



Text Complexity Analysis of *The Fun They Had* by Isaac Asimov

Text Type: Science Fiction

Text Description

Set in the future, “The Fun They Had” imagines a world where teachers are machines, students learn in isolation, and physical books no longer exist. The story is constructed of a conversation between its two characters, Margie and Tommy. Margie doesn’t know how things used to be, and Tommy explains to her, sometimes condescendingly, the ways of the past. The story closes with Margie daydreaming about “old schools” when children learned together in physical buildings, revealing the author’s warning about the dangers of relying too heavily on technology.

Recommended Complexity Band Level

Grades 5-6

Quantitative Measure

Quantitative Measure of the Text:	Range:	Associated Band Level:
Lexile: 650L (Grade 5 is 950L-1260L); Flesch Kincaid: 4.2	(Grade 5 is 950L-1260L)	Grades 5-6

Qualitative Measures

Text Structure:

Simple/Moderately Complex) The story’s futuristic setting makes the text moderately complex. It also may be tricky for students to navigate the story’s flashbacks and to follow Margie’s train of thought. Most vocabulary should be accessible to 5th and 6th grade students. The story takes place during one day. It begins with Margie writing in her diary about finding a “real book” with Tommy. The rest of the story contains Margie and Tommy’s earlier conversation, along with Margie’s thoughts, reactions, and reflections. Dialogue makes up a significant portion of the story.

Language Features:

Conventionality is largely explicit with some abstract language or figurative language. Vocabulary and sentence structure are both slightly complex. There are a few words that could be explained/defined prior to reading to support comprehension.

Meaning/Purpose:

(Moderately Complex) More than one level of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety

Big ideas include technology, education, and community. He warns readers about his vision of a future where we’ve come to rely so heavily on technology that it deteriorates personal, human connections.

Knowledge Demands:

Students may benefit from general information about the author’s background and historical relevance of the 1950s.
Review of unfamiliar vocabulary words that can be future supported by using context clues and annotation strategies.



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Considerations for Reader and Task

Possible Major Instructional Areas of Focus (include 3-4 CCS Standards) for this Text:

Even though this story was written in the early 1950s, its themes and ideas around technology are still relevant. This is especially relevant to students effected by the shutdown of schools and the advent of remote learning. After identifying the author's attitude towards these things, allow students to discuss their perspectives on the issues.

Below are factors to consider with respect to the reader and task:

Potential Challenges this Text Poses:

Differentiation/Supports for Students: