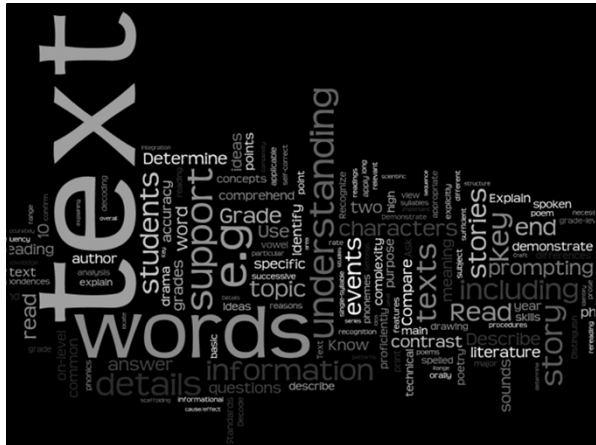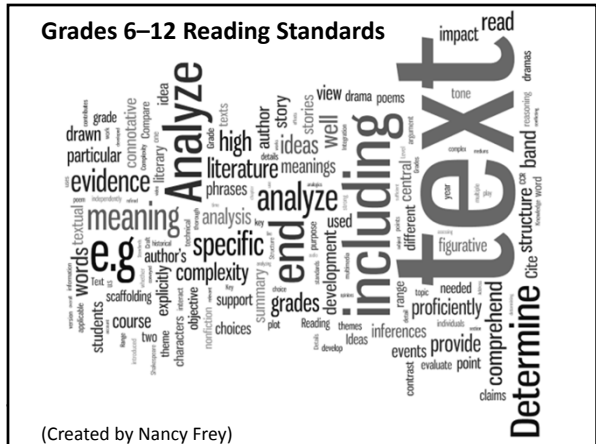### (p. 147)

- Working with a partner, underline or highlight the word **text** or any word that implies **text** wherever you see it above.

- Discuss assumptions and conclusions you can make based on this information. Write three.

Grades 6–12 Reading Standards

(Created by Nancy Frey)

CCSS Text Complexity Expectations

- One key requirement of CCSS for reading is that all students must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school.

- By the time they complete the core, students must be able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers.
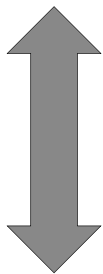
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1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; **cite specific textual evidence** when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence.

Standards 2–9

Standard 10: Read complex texts.

> "Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade 'staircase' of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level."
>
> —CCSS Initiative, 2010, p. 80)

The Progression of Reading Standard 10

Figure 4: The Progression of Reading Standard 10

Grade(s)	Reading Standard 10 (Individual text types omitted)
K	Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
1	With prompting and support, read prose and poetry [informational texts] of appropriate complexity for grade 1.
2	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts] in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
3	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts] at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
4	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts] in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
5	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts] at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
6	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
7	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
8	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] at the high end of the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
9–10	By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature [informational texts, history/social studies texts, science/technical texts] at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Standard-10 Mini-Unpacking
(pp. 148–150)

With a partner:
1. Review standard 10 in grades 3, 8 and 11–12.

2. Circle verbs, underline skills and concepts, and bracket conditions or context.

3. Jot what you notice about each as you unpack.

4. Discuss with another partner team at your table.

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Why Does Text Complexity Matter So Much?

Text complexity is the most important variable in reading comprehension.

Importance of Text Complexity in Reading Achievement

Students who scored 21 out of 36 in reading section of ACT:

"The clearest differentiator in reading between students who are college ready and students who are not is the ability to comprehend complex texts."

—ACT, *Reading Between the Lines* (2006)

Steady or Increasing Complexity of Texts and Tasks

"The difficulty of college textbooks, as measured by Lexile scores, has not decreased in any block of time since 1962; it has, in fact, increased over that period."

—Common Core State Standards for ELA,
Appendix A (2010), p. 2

Steady or Increasing Complexity of Texts and Tasks

"The word difficulty of every scientific journal and magazine from 1930 to 1990 had actually increased, which is important because, as a 2005 College Board study found, college professors assign more readings from periodicals than do high school teachers."

—Common Core State Standards for ELA,
Appendix A (2010), p. 2

K–12 text complexity has declined over the last 50 years, while post K–12 texts have remained constant or increased.

—Common Core State Standards for ELA,
Appendix A (2010), p. 3

**Declining Complexity of Texts
and Lack of Reading Complex Texts
Independently**

"Expository text makes up the vast majority of the required reading in college and the workplace (p. 2)."

"….Students need sustained exposure to expository text to develop important reading strategies (p. 3)."

—Common Core State Standards for ELA,
Appendix A (2010)

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**Too Many Students Reading
at Too Low a Level**

"The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy reported that 14 percent of adults read prose texts at 'below basic' level meaning they could exhibit 'no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills….'"

—Common Core State Standards for ELA,
Appendix A (2010), p. 3

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**2005–2006 Lexile Framework® for Reading Study
Summary of Text Lexile Measures**

Interquartile Ranges Shown (25–75%)

Text Lexile Measure (L)

Categories: High School Literature, College Literature, High School Textbooks, College Textbooks, Military, Personal Use, Entry-Level Occupations, SAT 1, ACT, AP*
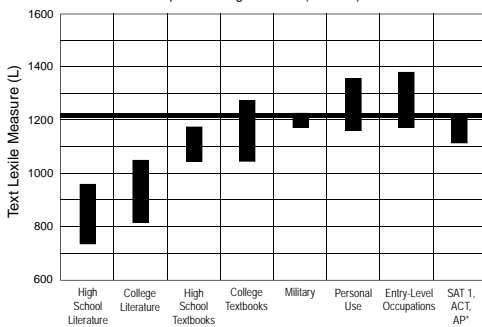
(Source of National Test Data: MetaMetrics)

Lexile Literature

1500:	*On Ancient Medicine*
1400:	*The Scarlet Letter*
1300:	*Brown vs. Board of Education*
1200:	*War and Peace*
1100:	*Pride and Prejudice*
1000:	*Black Beauty*
900:	*Tom Swift in the Land of Wonders*
800:	*The Adventures of Pinocchio*
700:	*Bunnicula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery*
600:	*A Baby Sister for Frances*
500:	*The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth*
400:	*Frog and Toad Are Friends*
300:	*Clifford's Manners*

Personal Use

1360:	Aetna health care discount form
1280:	Medical insurance benefit package
1270:	Application for student loan
1260:	Federal Tax Form W-4
1170:	"Installing Your Child Safety Seat" manual
1150:	"Microsoft Windows User Manual"
1150:	GM Protection Plan contract
1080:	CD-DVD player instructions

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What Makes a Text Complex?

Three-Part Model for Measuring Text Complexity

Text complexity is defined by:

- Quantitative dimensions
- Qualitative dimensions
- Reader and task considerations

Qualitative / Quantitative

Reader and Task

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Appendix A: Text Complexity

Qualitative Dimensions
- Levels of meaning or purpose
- Structure
- Language conventionality and clarity
- Knowledge demands

Quantitative Dimensions
- Word length or frequency
- Sentence length
- Text cohesion
- Lexile

Qualitative / Quantitative

Reader and Task

The Common Core Standards' Model of Text Complexity

Reader and Task
Specific to particular readers or teacher knowledge
- Motivation
- Knowledge
- Experiences

Particular Tasks
- Purpose
- Complexity of assigned task
- Questions posed

Quantitative Measures (p. 153)

Grade band	CCSS 2010	Revised CCSS 2011	ATOS	DRP	FK	SR	RM
K-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2-3	450-790	420-820	2.75-5.14	42-54	1.98-5.34	0.05-2.48	3.53-6.13
4-5	770-980	740-1010	4.97-7.03	52-60	4.51-7.73	0.84-5.75	5.42-7.92
6-8	955-1155	925-1185	7.00-9.98	57-67	6.51-10.34	4.11-10.66	7.04-9.57
9-10	1080-1305	1050-1335	9.67-12.01	62-72	8.32-12.12	9.02-13.93	8.41-10.81
11-CCR	1215-1355	1185-1385	11.20-14.10	67-74	10.34-14.2	12.30-14.50	9.57-12

Lexile: Lexile (MetaMetrics)
ATOS: Accelerated Reader (Renaissance Learning)
DRP: Degrees of Reading Power (Questar)
FK: Fleisch-Kincaid
SR: Source Rater (Educational Testing Service)
RM: Pearson Reading Maturity Metric (Pearson Education)

Quantitative: Lexiles

- Lexile Framework for Reading®, developed by MetaMetrics

- Uses word frequency and sentence length to produce a single measure, called a Lexile, of a text's complexity

- www.lexile.com

Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile Ranges	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K–1	N/A	N/A
2–3	450–725	450–790
4–5	645–845	770–980
6–8	860–1010	955–1155
9–10	960–1115	1080–1305
11–CCR	1070–1220	1215–1355

Qualitative Considerations

Levels of Meaning and Purpose

- Density and complexity

- Figurative language

- Purpose

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Structure

- Genre

- Organization

- Narration

- Text features and graphics

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Structure (Page 153)

Complicated text structures (chronological, problem–solution, cause–effect) will add to a text's complexity level.

Holes, Louis Sachar
Quantitative*: Lexile: 660; DRA: 50; F&P: V
Interest level: Grades 5–8

Qualitative
Structure: Story continuously jumps back and forth among three time periods, settings, and character groups.

Possible Stretch Text: To **challenge** students' reading capacity—stretching them to grow to a higher reading level—teachers might have students read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* **(7.9)**, describing the effects of racism during the slavery period.

Scaffolding needed: Teacher should provide **critical background** knowledge, along with **teacher-directed reading** of the text.

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## Language Conventions

- Standard English and variations

- Register

Language Conventions

Nonstandard English usage:

"Out in the hottest, dustiest part of town is an orphanage run by a female person nasty enough to scare night into day. She goes by the name of Mrs. Sump, though I doubt there ever was a Mr. Sump on accounta she looks like somethin' the cat drug in and the dog wouldn't eat."

(Stanley, 1996, p. 2)
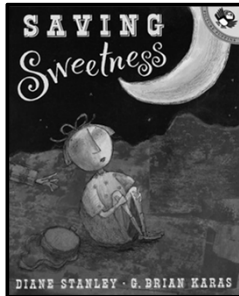
Knowledge Demands

- Background knowledge

- Prior knowledge

- Cultural knowledge

- Vocabulary

Reader and Task Considerations

Educators must employ professional judgment to match texts to particular students and tasks based upon reader motivation, capabilities, interest, knowledge of vocabulary and topic, and experiences.

How to Use Quantitative and Qualitative Together

The standards recommend that multiple **quantitative measures** be used whenever possible and that their results be confirmed or overruled by a **qualitative analysis** of the text in question.

Use both Lexile measure and your purpose when choosing books for your students.

Lexile Level: Appropriate?

Title	Lexile	Grade Equiv.
Sarah Plain and Tall	430 L	High grade 1
Henry and Mudge	460 L	Low grade 2
Clifford's Pals	480L	Low grade 2

Which book is appropriate for a first- or second-grade student?

How do you decide?
- Quantitative dimensions?
- Qualitative dimensions?
- Reader and task?

Practice Assessing a Text

- Work with a partner.

- Use the passage from Aesop's Fables to practice assessing text complexity qualitatively. Use the rubric on page 152.

- Lexile: 370

Text Complexity Expectations– Instruction and Assessment

The following chart provides the F and P level text complexity expectation for District 96 students.

The chart provides the F and P level that will be used for Formative (CFA) and Benchmark Assessments.

Independent Expectations

Grade	Trimester 1			Trimester 2			Trimester 3		
	Aug/Sept FA	October FA	November DBA	Nov./Dec. FA	January FA	Feb. DBA	March FA	April FA	May/June DBA
K	*	*	A/B	A/B	B	B/C	B/C	C	C/D
1	C/D	D/E	E/F	E/F	F	G/H	G/H	H	I/J
2	I	J	J	J/K	K	L	L	L/M	M
3	M	M/N	N	N	N/O	O	O	O/P	P
4	P	P/Q	Q	Q	Q/R	R	R	R/S	S
5	S	S/T	T	T	T/U	U	U	U/V	V

Based on Lexile Stretch Text Measures: Defined in 2010 as related to the common core standards. The demand of text that students should be reading to be college and career ready by the end of Grade 12.

Grade									
6	950		980	980		1010	1010		1040
7	1000		1030	1030		1060	1060		1090
8	1040		1080	1080		1120	1120		1160
9	1080		1130	1130		1180	1180		1230

FA - Formative Assessments (could be Common)   DBA - District Benchmark Assessment at end of Trimester

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Some Closing Thoughts About Text Complexity…

- Instruction must move generally toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence.
- Goal is for students to read independently and proficiently within a given grade-level band by the end of the band's final year.

Turn and Talk

1. Share what is crystal clear about text complexity.

2. Share what you still want to know.

Thank You!

To schedule professional development
at your site, contact
Solution Tree
at **800.733.6786.**

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