



Appendix D

A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts



Text selection is critical to both literacy instruction and student engagement. Traditionally, tools that support text selection have focused on quantitative and qualitative measures only. *Appendix D: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts* is different. It supports a multi-dimensional approach to text selection, and includes considerations that help educators prioritize text complexity, critical literacy and cultural responsiveness.

Appendix D: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts considers four distinct—but interconnected—dimensions of text selection: complexity, diversity and representation, critical literacy, and reader and task.



CONSIDERATION I COMPLEXITY

This section quantitatively and qualitatively evaluates the inherent elements of a text. Quantitative factors refer to word length or frequency, sentence length and text cohesion; these dimensions are measured by computer software. Qualitative factors are measured by an attentive reader, reflect a teacher’s professional judgment, and refer to levels of meaning, purpose, structure, language features (such as conventionality and clarity) and knowledge demands.



CONSIDERATION II DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

This section considers the ways in which the author and characters in a text contribute to the inclusion of diverse voices in the curriculum. Similar to text complexity, diversity and representation are inherent elements of a text.



CONSIDERATION III CRITICAL LITERACY

Critical literacy teaches readers to actively and reflectively engage with texts. Readers use critical literacy skills to interpret messages and challenge the power relationships found within those messages. They are encouraged to question social norms and institutions like family, poverty, education, equity and equality. This section of the tool asks users to determine if a text is a good candidate for critical literacy instruction.



CONSIDERATION IV READER AND TASK CONSIDERATIONS

Culturally responsive text selection includes finding texts that both reflect your students’ identities, experiences and motivations (mirrors) and provide insight into the identities, experiences and motivations of others (windows). This section asks users to consider whether texts act as windows or mirrors and to explicitly name how the text will help meet established learning goals.

Finally, educators decide whether or not to select the text and have a chance to reflect on their rationale.



Title: _____

Author: _____

CONSIDERATION | COMPLEXITY

QUANTITATIVE: Go to <http://www.lexile.com>. Use the Quick Book Search box in the upper right to see if your text already has a Lexile Measure. If not, copy and paste a portion of the text into the Lexile Analyzer.

Lexile Measure	CCSS Grade Band
<input type="radio"/> 420–820L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 2–3
<input type="radio"/> 740–1010L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 4–5
<input type="radio"/> 925–1185L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 6–8
<input type="radio"/> 1050–1335L	<input type="radio"/> Grades 9–10
<input type="radio"/> 1185–1385L	<input type="radio"/> Grade 11–CCR

QUALITATIVE: Consider the four qualitative measures of text complexity—meaning/purpose, structure, language features and knowledge demands—and how they make the text more or less complex. Mark an X on each line to place the text within its grade band for that qualitative measure.

Qualitative Measure	Notes and Comments on Text	Placement Within Band				
		Not suited to band	Beginning of lower grade	End of lower grade	Beginning of higher grade	End of higher grade
Meaning/Purpose		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Structure		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language Features		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge Demands		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Use both the Lexile Measure and the qualitative analysis to adjust the overall placement of the text within its grade band. Summarize your analysis and reasoning.

OVERALL GRADE LEVEL	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS AND REASONING



CONSIDERATION II DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

1. Does the identity or experience of this text's author support the inclusion of diverse voices in the curriculum?

Which voices?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Race | <input type="radio"/> Immigration |
| <input type="radio"/> Ethnicity | <input type="radio"/> Religion |
| <input type="radio"/> Language | <input type="radio"/> Ability |
| <input type="radio"/> Gender | <input type="radio"/> Age |
| <input type="radio"/> LGBT | <input type="radio"/> Place |
| <input type="radio"/> Class | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |

Explain.

2. Do the identity or experiences of this text's characters and/or speakers support the inclusion of diverse voices in the curriculum? Which voices?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Race | <input type="radio"/> Immigration |
| <input type="radio"/> Ethnicity | <input type="radio"/> Religion |
| <input type="radio"/> Language | <input type="radio"/> Ability |
| <input type="radio"/> Gender | <input type="radio"/> Age |
| <input type="radio"/> LGBT | <input type="radio"/> Place |
| <input type="radio"/> Class | <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ |

Explain.

3. Which elements of this text, if any, provide an authentic account or reflection of peoples' lived experiences?

- Setting
- Characters/Speakers
- Events
- Language
- Illustrations

Explain.



4. Do you have any concerns about generalizations, stereotypes or misrepresentations in the text?

Explain.

CONSIDERATION III CRITICAL LITERACY

Gaps and Silences: *Authors intentionally and unintentionally include and exclude information. A gap exists where something is left out of the text for the reader to fill in. A silence occurs when a voice or viewpoint is left out or suppressed.*

1. Are certain people or groups left out or given roles that don't enable them to be heard?

2. What questions does this text not raise?

3. What strengths and weaknesses does this text pose in terms of gaps and silences?

Intertextuality: *Students are exposed to multiple texts at school, at home, in the media and through cultural transmission. Intertextuality refers to the way a text's meaning is shaped by other texts.*

1. What are some examples of similar texts?

2. What are some texts that would pair well with this text?

3. What strengths or weaknesses does this text pose in terms of intertextuality?

Positioning: *The content and characters in a text are framed by the author's attitudes, beliefs and point of view. This is referred to as positioning. Positioning also impacts the way a reader absorbs and interprets a text.*

1. What do I know about the author's attitudes, beliefs or point of view in relation to the topic?



2. How might this impact author and reader positioning?

3. What strengths or weaknesses does this text pose in terms of positioning?

Context: *When a text is read shapes reader response. A reading in 1850 will differ from a reading in 2014. The history of a text, as well as contemporary attitudes and practices, shapes the context.*

1. What is the historical, social or cultural context in which this text was written?

2. How can this text be made relevant to a contemporary context?

3. What strengths or weaknesses does this text pose in terms of context?



CONSIDERATION IV READER AND TASK CONSIDERATIONS

Reader considerations: *Culturally responsive text selection relies on a teacher who knows the reader(s) and considers their experiences, motivations and knowledge. These considerations relate to the discursive background of your readers.*

1. Experience

For whom could this text be a mirror of their identities and experiences?

For whom could this text be a window into the identities and experiences of others?

What strengths or weaknesses does this text pose in terms of windows and mirrors?

2. Motivation

How could this text connect with the interests and concerns of my students?

How could this text motivate my students?

3. Knowledge

To what extent does this text access and build upon the knowledge my students bring with them?

Task considerations: *Perhaps the most important question when selecting a text is “How will it help students learn?” Keep your standards and learning objectives in mind as you select texts.*

1. What is the learning objective?

2. How does this text help meet that objective?

3. What task might I match with this text in order for students to demonstrate mastery of the instructional goals?

4. How will this task work toward the goals of anti-bias education?

- Identity:** Promote a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity.
- Diversity:** Foster intergroup understanding.
- Justice:** Raise awareness of prejudice and injustice.
- Action:** Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice.

Explain how.

5. What supports or differentiation will my students need to succeed in that task using this text?

DECISION WILL I SELECT THIS TEXT?

Yes	No
<p>Why and how will I use this text in instruction?</p>	<p>Why am I choosing not to use this text in instruction?</p>