**Text Complexity**

**Appropriate Achievement**

Students select and read independently a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Texts include:

- a range of topics beyond personal experiences, often requiring cultural, historical or social perspectives; topics that appeal to preadolescents (e.g., pop culture, growing independence)
- often more challenging/mature themes/ideas (e.g., war, racial barriers) with age-appropriate characters and/or information, requiring the reader to interpret and connect information/ideas with other texts and subject areas
- a variety of complex sentence structures, including complex, compound and long simple sentences; examples of more complicated use of dialogue and variation in order of phrases, subjects, verbs, objects
- challenging language (e.g., new and content-specific vocabulary sometimes supported by context or glossary); figurative (e.g., similes, metaphors), descriptive and connotative language; dialect or languages other than English
- many words with more than three syllables, some of which are difficult to decode
- chapter books with no or few illustrations; illustrations/photographs that represent and extend text in nonfiction
- many lines of print on a page, organized in paragraphs with standard-sized font (some examples of dense print); variation in layout within same text

**Nonfiction (Informational, Biography, Autobiography)**

Texts are characterized by:

- varied structures (short stories, letters) with multiple narrators; longer books which require sustained reading and recall of information
- plots with detailed episodes usually proceeding in time-order (may have foreshadowing); occasional unexpected "twists"; descriptions important to understanding; some obvious symbolism
- main character with some complexity and unpredictability, i.e., "hero" with shades of "good/bad"; factors related to character development that may require inferences; multiple characters revealed through dialogue, actions, thoughts, and/or perspectives of others
- variety of dialogue with use of descriptive language; relationship between characters becoming important to plot and character development; settings described in detail are important to understanding; often beyond personal experience
- several topics and/or explicit ideas/information often linked by categories and presented through clear structures (e.g., description, sequence, compare/contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect – at times combined in same text)
- small pieces of information per section; sections not always clearly identified; paragraphs of varied lengths
- print and illustrations/photographs equal in prominence; print that adds details necessary for interpretation; variety in layout, often not linear
- full-range of graphics, unexplained, supplement text; scales/legends/labels which often require interpretation; varied, and sometimes dense, layout
- additional information conveyed through text features including but not limited to: table of contents, subheadings, index, glossary, captions, sidebars, charts/diagrams, maps and simple keys/legends, and bold type

**Fiction (Realistic, Fantasy, Traditional - including Myths and Legends, Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, Mysteries)**

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**Reading Strategies and Behaviours**

**Appropriate Achievement**

- monitor reading and self-correct; adjust according to form, purpose, and specific text challenges
- use meaning, structure, and visual cues (e.g., word order, roots, affixes, syllables) to solve unknown words; make reasonable attempts at multi-syllabic and content-specific words
- read a wide variety of words with automaticity, including content-specific words
- read familiar passages fluently, with appropriate pacing, phrasing and expression, to convey sense of text to audience; may hesitate occasionally with unfamiliar words
- use context clues, prior knowledge/experiences and knowledge of text forms/features to verify and adjust predictions while reading
- use a wide variety of text features (e.g., headings/subheadings, index, sidebars, charts/diagrams, maps, font) to preview, interpret, and locate information

**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 inclusion of varied content and complex themes requiring understanding of a variety of subject areas and perspectives
- the use of some challenging language that is often not supported by context
- the need to understand the relationship between increasingly complex character development and the overall theme of a narrative
- an increasing use of literary devices such as symbolism
- multiple obstacles and events

**Nonfiction (Informational, Biography, Autobiography)**

Students demonstrating strong achievement apply strategies and exhibit behaviours described at the appropriate level in an increasingly efficient and deliberate manner, and:

- make appropriate choices about how to deal with challenging material
- solve new words independently
- show insight with their questions and predictions, based on subtle interpretations of textual details and knowledge gained from reading texts

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Comprehension Responses

### Appropriate Achievement

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

#### Literal Response

- respond accurately to most literal questions by selecting and locating relevant details, often skimming a large amount of text (i.e., a chapter or an article)
- identify most key story elements (setting, characters, events, problem/resolution, theme/lesson) of a narrative text with some relevant details; begin to explain how events are related to problem or overall theme; graphic organizers may be used
- distinguish between main ideas and supporting details; may use graphic organizers to categorize notes but may omit some information when synthesizing a large amount of text

#### Inferential/Interpretive Response

- make logical inferences about a character (his/her motivations, feelings or personality), and story events, referring to some relevant textual details; describe relationships between characters and effect on plot or overall theme
- interpret relationships among several ideas to draw conclusions (e.g., cause/effect; problem/solution); or make comparisons; support responses with some relevant details
- use context clues, prior knowledge, and reference tools (e.g., dictionary, glossary) to explain the meaning of new vocabulary; provide a reasonable interpretation of more subtle shades of meaning as well as figurative and descriptive language
- interpret text features (e.g., captions, font, diagrams, maps, keys/legends) and demonstrate a general understanding of their purpose; gain literal information accurately but may require prompts when text/graphics not explained in text

#### Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

- make personal connections, relate relevant prior knowledge and make logical text-to-text comparisons; some connections go beyond obvious and can be supported with a reasonable explanation
- explain and support preferences for, and opinions about, a text, authors, and illustrators with some specific details or examples
- recognize some elements of an author’s style/technique (e.g., figurative language, descriptions, dialect) and explain how they help the reader; evaluate author’s effectiveness by providing a relevant personal example or preference
- distinguish between fact and opinion, and identify author’s point of view and use of evidence; suggest an alternative perspective
- identify a variety of text forms (e.g., narrative, report, instructions, explanation, persuasive writing, autobiography), including key characteristics (e.g., compare/contrast), and a form’s purpose

### Strong Achievement

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

- reread and skim large amounts of information for details and distinguish important from unimportant information
- present information gathered from nonfiction texts in appropriate categories and organized notes

#### Literal Response

- Skim this part to find ___ (information/topic) and tell me about it.
- Summarize, or give me the “gist” of this story.
- Why is ___ (event/action of character) important to the story?
- What message do you think the author is trying to give to the reader?
- What were the main ideas in this book? What did you find out about each of the main ideas?

#### Inferential/Interpretive Response

- Do you think this character’s actions and words show how he is really feeling? What information in the book makes you think that way?
- Describe ___ (character) at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story. What caused this change?
- After reading this book, what do you think about ___ (topic)? What evidence in the book helped you make that decision?
- How would the story be different if the character had ___ (e.g., acted in a certain way)?
- What does this word mean? What helped you figure that out?
- What does this expression mean?
- Show me how you used this key to understand the map.
- Look at this photograph and caption. What details do you learn that aren’t in the words of the text?

#### Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

- Which character is most like you? How?
- How would you have solved the problem?
- What did you already know about this topic? What questions do you still have?
- If you were going to recommend this book to someone, who would you choose? Why?
- Does the author keep you interested in this story? How?
- What does the author do in this book to make the information easier to understand?
- What does the author do to help you picture this character?
- Do you agree with the author’s opinion? Why or why not?
- This problem is described by ___ (e.g., the students). What do you think the ___ (e.g., principal) would say about the issue?
- What do you notice about how this report is organized? How does that help you?