

Gradients in Complexity: Literary Texts

	Simple Texts	Somewhat Complex Texts	Complex Texts	Very Complex Texts
Layout	Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font	May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font	Longer passages of uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller more elaborate font	Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small densely packed print
	Extensive illustrations that directly support and help interpret the written text	A range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	A few illustrations that support the text	Minimal illustrations that support the text
	Supportive signposting and enhancements	Reduced signposting and enhancements	Minimal signposting and/or enhancements	Integrated signposting conforming to literary devices. No enhancements
Purpose and Meaning	Purpose usually stated explicitly in the title or in the beginning of the text	Purpose tends to be revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety	Purpose is implicit and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	Purpose implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text
	One level of meaning	More than one level of meaning, with levels clearly distinguished from each other	Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify/separate	Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify/separate and interpret
	Theme is obvious and revealed early in the text	Theme is clear and revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety	Theme may be implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	Theme is implicit or subtle, is often ambiguous, and is revealed over the entirety of the text
Structure	The organization of the text is clear, chronological and/or easy to predict	The organization of the text may have additional characters, two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict	The organization of the text may include, subplots, time shifts and more complex characters	The organization of the text is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail
	Connections among events or ideas are explicit and clear.	Connections among events or ideas are sometimes implicit or subtle.	Connections among events or ideas are often implicit or subtle	Connections among events or ideas are implicit or subtle throughout the text.
	One text type is evident	May include different text types	May include different text types of varying complexity	May include sustained complex text types and hybrid or non-linear texts
Language Features	Mainly simple sentences	Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions	Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses	Many complex sentences, often containing intricate detail or concepts
	Simple, literal language	Mainly literal, common language	Some figurative or literary language	Much figurative or literary language such as metaphor, analogy, and connotative language
	Vocabulary is mostly familiar	Some unfamiliar vocabulary	Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain specific (content) vocabulary	Includes extensive academic and domain specific (content) vocabulary, and possibly archaic language
Knowledge Demands Fiction	Little assumed personal experience or cultural knowledge	Some assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge	Much assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge	Extensive, demanding, assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge
	Simple ideas	Both simple and more complicated ideas	A range of recognizable ideas and challenging concepts	Many new ideas and/or complex, challenging concepts