

Text Complexity

Students select and read independently a variety of literary and information texts. Texts include

- a wide range of genres; some texts (hybrids) combine genres; longer texts, beyond personal experiences, often requiring cultural, historical or social perspectives
- multidimensional mature/challenging themes/ideas (e.g., human problems: abuse, war, hardship, poverty, racism) that cultivate social awareness and provide insight into the struggles of humanity; age-appropriate characters/information requiring the reader to interpret and connect information/ideas with other texts and subject areas; sometimes themes that evoke alternative interpretations
- many complex sentence structures (including sentences greater than 30 words); large amounts of description containing information vital to the understanding of the text; more complicated use of dialogue; wide range of declarative, imperative and interrogative sentences; embedded phrases/ clauses
- challenging language (need context, glossary/dictionary); wide range of literary devices (e.g., figurative language, symbolism, flashbacks, flash forward, time lapses, stories within stories); dialects (regional/historical), some words from other languages, archaic words
- many long multi-syllable words (require knowledge of root words/affixes), complex plurals/spelling patterns, many nouns/ technical words that are difficult to decode
- variety of challenging illustrations/photographs/complex graphics that match/add meaning/extend text; much literary text with no or few illustrations
- many lines of print on a page; variation in layout/print styles/font within the same text (some examples of dense print); wide range of punctuation; may feature readers' tools (e.g., glossary, pronunciation guide)

Note: Text complexity is not defined as appropriate or strong. The wide range of unfamiliar content at this level ensures sufficient challenges for all readers

Literary (Realistic/Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Myths, Legends, Poetry, Science Fiction, Mysteries, Satire, Hybrids)

Texts characterized by

- varied structures (e.g., short stories, plays) with multiple narrators, some longer books requiring sustained reading and recall of information; some collections with interrelated themes
- plots with detailed episodes/subplots/multiple story lines; occasional unexpected twists
- main characters display complexity and unpredictability, i.e. "hero" with shades of good and bad; factors that relate to character development that require inferences; multiple characters revealed through dialogue, actions, thoughts and/or perceptions of others
- some unassigned dialogue from which story action must be inferred; many lines of descriptive language vital to understanding setting, characters, theme, imagery, symbolism, figurative language

Information (Content Subject Textbooks, Reports, Directions, Biography, Memoir Autobiography, Ads, Hybrids)

Texts characterized by

- heavy content load requiring readers to synthesize information
- topics/explicit ideas/information linked by categories and presented through clear structures (e.g., description, sequence, compare/contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect) - at times combined in same text
- variety of formats (paragraphs, columns, boxes, legends, question/answer)
- wide variety of graphics, some dense and challenging, support text; some complicated layouts
- information conveyed through text features (e.g., table of contents, index, glossary, subheadings, captions, sidebars, cutaways, charts, diagrams, maps, keys/ legends, bold type)



Reading Achievement Standards End of Grade 8

Reading Strategies and Behaviours *Appropriate Achievement*

Students

- check closely for understanding; adjust and use a wide variety of strategies (e.g., generate questions, make connections, organize significant information in notes or with graphic organizers)
- quickly solve unfamiliar words using a variety of cues (e.g., dividing words into syllables, using root words/ origins to gain meaning; using background knowledge and context cues); use references to find the meanings of unknown/technical words
- automatically read and understand most words in range of contexts (e.g., subject-specific terminology, vocabulary from oral language)
- read appropriate-level texts with expression and confidence; adjust rates to match form and purpose; use appropriate phrasing, pausing and intonation
- use context clues, prior knowledge/experience, and knowledge of text forms/features to verify and adjust predictions while reading; inquire/conduct research when content exceeds knowledge/experience
- use text features (e.g., table of contents, glossary, captions, headings/subheadings, index, sidebars, charts/ diagrams, maps, font) to preview, interpret, and locate information
- reflect on reading processes and strategies to ensure deeper understanding of content

Reading Strategies and Behaviours *Strong Achievement*

Students demonstrating strong achievement apply strategies and exhibit behaviours described at the appropriate level in an increasingly efficient and deliberate manner, and

- show insight with their questions and predictions, based on interpretations of subtle textual details
- recognize subtle biases
- make sophisticated text-to-text and text-to-world connections based on extensive knowledge gained through broader reading experiences



Education, Early
Learning and Culture
English Programs

Comprehension Responses

Appropriate Achievement

Students demonstrating appropriate achievement respond to a variety of comprehension tasks in the manner described below. Students

Literal Response

Reading
“the lines”

- respond accurately to most literal questions; skim large amount of text in search of information, locate literal information from a variety of texts
- identify key story elements (setting, characters, events, problem/resolution, theme/lesson) of a narrative text; explain how events are related to the theme; graphic organizers (e.g., timelines, story maps) may be used
- distinguish between main ideas and supporting details; concisely summarize key information; graphic organizers (e.g., timelines, charts, webs) may be used

Inferential/Interpretive Response

Reading
“between the lines”

- make logical inferences about multiple complex characters (i.e., motivations, traits, feelings, personality) and story events, referring to relevant textual details; describe relationships among characters and effect on plot or overall theme
- interpret relationships among ideas to draw conclusions (e.g., plot, sequence, cause/effect, problem/solution) or make comparisons; support responses with relevant details
- use context clues, prior knowledge, and reference tools (e.g., dictionary, glossary) to explain the meaning of new vocabulary/technical terms; interpret subtle shades of meaning, and figurative and descriptive language; interpret symbols (objects, events, motifs) used by author to convey meaning
- interpret/use text features to understand the text (headings and subheadings, cut-aways, legends, diagrams, maps, graphs, glossaries, captions, charts, feature boxes, sidebars); make general inferences using this information

Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

Reading
“beyond the lines”

- make personal connections; compare/contrast with personal experiences/relevant prior knowledge; make logical text-to-text, text-to-world comparisons; connect characters within and across texts/genres by circumstances, traits, or actions
- make connections between the social/moral issues of the present and those presented in realistic/historical fiction, biographies, and other genres
- express and support personal reactions, preferences for, and opinions about, particular texts, authors, illustrators, and genres using specific details/examples
- explain how the different elements of author’s style/technique (e.g., dialect, descriptions, figurative language, flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism) create meaning and reaction; evaluate author’s effectiveness by providing relevant examples
- respond critically to text; recognize language used to manipulate, persuade, or control; detect prejudice, stereotyping and bias; propose alternative perspectives
- evaluate purpose, structure, and characteristics of a variety of text forms (e.g., short story, ballad, report, explanation, persuasive, autobiography science fiction, fantasy); explain how they contribute to understanding the text

Comprehension Responses

Sample Questions/Tasks

The following types of questions/tasks may be used to assess students’ comprehension.

Strong Achievement

Literal Response

- *What new information did you learn from reading and viewing this selection?*
- *Summarize what you have found so far. What key words did you note to help you remember?*
- *Where would you begin to construct a timeline to plot the events in this autobiography?*
- *Why is ___ (event/action of character) important to the story?*
- *What were the key ideas in the information you read/viewed? Why did you identify them as important?*
- *Provide the “gist” of this article in twenty words or less.*

Students demonstrating strong achievement respond to questions/tasks described at the appropriate level with overall accuracy and precision. They also

- read large amounts of text and distinguish between important and unimportant details
- organize and present information gathered from a wide variety of texts

Inferential/Interpretive Response

- *Describe ___ (character) at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story. What caused this change?*
- *In what ways did the weaknesses/strengths of the character affect the chain of events in the story? How would the story be different if the character had acted differently?*
- *What is the theme or message of this selection? What do you think the author/poet wants you to think about and remember?*
- *What does this word mean? What helped you figure that out?*
- *Explain and give an example of how the author/poet used metaphor/simile/irony/personification/onomatopoeia.*
- *Show me how you used this key to understand the map.*
- *Look at this photograph and caption. What information do you learn that adds to the words of the text?*
- *How do the text features (e.g., headings, charts, questions...) help you understand what you have read?*

- demonstrate a solid understanding of how story events are interrelated
- provide thoughtful inferences supported by specific and relevant examples and by personal knowledge and experience

Personal/Critical/Evaluative Response

- *Which character is most like you? How?*
- *How would you have solved the problem?*
- *Tell me about your favourite genre. What is it about the genre that engages you?*
- *Does the author keep you interested in this selection? How?*
- *What does the author do to help you picture this character?*
- *The problem is described by ___. What do you think ___ would say about it?*
- *Whose viewpoint is presented? What, if any, opposing viewpoints are presented? Whose viewpoint is missing? Describe the biases and assumptions presented in this selection. Whose interests are served?*
- *What are some examples of how the author used persuasive language in this piece?*
- *What are some similarities and differences between one form/genre and another? (e.g., myths and legends)*

- synthesize knowledge/experience gained through reading extensively to make insightful and sometimes sophisticated connections