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|  | **Simple Texts** | **Somewhat Complex Texts** | **Complex Texts** | **Very Complex Texts** |
| **Layout** | Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font | May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font | Longer passages of uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller of more elaborate font | Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small densely packed print |
| Extensive illustrations that directly support and help interpret the written text | A range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text | A few illustrations that support text | Minimal illustrations that support the text |
| Supportive signposting and enhancements | Reduced signposting and enhancements | Minimal signposting or enhancements | Integrated signposting conforming to literary devices. No enhancements |
| **Purpose and Meaning** | Purpose usually stated explicitly in the title or in the beginning of the text | Purpose tends to be revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety | Purpose is implicit and may be revealed over the entirety of the text | Purpose implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text |
| One level of meaning | More than one level of meaning, with levels clearly distinguished from each other | Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify/separate | Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify/ separate and interpret |
| Theme is obvious and revealed early in the text | Theme is clear and revealed early in the text, but may be conveyed with some subtlety | Theme may be implicit or subtle, is sometimes ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text | Theme is implicit or subtle, is often ambiguous, and is revealed over the entirety of the text |
| **Structure** | The organization of the text is clear, chronological and/or easy to predict | The organization of the text may have additional characters, two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict | The organization of the text may include subplots, time shifts, and more complex characters | The organization of the text is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts multiple characters, storylines and detail |
| Connections between events of ideas are explicit and clear | Connections among events or ideas are sometimes implicit or subtle | Connections among events or ideas are often implicit or subtle | Connections among events or ideas are implicit or subtle throughout the text |
| One text type is evident | Includes different text types | Includes different text types of varying complexity | Includes sustained complex text types and hybrid or non-linear texts |
| **Language Features** | Mainly simple sentences | Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions | Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses | Many complex sentences, often containing intricate detail or concepts |
| Simple, literal language | Mainly literal, common language | Some figurative or literary language | Much figurative or literary language such as metaphor, analogy, and connotative language |
| Vocabulary is mostly familiar | Some unfamiliar vocabulary | Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain-specific (content) vocabulary | Includes extensive academic and domain-specific (content) vocabulary, and possibly archaic language |
| **Background****Knowledge** | Little assumed personal experience or cultural knowledge | Some assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge | Much assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge | Extensive, demanding, assumed personal experience and/or cultural knowledge |
| Simple ideas | Both simple and more complicated ideas | A range of recognizable ideas and challenging concepts | Many new Ideas and/or complex, challenging concepts |

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium*, Content Specifications with Content Mapping for the Summative Assessment of the CCSS for ELA*, DRAFT, September 12, 2011

**Gradients in Complexity: Text Complexity Rubric for LITERARY TEXTS**