

Vocabulary Instruction & the Common Core

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Vocabulary Instruction & the Common Core

- ★ The role of vocabulary in complex text
- ★ Uniqueness of complex vocabulary of informational & narrative texts

Standard 10: Range, Quality, & Complexity of Student Reading

Grade 6 students:

Grade 7 students:

Grade 8 students:

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

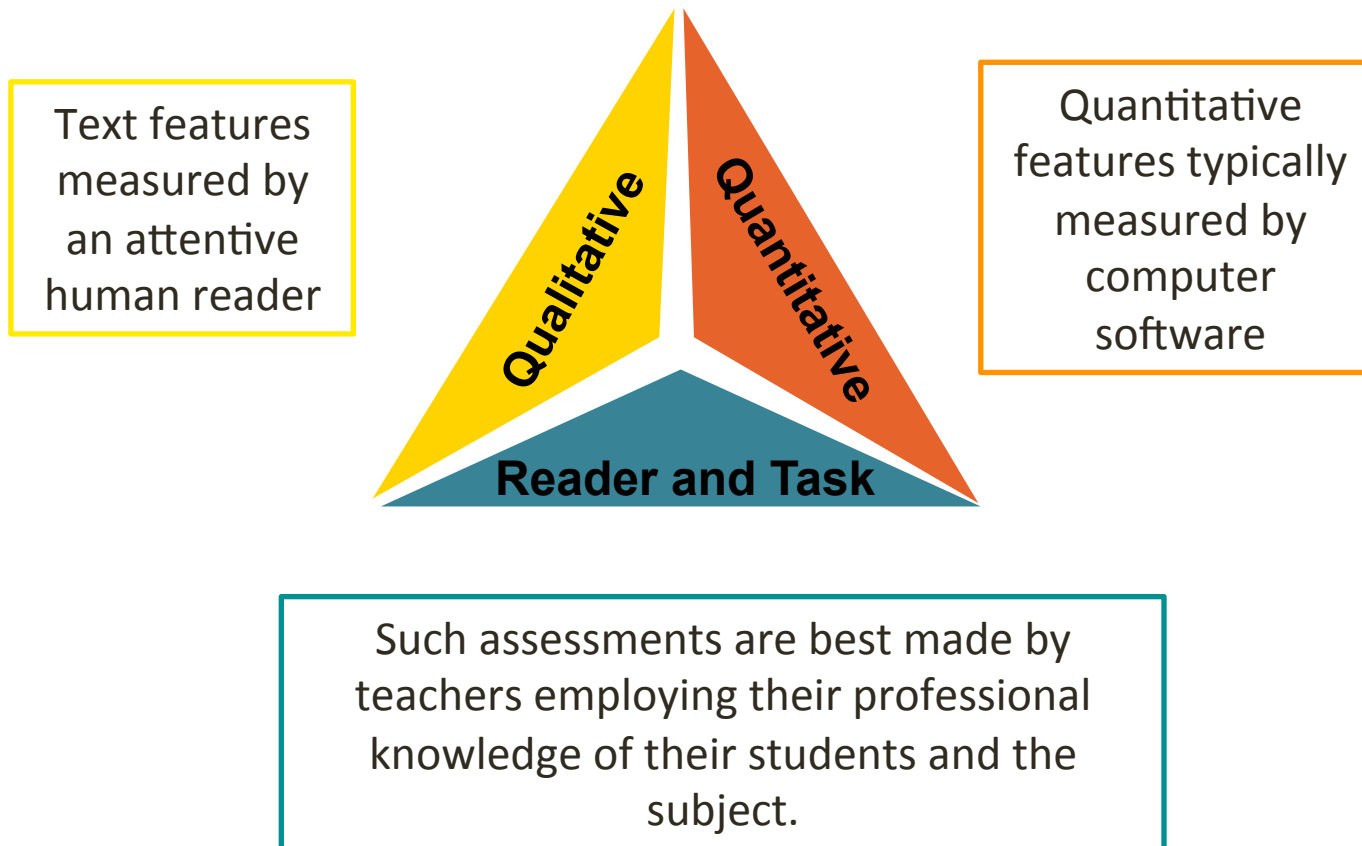
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10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

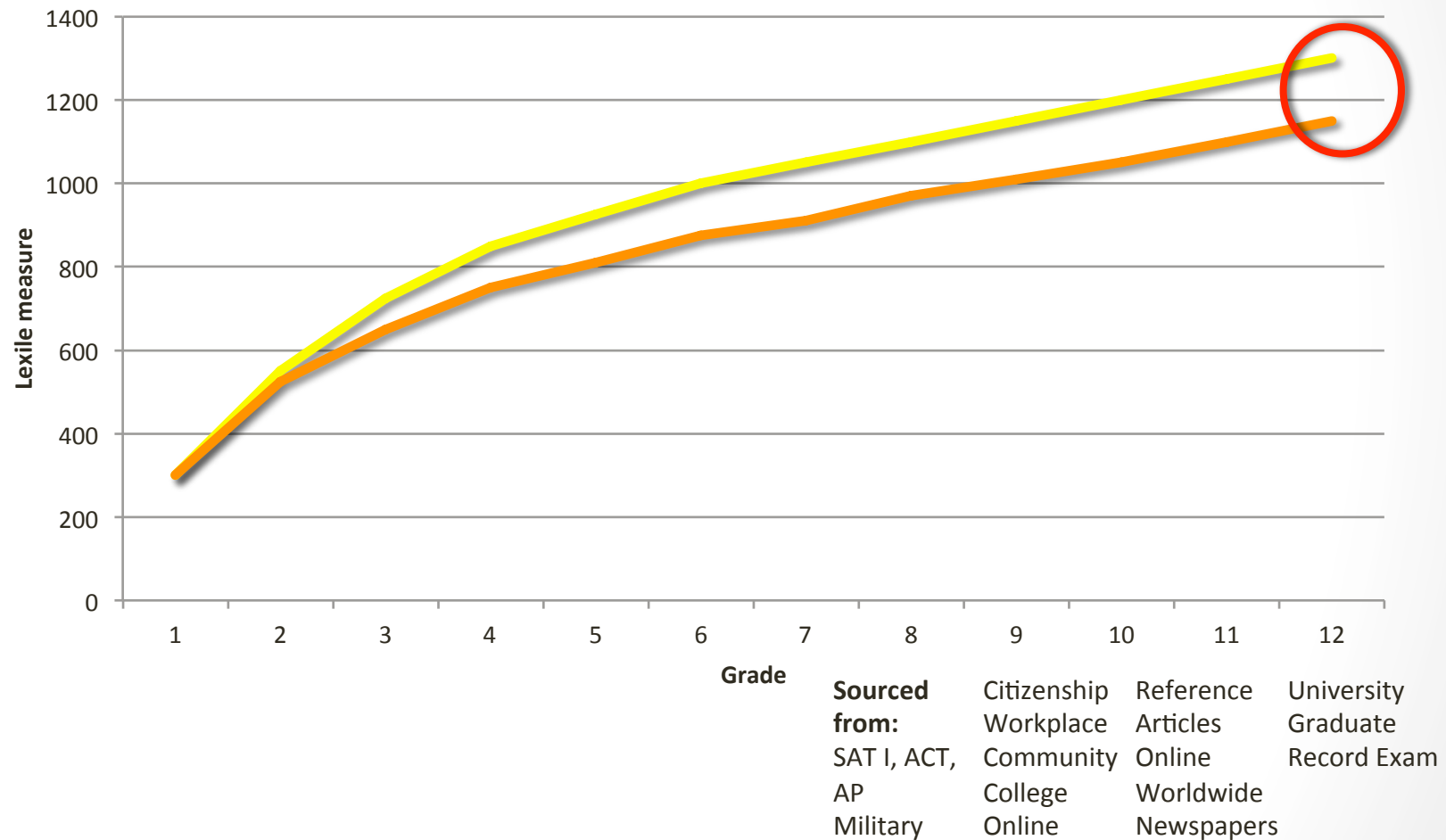
Texts Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, and Range of Student Reading 6-12

	Literature: Stories, Dramas, Poetry	Informational Texts: Literary Nonfiction
6-8	▪ <i>Little Women</i> by Louisa May Alcott (1869) ▪ <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Twain (1876) ▪ "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost (1915) ▪ <i>The Dark Is Rising</i> by Susan Cooper (1973) ▪ <i>Dragonwings</i> by Laurence Yep (1975) ▪ <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> by Mildred Taylor (1976)	▪ "Letter on Thomas Jefferson" by John Adams (1776) ▪ <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i> by Frederick Douglass (1845) ▪ "Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: Address to Parliament on May 13th, 1940" by Winston Churchill (1940) ▪ <i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i> by Ann Petry (1955) ▪ <i>Travels with Charley: In Search of America</i> by John Steinbeck (1962)
9-10	▪ <i>The Tragedy of Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare (1592) ▪ "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1817) ▪ "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe (1845) ▪ "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry (1906) ▪ <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> by John Steinbeck (1939) ▪ <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> by Ray Bradbury (1953) ▪ <i>The Killer Angels</i> by Michael Shaara (1975)	▪ "Speech to the Second Virginia Convention" by Patrick Henry (1775) ▪ "Farewell Address" by George Washington (1796) ▪ "Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln (1863) ▪ "State of the Union Address" by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1941) ▪ "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr. (1964) ▪ "Hope, Despair and Memory" by Elie Wiesel (1997)
11-CCR	▪ "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats (1820) ▪ <i>Jane Eyre</i> by Charlotte Brontë (1848) ▪ "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" by Emily Dickinson (1890) ▪ <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925) ▪ <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> by Zora Neale Hurston (1937) ▪ <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> by Lorraine Hansberry (1959) ▪ <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)	▪ <i>Common Sense</i> by Thomas Paine (1776) ▪ <i>Walden</i> by Henry David Thoreau (1854) ▪ "Society and Solitude" by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1857) ▪ "The Fallacy of Success" by G. K. Chesterton (1909) ▪ <i>Black Boy</i> by Richard Wright (1945) ▪ "Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell (1946) ▪ "Take the Tortillas Out of Your Poetry" by Rudolfo Anaya (1995)

Measuring Text Complexity



The Staircase of Text Complexity



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

Text Pair 1: Formerly Middle-School, Now Grs. 4-5 in CCSS Exemplars

It had been fun, those two months in India. He would miss Uncle Ralph, miss the days they had spent together in the jungle, even the screams of the panthers and the many eerie sounds of the jungle night. Never again would he think of a missionary's work as easy work.

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, and what is the use of a book, thought Alice without pictures or conversation?

Text Pair 2: Common Core Exemplars for Middle School

The door to the cook's quarters whacked open against the iron cot of Assistant Baker Charles Burgess. He woke up with a start and stared at Second Steward George Dodd standing in the doorway. Normally a rotund, jolly man, Dodd looked serious as he called, Get up lads, we're sinking.

Lord, W. (1955). *A night to remember*, NY: Bantam Books, p. 22.

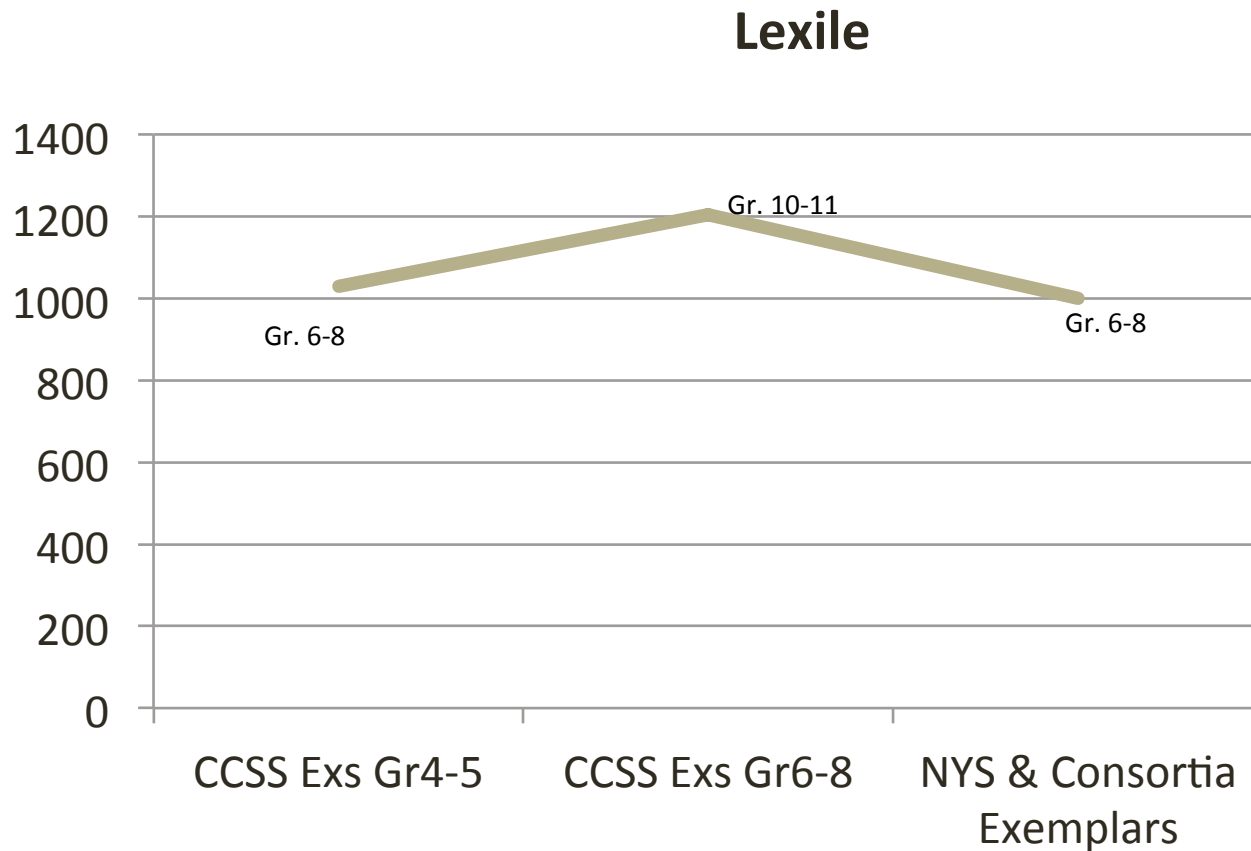
He wasn't just a kid at a computer, but something more, something new, an impresario, and an Information Age CEO, transfixed and concentrated, almost part of the machinery, conducting the digital ensemble that controlled his life...He was playing, working, networking, visiting, strategizing, all without skipping a function, getting confused, or stopping to think.

Katz, J. (2000). *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho*. NY: Broadway Books, p. 19.

Text Pair 3: Assessment Examples (IL State & PARCC)

Illinois Sample Assessment	PARCC Sample Assessment
Evans chose not to turn professional and earn money for his fine skill. This choice might seem unusual today, but Evans felt strongly that any money he earned from golf should return to the sport of golf. Evans respected the tradition of the game and felt that taking money from it would detract from its purity.	When 10-year old Amelia Mary Earhart saw her first plane at a state fair, she was not impressed. "It was a thing of rusty wire and wood and looked not at all interesting," she said. It wasn't until Earhart attended a stunt flying exhibition, almost a decade later, that she became seriously interested in aviation.
Keller, H. (1903). <i>The Story of My life</i>.	

One more piece of challenging news: Role of Syntax and Vocabulary in Lexiles



- Syntax accounts for 88% of the variance in Lexiles.
- Vocabulary accounts for 28% of the variance in Lexiles.

Digital readability formulas (Lexiles) provide no indication of challenging vocabulary

	Lexile	Sentence Length	Word Frequency
Henry & Mudge (First Book) (Gr. 2-3)	460	7.98	3.65
Black Ship (Gr. 6-8)	1050	17.75	3.65

Bending close to look at it, everyone could see the words "To the fairest" traced on its side. *(Black Ship)*

Then he found Mudge. Mudge had floppy ears, not pointed. And Mudge had straight fur, not curly.

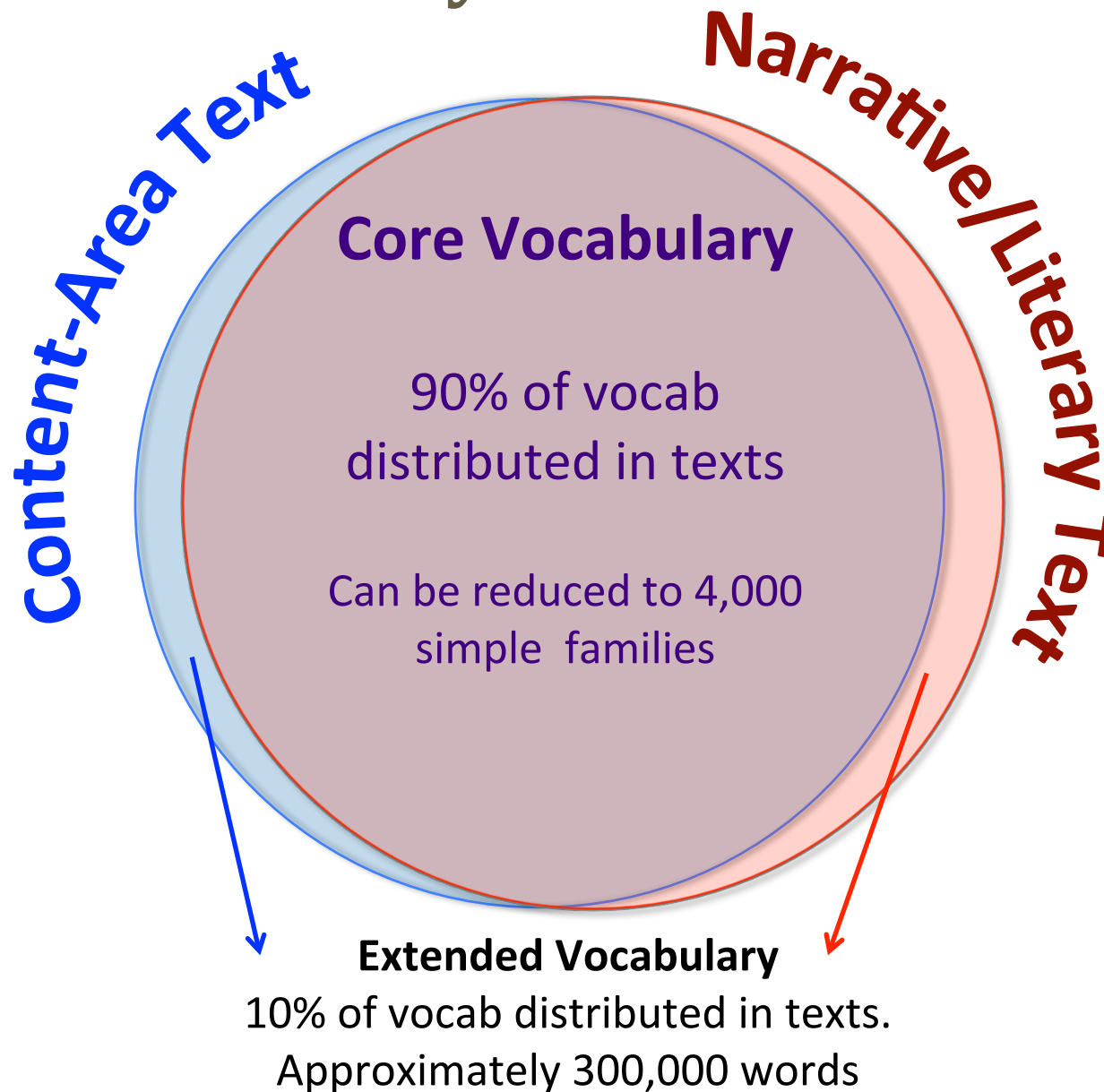
(Henry & Mudge, First Book)

Bottom Line

- Current quantitative text difficulty system(s) emphasize syntax, while vocabulary is the measure that consistently predicts students' comprehension performances.
- Further: evidence is strong that **vocabulary is amenable to instruction, especially for English Learners**. Syntax awareness can be improved through sentence combining/writing exercises and through extensive reading but **syntax knowledge *in reading* is much more difficult to influence directly through instruction** (Davis, 1944, 1968; Guo, Roehrig, & Williams, 2011; Pasquarella, Gottardo, & Grant, 2012)
- At present, **quantitative readability systems do not provide a good vocabulary indicator**. Teachers need to have a strategy for calculating challenging vocabulary (topic of next webinar).

THE “COMPLEX” VOCABULARIES OF INFORMATIONAL & NARRATIVE TEXTS

90-10 Vocabulary Distribution in Texts



Narrative/Literary Text

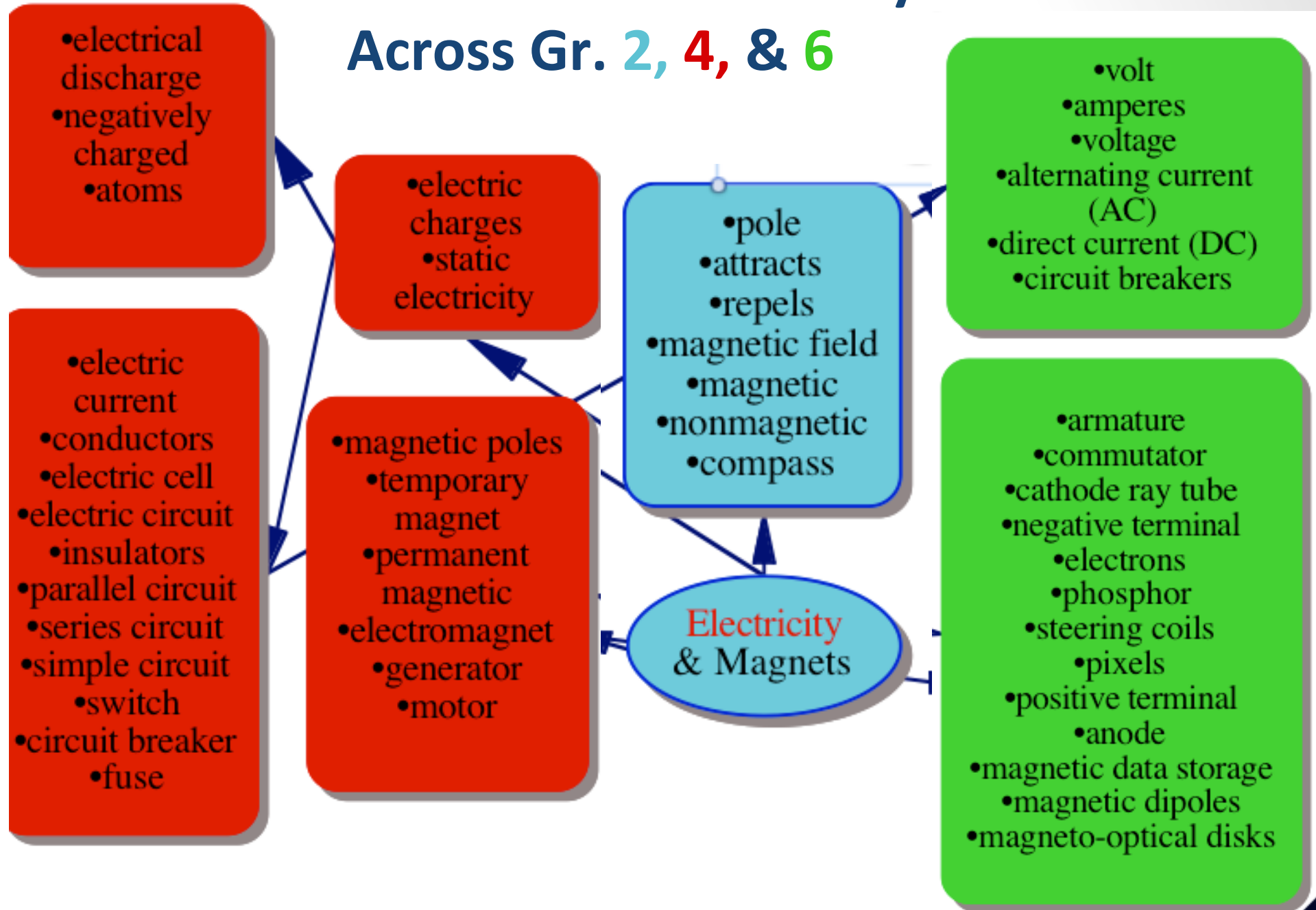
Ramona went to her room and looked at her table, which the family called Ramona's studio, because it was a clutter of crayons, different kinds of paper, bits of yarn, and odds and ends that Ramona used for amusing herself. Then Ramona thought a moment, and suddenly, filled with inspiration, she went to work.

Content-Area (Informational) Text

Sound is made when matter vibrates. To vibrate means to move quickly back and forth. You can feel vibrations if you touch a bell that is ringing or a radio that is playing. The sounds you hear may be different, but they are all alike in one way. All sounds are made by vibrating matter.

Content-Area Vocabulary

Across Gr. 2, 4, & 6

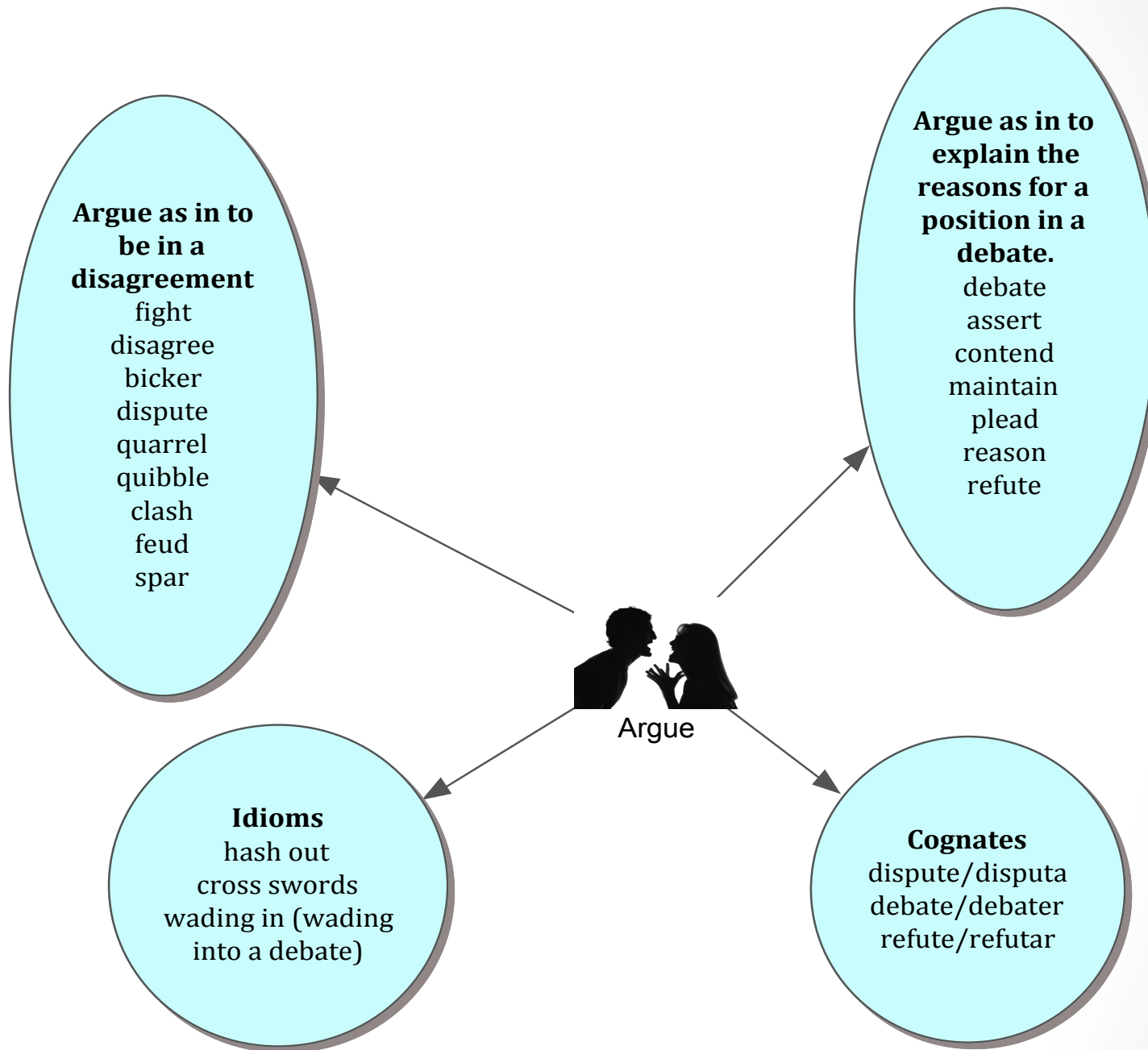


Teaching Narrative/Literary Words

Story Word	Examples of Words in Cluster (Beyond Story)
amazed	enchanted enthralled spellbound captivated transfixed
fascinated	
marveled	
baffled	confused bewildered mystified perplexed confounded
bewildered	
stumped	

Prolific Groups in Narrative/Literary Texts

Communication/ Internal Processes (verbs)	Emotions (adjectives)	Movement (verbs)
think	glad	go
argue	sad	send
observe	mad	start
guess	selfish	stop
say	fear	stay



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E4-01

Listen

Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events

An everyday event in classrooms revolves around listening—listening to peers, teachers, CDs, DVDs, announcements on the school sound system, and so on. Listening is an integral part of learning.

Listen is typically used as a verb. For example, teachers may ask students to listen carefully to a guest speaker. In this instance, **listen** is used as “to hear attentively.” Another use of the word **listen** can be exemplified by a student complaining to a friend or teacher that someone isn’t listening to what is being said. In this instance, **listen** is used to describe the act of paying attention. This second use of **listen** is as a command as when someone says, “Listen! It’s important to hear the announcement.”

Although **listen** is commonly used as a verb, **listen** can also be used as a noun. A person can ask that someone give an idea or a song a listen. In this case, **listen** is used to describe trying something out by listening to it.

Follow-Ups

- How is listening different from hearing?
- How might vigilant listening differ from observant listening? Listening circumspectly and listening respectfully?
- What are some things we can do to help others listen to our ideas?

The Spanish Connection

Listen comes from an Old English word that was spoken in the northern region of the British Isles—*lysna*. The Spanish word that means **to listen** is *escuchar*. *Lysna* and *escuchar* are not cognates. None of the synonyms for **listen** have Spanish cognates.

Word Changes

- The idiom “lend me your ears” comes from Shakespeare’s *JULIUS CAESAR*. The meaning of the idiom is to ask people to listen to what is about to be said. The idea is that the speaker wants the listener’s undivided attention and is asking for the listener’s metaphorical ears.



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CCSS

Webinar Series

Learn more about the Common Core State Standards by watching our new webinar series. Our first webinar with Dr. P. D. Pearson is now recorded and can be viewed [here](#). Information about our other webinars is found at the [webinar series homepage](#).

Student Resources

TextProject provides free, downloadable sets of texts that fill specific needs:

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