

Measuring Text Complexity

An Engagement Activity

Part 1 Facilitator Notes

Goal:

Participants will use a protocol to determine text complexity grade bands for a selection of common texts.

Session Preparation:

- Participate in initial group discussion activity: [Considering Text Complexity](#) in order to gain background and perspective. **OR**
- Suggested Reading: Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: [Appendix A](#) (pages 2-10)

Distribute to Participants:

- [Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity](#)
- Qualitative Measures Rubrics ([Informational](#) and [Literary](#))
- Text Excerpts: [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), and [Example 3](#)
- [Page 14](#) from Appendix A (**to be distributed at the conclusion of step #3**)

Disclaimer:

Facilitator should explain to participants that the purpose of this work is to gain experience with use of the protocol. Difficulties may arise when using excerpts if a participant has not read the entire text. The process will be most effective and beneficial when participants apply this protocol to texts they use in their own classroom (Part 2).

Directions:

1. All participants should independently read Example 1: Excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath*.
2. In heterogeneous groups of 4 to 6, participants should use the Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity to come to consensus regarding the appropriate grade band. (Approximately 30 minutes)
NOTE: Participants should record the Lexile level for *The Grapes of Wrath* as 680L in the quantitative measures section of the Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity.
3. Encourage small groups to share out their findings with the larger group. (Approximately 20 minutes)
4. Facilitator should then distribute page 14 from Appendix A to participants.
5. All participants should independently read page 14 from Appendix A and then engage in large group discussion regarding the implications of the findings. (Approximately 20 minutes)
6. Participants will choose from the following two texts:
 - *Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet* (informational text) **OR**
 - *A Wrinkle in Time* (literary text)

7. Once participants have grouped themselves accordingly, the facilitator should distribute Example 2: Excerpt from *A Wrinkle in Time* and Example 3: Excerpt from *Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet*.
8. All participants should independently read Example 2 or Example 3.
9. In groups of 4 to 6, participants should use the Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity to come to consensus regarding the appropriate grade band. (Approximately 30 minutes)
NOTE: Participants should record the Lexile level for *A Wrinkle in Time* as 740L or *Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet* as 670L in the quantitative measures section of the Protocol for Measuring Text Complexity.
10. Once groups have finished, the facilitator should inform participants that the CCSS has included *A Wrinkle in Time* as a 6-8 grade band text exemplar and *Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet* as a 4-5 grade band text exemplar. Both are included within [CCSS Appendix B](#).
11. Allow groups 10 minutes to discuss these findings.