

# Text Complexity

## Appropriate Achievement

Students select, at times with assistance, and read independently a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Texts include

- accessible content, based on familiar experiences of home, school, and community
- main ideas/themes that are concrete and easy to understand
- some longer, simple sentences with adjectives, adverbs, and phrases; some compound sentences
- language commonly used by students; many high-frequency words; occasional use of some unfamiliar words or content-specific vocabulary, explained and illustrated in text
- mostly one or two syllable words with a few easily decodable multi-syllable words; some plurals, contractions, and possessives
- illustrations/photographs enhance/match the text but offer minimal word-solving support
- approximately four to eight lines of text per page, with sentences that carry over two or three lines; short sentences may begin mid-line; longer sentences usually start at left margin; large clear font with ample spacing between words and lines; some variation in text layouts

### Fiction (Realistic, Simple Animal Fantasy, Folktales)

Texts are characterized by

- a predictable structure with a clear beginning, a series of events, and an ending
- a straightforward plot with sequential structure, often repetitive
- one-dimensional characters easily defined by actions; some opportunity to make simple inferences to understand thoughts and feelings
- dialogue clearly assigned to a speaker using a variety of verbs (e.g., cried, shouted)
- stories that may move from one time/place (usually no more than two settings)

## Strong Achievement

Students demonstrating strong achievement select and read independently texts as described above, as well as, some texts at a higher level of difficulty. The increase in text complexity is often created by

- the presence of some content beyond the personal experiences of most children
- the inclusion of a greater number of compound and longer simple sentences
- the use of more “story-language” as well as content-specific and multi-syllabic words
- minimal, if any, direct word-solving support from illustrations and photographs, yet their inclusion does enhance the style and mood
- the introduction of early chapter books and more detailed plots in narratives, sometimes requiring the making of more inferences to understand main character’s traits and actions
- more text and more complex layouts (e.g., insets) in nonfiction books as well as the inclusion of features such as table of contents and glossaries to support comprehension

### Nonfiction (Informational)

Texts are characterized by

- one idea or series of related ideas presented through clear structures (e.g., description, compare/contrast, sequence, problem/solution)
- usually one idea/main topic per page
- illustrations and photographs that convey a great deal of information, are clearly separated from print, and are arranged linearly; minimal text is included; understanding of illustrations and photographs is independent of presented text
- some simple graphics, usually only one type per page
- text features such as headings, captions, and labels support main ideas



## Reading Strategies and Behaviours Appropriate Achievement

Students

- monitor reading and self-correct when reading does not make sense, sound right and/or look right; reread to check for meaning (may require occasional prompting)
- use meaning, word structure (plurals, roots and *ing*, *ed*, *s* endings), language structure (e.g., predictable word order and language patterns), and phonics (e.g., initial/final/medial sounds; onsets and rimes; common spelling patterns) to solve simple words; may require occasional prompting
- recognize common high-frequency words and personally significant words
- read familiar texts fluently with expression, attending to punctuation; may hesitate with unfamiliar words
- use ideas in text and prior knowledge/experiences to make obvious predictions about “what will happen next”
- use basic punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks, exclamation marks), and a few simple text features (e.g., title, headings, illustrations) to support comprehension

## Reading Strategies and Behaviours Strong Achievement

Students demonstrating strong achievement apply strategies and exhibit behaviours described as appropriate achievement in an increasingly independent manner, and

- monitor comprehension closely while drawing upon a range of self-correcting strategies when problems occur
- solve a variety of unfamiliar words
- have acquired a sight-word bank of personally significant and content-specific words

# Comprehension Responses

## Appropriate Achievement

Students demonstrating appropriate achievement respond to a variety of comprehension tasks in the manner described below. Students

### Literal Response

Reading  
"the lines"

- respond accurately to most literal questions by identifying specific facts; rely on information located in one place in the text, rather than skimming complete text
- retell narrative text by recounting main events (usually three to four) in sequence, providing general details, and including many story elements (i.e., setting, main characters, problem/solution); verbal prompts or graphic organizers may be used to support/extend retelling
- recount main topic(s) and some related details; verbal prompts or graphic organizers may be used to support/extend recount

### Inferential/Interpretive Response

Reading  
"between the lines"

- make simple inferences about a character (his/her actions or feelings), using concrete examples from the text; may require verbal prompts
- interpret basic relationships among ideas to draw conclusions or make concrete comparisons, with general reference to the text
- use obvious context clues, and background knowledge to understand word meanings
- use text features (e.g., title, headings, photographs, labels, font) to access obvious information

### Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

Reading  
"beyond the lines"

- make personal connections, and relate prior knowledge to text; connections may be obvious
- express preferences for, and simple opinions (e.g., like/dislike) about texts, authors, and illustrators, providing general reasons for their responses
- identify a few simple text forms (e.g., narrative, retell, basic reports) and describe the general purpose of the form

# Comprehension Responses

## Sample Questions/Tasks

The following types of questions/tasks may be used to assess students' comprehension.

## Strong Achievement

### Literal Response

- *Find a part that tells about \_\_\_\_.*
- *What happened at the beginning/middle/end of the story?*
- *Who was in the story? Where did it take place?*
- *What problem did \_\_\_\_ (name of character) have? How did he/she solve it?*
- *What are the most important things to remember about \_\_\_\_ (this book/topic)?*
- *What facts did you learn from this book?*

Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy. They also

- provide complete responses, including more textual details, with minimal prompting

### Inferential/Interpretive Response

- *\_\_\_\_ (name of character) is very happy in this story but it doesn't say that. How can you tell he/she is happy?*
- *After reading this book, why do you think someone might want to be a fireman?*
- *How is being a fireman the same as being a policeman? How are they different?*
- *Tell me what \_\_\_\_ (word from book) means. How did you know?*
- *What does the title tell you about this story?*
- *Look at this photograph. What does it tell you?*
- *Why do you think this (point to word in book) is written in such big, black letters? Is the character speaking in a quiet voice or a loud voice?*

- make greater use of textual details in their responses
- make some inferences that go beyond the obvious

### Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

- *Has anything like this ever happened to you? Could this ever happen to you? Why or why not?*
- *What would you say if you were the character in this book?*
- *What did you already know about \_\_\_\_ (topic)? What did you learn that was new?*
- *Did you like this book? Why or why not?*
- *Show me your favourite picture. Why is it your favourite?*
- *Is this a story or an information book? How can you tell?*
- *Why might someone want to write an information book about \_\_\_\_ (topic)?*

- demonstrate some reflection in the connections they make with texts (i.e., relating text to personal experiences and knowledge, as well as making comparisons with other texts)
- often show defined preferences for an author or genre