Assessing Text Complexity Using the Common Core State Standards
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Responsibilities:
• Curriculum Design
• Text Leveling
• Custom Development for District Partners
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Assessing Text Complexity Using the Common Core State Standards

- Introduction to The Common Core and the Issue of Text Complexity
- Using a CCSS-based text complexity system
  - Walk-through: Matching students to appropriately complex text
  - Hands-on practice: Assessing the text complexity of any trade or textbook
Turn to your neighbor…

- Introduce yourself
- Share where your district (school) is with implementation of the Common Core State Standards
More Than Two-Thirds of New Jobs Require Some Postsecondary Education

Share of Jobs, 2000–2010

- Bachelor’s degree: 36%
- Some postsecondary: 31%
- High school diploma: 22%
- No high school diploma: 10%

Beginning in the spring of 2009, Governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia committed to developing a common core of state K-12 English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards.

The **Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI)** is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).
Common Core State Standards:

Who will use them?

- 46 states (92%) have adopted the CCSS to date.

In the States

[Map showing states adopted and not yet adopted]
Common Core State Standards: What Are They?

English Language Arts
1. Reading
   a. Anchor Standards
      i) Reading: Literature
      ii) Reading: Informational Text
   b. Foundational Skills
2. Writing
3. Speaking & Listening
4. Language

Grades 6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects
Common Core State Standards: What Are They?

The CCSS are not just about content – they are a call to shift instruction towards deeper reading, writing, and thinking.

3 Instructional Shifts for ELA

1. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
2. Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
3. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language
Based on 2005 ACT-tested high school graduates, it appears that only about half of our nation’s ACT-tested high school students are ready for college-level reading. What’s worse, more students are on track to being ready for college-level reading in eighth and tenth grade than are actually ready by the time they reach twelfth grade.

“Performance on complex texts is the clearest differentiator in reading between students who are likely to be ready for college and those who are not. And this is true for both genders, all racial/ethnic groups, and all annual family income levels.”

In 2005, only 51% of ACT-tested high school graduates were ready for college-level reading.

In 2012, only 52% were ready.

From: Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading and The Condition of College and Career Readiness 2012
What is Text Complexity & Why Does it Matter?

• The difficulty of college textbooks, as measured by Lexile scores, has only increased since 1962. (Stenner, Koons, & Swartz, in press)

• The difficulty of K-12 texts, by contrast, has significantly decreased in that same period. (Chall, et. al, 1977; Hayes, et. al, 1996)

• The result is a 350 Lexile gap between end of HS texts and college-level texts—a gap that is more than the Lexile difference between grade 4 and grade 8 texts on the NAEP. (Williamson, 2006)
“The Common Core Standards hinge on students encountering appropriately complex texts at each grade level in order to develop the mature language skills and the conceptual knowledge they need for success in school and life” (p. 3).
Turn to your neighbor…

➢ What implications related to Text Complexity are you facing in your school/district?

➢ Discuss a text used by your district (school) to do grade-level ELA/reading instruction.

➢ What level is it?

➢ How do you know?
Text Complexity & the CCSS

CCSS R10
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

*Independently* = 99-100% accuracy  
*Proficiently* = 90% comprehension

Emmett Betts, 1946; Richard Allington, 2011
Successfully implementing standard 10: What we need

A standards-based leveling system for leveling books

The same standards-based leveling system for leveling readers
**Text complexity** is determined by:

1. **Quantitative measures** – readability and other scores of text complexity often measured by computer software.

2. **Qualitative measures** – levels of meaning, structure, language conventionality and clarity, and knowledge demands often best measured by an attentive human reader.

3. **Reader and Task considerations** – background knowledge of reader, motivation, interests, and complexity generated by tasks assigned often best made by educators employing their professional judgment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRLA</th>
<th>Lexile Text Measures®</th>
<th>“Stretch” Lexile Band</th>
<th>Guided Reading (Fountas and Pinnell)</th>
<th>DRA (Joetta Beaver)</th>
<th>Reading Recovery</th>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>2Y (2 Yellow)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>A - B</td>
<td>A - 2</td>
<td>A, B, 1, 2, 3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1B (1 Blue)</td>
<td>200L - 400L</td>
<td>C - I</td>
<td>3 - 16</td>
<td>4 - 16</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1R (1 Red)</td>
<td>300L - 500L</td>
<td>J - M</td>
<td>18 - 28</td>
<td>17 - 20</td>
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<td>2R (2 Red)</td>
<td>450L - 790L</td>
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<td>500L - 700L</td>
<td>N - P</td>
<td>30 - 38</td>
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<td>Bk (Black)</td>
<td>650L - 850L</td>
<td>Q - R</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Or (Orange)</td>
<td>750L - 950L</td>
<td>S - V</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27 - 28</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Pu (Purple)</td>
<td>850L - 1050L</td>
<td>W - Y</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29 - 30</td>
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<td>Br (Bronze)</td>
<td>950L - 1100L</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31 - 44</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
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<td>1050L - 1200L</td>
<td>1080L - 1305L</td>
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<td>9-10</td>
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<td>11-12</td>
<td>Gl (Gold)</td>
<td>1100L - 1300L</td>
<td>1215L - 1355L</td>
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Matching Reader and Text Level
Turn to your neighbor…

➢ How will your understanding of Text Complexity, or determining Text Complexity impact your current practice?

➢ How can you use what you learned today?