

Smarter Balanced Assessment System:  
Connecting the ELA Claims  
to Classroom Instruction  
Grades K-5



Connecticut State Department of Education  
Fall 2014  
Participant Guide



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# Common Core Shifts for English Language Arts/Literacy

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## 1. Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**

Rather than focusing solely on the skills of reading and writing, the Standards highlight the growing complexity of the texts students must read to be ready for the demands of college and careers. The Standards build a staircase of text complexity so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school. Closely related to text complexity—and inextricably connected to reading comprehension—is a focus on academic vocabulary: words that appear in a variety of content areas (such as *ignite* and *commit*).

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## 2. Reading, writing and speaking grounded in **evidence from text**, both literary and informational

The Standards place a premium on students writing to sources, i.e., using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information. Rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge or experience, the Standards expect students to answer questions that depend on their having read the text or texts with care. The Standards also require the cultivation of narrative writing throughout the grades, and in later grades a command of sequence and detail will be essential for effective argumentative and informational writing.

Likewise, the reading standards focus on students' ability to read carefully and grasp information, arguments, ideas and details based on text evidence. Students should be able to answer a range of *text-dependent* questions, questions in which the answers require inferences based on careful attention to the text.

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## 3. **Building knowledge** through **content-rich nonfiction**

Building knowledge through content rich non-fiction plays an essential role in literacy and in the Standards. In K–5, fulfilling the standards requires a 50–50 balance between informational and literary reading. Informational reading primarily includes content rich non-fiction in history/social studies, science and the arts; the K–5 Standards strongly recommend that students build coherent general knowledge both within each year and across years. In 6–12, ELA classes place much greater attention to a specific category of informational text—literary nonfiction—than has been traditional. In grades 6–12, the Standards for literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects ensure that students can independently build knowledge in these disciplines through reading and writing.

To be clear, the Standards do require substantial attention to literature throughout K–12, as half of the required work in K–5 and the core of the work of 6–12 ELA teachers.

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**Smarter Balanced Assessment System: Connecting the ELA Claims to Classroom Instruction Grades K-5**

**Handout 2**

**Activity 1: Picture 1**



**Handout 3**

**Activity 1**

**Close Reading of a Picture**

<b>Details from the Picture</b>	<b>My Initial Impression</b>	<b>Unanswered Questions</b>

Adapted from: *More Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. J. Allen 2008.

**Handout 3**

**Activity 1**

**Close Reading of a Picture**

<b>Details from the Picture</b>	<b>My Initial Impression</b>	<b>Unanswered Questions</b>

Adapted from: *More Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. J. Allen 2008.

Handout 4

## Bringing It Back to the Standards

Anchor Standards	Standards
Reading Standards	
Writing Standards	
Speaking and Listening	
Language Standards	

## Amos & Boris Third Close Read Text-Dependent Questions Graphic Organizer

**Directions:** After rereading the text, write answers to each question below in the “My Response” section. Support each response by recording textual evidence in the “Evidence from the Text” section. After you are given time to talk to a classmate and share ideas, complete the “My Thoughts Now” section based on your conversation.

<b>1. Looking at paragraphs 21-28, how would you describe Boris?</b>	
<b>My Response</b>	<b>Evidence From the Text</b>
<b>My Thoughts Now</b>	

<b>2. What lines in paragraphs 21-22 best shows how Boris feels about Amos?</b>	
<b>My Response</b>	<b>Evidence From the Text</b>
<b>My Thoughts Now</b>	

3. What lines in paragraphs 21-28 best shows how Amos feels about Boris?

My Response	Evidence From the Text
My Thoughts Now	



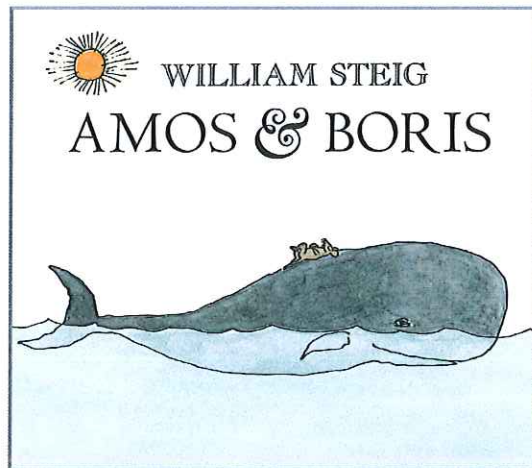
**Amos & Boris Final Close Read**  
**Text-Dependent Questions Graphic Organizer**

**Directions:** After rereading the text, write answers to each question below in the “My Response” section. Support each response by recording textual evidence in the “Evidence from the Text” section. After you are given time to talk to a classmate and share ideas, complete the “My Thoughts Now” section based on your conversation.

1. Using evidence from paragraphs 22 through 27, describe the friendship between Amos and Boris.

My Response	Evidence From the Text

**My Thoughts Now**





## Roscoe and Suryaia



As you read the text and then watch the video, gather evidence on what the animals do, their expressions, gestures, and relationships.

	Article	Video
Roscoe		
Suryia		

4-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-8)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is fully sustained and the focus is clear and maintained throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an effective plot helps to create a sense of unity and completeness</li> <li>• effectively establishes and maintains setting, develops narrator/characters, and maintains point of view*</li> <li>• consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas; strong connection between and among ideas</li> <li>• natural, logical sequence of events from beginning to end</li> <li>• effective opening and closure for audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is adequately sustained, and the focus is adequate and generally maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an evident plot helps to create a sense of unity and completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected</li> <li>• adequately maintains a setting, develops narrator/characters, and/or maintains point of view*</li> <li>• adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>• adequate sequence of events from beginning to end</li> <li>• adequate opening and closure for audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is somewhat sustained and may have an uneven focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there may be an inconsistent plot, and/or flaws may be evident</li> <li>• unevenly or minimally maintains a setting, develops narrator and/or characters, and/or maintains point of view.*</li> <li>• uneven use of appropriate transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>• weak or uneven sequence of events</li> <li>• opening and closure, if present, are weak</li> </ul>	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, may be maintained but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is little or no discernible plot or there may just be a series of events</li> <li>• may be brief or there is little to no attempt to establish a setting, narrator and/or characters, and/or point of view*</li> <li>• few or no appropriate transitional strategies may be evident</li> <li>• little or no organization of an event sequence; frequent extraneous ideas and/or a major drift may be evident</li> <li>• opening and/or closure may be missing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unintelligible</li> <li>• In a language other than English</li> <li>• Off-topic</li> <li>• Copied text</li> <li>• Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\*point of view begins at grade 7

4-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-8)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Development/Elaboration	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides thorough, effective elaboration using relevant details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences, characters, setting and events are clearly developed</li> <li>connections to source materials may enhance the narrative</li> <li>effective use of a variety of narrative techniques that advance the story or illustrate the experience</li> <li>effective use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that clearly advances the purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances the narration</li> </ul>	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides adequate elaboration using details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences, characters, setting, and events are adequately developed</li> <li>connections to source materials may contribute to the narrative</li> <li>adequate use of a variety of narrative techniques that generally advance the story or illustrate the experience</li> <li>adequate use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that generally advances the purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides uneven, cursory elaboration using partial and uneven details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences, characters, setting, and events are unevenly developed</li> <li>connections to source materials may be ineffective, awkward or vague but do not interfere with the narrative</li> <li>narrative techniques are uneven and inconsistent</li> <li>partial or weak use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that may not advance the purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides minimal elaboration using few or no details, dialogue, and/or description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experiences, characters, setting, and events may be vague, lack clarity, or confusing</li> <li>connections to source materials, if evident, may detract from the narrative</li> <li>use of narrative techniques may be minimal, absent, incorrect, or irrelevant</li> <li>may have little or no use of sensory, concrete, or figurative language; language does not advance and may interfere with the purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

2-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-11)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> </ul> <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

Holistic Scoring:

- Variety:** A range of errors includes formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
- Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.
- Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.

4-Point Informative-Explanatory Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained, and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic is clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea of a topic may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>controlling or main idea may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

4-Point Informative-Explanatory Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Evidence/Elaboration	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response clearly and effectively elaborates ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances content</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response adequately elaborates ideas, employing a mix of precise and more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes uneven or limited use of sources, facts, and details. The response elaborates ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary</li> <li>vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the controlling idea and supporting idea(s) that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details. The response is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used</li> <li>minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the controlling idea.

2-Point Informative-Explanatory Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> </ul> <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

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4-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task</li> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety</li> <li>introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the opinion but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task</li> <li>few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>introduction and/or conclusion may be missing</li> <li>frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>



4-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Evidence/Elaboration	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques*</li> <li>vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>effective, appropriate style enhances content</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>generally appropriate style is evident</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details. The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary</li> <li>vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details. The response's expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used</li> <li>minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose</li> <li>little or no evidence of appropriate style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> <li>Off-purpose</li> </ul>

\*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the opinion.

2-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unintelligible</li> <li>In a language other than English</li> <li>Off-topic</li> <li>Copied text</li> </ul> <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

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 connecticut's **re**search engine

## For School Superintendents and Principals

[iCONN.org – Connecticut's re-search engine](http://www.iconn.org) provides all students, teachers and administrators with free online access to a wealth of essential library and information resources from trustworthy sources designed to help students succeed in school. It is freely accessible from every school or library, and from home (access from home requires a public library card). It includes:

- Over 6,600 popular and scholarly magazines and journals across all disciplines:
  - High Schools - <http://www.iconn.org/classicschool>
  - Middle Schools - <http://www.iconn.org/classicmiddleschool>
  - Elementary Schools - <http://www.iconn.org/classicelementary>
- National newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Hartford Courant*
- The Historical Hartford Courant (from its first issue in 1764 to 1922)
- History, Biography and Science Reference Centers
- Connecticut Digital Collections - historical photos, maps, manuscripts, oral histories, etc.
- Downloadable Audiobooks and eBooks
- Statewide Library Catalog - search over 400 library collections in CT

In contrast to free web search engines, iCONN.org is age-appropriate, contains no ads and no viruses, does not track what you search, and many of its articles have Lexile levels for Common Core. While being as easy to use as any commercial search engine, iCONN.org also provides powerful search tools that allow you to refine your search to get right to the results that matter most.

For the most complete information about iCONN.org, visit the [iCONN Dashboard for Educators](#) and be sure to consult your *library media specialists*.

To streamline access to iCONN.org from schools and avoid having to login, please make sure your school's IP address is [registered](#) with iCONN. If your registered IP address has changed, please [update](#) it. Students are encouraged to obtain *public library cards* so that they can access iCONN.org from home.

iCONN.org is a service of the Connecticut State Library and your local library. It is authorized and funded by the State of Connecticut with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It costs the state approximately \$2 million dollars per year to provide this service. If every public, school and academic library had to acquire the same resources individually, the aggregate cost would be over \$35 million per year.

This is a great deal for Connecticut – please share this information with your teachers.

Best regards,

[William Sullivan](#)  
 Administrator

9/25/2014

<http://is.gd/58TU2z>

## Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric

### INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Text Title \_\_\_\_\_

Text Author \_\_\_\_\_

	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
<b>TEXT STRUCTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Organization:</b> Connections between an extensive range of ideas, processes or events are deep, intricate and often ambiguous; organization is intricate or discipline-specific</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Text Features:</b> If used, are essential in understanding content</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, intricate, extensive graphics, tables, charts, etc., are extensive and integral to making meaning of the text; may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Organization:</b> Connections between an expanded range ideas, processes or events are often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways or exhibit some discipline-specific traits</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Text Features:</b> If used, directly enhance the reader's understanding of content</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, graphics, tables, charts, etc. support or are integral to understanding the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Organization:</b> Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential or chronological</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Text Features:</b> If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc. are mostly supplementary to understanding the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Organization:</b> Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is chronological, sequential or easy to predict</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Text Features:</b> If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential to understanding content.</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, graphic, pictures, tables, and charts, etc. are simple and unnecessary to understanding the text but they may support and assist readers in understanding the written text</li> </ul>
<b>LANGUAGE FEATURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Conventionalality:</b> Dense and complex; contains considerable abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Vocabulary:</b> Complex, generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Sentence Structure:</b> Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases and transition words; sentences often contains multiple concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Conventionalality:</b> Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Vocabulary:</b> Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Sentence Structure:</b> Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Conventionalality:</b> Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Vocabulary:</b> Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely overly academic</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Sentence Structure:</b> Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Conventionalality:</b> Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Vocabulary:</b> Contemporary, familiar, conversational language</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Sentence Structure:</b> Mainly simple sentences</li> </ul>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Purpose:</b> Subtle and intricate, difficult to determine; includes many theoretical or abstract elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Purpose:</b> Implicit or subtle but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical or abstract than concrete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Purpose:</b> Implied but easy to identify based upon context or source</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Purpose:</b> Explicitly stated, clear, concrete, narrowly focused</li> </ul>
<b>KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> Relies on extensive levels of discipline-specific or theoretical knowledge; includes a range of challenging abstract concepts</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> Relies on moderate levels of discipline-specific or theoretical knowledge; includes a mix of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> Relies on common practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; includes a mix of simple and more complicated, abstract ideas</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> Few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Subject Matter Knowledge:</b> Relies on everyday, practical knowledge; includes simple, concrete ideas</li> <li><input type="radio"/> <b>Intertextuality:</b> No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.</li> </ul>

**Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric<sup>1</sup>**

**LITERATURE**

Text Title \_\_\_\_\_ Text Author \_\_\_\_\_

	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
<b>TEXT STRUCTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Organization:</b> Is intricate with regard to such elements as point of view, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines and detail</li> <li><b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, illustrations or graphics are essential for understanding the meaning of the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Organization:</b> May include subplots, time shifts and more complex characters</li> <li><b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, illustrations or graphics support or extend the meaning of the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Organization:</b> May have two or more storylines and occasionally be difficult to predict</li> <li><b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, a range of illustrations or graphics support selected parts of the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Organization:</b> Is clear, chronological or easy to predict</li> <li><b>Use of Graphics:</b> If used, either illustrations directly support and assist in interpreting the text or are not necessary to understanding the meaning of the text</li> </ul>
<b>LANGUAGE FEATURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Conventionality:</b> Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language</li> <li><b>Vocabulary:</b> Complex; generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading</li> <li><b>Sentence Structure:</b> Mainly complex sentences with several subordinate clauses or phrases; sentences often contain multiple concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Conventionality:</b> Fairly complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language</li> <li><b>Vocabulary:</b> Fairly complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic</li> <li><b>Sentence Structure:</b> Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Conventionality:</b> Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning</li> <li><b>Vocabulary:</b> Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic</li> <li><b>Sentence Structure:</b> Primarily simple and compound sentences, with some complex constructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Conventionality:</b> Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand</li> <li><b>Vocabulary:</b> Contemporary, familiar, conversational language</li> <li><b>Sentence Structure:</b> Mainly simple sentences</li> </ul>
<b>MEANING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meanings:</b> Multiple competing levels of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meanings:</b> Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meanings:</b> Multiple levels of meaning clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meanings:</b> One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.</li> </ul>
<b>KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Life Experiences:</b> Explores complex, sophisticated or abstract themes; experiences portrayed are distinctly different from the common reader</li> <li><b>Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:</b> Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Life Experiences:</b> Explores themes of varying levels of complexity or abstraction; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers</li> <li><b>Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:</b> Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Life Experiences:</b> Explores several themes; experiences portrayed are common to many readers</li> <li><b>Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:</b> Few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Life Experiences:</b> Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers</li> <li><b>Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:</b> No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies and Science and Technical Subjects (2010).



# Handout 15. Text Complexity Analysis of *Title* by Author

Text Type:

<b>Text Description</b>	<b>Recommended Complexity Band Level</b>

<b>Quantitative Measure</b>	<b>Associated Band Level:</b>
<b>Quantitative Measure of the Text:</b>	<b>Range:</b>

<b>Qualitative Measures</b>
<b>Text Structure:</b>
<b>Language Features:</b>
<b>Meaning/Purpose:</b>
<b>Knowledge Demands:</b>



# Handout 15. Text Complexity Analysis of *Title* by Author

Text Type:

## Considerations for Reader and Task

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

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

**Potential Challenges this Text Poses:**

**Differentiation/Supports for Students:**

Created by \_\_\_\_\_ (name, state, email, date)

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ (name, state, e-mail, date)

## Grades K-5 Additional Resources

### Sources for Texts

#### Kindergarten – 5th Grade

- **National Geographic for Kids**  
<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>  
Aimed at young readers from six years and up who want to find out more about the world around them. The magazine contains a superb blend of photos, fun facts, and articles.
- **Time for Kids**  
<http://www.timeforkids.com/>  
Provides accessible digital texts, including videos of current news in science, sports, entertainment, and world events.
- **Ranger Rick**  
<http://www.nwf.org/kids/ranger-rick.aspx>  
*Ranger Rick* brings kids all the things they most enjoy: close encounters with wild animals, science discoveries to share with friends and use in school assignments, and puzzles, riddles and mazes that stimulate logical thinking.
- **ReadWorks**  
<http://www.readworks.org/>  
ReadWorks provides research-based units, lessons, and authentic, leveled non-fiction and literary passages directly to educators online, for free, to be shared broadly.
- **Newsela**  
<https://newsela.com/>  
Newsela is an innovative way to build reading comprehension with nonfiction that's always relevant: daily news. Updated daily with real-world news from major publications, students can participate in conversation about the most urgent topics of our time, all while becoming stronger readers.
- **Cricket Magazine**  
<http://www.cricketmag.com>  
Cricket publishes high quality fiction - fantasy, historical fiction, myths and legends, humor, adventure, contemporary fiction - and nonfiction stories for kids on culture, history, science, and the arts.
- **Washington Post for Kids**  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/>  
KidsPost features world, science, cultural, and other kinds of news in articles for kids.



## Handout 16

- **America's Library**

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/index.html>

America's Library contains many images of documents, prints, photographs, maps, recordings and other materials from the past. These images represent letters, diaries, records and tapes, films, sheet music, maps, prints, photographs and digital materials. Much of what you see on America's Library will be non-book items, and many of those materials are found only in the collections of the Library of Congress

### Text Dependent Questions

- **Achieve the Core**

<http://achievethecore.org/page/710/text-dependent-question-resources>

On this page teachers can find tools to help write and evaluate text-dependent questions, as well as a link to lesson materials with examples of text-dependent questions included.

- **Connecticut Dream Team 2014 ELA Resources – Close Reading Plans**

[http://ctcorestandards.org/?page\\_id=3708](http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=3708)

The Connecticut Dream Team ELA and content-area literacy teachers created materials built from complex texts and the CT Core Standards with a focus on close reading. Their work includes an analysis of a complex text and a set of text-dependent questions designed to guide students towards a “big takeaway” in the text.

- **Karin Hess Depth of Knowledge**

[http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/M1-Slide\\_22\\_DOK\\_Hess\\_Cognitive\\_Rigor.pdf](http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/M1-Slide_22_DOK_Hess_Cognitive_Rigor.pdf)

### Resources to find Unit & Lesson Plans

- **EngageNY**

[www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org)

EngageNY is dedicated to providing educators with real-time, professional learning tools and resources to provide a college- and career-ready education for all students. Here you can find downloadable curriculum for ELA and Mathematics for Pre-K through twelfth grade. These modules, units, and lessons are provided free for all educators to use and adapt. They are fully aligned with the CCSS and the instructional shifts.

- **Odell Education**

<http://odelleducation.com/literacy-curriculum>

The Developing Core Proficiencies Curriculum is an integrated set of English Language Arts/Literacy units spanning grades 6-12. Funded by the USNY Regents Research Fund, the free

## Handout 16

curriculum comprises a series of four units at each grade level that provide direct instruction on a set of literacy proficiencies at the heart of the Common Core State Standards. Each unit highlights a core literacy proficiency and provides approaches, instructional sequences, handouts, tools and texts for developing independent mastery and creative critical thinking in students. The units build in complexity to support students from reading for key details to writing fully developed arguments from text.

- **Achieve the Core**

<http://achievethecore.org>

This website is full of free content designed to help educators understand and implement the Standards. It includes practical tools designed to help students and teachers see their hard work deliver results. Achievethecore.org was created by Student Achievement Partners in the spirit of collaboration, and provides access to many tools and resources from other aligned organizations and websites.

- **America Achieves**

<http://commoncore.americaachieves.org/>

America Achieves helps communities and states leverage policy, practice and leadership to build high quality educational systems and prepare each young person for success in careers, college, and citizenship. On this site you will find annotated videos of Common Core-aligned instruction, as well as lesson plans and in many cases, student work samples for Math and English Language Arts & Literacy both elementary and secondary levels.

- **Literacy Design Collaborative**

<http://ldc.org/sample-curricula/english-language-arts>

LDC offers a variety of templates that help ELA teachers boost student engagement and master texts at their reading level (and above)! LDC templates "hardwire" Common Core Standards into module design, requiring students to use critical thinking skills to evaluate texts and improve their reading and writing skills. LDC also provides full units of instruction for some of the template tasks. While originally designed for secondary lessons, LDC has now expanded to include elementary examples and tasks. Sign up for LDC CoreTools to access even more curriculum.

## Smarter Balanced

- Smarter Balanced Assessment System

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>

- Smarter Balanced Practice Tests and Training Site

<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/resources/>

## Smarter Balanced Assessment System: Connecting the ELA Claims to Classroom Instruction Grades K-5

### Handout 16

- Smarter Balanced Scoring Guides and Performance Task Writing Rubrics  
<http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/resources/>