

2012 Pearson
National Summit

Best Practices in School Improvement

Looking at Complex Text Through the Lenses of Struggling Readers & English Learners

Elfrieda H. Hiebert,
TextProject, University of California, Santa Cruz

CCSS/ELA Vision

Students who meet the Standards readily undertake the close, attentive, reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature.

They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally.

CCR and Grade-Specific Standards

The K–12 grade-specific standards define end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school.

Standard #10 of the Common Core State Standards: English/Language Arts:

By the time they complete high school, students must be able to read and comprehend independently and proficiently the kinds of complex texts commonly found in college and careers.

What is Not Covered by the Standards*

4. *The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations.*

*A similar statement is made about English Learners.

Focus of Today's Session

1. The whys, hows, and wheres of text complexity

***** MIDDLE PART*****

2. 7 actions that teachers can take to ensure students' capacity with complex text

Why? Assumption 1:

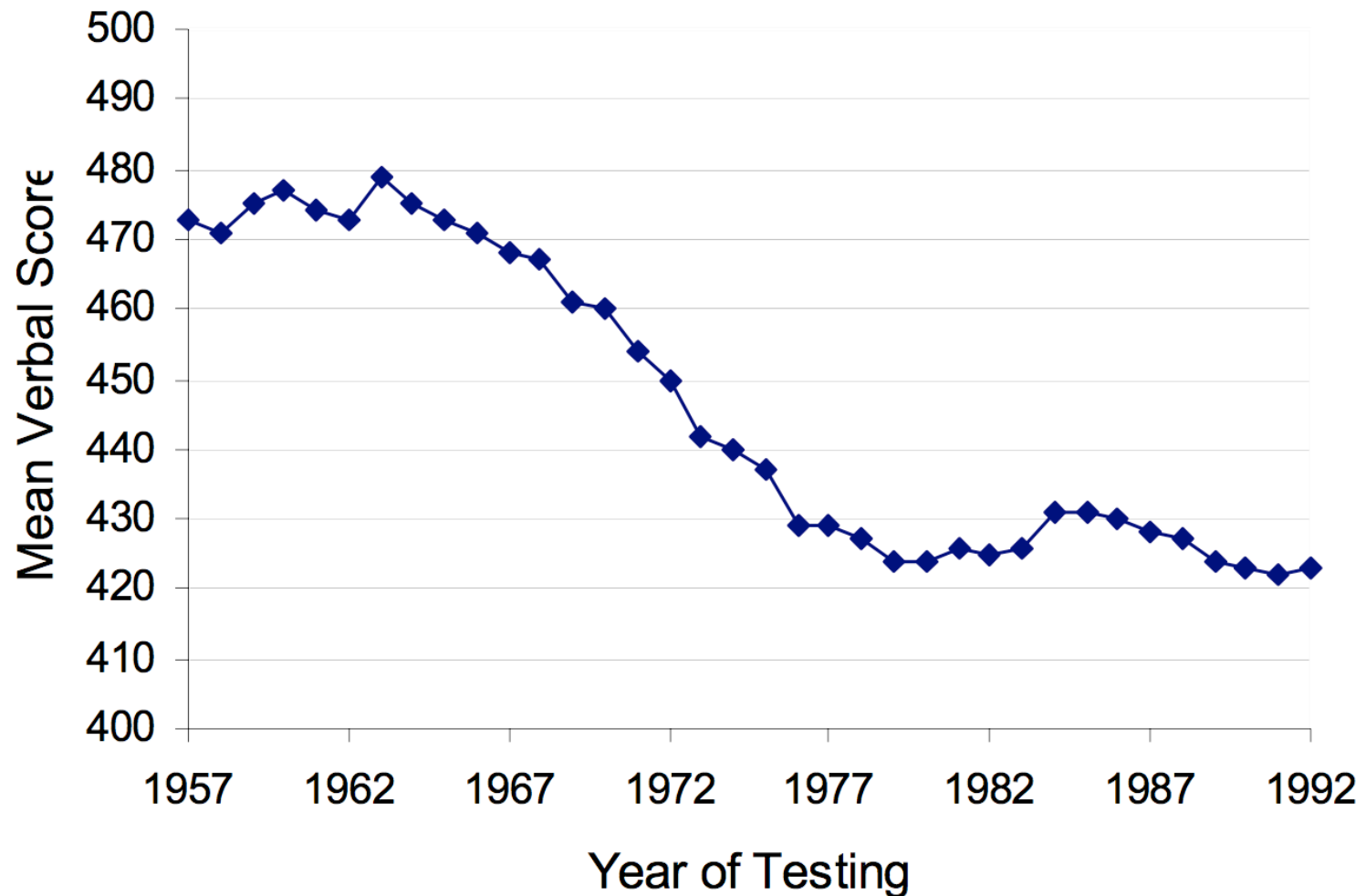
Reading demands have increased in the digital-global age.

Why? Assumption 2:

“K–12 reading texts have actually trended downward in difficulty in the last half century.”

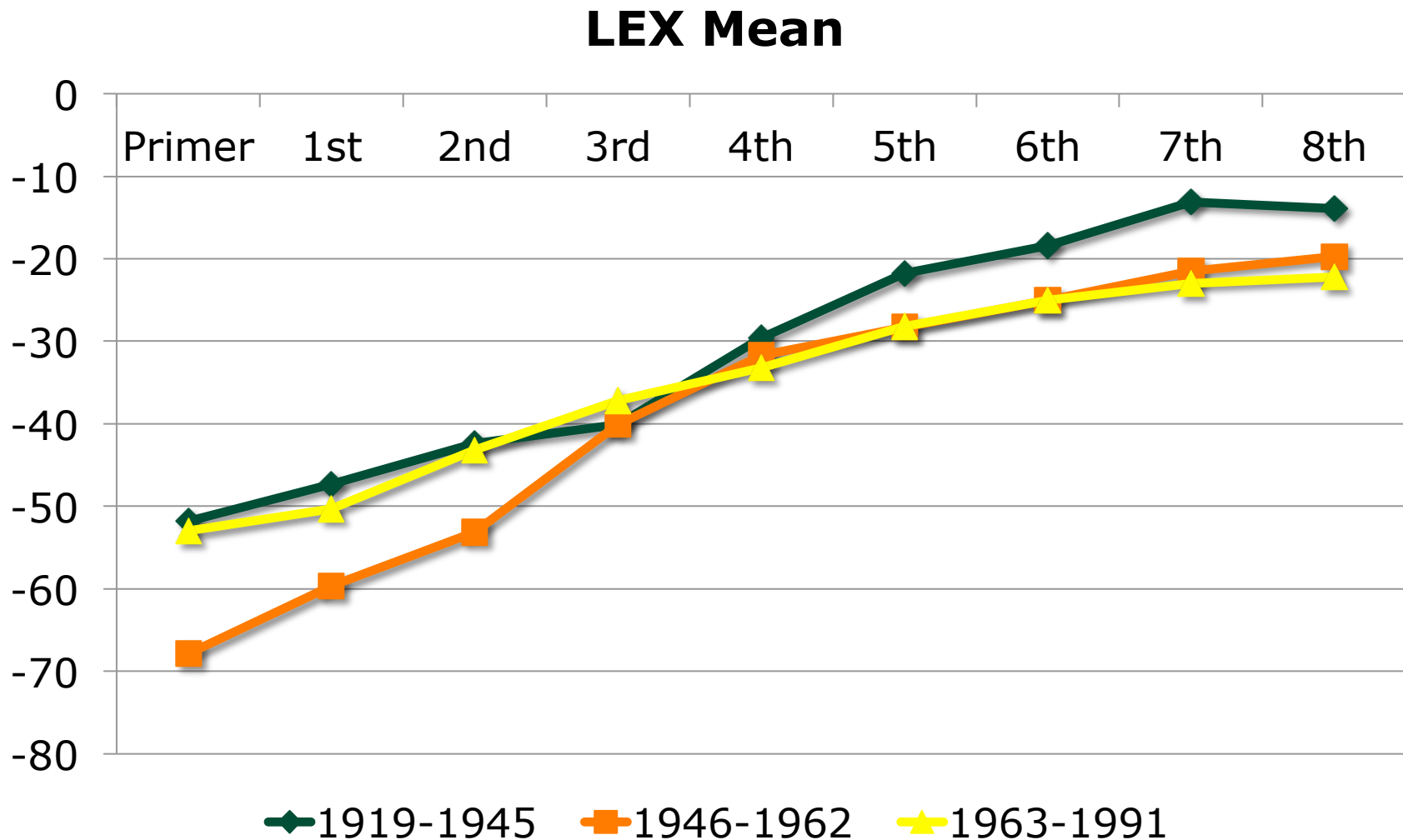
– Common Core State Standards, Appendix A, page 3

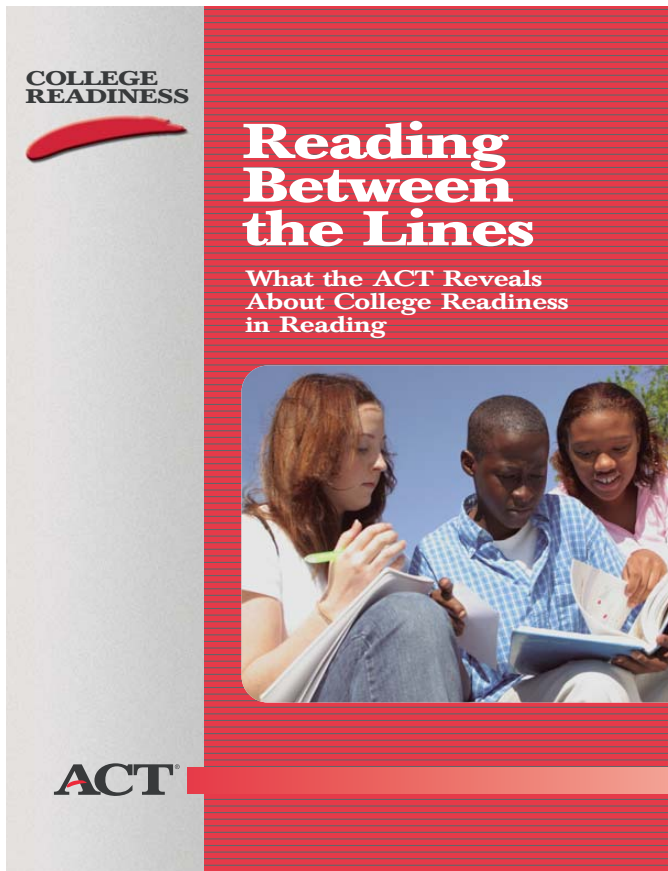
1977: “Dumbing down” of texts & SAT Decline



Chall (1977)

1996: Analysis of Declining Text Difficulty





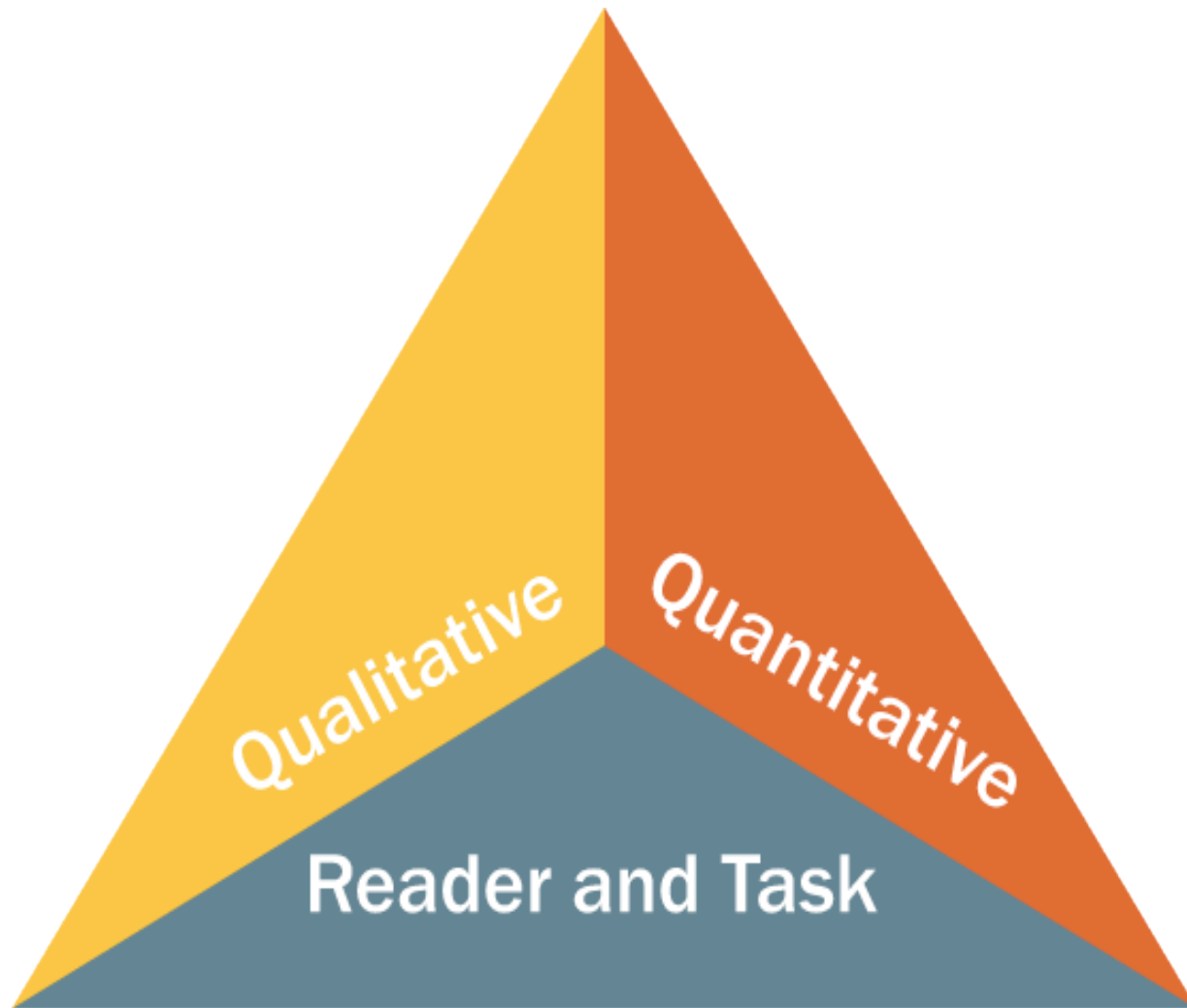
2006: *Reading Between the Lines*

Only 51 percent of 2005 ACT-tested high school graduates are ready for college-level reading—and, 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.

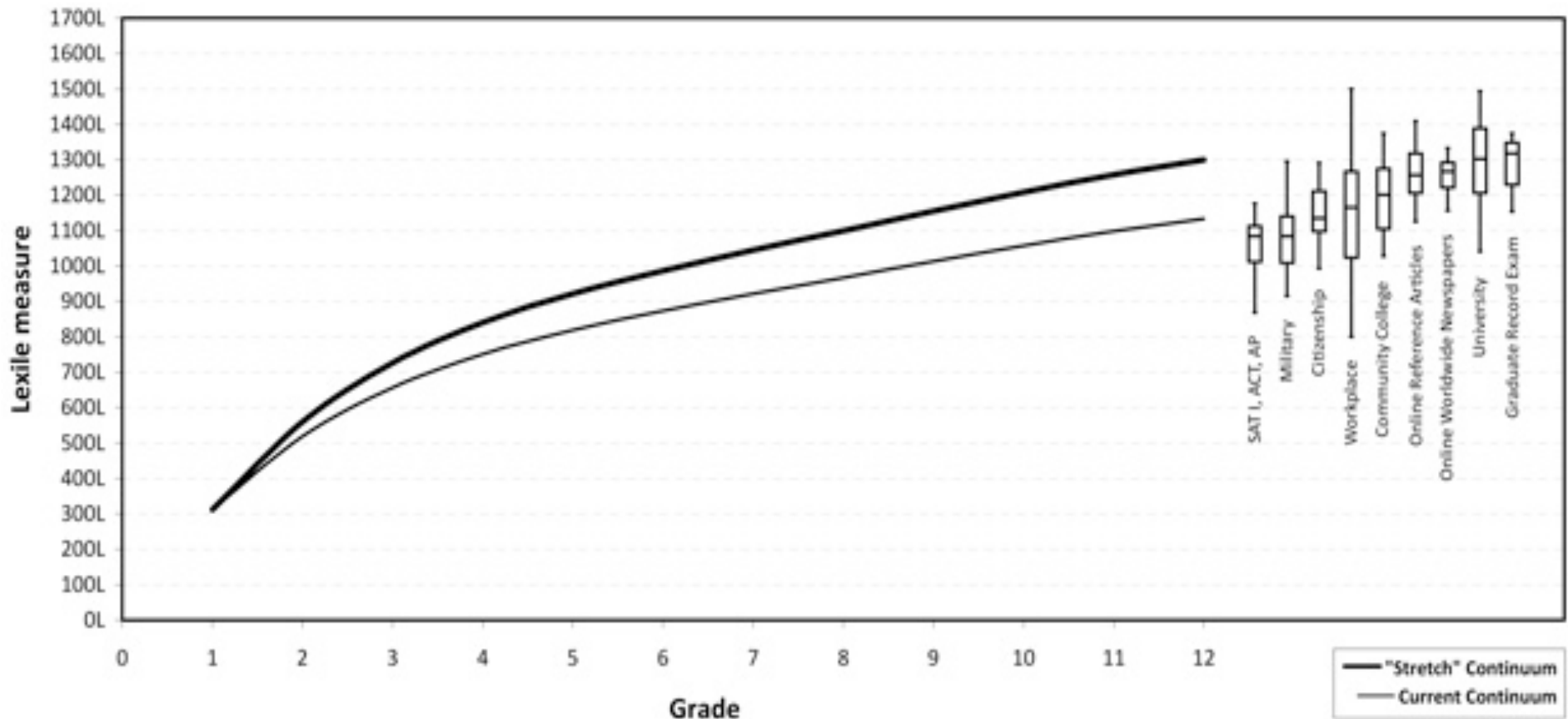
WHAT IS COMPLEX TEXT?

- The complexity of a text is a function of the reader's proficiency. There are complex beginning reading texts, there are complex middle-grade texts, etc.
- Numerous features can make a text complex.
- Typically: Complex texts have complex ideas and, usually, complex ideas are conveyed with rare and infrequent vocabulary.

Text Complexity within the Common Core State Standards: Answer 1



...with an emphasis on Quantitative measurement



Stenner, A. J., Koons, H., & Swartz, C. W. (2010). *Text complexity and developing expertise in reading*. Chapel Hill, NC: MetaMetrics, Inc.

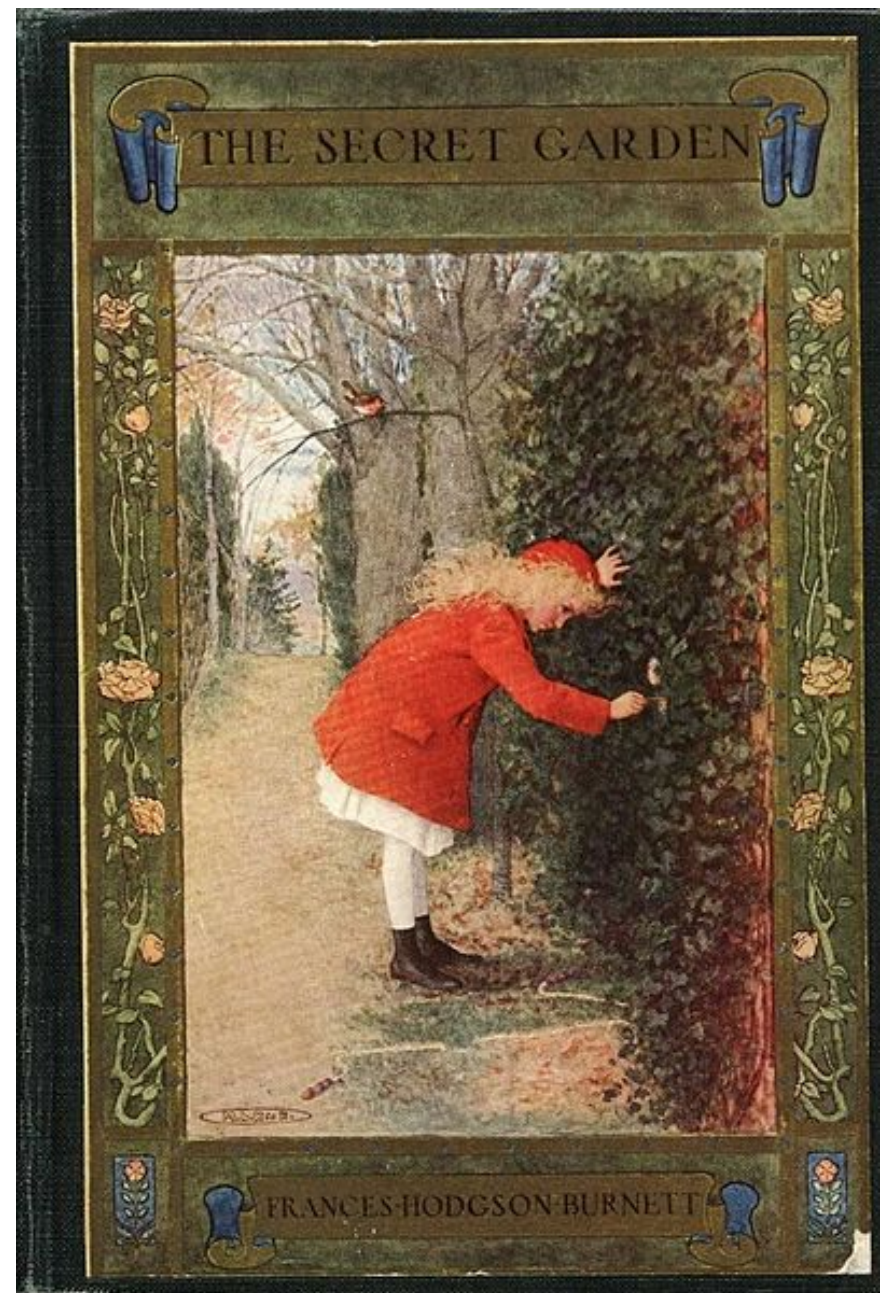
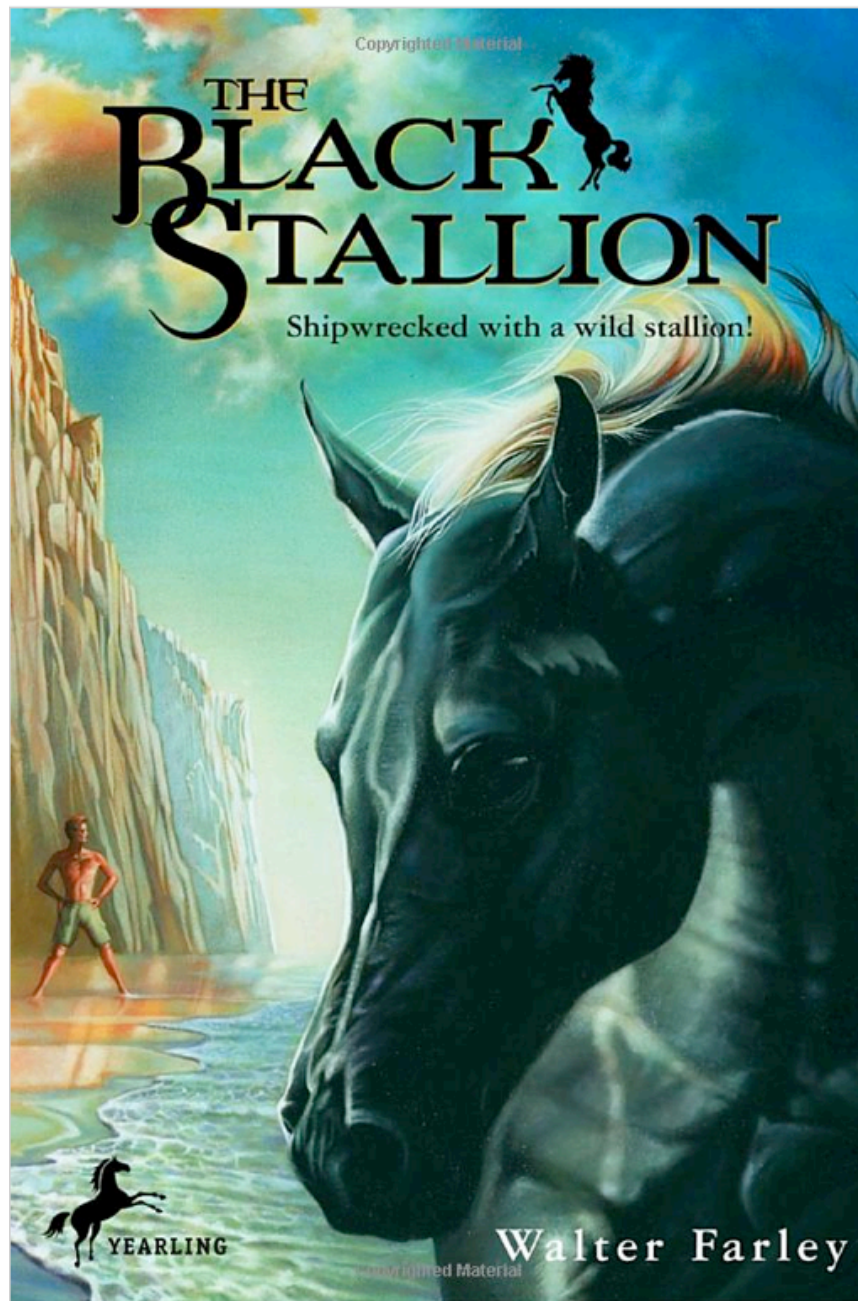
The Staircase of Text Complexity

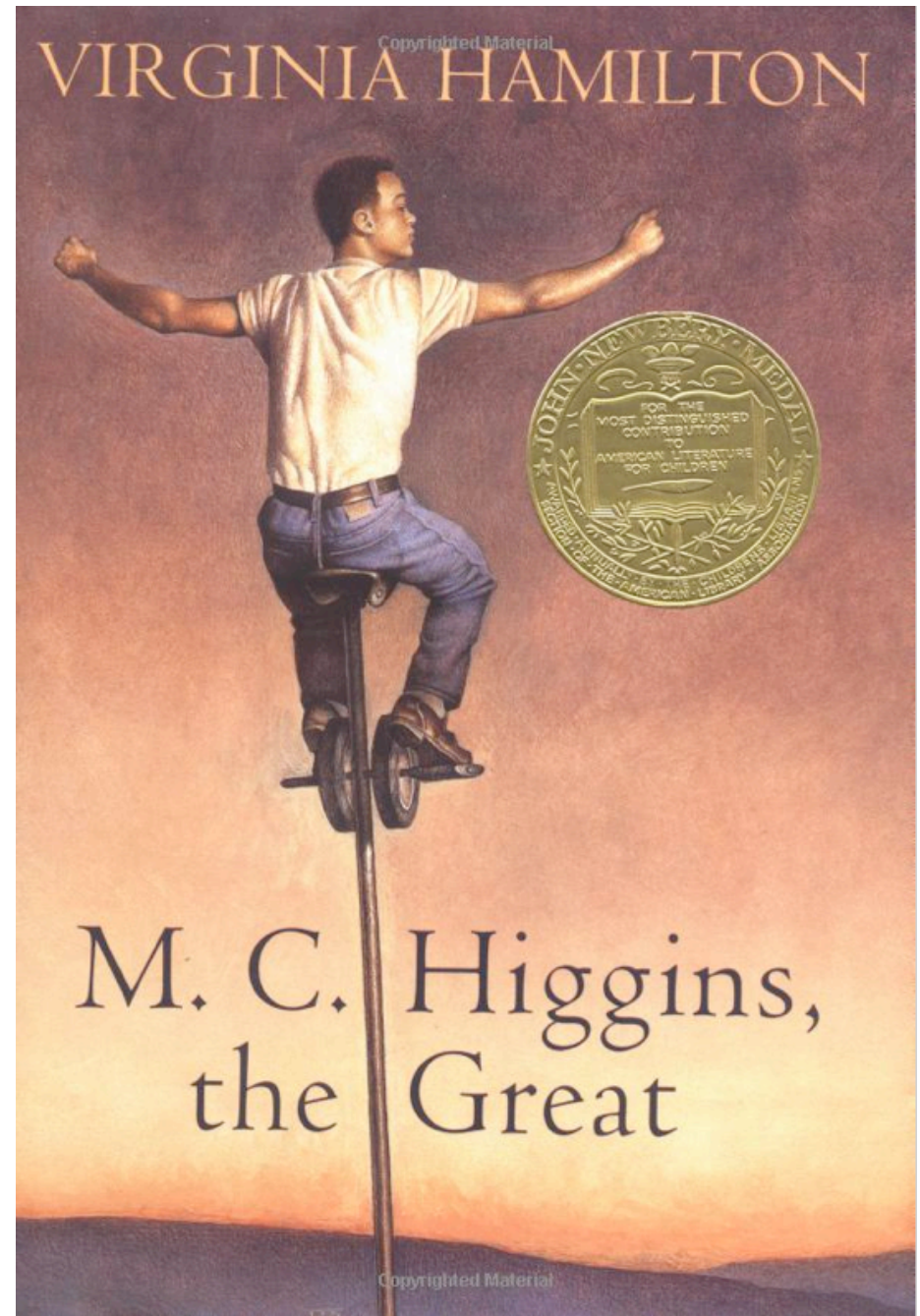
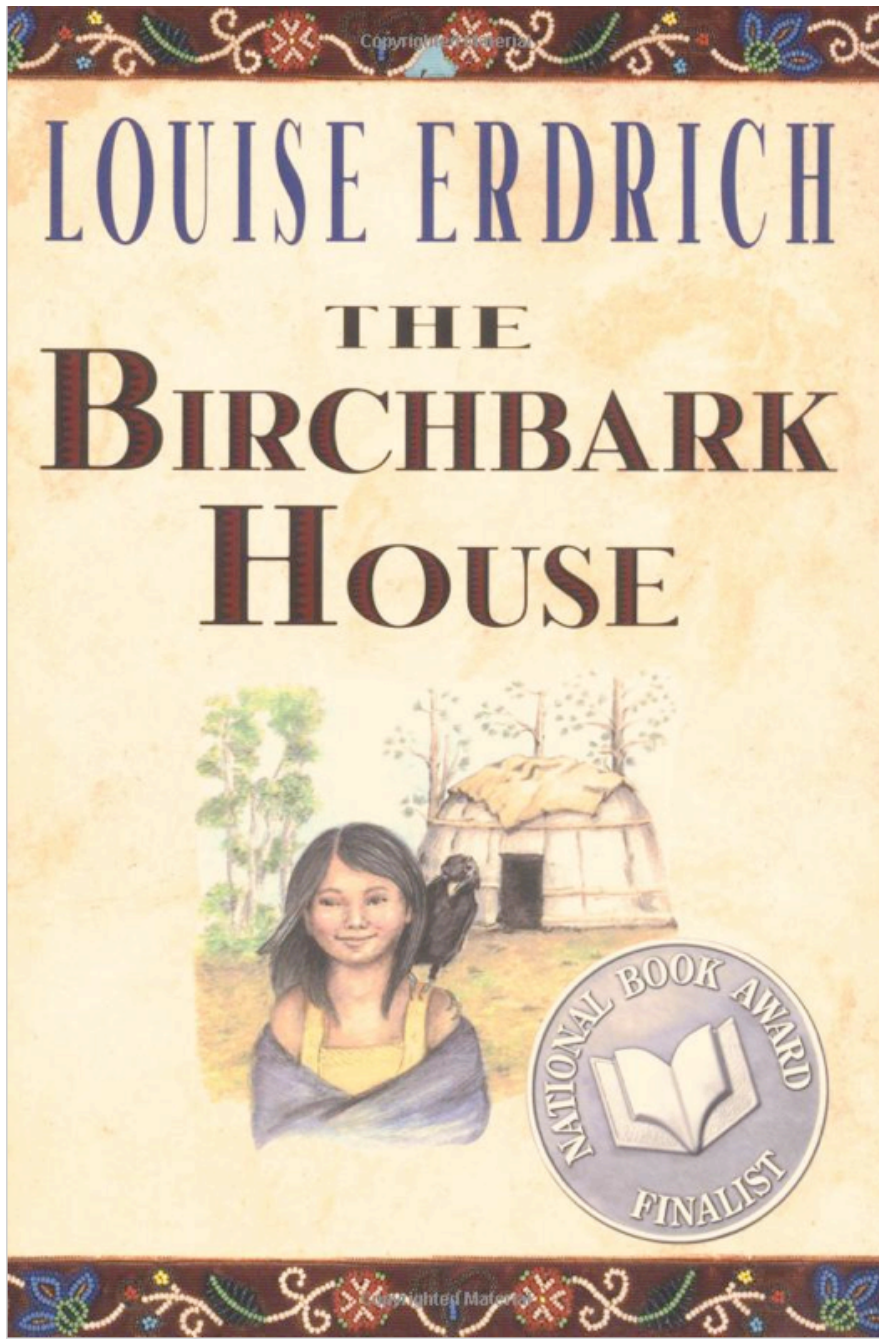
	450-600	600-750	750-900	900-1,050	1050-1200	1200-1350
2-3	Blue		Red			
4-5		Blue	Blue	Red		
6-8				Blue	Blue	Red
9-10					Blue	Red
11-CCR					Blue	Red

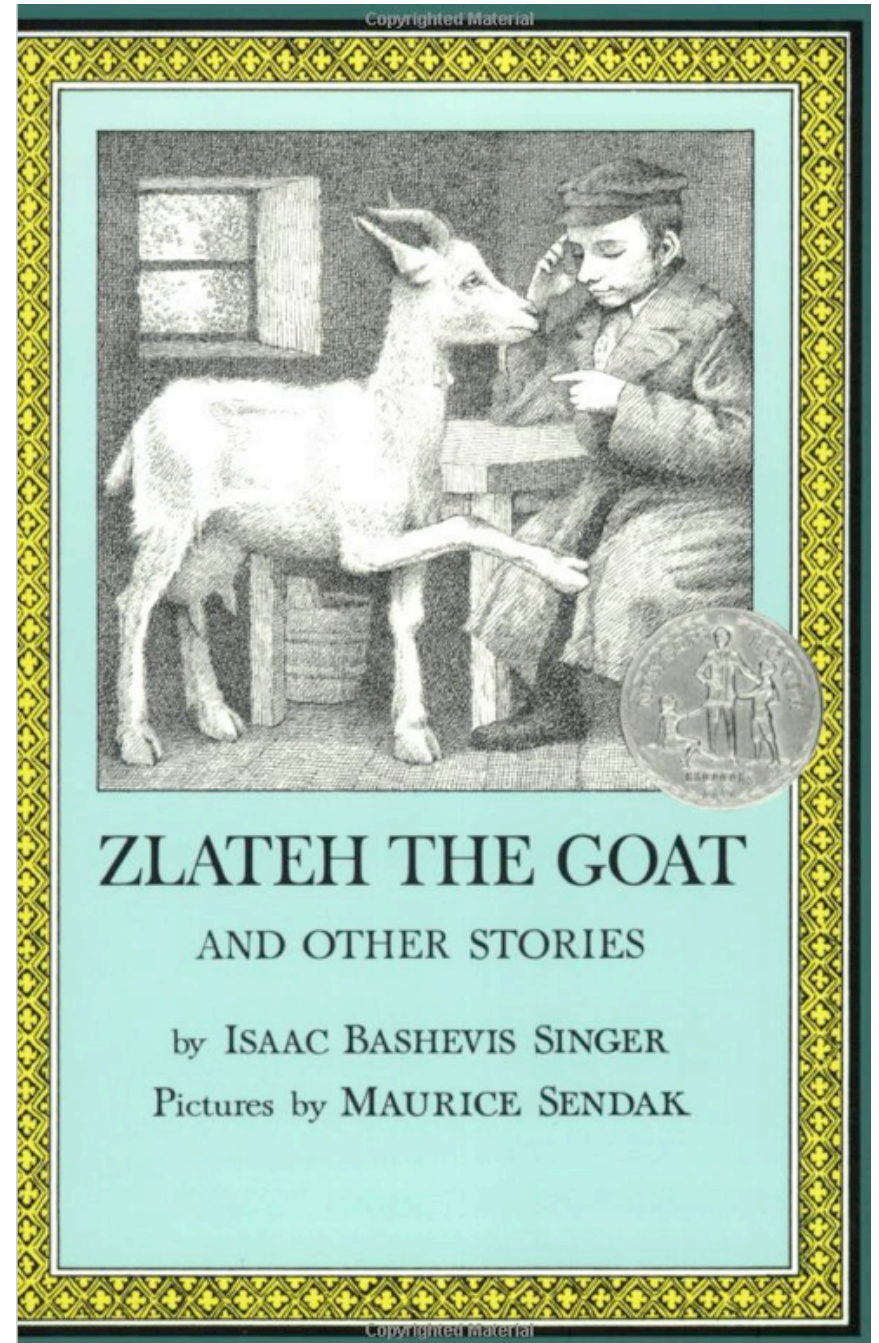
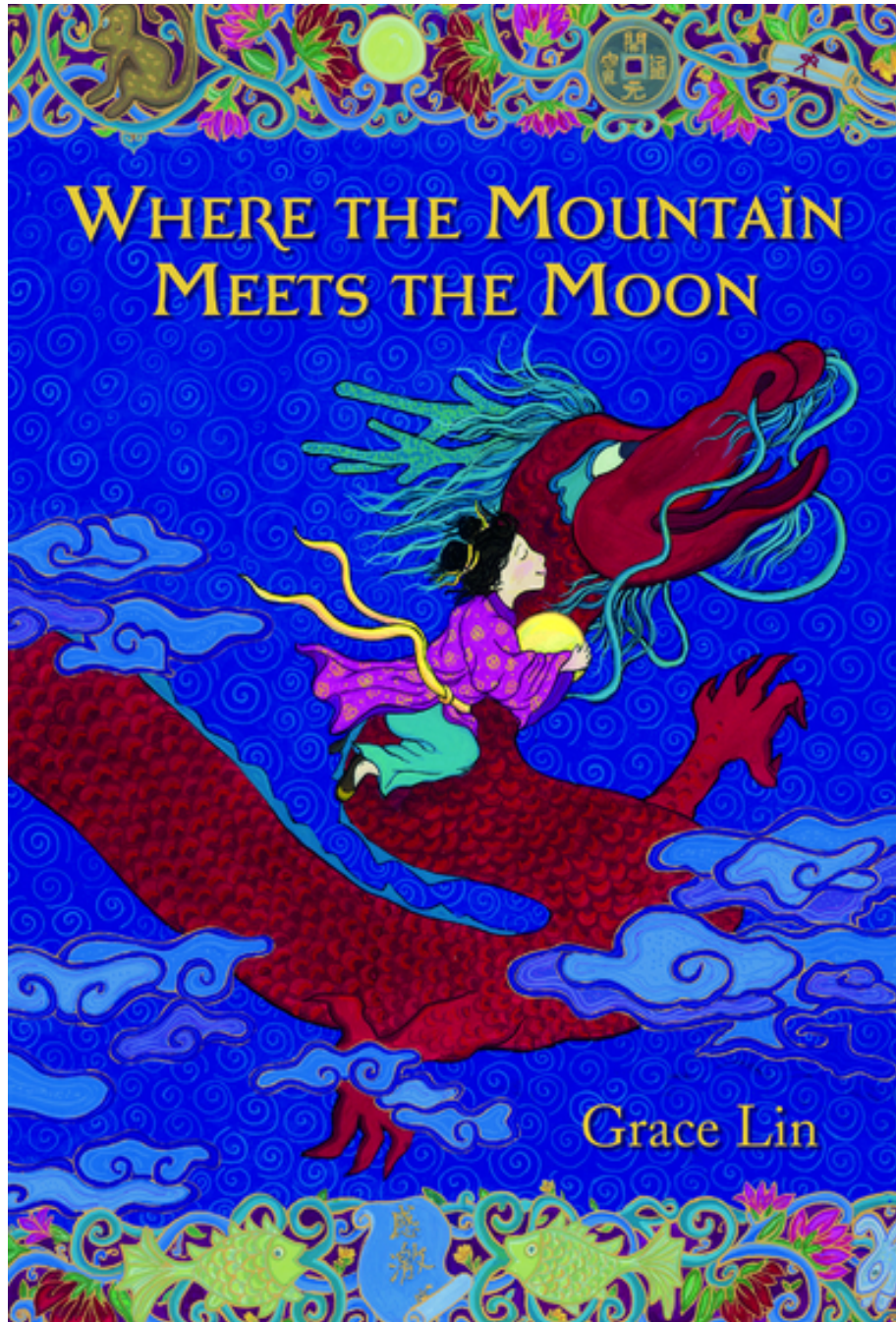
Blue	Old Metrics recommendations
Red	CCSS Recommendations

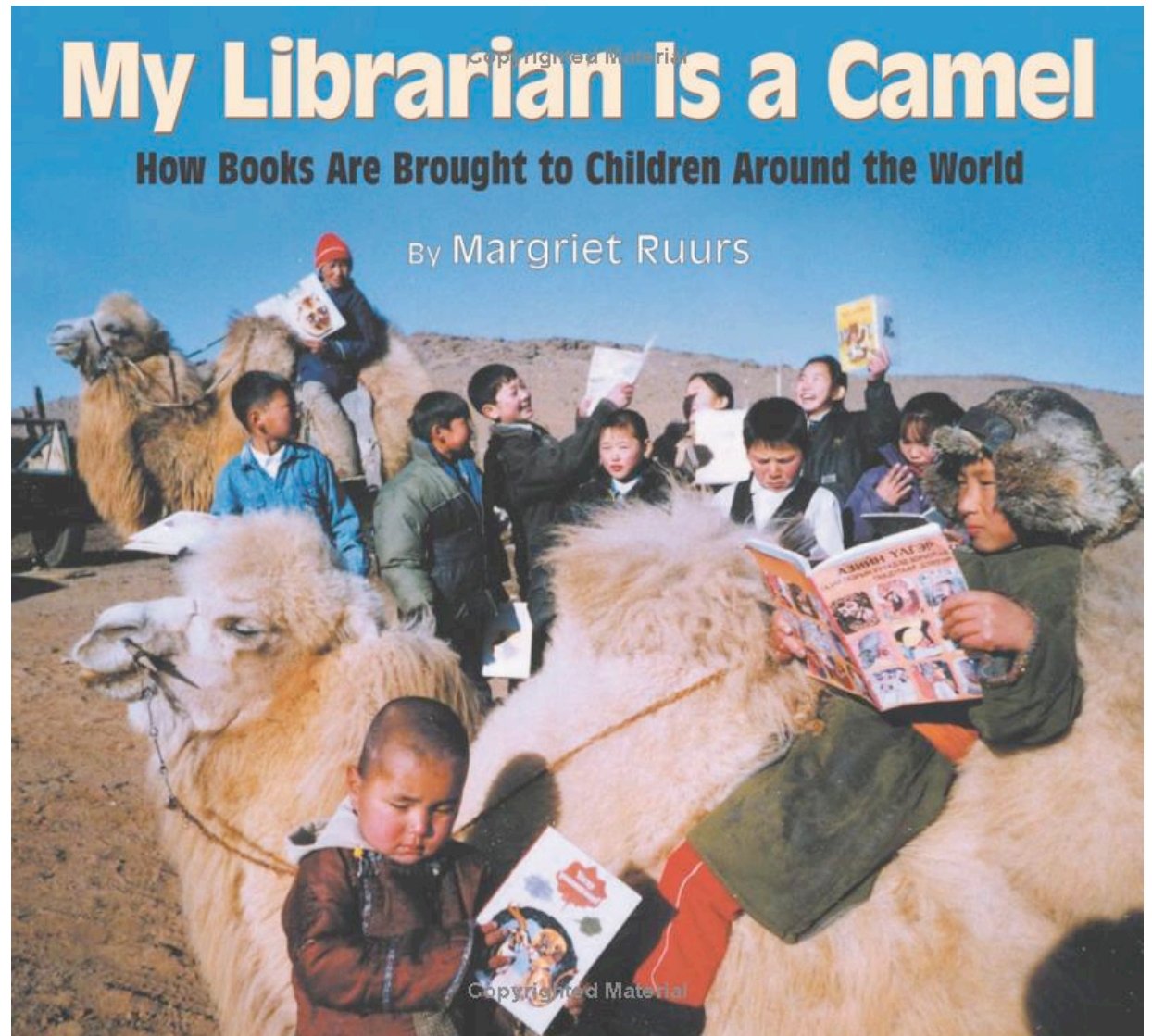
Text Complexity within the Common Core State Standards: Answer 2

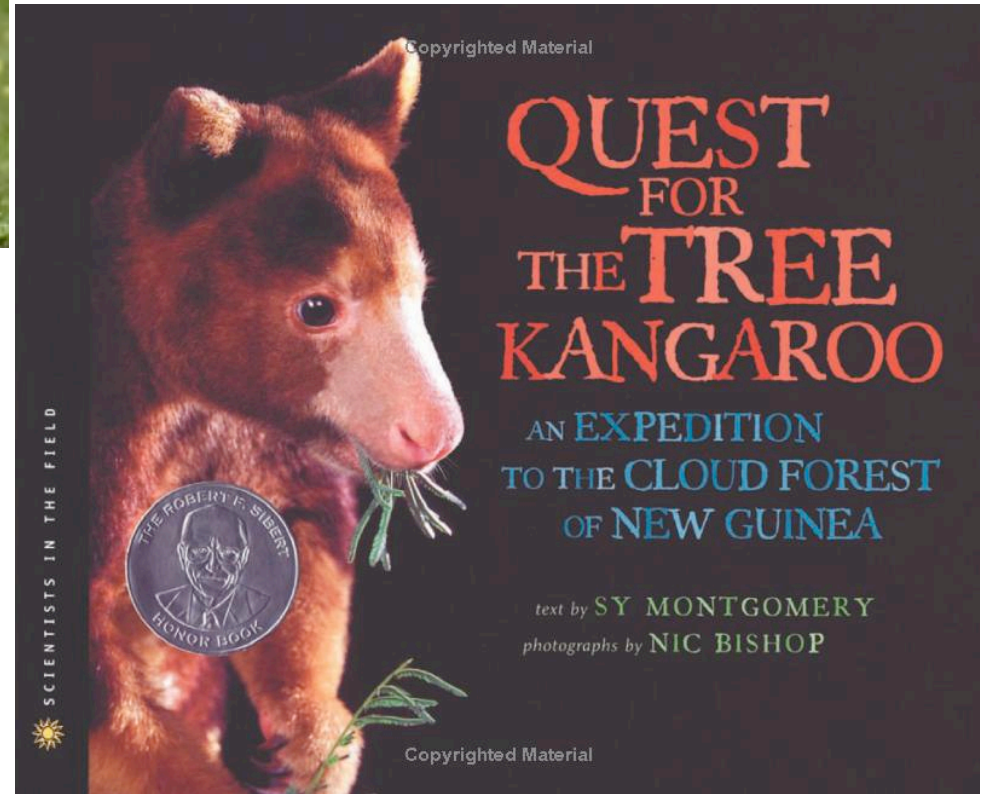
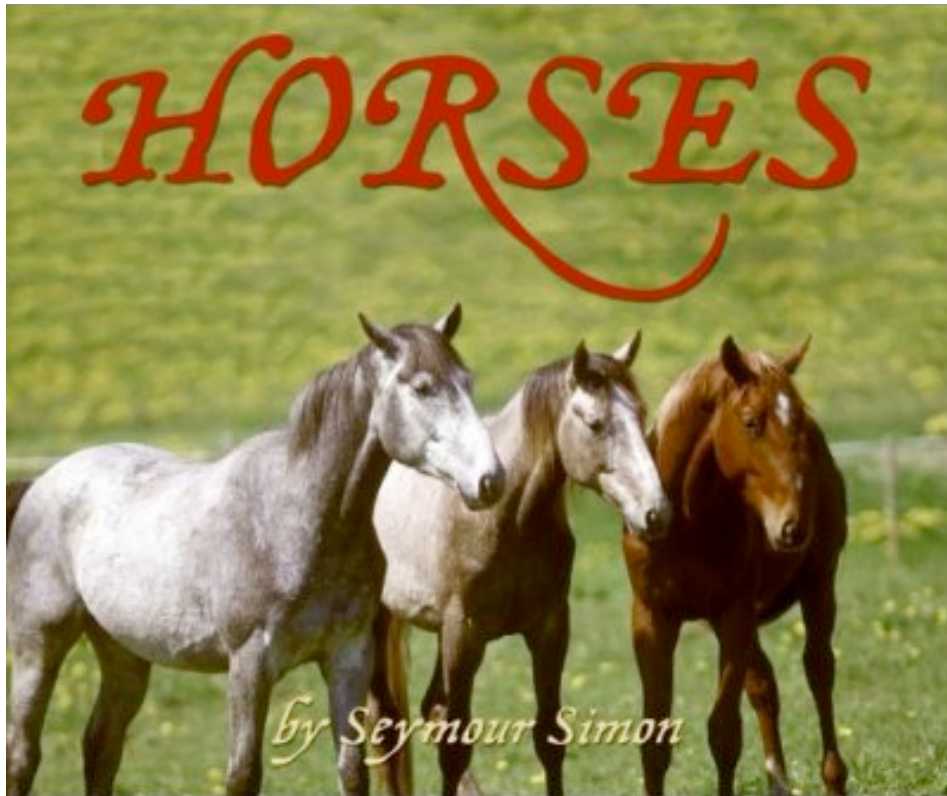
Exemplar texts for grade-level bands,
beginning with Grades 2-3











The Echoing Green **William Blake**

The sun does arise,
And make happy the skies.
The merry bells ring
To welcome the spring.
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
'Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen
On the echoing green.'

Till the little ones weary
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mother
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest;
And sport no more seen
On the darkening green.

In the Garden

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,--
They looked like frightened beads, I
thought;
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

Emily Dickinson

Words Free As Confetti **Pat Mora**

Come, words, come in your every color.
I'll toss you in storm or breeze.
I'll say, say, say you,
Taste you sweet as plump plums,
bitter as old lemons,
I'll sniff you, words, warm
as almonds or tart as apple-red,
feel you green
and soft as new grass,
lightweight as dandelion plumes,
or thorngray as cactus,
heavy as black cement,
cold blue as icicles,
warm as *abuelita's* yellowlap.
I'll hear you, words, loud as searoar's
Purple crash, hushed
as *gatitos* curled in sleep,
as the last goldlullaby.
I'll see you long and dark as tunnels,
bright as rainbows,
playful as chestnutwind.
I'll watch you, words, rise and dance and spir
I'll say, say, say you
in English,
in Spanish,
I'll find you.
Hold you.
Toss you.
I'm free too.
I say *yo soy libre*,
I am free
free, free,
free as confetti.

Where are American students on the staircase of text complexity?

Sample Text from 4th Grade NAEP (2007)

"I must get help," said Rosa to herself. But how? I don't know anyone. Mama told me not to speak to strangers. Besides, I don't know how to ask in English.

Rosa had an idea. She rushed back to the street, walked to the traffic light, then raced around the corner and back to the school yard.

Sample Text from 4th Grade NAEP (2009)

Were these his own footprints?
Yes! He could follow them back to
the path. Hooray! Willy shouted.
Then he remembered the nuts.
I'll come back for them. But, no,
on second thought he didn't
really want to come here again.

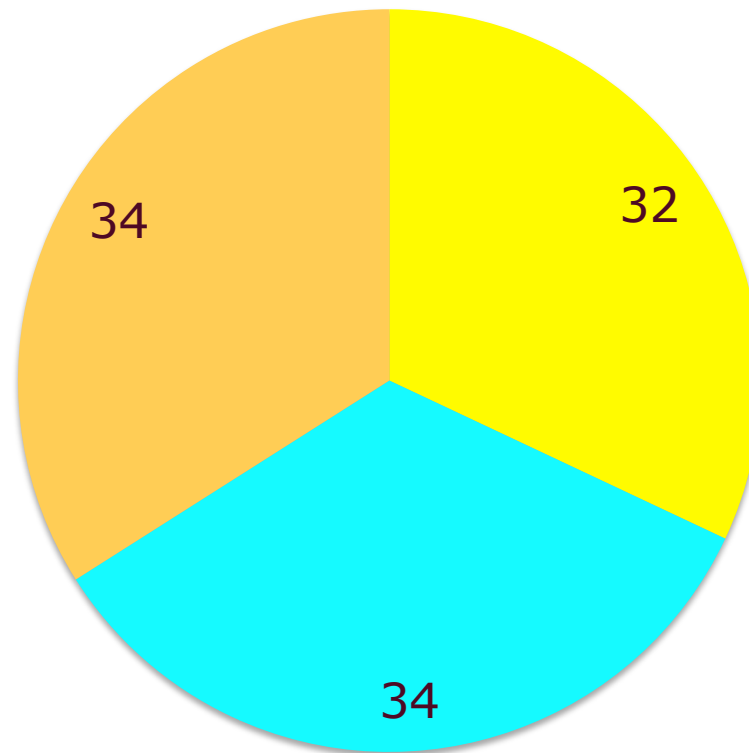
On the Staircase of Text Complexity: Approximately Last Trimester of Grade 3

	450-600	600-750	750-900	900-1,050	1050-1200	1200-1350
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4-5		Blue	Blue	Red		
6-8				Blue	Blue	Red
9-10					Blue	Blue
11-CCR						Blue

Blue	Old Metrics recommendations
Red	CCSS Recommendations

National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011)

Nation



■ Proficient & Above ■ Basic ■ Below Basic

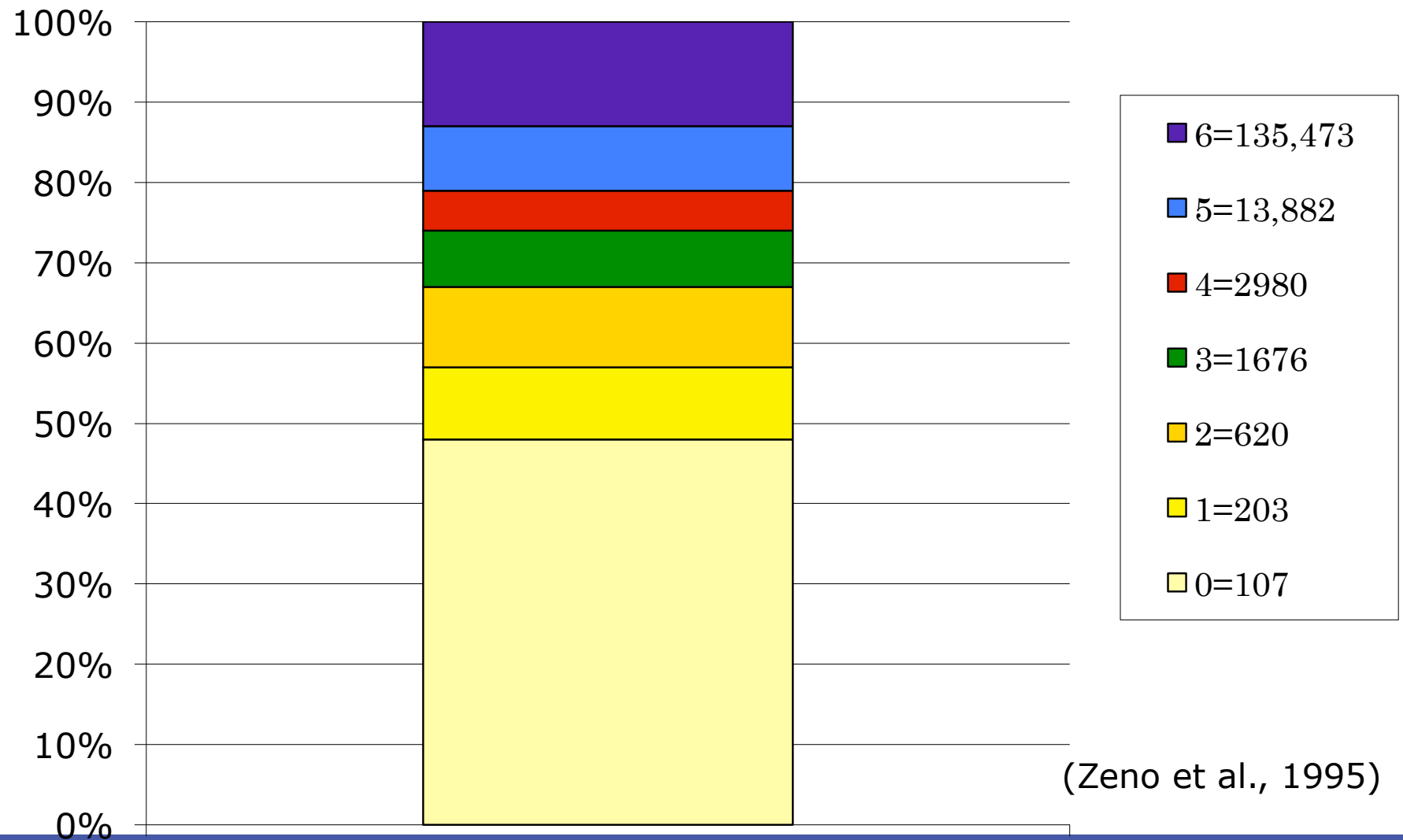
The Middle Part

If students are reading well by the end of third-grade, sustain the practices in the primary grades.

And if they are not: The situation needs to be addressed immediately.

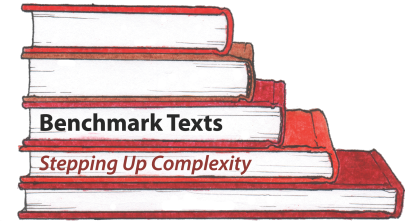
Core and Extended Vocabularies: Words in American Textbooks

Word Zones™



(Zeno et al., 1995)

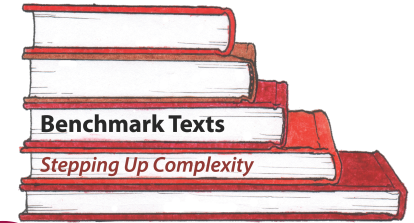
Ensure that students are highly facile with the Core Vocabulary



5,500 most frequent words & words with ≤ 7 letters
3,000 most frequent words & words with ≤ 6 letters
1,000 most frequent words & words with ≤ 5 letters
500 most frequent words & words with ≤ 5 letters
300 most frequent words & words with ≤ 4 letters
100 most frequent words & words with ≤ 4 letters
50 most frequent words & words with ≤ 3 letters

95+% of words in texts fall into these categories

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300 most frequent words & words with ≤ 4 letters
100 most frequent words & words with ≤ 4 letters
50 most frequent words & words with ≤ 3 letters

95+% of words in texts fall into these categories

Step 2: 100 most frequent words & words with ≥ 4 letters



Level 2
Set 2
Book 3

Get the Ball



Can a cat be pink? No.
Can a cat be green? No.
Can a cat be black and white? Yes!

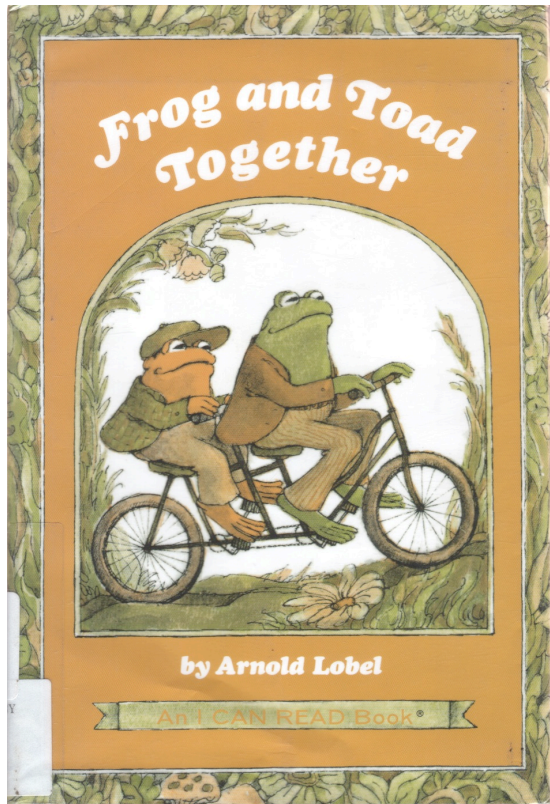
I play ball with my cat and dog.
Get the ball, cat. No, cat, no.
Get the ball, dog. Yes, dog, yes!

Dogs can run. They run and run.
Dogs can dig. They dig and dig.
Dogs cannot fly. Birds can fly and fly.

Cats are big. Dogs are big.
Cats are little. Dogs are little.
Dogs can run with balls. Cats cannot run with balls.

My pet is not a dog. It is not a cat.
My pet can fly. It is green.
I see my pet! It is a bird!

Step 4: 500 most frequent words & words with ≥ 5 letters



Toad came walking by.

"What a fine **garden** you have, Frog," he said.

"Yes," said Frog. "It's very nice, but it was hard work."

"I wish I had **a garden**," said Toad.

"Here are some **flower** seeds.

Plant them in the ground," said Frog, and soon you will have a **garden**."

"How soon?" asked Toad.

"Quite soon," said Frog.

Toad ran home.

He planted the **flower** seeds.

"Now seeds," said Toad, "start growing."

Toad walked up and down a few times.

The seeds did not start to grow.

Toad put his head close to the ground and said **loudly**,

"Now seeds, start growing!"

Step 6: 3,000 most frequent words & words with ≥ 6 letters

Talking
Points

For
Kids

Talking Points for Kids

Music in Schools



Written by Andrew Funk

What Our Leaders Say About: Music in Schools

Sometimes, schools cut music programs when there is a shortage of money. The members of school boards are faced with hard choices when money is limited. One choice might be between music programs or larger classes. In situations like this, it is difficult for school board members to know which choice provides the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people.

Music programs can be costly. Violins, trumpets, and pianos are expensive to buy. They are also expensive to repair. In addition, music classes are usually taught by music teachers. This means hiring one or more music teachers when schools can barely pay for school supplies. Further, only a small percentage of students in a school choose to take music classes. When faced with the choice of larger classes or music programs, school leaders will often choose to decrease class sizes.

Most school board members and taxpayers agree that music is good for students and their learning. But many leaders and taxpayers will argue that music is something that can be done in after-school programs or outside of school.

Leaders in some communities argue that this means that their children do not get to learn to play an instrument. Many families cannot afford the cost of music lessons and musical instruments. If there are no free after-school programs, students in these communities do not have the chance to develop their skills in music.



Photo: Students from the Paul Green School of Rock Music performing at the 2009 Fremont Fair, Seattle, Washington, June, 2009.
©2009 by Joe Mabel in en.wikipedia. Some rights reserved
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>).

For more information about Talking Points for Kids (© Elfrieda H. Hiebert), visit www.textproject.org. Some rights reserved (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-cd/3.0/us/>).



Introduction

Thunderstorms

For many people around the world, summer brings thunderstorms. Warm wet air and strong winds help to create thunderstorms. But thunderstorms don't happen in every part of the United States. The states along the Pacific Ocean don't get as many thunderstorms as the states along the Gulf of Mexico. Some areas of Florida have thunderstorms once a day for most of the summer!

The best place to be during a thunderstorm is inside a building. Lightning from a thunderstorm can be very dangerous. Just before a thunderstorm, the air may feel like there is electricity in it. When people start feeling electricity in the air, they know a thunderstorm is on the way. People start heading inside buildings so they can be safe during a thunderstorm.

So how are thunderstorms created? You can read about it here without getting wet!

Photo: Rain falls on a field in Germany during a storm in 2006.

Part 2: 7 Actions Teachers Can Take to increase students' capacity with complex text

1. KNOWLEDGE

Reading is where vocabularies and concepts are extended & developed.

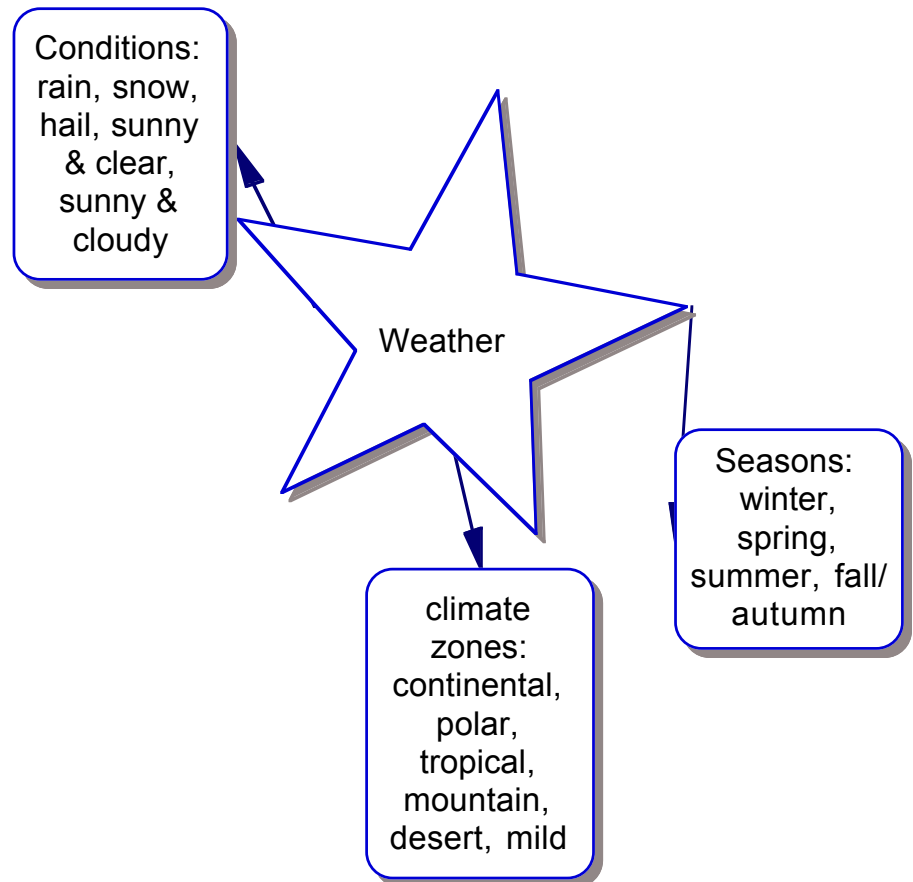
Comparison of Spoken & Written Language

(from Hayes & Ahrens, 1988)

<u><i>Printed Text</i></u> Popular Magazines Children's Books	<i>Rare Words per 1,000</i> 65.7 30.9
<u><i>Television Texts</i></u> Popular adult shows	22.7
<u><i>Adult Speech</i></u> College graduates to friends	17.3

Particular funds of knowledge are acquired solely through academic presentations (texts, lessons, selected media)

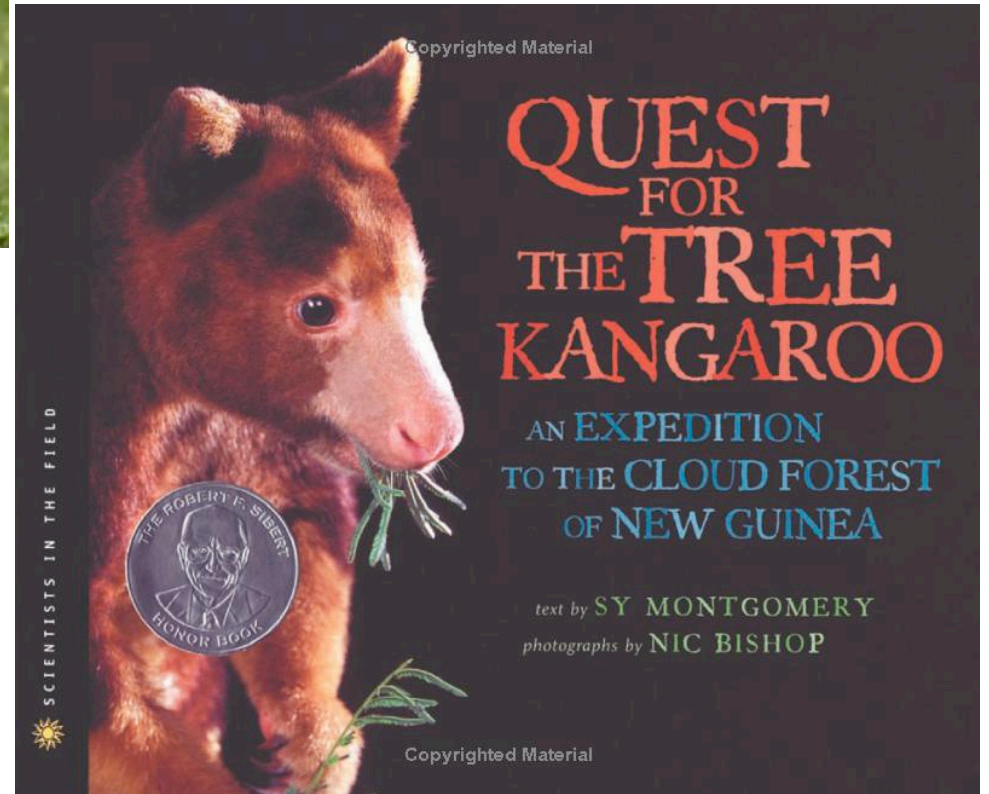
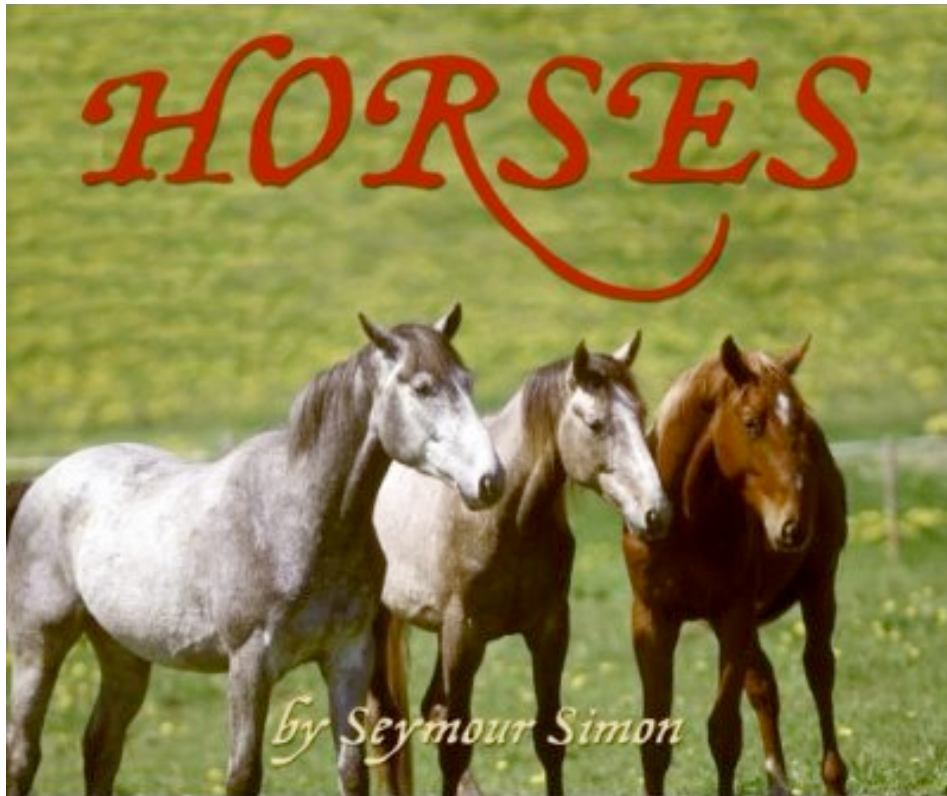
Representational forms of
government
Photosynthesis
Atom-splitting

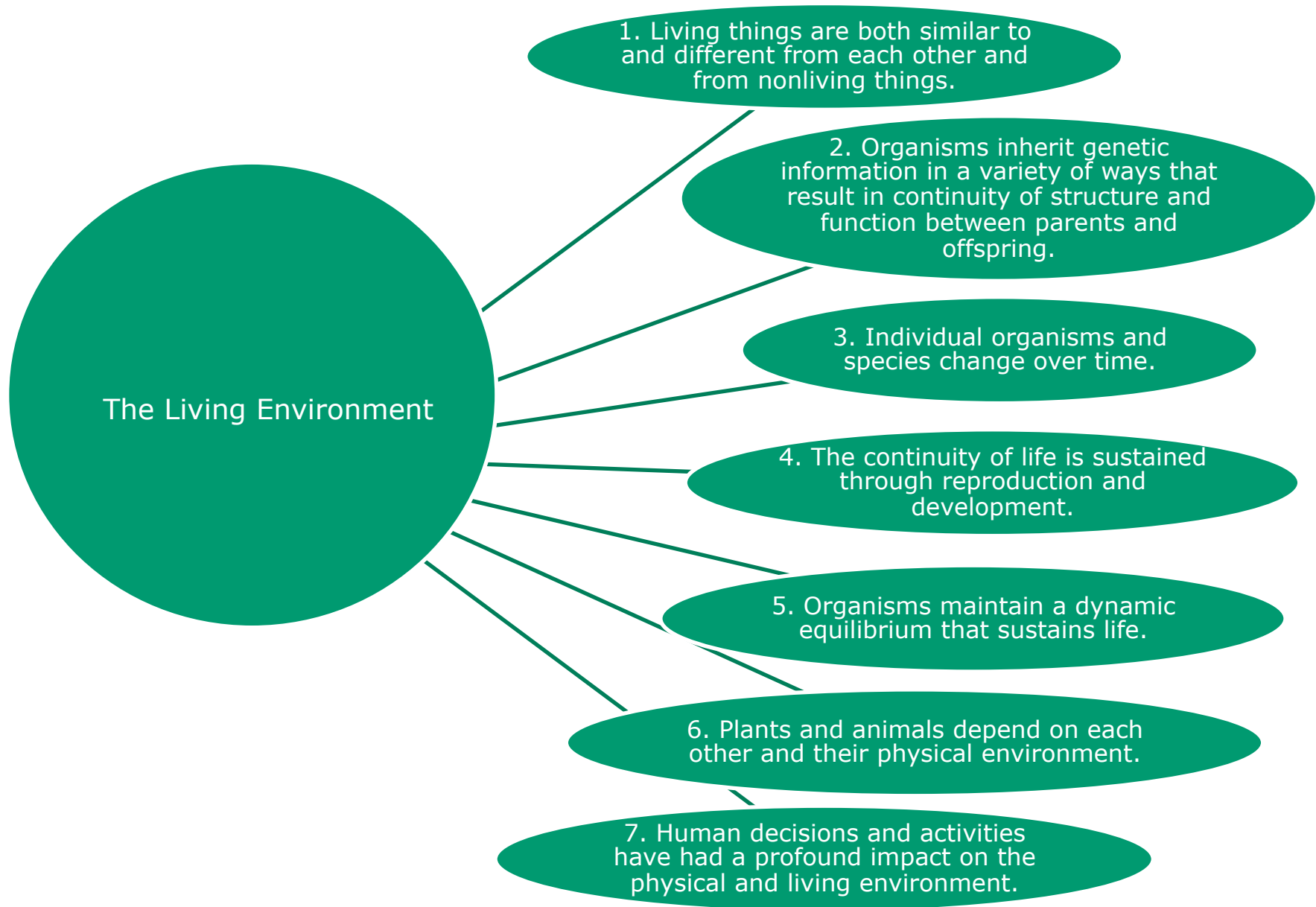


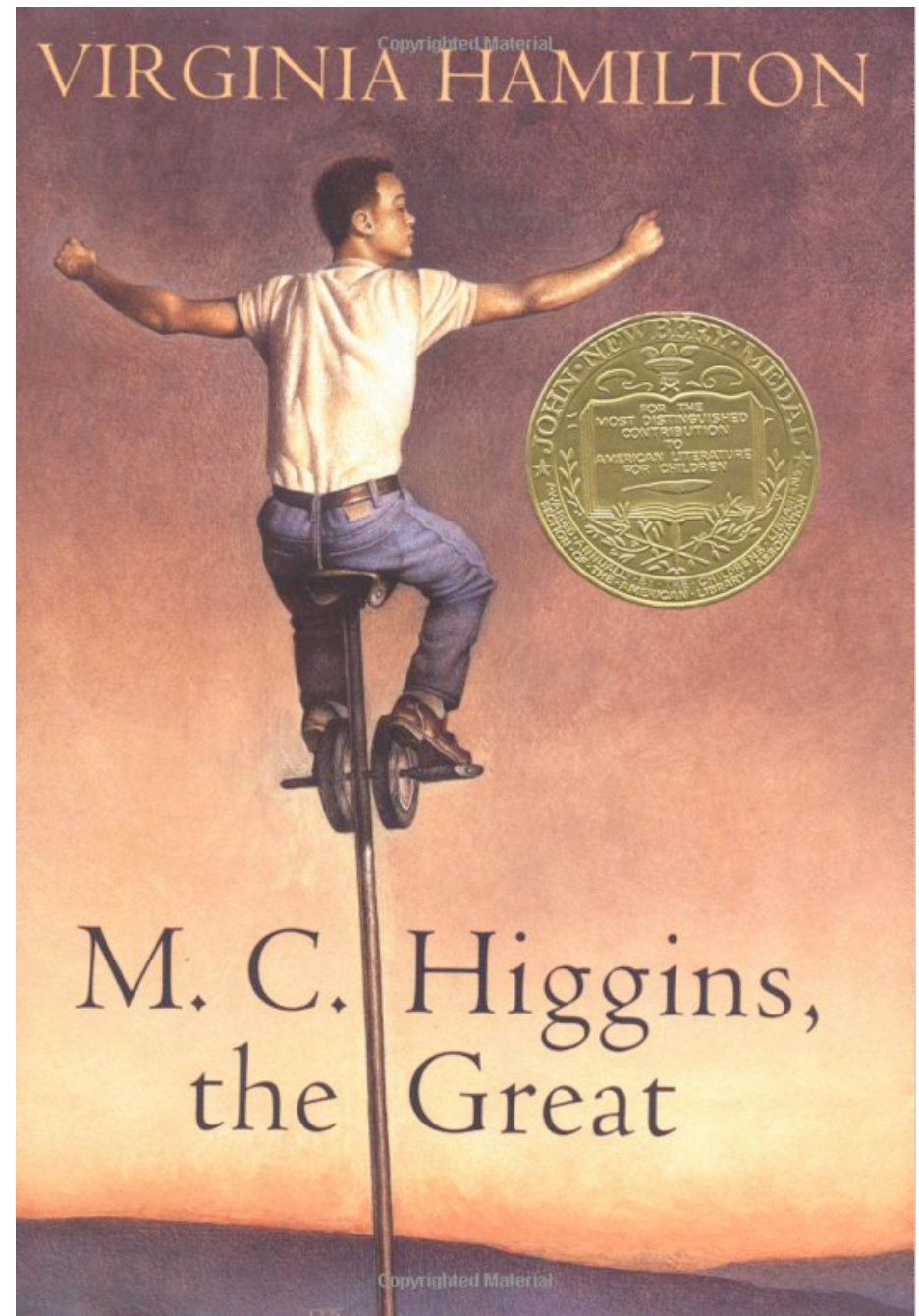
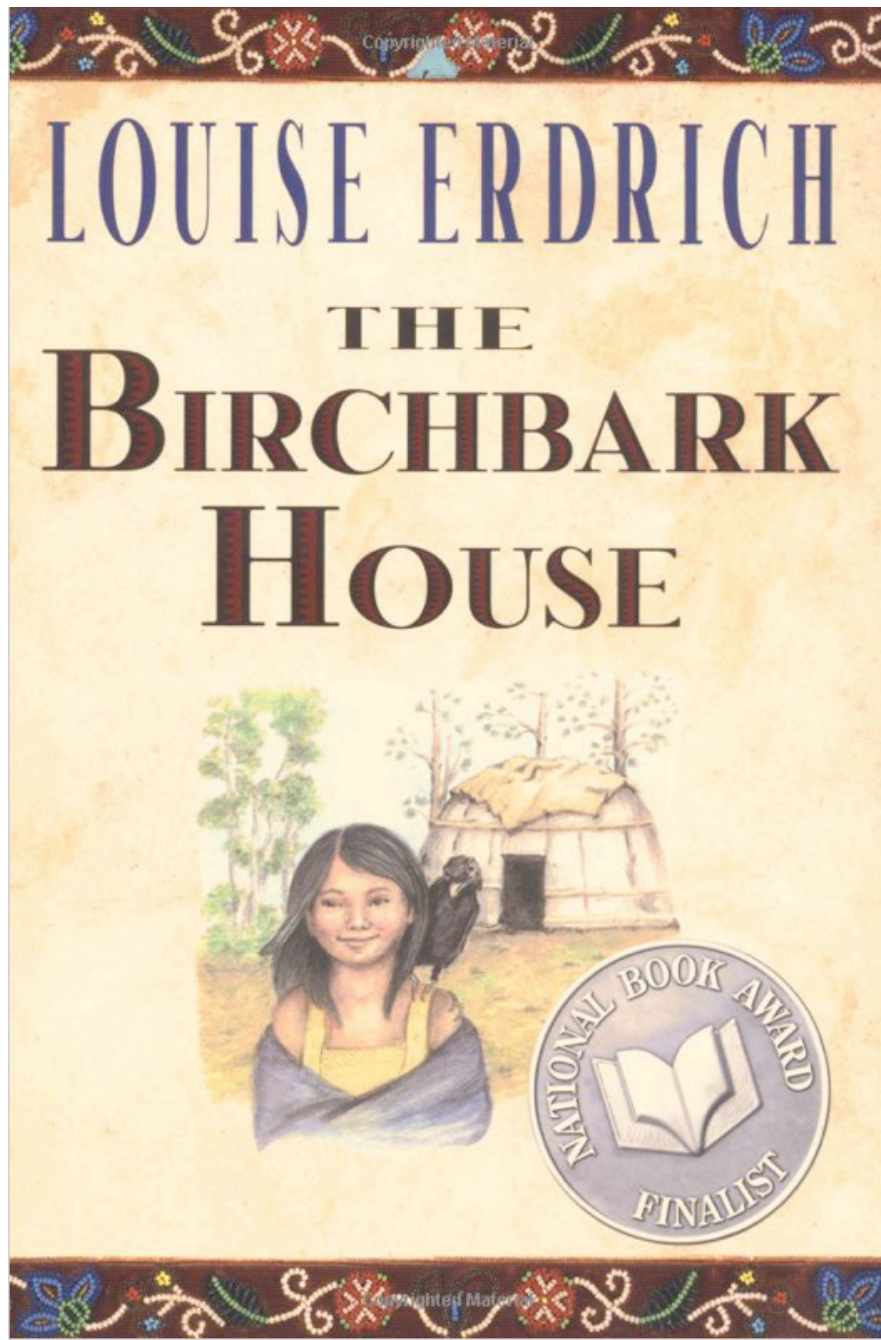
2. CONNECTIONS

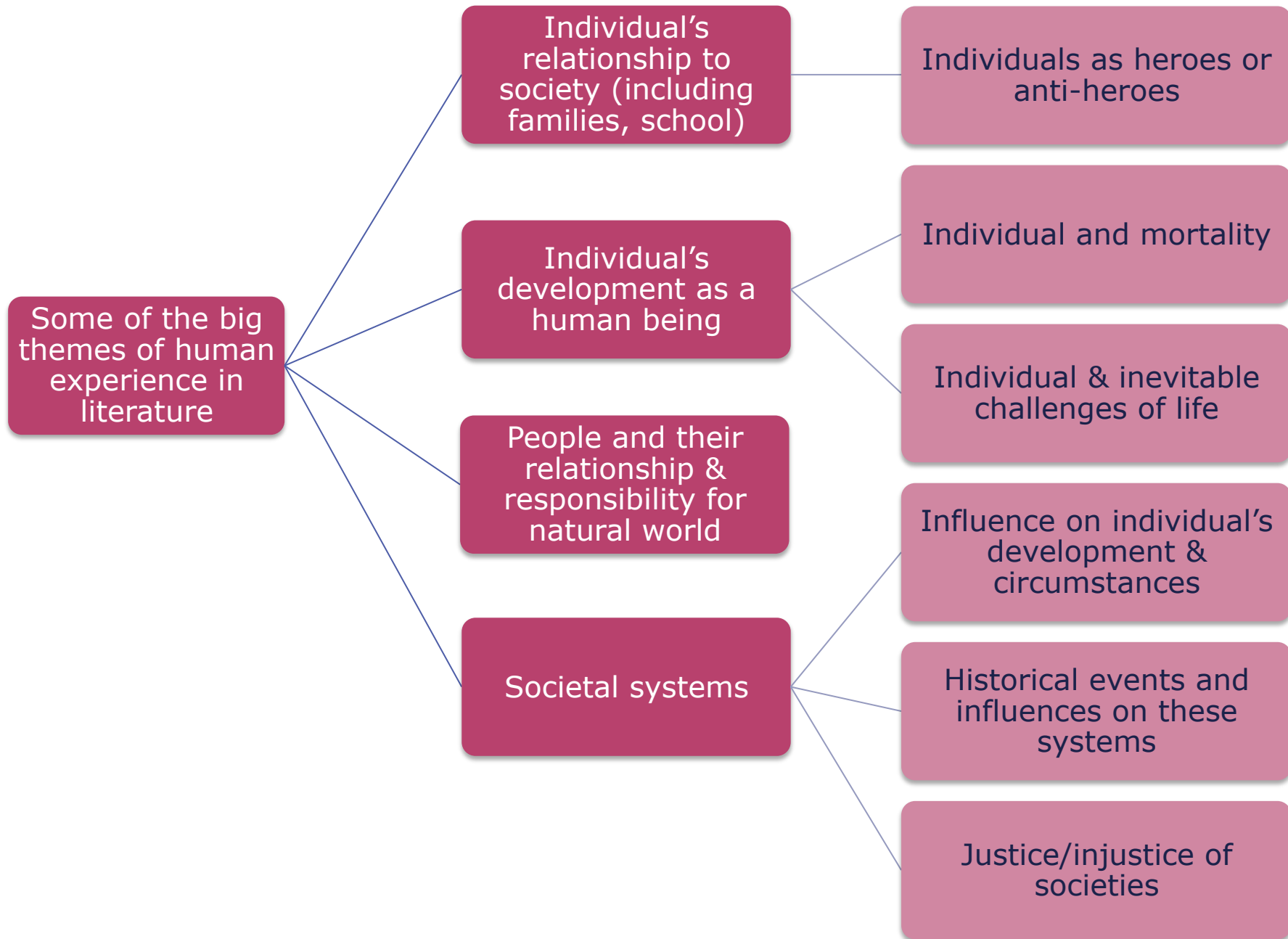
Connections

1. To students' existing knowledge
2. To overall purposes
3. Across texts and experiences









And....

Blood, Toil, Sweat, and Tears—
yes but with:

Examples of Speeches

JK Rowlings, Harvard Commencement, 2008: The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination

- You might never fail on the scale I did, but some failure in life is inevitable. It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default.



Cesar Chavez's speech to the Commonwealth Club



<http://esl-bits.net/listening/Media/CesarChavez/default.html>

Twenty-one years ago last September, on a lonely stretch of railroad track paralleling U.S. Highway 101 near Salinas, 32 Bracero farm workers lost their lives in a tragic accident.

The Braceros had been imported from Mexico to work on California farms. They died when their bus, which was converted from a flatbed truck, drove in front of a freight train.

Conversion of the bus had not been approved by any government agency. The driver had "tunnel" vision.

Most of the bodies lay unidentified for days. No one, including the grower who employed the workers, even knew their names.

Steve Jobs

Commencement address
to Stanford class of 2005:

[http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1R-jKKp3NA)

"Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you."



3. PASSION



Stories about heroes		• <i>Joan of Arc</i> (Diane Stanley) • <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> (Rosemary L. Bray) • <i>Seven Brave Women</i> (Betsy Hearne) • <i>She's wearing a dead bird on her head!</i> (Kathryn Lasky)
Music		• <i>I like music</i> (Leah Komaiko) • <i>The Philharmonic gets dressed</i> (Karla Kuskin) • <i>Moses goes to a concert</i> (Isaac Millman)
Tales: New & Old		• <i>The Huckabuck Family & and how they raised popcorn in Nebraska and quit and came back</i> (Carl Sandburg) • <i>The people could fly: American black folktales</i> (Virginia Hamilton) • <i>Rapunzel</i> (Paul O. Zelinsky)
Math		• <i>Math Curse</i> (Jon Scieszka) • <i>The Adventures of Penrose the Mathematical Cat</i> (Theoni Pappas) • <i>The Joy of Mathematics: Discovering Mathematics All Around You</i> (Theoni Pappas)
Animals in the Wild		• <i>Starlight Animal Rescue: Wild Cat</i> (Dandi Daley Mackall) • <i>Animals and the Seasons</i> (Susanne Riha) • <i>Amazing X-Rays: Wild Animals</i> (Jacquelin A. Ball)
History & Geography		• <i>Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes</i> (Eleanor Coerr) • <i>The Scrambled States of America</i> (Laurie Keller) • <i>Shaka: King of the Zulus</i> (Diane Stanley)
How People Live	Fashion	• <i>I want to be a fashion designer</i> (Stephan Maze) • <i>My wonderful world of Fashion: A book for drawing, creating, and dreaming</i> (Nina Chakarabarti) • <i>Frankly, Frannie: Fashion Frenzy</i> (AJ Stine)
	Sports	• <i>The World's greatest soccer players</i> (Matt Doeden) • <i>The Wild Soccer Bunch: Kevin the Star Striker</i> (Joachim Masannek) • <i>A Beautiful Game: The World's Greatest Players and How Soccer Changed Their Lives</i> (Tom Watt)

The Funds of Knowledge Initiative

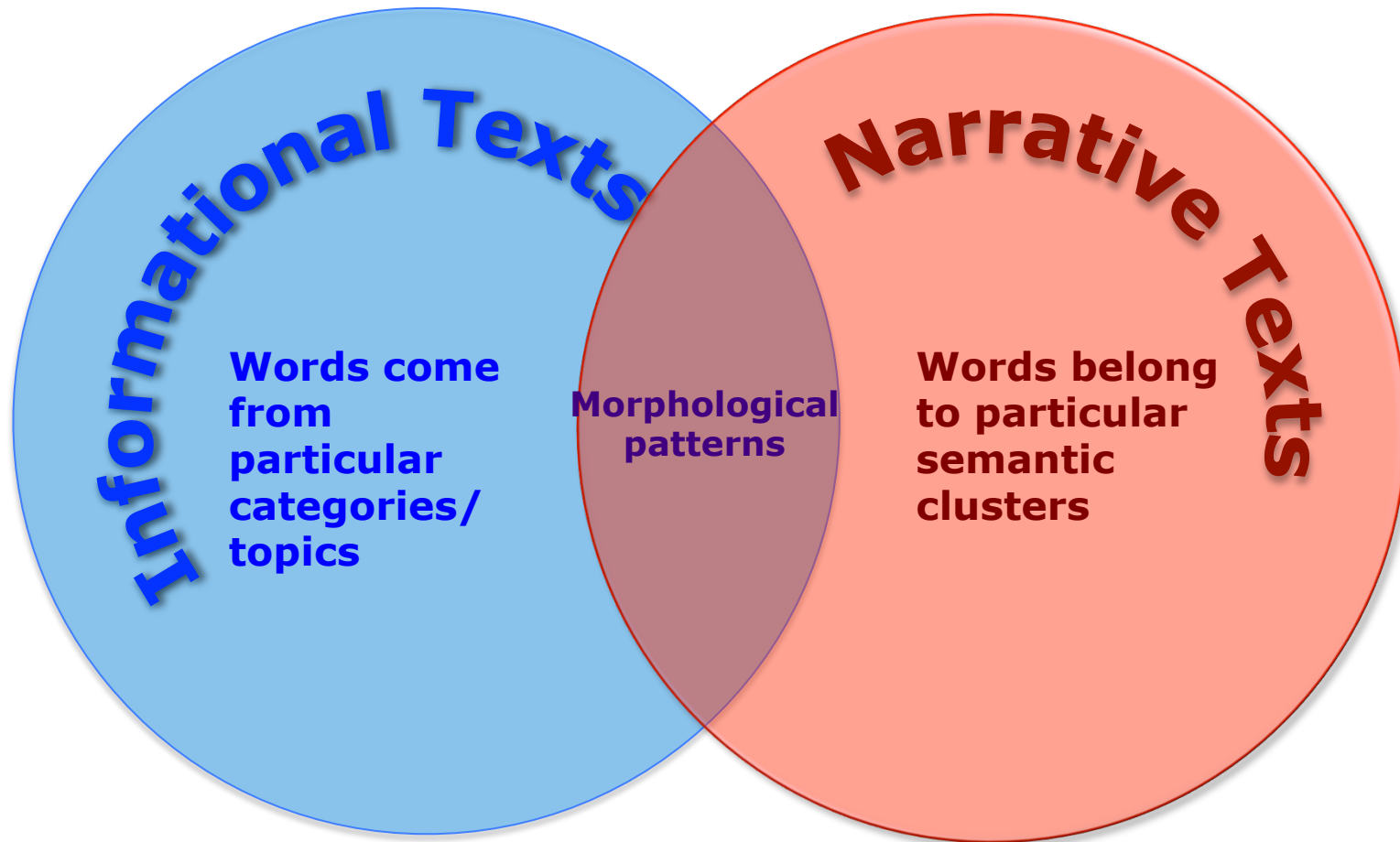
Stories about Heroes	Music	Tales: New & Old	Math
Animals in the Wild	History & Geography	How People Live	Your Choice!

The Funds of Knowledge Initiative

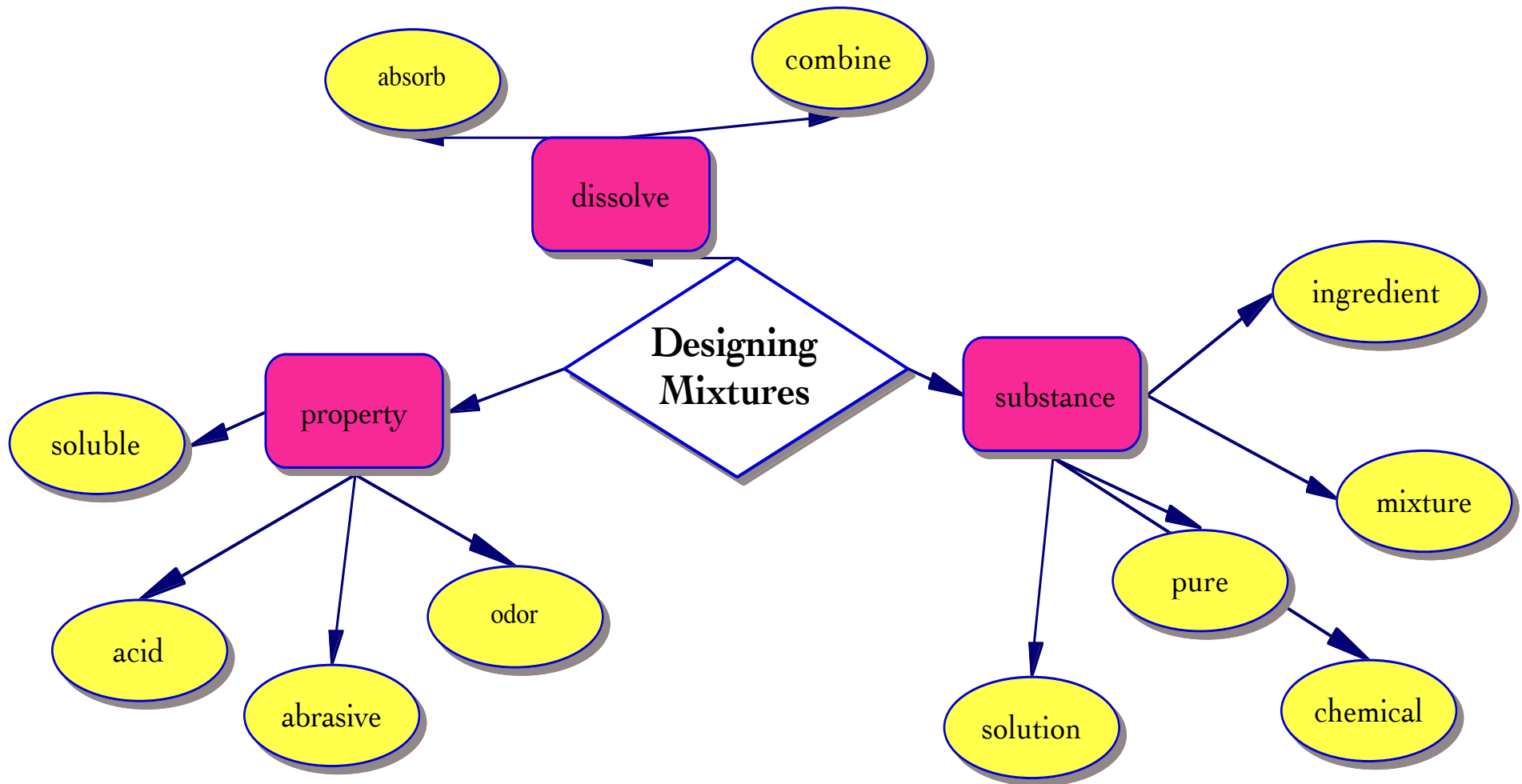
 Stories		Tales: New & Old	Math
Animals in the Wild	History & Geography	How People Live	You  Learn!

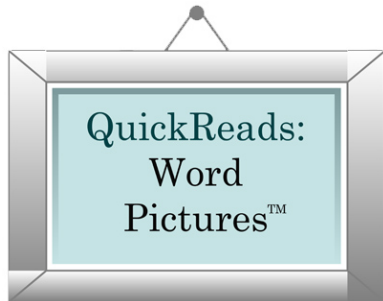
4. VOCABULARY

The vocabularies of informational & narrative texts



Vocabulary of Informational Text





Natural Resources & the Economy



Left Photo: Typical rocky shores. September, 2009. ©2009 by Petritap in en:wikipedia. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA-3.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

M56leElfrieda H. Hiebert www.textproject.org main by Myke2020 in en:wikipedia.

Right: A child drinks water from a well built by Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 in Shant Adak.

Corresponds to QuickReads Level D, book 2, Geography and Economics, *Natural Resources & the Economy*

PEARSON

Inventions

Definition: The act of making, designing, or producing something for the first time, or the thing that is made, designed, or produced for the first time.

Example: These machines are one of the new *inventions* that help get oil out of the ground.



Resources



Definition: Something such as land, mineral, or natural energy that exists in a country and can be used in order to increase its wealth

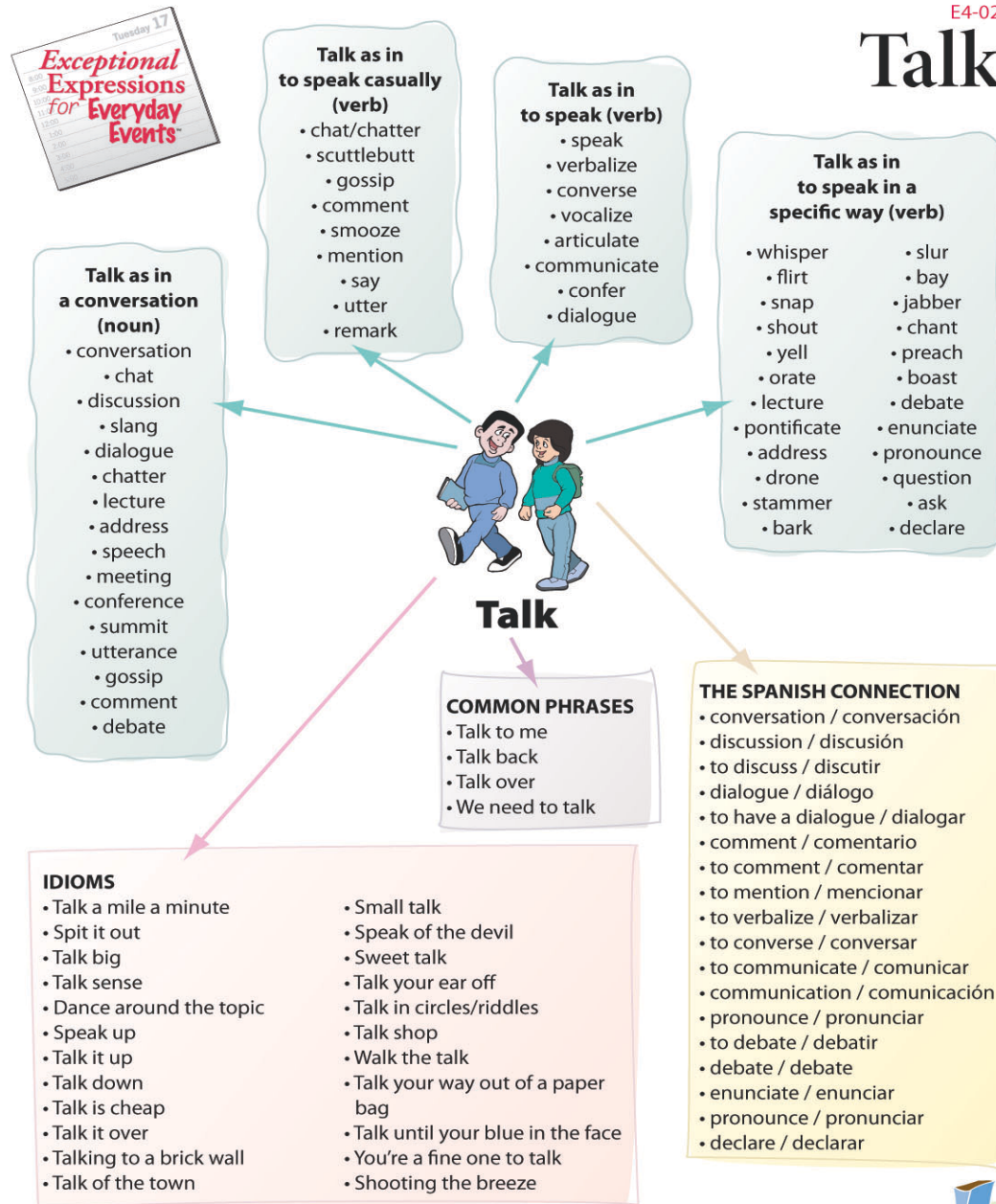
Example: Trees are a natural *resource* that humans use to make paper.



The Vocabularies of Narrative Texts

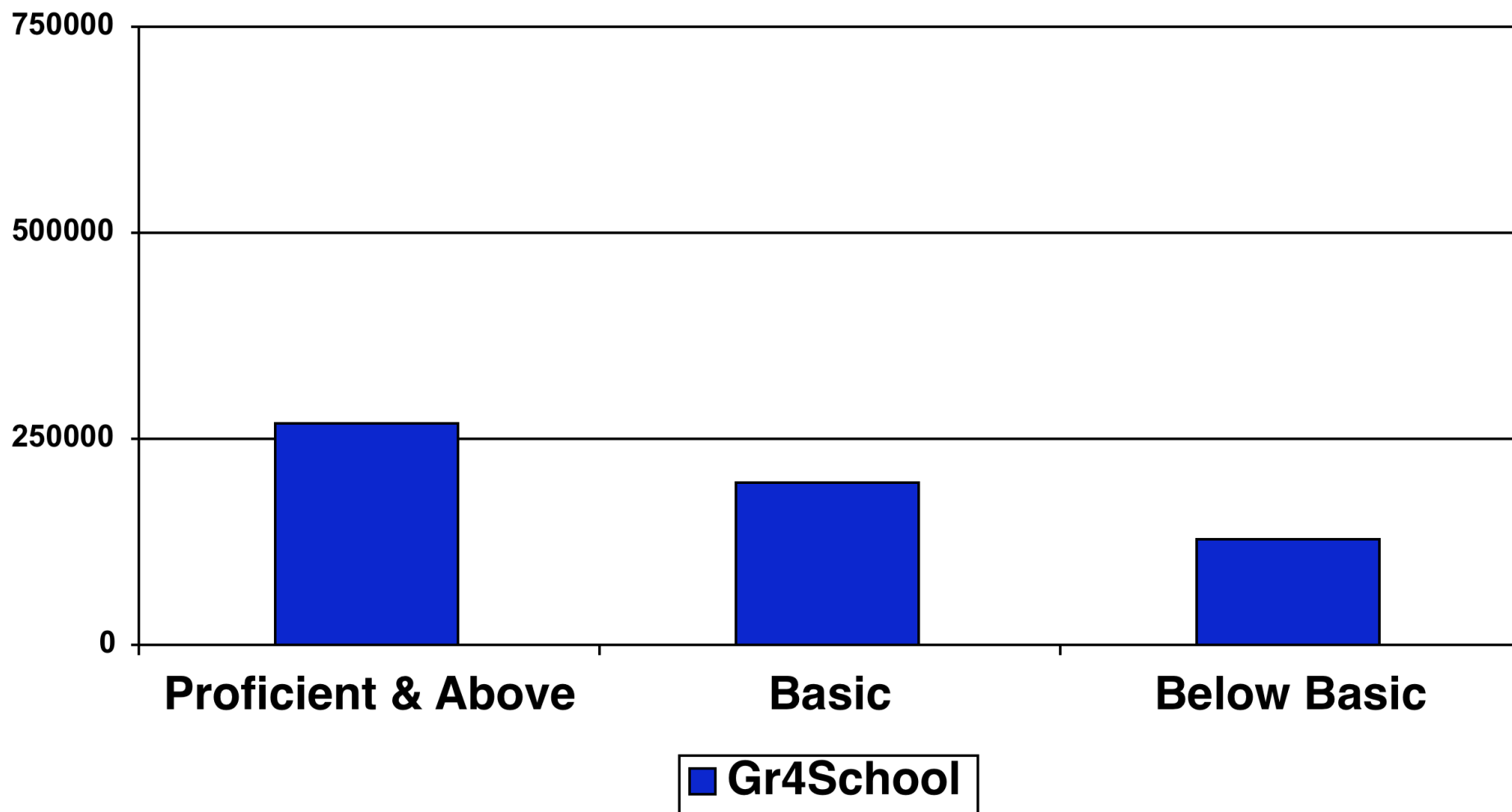
Story Word	Cluster	Examples of Words in Cluster (Beyond Story)
amazed	Emotions/Feelings/Happy Excitement	surprised jubilant ecstatic dumbfounded
fascinated		
marveled		
baffled	Communication/Mental Actions/Confused	confused bewildered mystified perplexed confounded
bewildered		
stumped		
humble	Traits/Shyness/Meek	reluctant retiring self-effacing
timid		

Talk



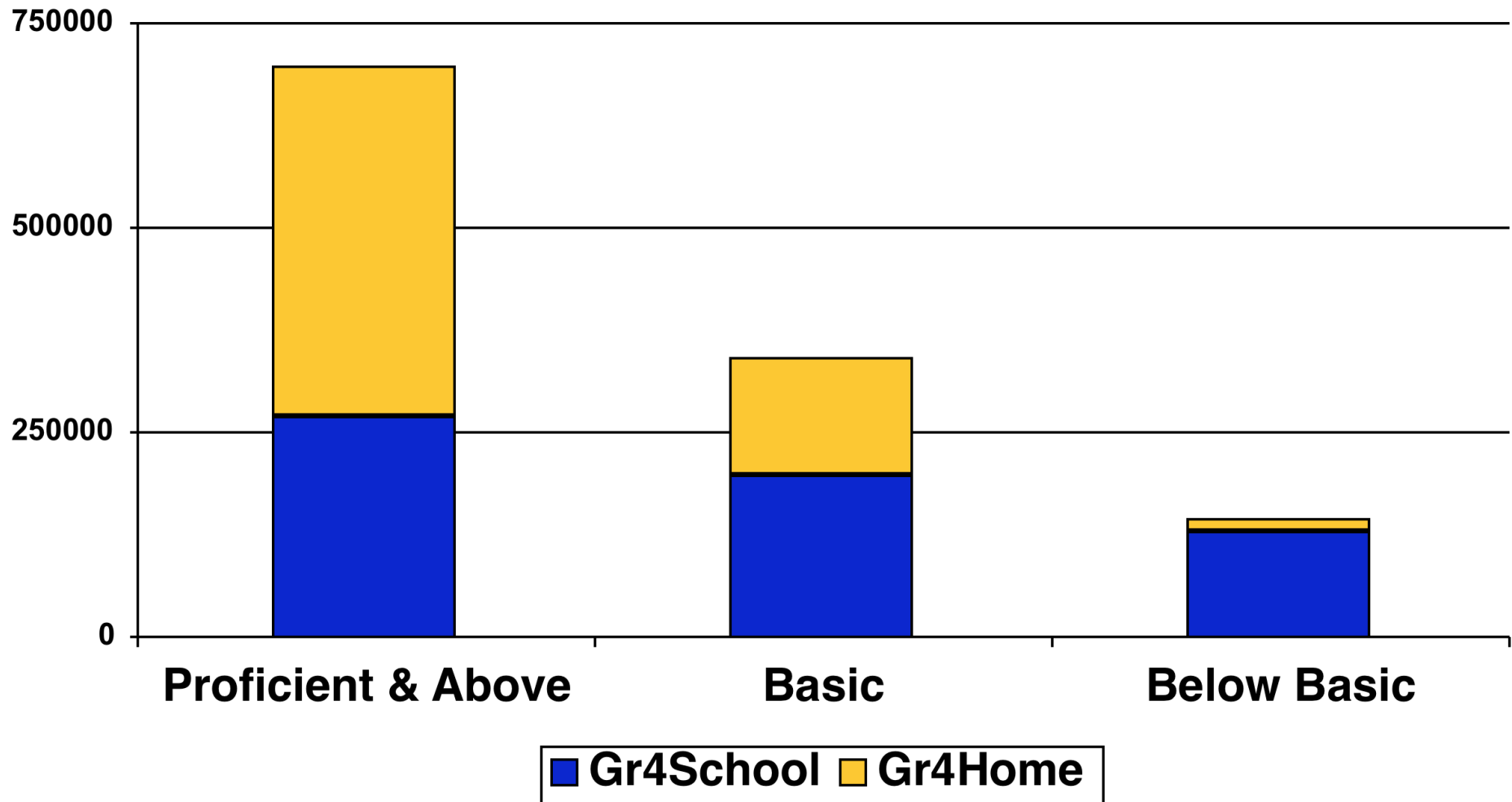
5. VOLUME

Typical Number of Words Read in School



Guthrie, J.T., Schafer, W.D., Huang, C.W. (2001), Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *Journal of Educational Research*, 84, 145-162.

Plus the Typical Amount of Text Read at Home



Anderson, R.C., P.T. Wilson, and L.G. Fielding. 1988. Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly* 23(3):285-303.

Recent evidence from Reading First Classrooms

Length of Instructional Blocks	Time with eyes on text
90-minute	17.57
100-minute	16.25
120-minute	19.25
Overall	18.33

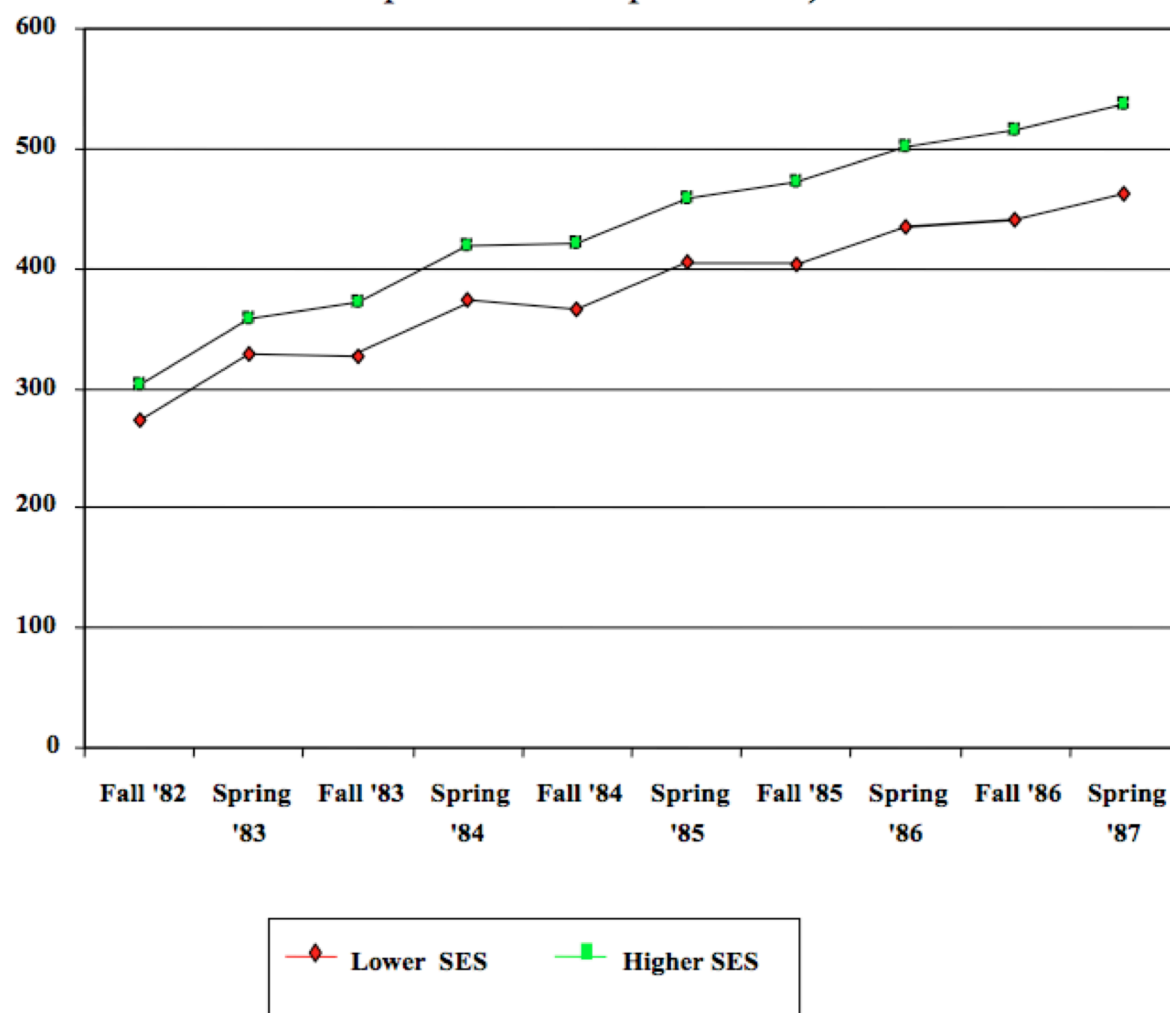
(Brenner & Hiebert, 2009)

What 7 Minutes of Extra Reading Mean

- Kuhn & Schwanenflugel (2009): Data from the seven classes most successful in increasing reading rate were compared to 7 least successful classes: students in former read 7 minutes more daily than students in latter.
- Average 3rd grader:
 - 127 words per minute x 7 minutes x 180 school days: 160,020 additional words
 - Using Hayes & Ahren's (1988) data (31 rare/new words per 1,000): 5,000 additional words

Figure 1: The Trajectory of CAT-V Reading Comprehension Gains for Lower- and Higher-SES Children

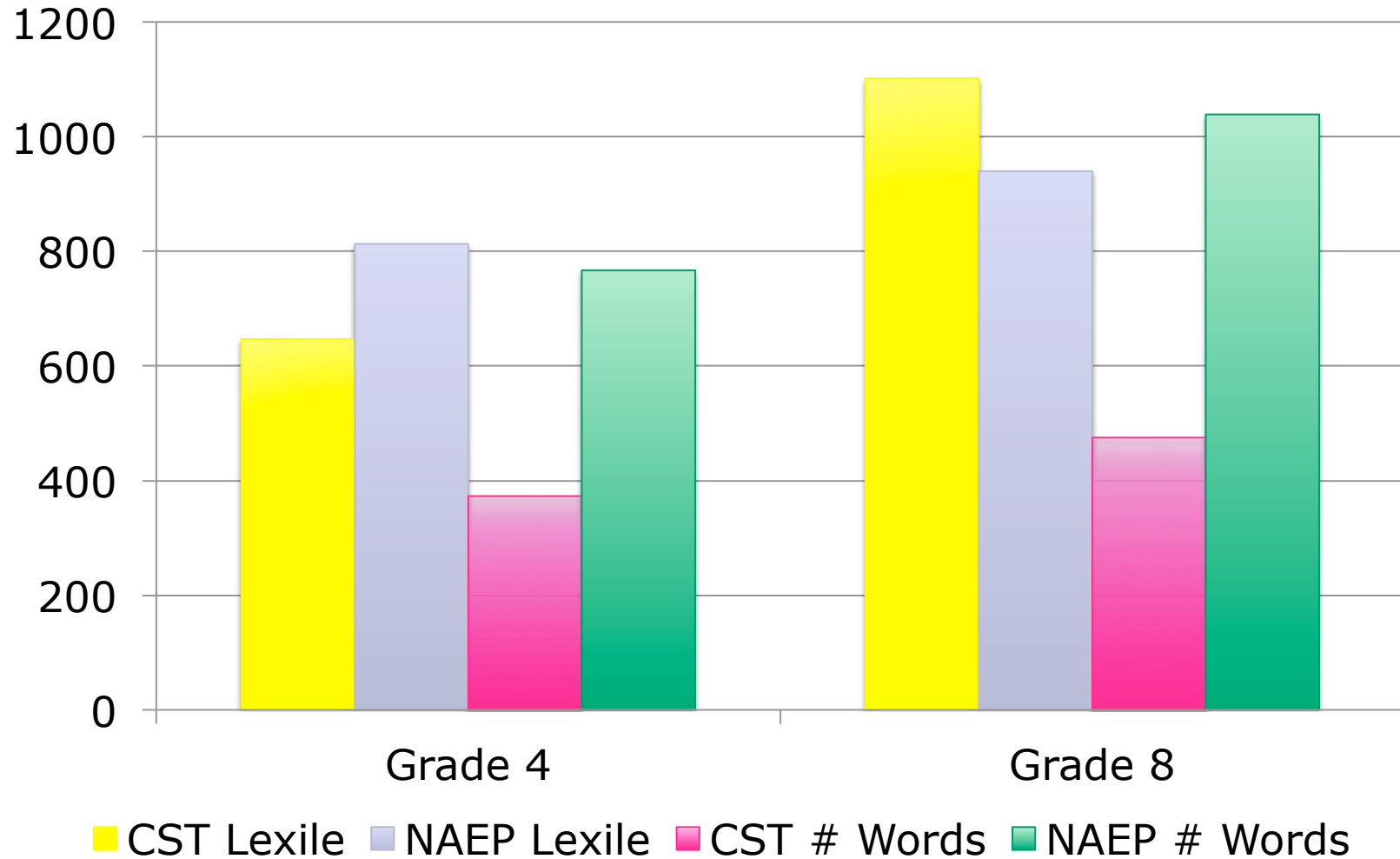
(from Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2004,
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The Funds of Knowledge Initiative is Especially Critical for Summer Reading

6. STAMINA

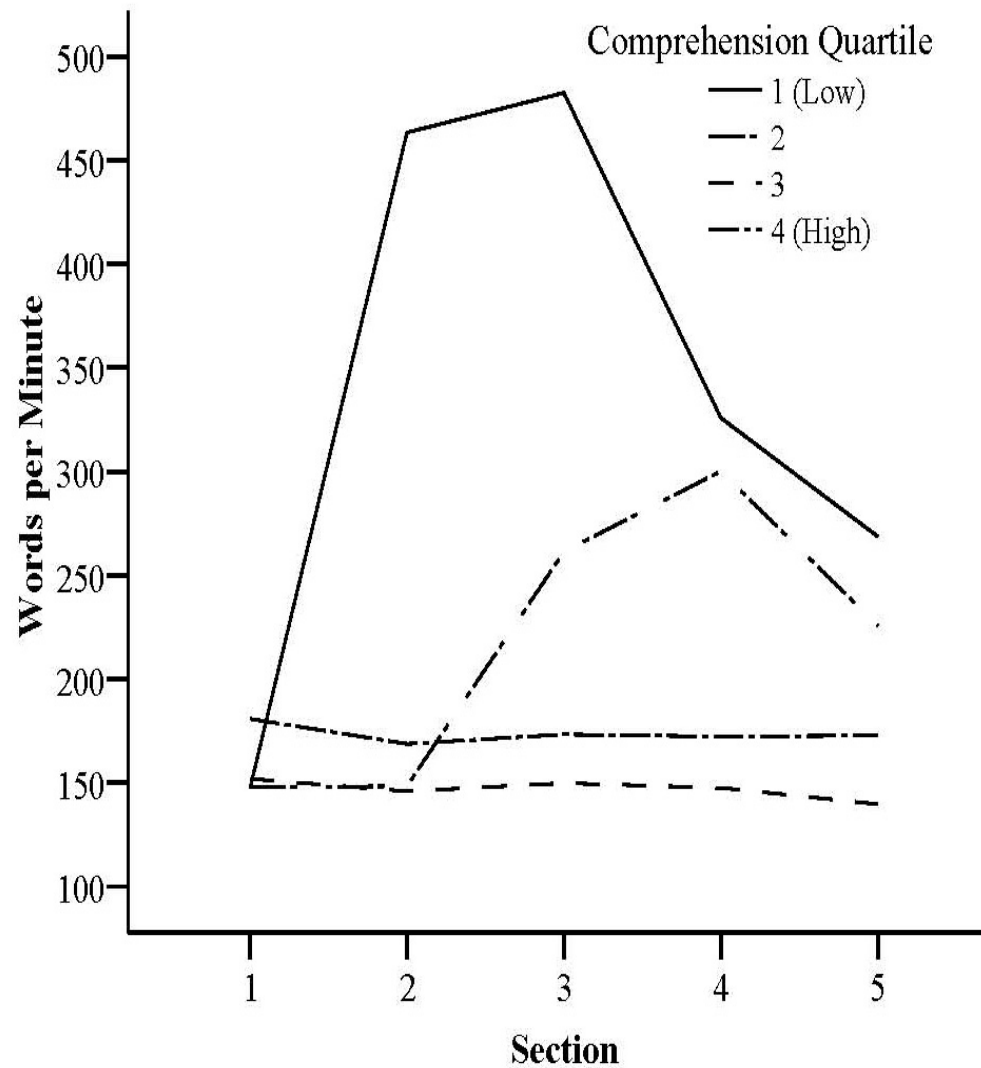
Comparison of CST & NAEP



Studies on Comprehension-Based Silent Reading Rate

Task	Results
Consecutive presentation of 4 short passages followed by questions (4 th graders) (Hiebert, Wilson, & Trainin, 2010)	While students in two lower quartiles started out at a reasonable rate, their rates changed dramatically over assessment (but not with increases in comprehension). Students in top two quartiles had both stable rates and comprehension across sections of the text.
Consecutive presentation of 4 short passages followed by questions (2 nd & 4 th graders) (Hiebert, Trainin, & Wilson, 2011)	30% of second graders and 21% of fourth graders failed to attain comprehension level of 70%. Among comprehenders: students had consistent rates and comprehension across segments 1 and 3 but rates increased and comprehension decreased for segment 4.

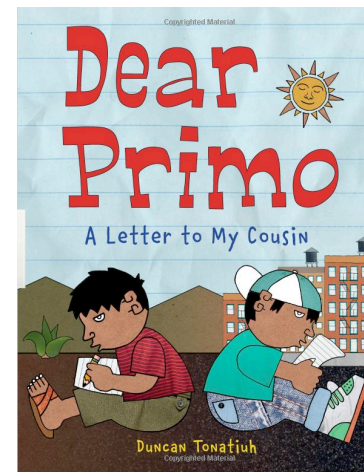
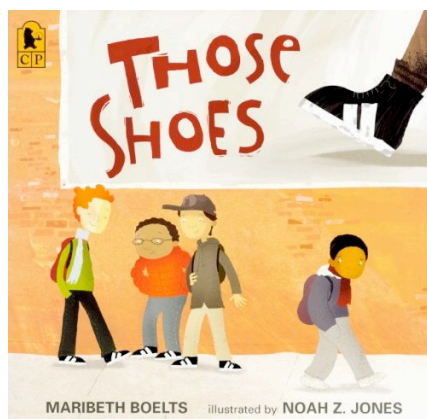
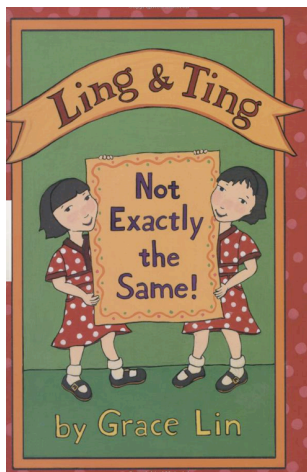
Stamina



7. KEEPING THE GOAL IN SIGHT

Level	Source	Title	Curriculum	
			Word Recognition	Comprehension Strategies
2.1	CCSS	• <i>The Fire Cat</i> (Averill, 1960)	600 most-frequent (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1-3 letters	Follow story structure with a dilemma that is fairly common (e.g., a mischievous cat, twins who are different)
	High recognition	• <i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i> (Lobel, 1970)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Ling and Ting</i> (Lin, 2010) • <i>Fly High, Fly Guy</i> (Arnold, 2008)		
2.2	CCSS	• <i>The Treasure</i> (Shulevitz, 1978)	1,000 most-frequent (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1- 4 letters	Follow story structure where characters need to make choices (e.g., giving away shoes)
	High recognition	• <i>Henry & Mudge</i> (Rylant, 1987)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Those Shoes</i> (Boelts, 2007) • <i>Grandfather Counts</i> (Cheng, 2003)		
2.3	CCSS	<i>Tops & Bottoms</i> (Stevens, 1995)	1,000 most frequent words (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1-5 letters	Understand that characters may be “playing” tricks (as in a fable); compare/contrast contexts
	High recognition	<i>Good Luck, Ronald Morgan</i> (Giff, 1999)		
	Contemporary	• <i>Dear Primo</i> (Tonatiuh, 2010) • <i>Amazing Grace</i> (Hoffman, 1991)		

Level	Source	Title	Curriculum	
			Word Recognition	Comprehension Strategies
2.1	CCSS	• <i>The Fire Cat</i> (Averill, 1960)	600 most-frequent (& inflected endings) + less-frequent words with 1-3 letters	Follow story structure with a dilemma that is fairly common (e.g., a mischievous cat, twins who are different)
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Grade 2.1

“Tell me a story,” Ling says.
 “Okay,” Ting says. Once upon a time there were twin girls. They were named Ling and Ting. People saw them and said, you two are exactly the same.
 “Oh good” Ling says. “I know this story.”

Grade 2.2

I have dream about those shoes. Black high tops. Two white stripes.
 “Grandma, I want them.”
 “There's no room for want around here, just need,” Grandma says. “And what you need are new boots for winter.”

Grade 2.3

Dear primo Carlitos,
 I live in a city. From my window I can see a bridge and cars zooming by. I can see skyscrapers, too. Skyscrapers are buildings so tall they tickle the clouds. At night all the lights from the city look like the stars from the sky.



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TextProject

TextProject aims to bring beginning and struggling readers to high levels of literacy through a variety of strategies and tools, particularly the texts used for reading instruction.

TextProject Topics

- Common Core State Standards
- Beginning Reading
- Morphological Awareness
- Content & Story Words
- Silent Reading & Reading Stamina
- Reading Automaticity & Fluency

Upcoming Events

Jan 21, 2012 in CSU, East Bay
Alameda County Office of
Education: English Learner
Conference 2011

Reading Today The Common Core's Staircase of Text Complexity: Getting the Size of the First Step Right

TextProject president and CEO Elfrieda (Freddy) Hiebert explains why the assertion in the Common Core State Standards that K-3 reading texts have been dumbed down along with those for higher grades is contradicted by research, that too much text complexity in lower grades is an obstacle to beginning reading proficiency, and that there is no evidence that the recommended increase in complexity for third-grade texts will improve reading proficiency at higher grades. The article appears in the December 2011/January 2012 issue of IRA's *Reading Today* (digital magazine version available online to IRA members only) but is  [reprinted here](#) from *Reading Today* with the permission of the International Reading Association.

TEtT Products

TextProject creates reading programs based on our **TEtT** model of text complexity.



Among the leading classroom reading

programs based on TEtT are [QuickReads](#) and [ZipZoom](#).



SummerReads is TextProject's free summer reading program, based on the TEtT model, that helps at-risk readers avoid the summer slump.



For Fall 2011, TextProject launches our new **BeginningReads** program to support bringing children into reading by connecting their oral language knowledge

Teacher Support

TextProject helps teachers who want to improve their students' reading achievement.



Reading activities promote fluency and vocabulary, including

E4: Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events (still free but newly revised, updated and polished) and [QuickReads Word Pictures](#).

Professional development, including a series of upcoming [webinars](#), provides teachers background on the elements of reading success.

Benchmark Texts: Stepping Up Complexity is a set of contemporary benchmark books that complement those

Research

TextProject's new Reading Research Report series documents innovations in reading education.



The latest report looks at the

measurement of text complexity under the guidelines of the CCSS.

The **TextProject Library** contains a decade's worth of research articles, presentation slides and more from founder Elfrieda H. Hiebert and her colleagues.

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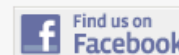
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