

Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
Created by:	Ashley Millerd	Event/Date:	TeachFest Summer Academy July 2014
Text and Author	<u>The Outsiders</u> – S.E. Hinton pages 76-78 // “Nothing Gold Can Stay” – Robert Frost (imbedded in text)	Where to Access Text	Novel – check out from school or library Poem – http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/nothing-gold-can-stay
Text Description			
A selection from chapter 5 of <u>The Outsiders</u> . Ponyboy and Johnny, two Greasers, are hiding out in Windrixville, a rural town in Oklahoma, after the murder of Bob, a Soc. Despite the troubles of the previous week and the danger they are in, both boys sit down and enjoy the beauty of the sunrise. Ponyboy remembers the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost and recites it for Johnny in an attempt to put into words what both boys are feeling while watching the sunrise.			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	<u>The Outsiders</u> – 750L “Nothing Gold Can Stay” – no Lexile Grade 8	Text Length	385 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
Text: Themes (what it means to be an “outsider”, being golden – seeing beauty in the world despite the harsh reality of life) are moderately complex with multiple levels of meaning layered within the text. The themes are clear to the reader in this excerpt of <u>The Outsiders</u> , shining a light on the disparities between Ponyboy/Johnny and the rest of the Greasers through their understanding and appreciating of the beauty in the sunrise, as well as in their value in each other’s friendship and companionship. Poem: “Nothing Gold Can Stay” has multiple levels of meaning, as most poems do. The theme/meaning is implicit and ambiguous. At first glance, Frost is speaking directly of nature and how anything beautiful and precious cannot last forever and will eventually fade away. When the layers of the poem are pulled away, one can interpret the metaphors of nature to symbolize childhood innocence, which due to the circumstances leading up to this excerpt, both Johnny and Ponyboy are on the verge of losing forever.		Within the excerpt, the structure of the text is centered around the point of view of our narrator, Ponyboy, as he looks back on the events that have led to him writing his story. Characters are complex with multiple layers which come to light in this excerpt – we see a softer side to Johnny and Ponyboy and come to better understand their connection and friendship through the description of their characters. Hinton uses Ponyboy’s inner monologue to move the plot, as well as dialogue between Ponyboy and Johnny to express meaning and understanding of plot and characters. The poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” is an 8 line poem. Frost uses rhyming couplets and the poem has a rhyme scheme of AABCCDD. It is written in short trimeter.	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
In order to understand the theme and characters, the reader must have prior knowledge of Ponyboy, Johnny, and the Greasers. Prior knowledge and understanding of the plot up to this point is also important as it highlights the potential loss of innocence in the boys as well as gives understanding on why Ponyboy and Johnny are outsiders among their own. Experiences of the		The text itself is fairly contemporary, with few unfamiliar, complex vocabulary words. The writing is conversational and relatively easy to understand. The author uses imagery to paint a picture of the sunrise as seen through Ponyboy’s eyes. The poem is fairly complex. Frost uses many different types of figurative	

narrator are both common and uncommon to students. Many students have not experienced the same hardships as the characters; however they are the same age and can understand some of the common issue a teenager might be dealing with.

In “Nothing Gold Can Stay”, prior knowledge of the biblical story of Eden as presented in the Book of Genesis, as it alludes to Eden sinking to grief.

Knowledge of nature is also needed.

language. The poem uses metaphor and similes of nature as well as nature imagery to showcase the theme of innocence and that nothing precious can last. Alliteration is used several times to put emphasis on particular words and keep the poem flowing (*Her hardest hue to hold...*). Frost uses allusion to connect the fall of Eden from the Bible to the theme (*So Eden sank to grief*). Personification is utilized by referring to nature as a female (*Her early leaf...*), alluding to Mother Nature. Frost also uses many contrasts to show time and progression (*So dawn goes down to day...*).

Potential Reader/Task Challenges

Understanding the meaning of the poem will be difficult for readers. The figurative language and the subtle, implicit meaning of the poem makes understanding more complex. Making the leap from understanding the poem in terms of nature to understanding the poem in terms of human life is a potential challenge. Finding that connection between the poem’s meaning, their lives, and the lives of the characters – showing innocence in their ability to see the beauty in the world – is challenging.

Big Takeaway

In chapter 5 of The Outsiders, Ponyboy recites the Robert Frost poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay”. Frost’s poem speaks of nature’s beauty, the first moments of spring, as being the most valuable and most precious moments, even though they cannot last and will eventually fade. Reading the poem through the lens of human life, the reader understands that the poem’s nature is a metaphor for the innocence of life that one has in the “spring” of childhood. That innocence is “gold” and is the most precious part of life. Through the meaning of the poem, Ponyboy and Johnny’s ability to see the beauty in the sunrise despite the circumstances surrounding their trip to Windrixville and the murder of Bob makes them golden characters – they have not lost their innocence and have not turned hard and cold against the world like the other Greasers.

Vocabulary Analysis Template

	Words that demand less teaching time (i.e. the definition is singular and concrete)	Words that demand more teaching time (i.e. words with multiple meanings and/or that are part of a word family)
Words that can be determined in context	Eluded (Tier 2) Hue (Tier 2)	
Words that cannot be determined in context	Horizon (Tier 2) Subsidies (Tier 2)	Eden (Tier 2)