Text Complexity

Students select and read independently a variety of literary and information texts. Texts include

- a wide range of genres; some texts (hybrids) combine genres; longer texts, beyond personal experiences, often requiring cultural, historical or social perspectives
- multidimensional mature/challenging themes/ideas (e.g., human problems: abuse, war, hardship, poverty, racism) that cultivate social awareness and provide insight into the struggles of humanity; age-appropriate characters/information requiring the reader to interpret and connect information/ideas with other texts and subject areas; sometimes themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- many complex sentence structures (including sentences greater than 30 words); large amounts of description containing information vital to the understanding of the text; more complicated use of dialogue; wide range of declarative, imperative and interrogative sentences; embedded phrases/clauses
- challenging language (need context, glossary/dictionary); wide range of literary devices (e.g., figurative language, symbolism, flashbacks, flash forward, time lapses, stories within stories); dialects (regional/historical), some words from other languages, archaic words
- many long multi-syllable words (require knowledge of root words/affixes), complex plurals/spelling patterns, many nouns/technical words that are difficult to decode
- variety of challenging illustrations/photographs/complex graphics that match/extend meaning/extend text; much literary text with no or few illustrations
- many lines of print on a page; variation in layout/print styles/font within the same text (some examples of dense print); wide range of punctuation; may feature readers’ tools (e.g., glossary, pronunciation guide)

Note: Text complexity is not defined as appropriate or strong. The wide range of unfamiliar content at this level ensures sufficient challenges for all readers

Literary (Realistic/Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Myths, Legends, Poetry, Science Fiction, Mysteries, Satire, Hybrids)

Texts characterized by
- varied structures (e.g., short stories, plays) with multiple narrators, some longer books requiring sustained reading and recall of information; some collections with interrelated themes
- plots with detailed episodes/subplots/multiple story lines; occasional unexpected twists
- main characters display complexity and unpredictability, i.e. “hero” with shades of good and bad; factors that relate to character development that require inferences; multiple characters revealed through dialogue, actions, thoughts and/or perceptions of others
- some unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred; many lines of descriptive language vital to understanding setting, characters, theme, imagery, symbolism, figurative language

Information (Content Subject Textbooks, Reports, Directions, Biography, Memoir Autobiography, Ads, Hybrids)

Texts characterized by
- heavy content load requiring readers to synthesize information
- topics/explicit ideas/information linked by categories and presented through clear structures (e.g., description, sequence, compare/contrast, problem/solution, cause/ effect) - at times combined in same text
- variety of formats (paragraphs, columns, boxes, legends, question/answer)
- wide variety of graphics, some dense and challenging, support text; some complicated layouts
- information conveyed through text features (e.g., table of contents, index, glossary, subheadings, captions, sidebars, cutaways, charts, diagrams, maps, keys/legends, bold type)

Note: Information complexity is not defined as appropriate or strong. The wide range of unfamiliar content at this level ensures sufficient challenges for all readers

Reading Strategies and Behaviours

Appropriate Achievement

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

- check closely for understanding; adjust and use a wide variety of strategies (e.g., generate questions, make connections, organize significant information in notes or with graphic organizers)
- quickly solve unfamiliar words using a variety of cues (e.g., dividing words into syllables, using root words/origins to gain meaning; using background knowledge and context clues); use references to find the meanings of unknown/technical words
- automatically read and understand most words in range of contexts (e.g., subject-specific terminology; vocabulary from oral language)
- read appropriate-level texts with expression and confidence; adjust rates to match form and purpose; use appropriate phrasing, pausing and intonation
- use context clues, prior knowledge/experience, and knowledge of text forms/features to verify and adjust predictions while reading; inquire/conduct research when content exceeds knowledge/experience
- use text features (e.g., table of contents, glossary, captions, headings/subheadings, index, sidebars, charts/diagrams, maps, font) to preview, interpret, and locate information
- reflect on reading processes and strategies to ensure deeper understanding of content

Reading Strategies and Behaviours

Strong Achievement

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

- show insight with their questions and predictions, based on interpretations of subtle textual details
- recognize subtle biases
- make sophisticated text-to-text and text-to-world connections based on extensive knowledge gained through broader reading experiences
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; skim large amount of text in search of information, locate literal information from a variety of texts
- identify key story elements (setting, characters, events, problem/resolution, theme/lesson) of a narrative text; explain how events are related to the theme; graphic organizers (e.g., timelines, story maps) may be used
- distinguish between main ideas and supporting details; concisely summarize key information; graphic organizers (e.g., timelines, charts, webs) may be used

**Inferential/Interpretive Response**

- make logical inferences about multiple complex characters (i.e., motivations, traits, feelings, personality) and story events, referring to relevant textual details; describe relationships among characters and effect on plot or overall theme
- interpret relationships among ideas to draw conclusions (e.g., plot, sequence, cause/effect, problem/solution) or make comparisons; support responses with relevant details
- use context clues, prior knowledge, and reference tools (e.g., dictionary, glossary) to explain the meaning of new vocabulary/technical terms; interpret subtle shades of meaning, and figurative and descriptive language; interpret symbols (objects, events, motifs) used by author to convey meaning
- interpret/use text features to understand the text (headings and subheadings, cutaways, legends, diagrams, maps, graphs, glossaries, captions, charts, feature boxes, sidebars), make general inferences using this information

**Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response**

- make personal connections; compare/contrast with personal experiences/relevant prior knowledge; make logical text-to-text, text-to-world comparisons; connect characters within and across texts/genres by circumstances, traits, or actions
- make connections between the social/moral issues of the present and those presented in realistic/historical fiction, biographies, and other genres
- express and support personal reactions, preferences for, and opinions about, particular texts, authors, illustrators, and genres, using specific details/examples
- explain how the different elements of author’s style/technique (e.g., dialect, descriptions, figurative language, flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism) create meaning and reaction; evaluate author’s effectiveness by providing relevant examples
- respond critically to text; recognize language used to manipulate, persuade, or control; detect prejudice, stereotyping and bias; propose alternative perspectives
- evaluate purpose, structure, and characteristics of a variety of text forms (e.g., short story, ballad, report, explanation, persuasion, autobiography science fiction, fantasy); explain how they contribute to understanding the text

Sample Questions/Tasks

- What new information did you learn from reading and viewing this selection?
- Summarize what you have found so far. What key words did you note to help you remember?
- Where would you begin to construct a timeline to plot the events in this autobiography?
- Why is ___ (event/ action of character) important to the story?
- What were the key ideas in the information you read/viewed? Why did you identify them as important?
- Provide the “gist” of this article in twenty words or less.

Strong Achievement

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

- read large amounts of text and distinguish between important and unimportant details
- organize and present information gathered from a wide variety of texts

**Literal Response**

- describe ___ (character) at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story. What caused this change?
- In what ways did the weaknesses/strengths of the character affect the chain of events in the story? How would the story be different if the character had acted differently?
- What is the theme or message of this selection? What do you think the author/poet wants you to think about and remember?
- What does this word mean? What helped you figure that out?
- Explain and give an example of how the author/poet used metaphor/simile/irony/personification/onomatopoeia.
- Show me how you used this key to understand the map. What information do you learn that adds to the words of the text?
- How do the text features (e.g., headings, charts, questions…) help you understand what you have read?

**Inferential/Interpretive Response**

- provide thoughtful inferences supported by specific and relevant examples and by personal knowledge and experience

**Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response**

- synthesize knowledge/experience gained through reading extensively to make insightful and sometimes sophisticated connections

- Which character is most like you? How?
- How would you have solved the problem?
- Tell me about your favourite genre. What is it about the genre that engages you?
- Does the author keep you interested in this selection? How?
- What does the author do to help you picture this character?
- The problem is described by ___. What do you think ___ would say about it?
- Whose viewpoint is presented? What, if any, opposing viewpoints are presented? Whose viewpoint is missing? Describe the biases and assumptions presented in this selection. Whose interests are served?
- What are some examples of how the author used persuasive language in this piece?
- What are some similarities and differences between one form/genre and another? (e.g., myths and legends)