# Initial Considerations for Complexity and Cultural Relevance

*This tool is intended to support your analysis of anchor texts for both complexity and opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy[1] to determine whether/how to use a text and to prepare for instruction. First, read to yourself the full text you are considering (or the text included in your instructional materials you are required to teach), all the way through.*

| Text: |
|---|

| Key Ideas of this Text: |
|---|
| |

## Move forward with analyzing this text and considering for use with students?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 🚫 | Text contains harmful content, such as stereotypes and/or inaccurate representation. DO NOT USE. |
| | ⚠️ | Text has one or more cautions about the way this content is presented or how this story is told that will take careful teacher planning. MOVE TO ANALYSIS, TENDING CAREFULLY TO PLANNING FOR CAUTIONS THROUGH TASKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. |
| | ✅ | No initial concerns about the way this content is presented or how this story is told; for example, this text is affirming of the characters/topics it portrays. MOVE TO ANALYSIS; USE WITH INTENTIONAL PLANNING. |
| Notes: | | |

## Consider what you bring to this text, what your students could bring, and how you'll prepare for instruction.

| Locating Myself within This Text:<br>Are the identities,[2] ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from my own? | Locating Students within This Text:<br>Are the identities, ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from students? In what ways and for which students? |
|---|---|
| **Research & Reflection:**<br>💬 What do I need to know more about before engaging more deeply with this text?[3] ||

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[1] Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159–165.
[2] In considering identity, you might think about any of the following: ability, age, body type, ethnicity, gender, home language, immigration status, socio-economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. For more, see Let's Talk, Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students, Learning for Justice, p. 6
[3] For example, you may want to learn more about a historical event, a cultural practice that is unfamiliar to you, or accurate pronunciations of proper nouns.

*Now that you have read through the text once, identify 1) potential rationales for using this text with your students and 2) the quantitative level (e.g., Lexile) as an initial gauging of this text's grade-level complexity.*

## Why Read This Text with These Students?

Identify the potential rationales for reading this text by highlighting any of the possible relevant purposes in the table. Add additional rationales as needed. Read more about these three pillars of culturally relevant pedagogy from Gloria-Ladson Billings [here](#).

| Academic Success | Cultural Competence | Critical Consciousness |
|---|---|---|
| Builds academic language | Connects to (some) students' identities or lived experiences | Provides accurate representation |
| Reads text with rich thought and/or ideas | Teaches (some) students about other cultures, identities, or experiences | Connects to current events and/or topics that matter to students |
| Builds knowledge about a topic, perspective, or event | Shows joy, agency, creativity and/or resilience of non-dominant or historically marginalized identities | Explores power, equity, justice, or injustice |
| Connects to content knowledge of a unit of study | Provides opportunity for multilingual learners to leverage their existing language resources and/or vocabulary from content under study | Sparks critical conversation |
| *Other:* | *Other:* | *Other:* |

## Quantitative Level[4]

*Will this text give students the chance to interact with a complex, grade-level text?*

| Grade Band | Lexile Ranges |
|---|---|
| PK–2 Read-Aloud | 420–1010 L |
| 2–3 | 420–820 L |
| 4–5 | 740–1010 L |
| 6–8 | 925–1185 L |
| 9–10 | 1050–1335 L |
| 11–12 | 1185–1385 L |

### Quantitative Measurement & Associated Grade Band:

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|---|
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*Note that in order to fully determine grade-level complexity, **qualitative** demands (meaning/purpose, knowledge, language, structure) must also be considered.*

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### Initial Text Reflections

Based on your initial read, do you see **potential rationales** for reading this text with students? Is this text **within the quantitative grade band**? If not, does it have another relevant purpose for reading with your students?

*Note: Don't reject a text for simply not being within the grade-level quantitative band, but be thoughtful about the purpose for reading. Consider the fact that over the course of a school year, all students should have ample learning opportunities with rich and complex text and language.*

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### Notes for Future Planning

If using this text, what do you want to keep in mind for future text selection?[5] Consider how this text contributes to the [volume of texts students will read](#) with you over the course of the school year.

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[4] A [quantitative tool](#), such as a Lexile level, is one piece of information to gauge a text's overall complexity. This computer-generated numerical value is based on features such as sentence length and vocabulary complexity and is one way of ensuring that your students are regularly interacting with rich reading material. To find a text's Lexile, visit https://hub.lexile.com/find-a-book/search; you may also [paste in portions of a text](#) to get an approximation.

[5] For example, how might you balance the perspectives offered in this text or ensure a variety of identities are represented?