

Gradients in Complexity: Informational 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
	Graphics and pictures that directly support and help interpret the written text	Graphs, pictures, tables, charts that directly support the text	Essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, formula (necessary to make meaning of text)	Extensive, intricate, essential integrated tables, charts, formulas necessary to make meaning of text
	Simple indexes, glossaries	Indexes, glossaries, occasional quotes, references	Quotes, concluding appendices, indexes, glossaries, bibliography	Abstracts, footnotes, citations and detailed indexes, appendices, bibliography
	Supportive signposting and enhancements	Reduced signposting and enhancements	Minimal signposting and/or enhancements	Integrated signposting conforming to disciplinary formats. No enhancements
Purpose and Meaning	A single or simple purpose conveying clear or factual information	Purpose involves conveying a range of more detailed information	Purpose includes explaining or interpreting information	Purpose may include examining/evaluating complex, sometimes theoretical and contested information
	Meaning is clear, concrete with a narrow focus	Meaning is more involved with a broader focus	Meaning includes more complex concepts and a higher level of detail	Meaning is intricate, with abstract theoretical elements
Structure	The organization of the text is clear or chronological and/or easy to predict	The organization of the text may include a thesis or reasoned explanation in addition to facts	The organization of the text may contain multiple pathways, more than one thesis and/or several genres	The organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline
	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 mode of communication is evident	May include different modes of communication	Includes smaller sections that utilize different modes of communication of varying complexity	Includes sustained sections that utilize different modes of communication and/or 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 or transition words	Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts
	Simple language style, sometimes with narrative elements	Increased objective style and passive constructions with higher factual content	Objective/passive style with higher conceptual content and increasing nominalization	Specialized disciplinary style with dense conceptual content and high nominalization
	Vocabulary is mostly familiar	Vocabulary includes some unfamiliar, context-dependent words	Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain specific (content) vocabulary	Includes extensive academic and domain specific (content) vocabulary
Knowledge Demands Informational	General topic is familiar, with details known by reader	General topic is familiar, with some details new to reader	General topic is somewhat familiar but with many details unknown to reader	General topic is mostly unfamiliar with most details unknown to reader
	Simple, concrete ideas	Both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas	A range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts	Many new ideas and/or complex, challenging, abstract and theoretical concepts