

# Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity



Text being measured:

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave, Written by Himself*

Type of Text: Literary X Informational   

## I. Quantitative Measures:

Find the appropriate grade band for the text using the chart below. (If Lexile measures are not available, you may locate the text's Lexile level at: [www.Lexile.com](http://www.Lexile.com) )

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR expectations
K-1	N/A
2-3	420-820
4-5	740-1010
6-8	925-1185
9-10	1050-1335
11-CCR	1185-1385

Text Complexity Grade Band based upon quantitative measures from above: **1080L**

## II. Qualitative Measures:

- A. Read the text or excerpt. Record any ideas, vocabulary, or text characteristics that could make this text difficult to read.

**Language:** juxtaposing literal *bread* with the metaphorical *bread of knowledge*, personifying freedom

**Ideas:** slavery and race, Christianity

- B. Use the *Text Complexity: Qualitative Measures Rubric* that corresponds to the appropriate text type (literary/informational). Check the appropriate boxes that correspond to each qualitative measure category.

- C. Based upon the findings from the rubric, identify the complexity descriptor for each category of qualitative measures and include any notes to extend your thinking.

Qualitative Measures Categories	Complexity Descriptor  (e.g., Very Complex, Complex, Somewhat Complex, Simple)	Notes  Examples: <u>Language</u> : Uses some figurative language (e.g., juxtaposing literal <i>bread</i> with the metaphorical <i>bread of knowledge</i> ). <u>Knowledge Demands</u> : general background knowledge about slavery and race in mid-nineteenth-century America is helpful.
Levels of Meaning/Purpose	<b>Complex</b>	Most obvious aim of the text is to convince readers of the evils of slavery. Also not mentioned in excerpt, for Douglass to assert his own manhood and to create an extended analogy between his own literal rise to freedom and a spiritual awakening.
Structure	<b>Simple</b>	Uses fairly simple, explicit, and conventional story structure, with events largely related chronologically by the narrator recounting his past. There are some philosophical discussions that may, to the reader just looking for a story, seem like digressions.
Language Conventinality and Clarity	<b>Somewhat Complex/Complex</b>	Language is largely clear and meant to be accessible. Some figurative language and literary devices. Also, some now-archaic and unusual words and phrasings (e.g., choice documents)
Knowledge Demands	<b>Somewhat Complex</b>	Moderately sophisticated themes. The experiences of slavery that Douglass describes are outside students' own experiences, but Douglass renders them vivid. General background knowledge about slavery and race in mid-nineteenth-century America is helpful, as is knowledge of Christianity.

**III. Reader-Task Considerations:**

These are to be determined locally with reference to such variables as a student's motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the questions posed.

Participants should engage in deep discussions regarding the specific text and their learners' backgrounds and needs.

**IV. Recommended Placement:**

Based upon the text complexity grade band derived from quantitative measures, information gathered using the qualitative rubric, and any reader-task considerations, recommend a text complexity band for this text.

(Complexity bands: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, **6-8**, 9-10, or 11-12)

RECOMMENDED PLACEMENT: **6-8**