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Evaluating Informational Texts for Complexity Form

Instructions: Select an informational text and analyze it for text complexity using the form provided below. As you think about the text, consider what instructional scaffolds you will need to provide for your students to support their understanding.

Part One: Key Information

Title of Text: **The Life Cycle of a Whale**

Type of Text: Literary Nonfiction   (Expository)   Functional/Procedural   Persuasive/Argumentative

Quantitative Evaluation: Lexile Level **NC 970 L**

Part Two: Rubric for Qualitative Evaluation of Informational Text

Directions: Circle the best description for each text dimension.

Text Dimension	Notes	Easy Text	Grade-Level Text	Challenge or Stretch Text
What Does the Text Say?				
Meaning		(Clear and obvious)	Somewhat complex	Highly abstract
Main Ideas and Details		(Explicitly stated)	Some explicitly stated but some require inference	Most main ideas and details must be inferred
How Does the Text Work?				
Organization		(Single, clear text structure)	Multiple structures; may be discipline-specific, with a single thesis	Intricate with multiple structures, multiple theses, sophisticated organization
Visual Supports and Layout		(Text placement is consistent with readable font, simple charts, tables, etc., with easy-to-understand headings)	Text placement includes columns, medium font size, text interrupted with visuals, complex charts, tables, etc., and headings and subheadings requiring interpretation	Inconsistent text placement, small font size, with intricate charts, tables, etc., and headings and subheadings requiring inference and synthesis

(continued)

Text Dimension	Notes	Easy Text	Grade-Level Text	Challenge or Stretch Text
Relationships among Ideas		Clear and explicitly stated	Implicit and/or subtle	Intricate, deep, and subtle
Vocabulary	Some scientific terms and vocabulary words are unfamiliar	Some subject-specific vocabulary; many familiar terms supported by context clues	Subject-specific vocabulary with many unfamiliar terms with limited support from context clues	Highly academic subject-specific, demanding vocabulary that is context dependent
Author's Purpose		Simple, clear, concrete, and obvious	Subtle or abstract; requires interpretation	Very abstract; must be inferred

What Does the Text Mean?

Text Dimension	Notes	Easy Text	Grade-Level Text	Challenge or Stretch Text
Author's Tone and Style		Style is conversational with narrative elements	Style is objective, with passive constructions and compound sentences and a formal tone	Style is specific to a discipline, with dense concepts and complex sentences with an extremely formal tone
Theme		Obvious and clearly stated	Is not obvious, but easily inferred	Requires inference based on careful reading
Point of View		Clearly stated in the text	Easily inferred by the reader	Requires careful reading to infer
Uses of Language		Common, explicitly disciplinary language that can be literally interpreted	Less familiar disciplinary language with explanations that support interpretation of meaning	Highly sophisticated disciplinary language that does not include supports for interpretation
Knowledge Demands	Although students are familiar with the subject (whales)	Content addresses common information familiar to students	Content requires some background knowledge that may be unfamiliar to students	Content is highly technical, requiring deep background knowledge about specific information

Some areas of the text use scientific terminology that students will be unfamiliar with

Part Three: Reader/Task Evaluation Checklist

Directions: Check those items that represent areas of challenge for your students.

Reading/Cognitive Skills

☐ Do my students have the reading/cognitive skills to comprehend this text at the literal level? At deeper levels of meaning?

Most of the students will be able to comprehend the text. Accommodations, like preteaching vocabulary words & explanation of scientific terms, will be made for those who need assistance.

Background Knowledge

☐ Do my students have the background knowledge, genre knowledge, and academic vocabulary knowledge to understand this text?

Yes, students are familiar with the "Life Cycle" text & the subject matter. but some academic vocabulary will be unfamiliar.

Motivation and Engagement

☐ Will this text be one that motivates my students to read and maintain reading stamina?

This text will motivate students because it's a topic of interest to them, and it's a bit challenging but not enough to overwhelm them.

Reader and Task Concerns

☐ How challenging will this task be for my students?

Students will be able to complete the task with support if needed.

☐ Have I matched the task to the text? In other words, if the task is challenging, have I used an easier text? If the task is easier, have I used a challenging text?

Yes