

TEXT COMPLEXITY AND HOW IT APPLIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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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.

*p. 6..and similar statement made for English Learners

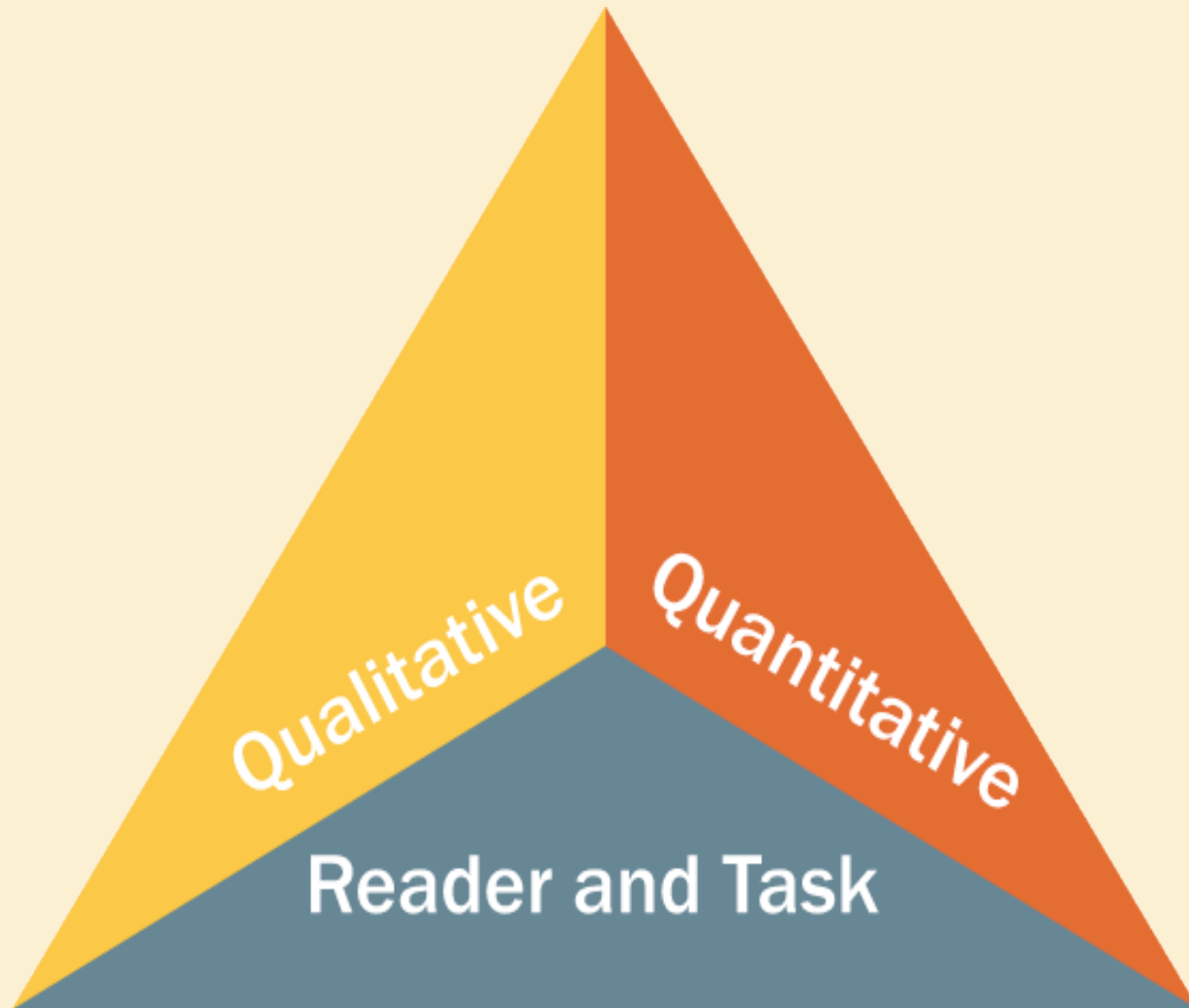
FOCUS OF TODAY'S SESSION: CCSS & COMPLEX TEXT

- I. What's complex text?
- II. How are our students doing with complex texts?
- III. How do you build capacity to read complex text?
 - a) Ways NOT to improve capacity with complex text
 - b) Ways to improve capacity with complex text

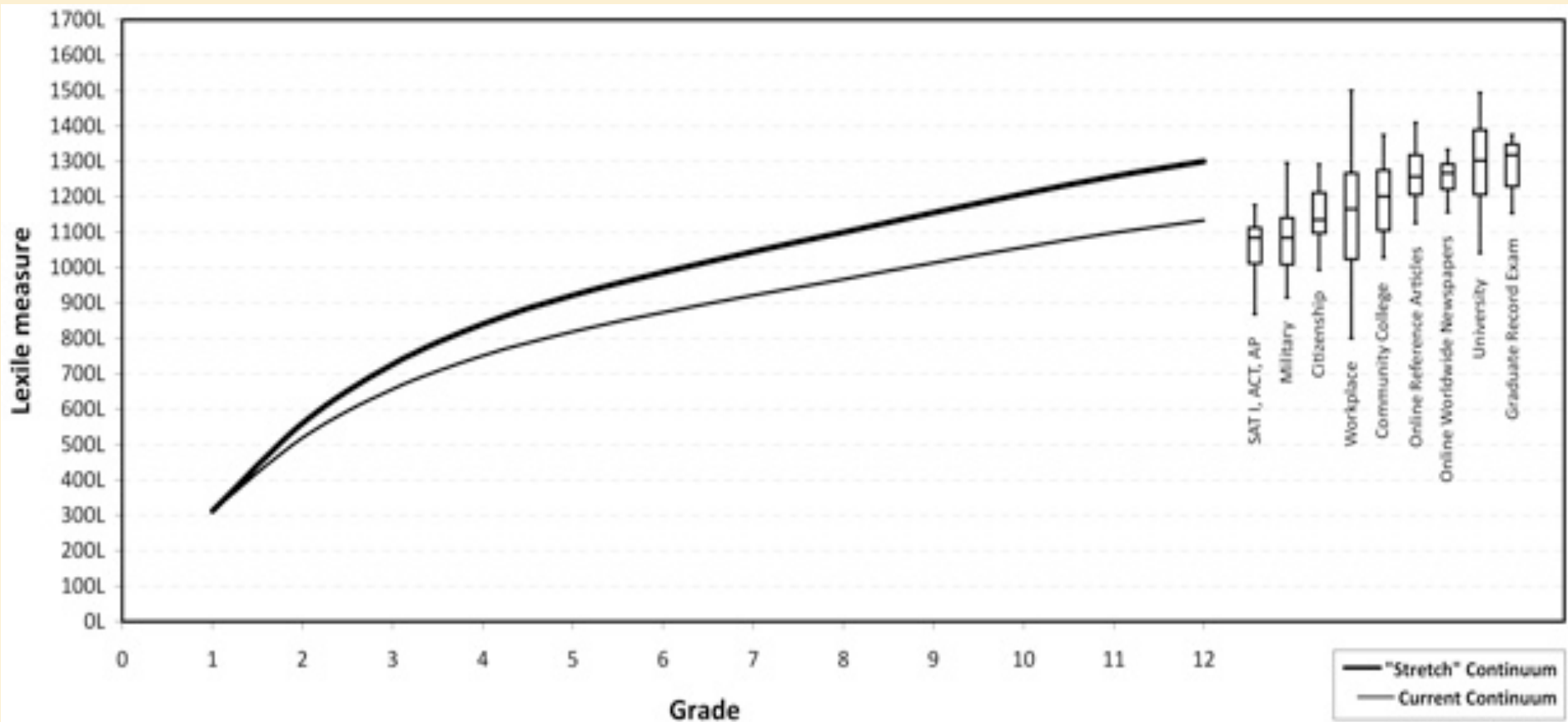
I. WHAT'S A COMPLEX TEXT?

- ✧ 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.

The view of text difficulty within the Common Core State Standards



RECALIBRATED QUANTITATIVE SCALE



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

The CCSS 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	Blue	Red
11-CCR					Blue	Red

Blue	Old Metrics recommendations
Red	CCSS Recommendations

II. HOW ARE OUR STUDENTS DOING WITH THE TEXTS?

2009



■ Proficient & Above ■ Basic ■ Below Basic

III. HOW DO YOU INCREASE CAPACITY WITH COMPLEX TEXT?

a) What you don't do:

- Give students who can't read well hard texts.
- Reading texts aloud to students does not develop independent reading (this is not to say that there are not occasions for read-alouds)

ANSWER:

When the gap in reader capacity and text requirements becomes greater than approximately 90% accuracy, even comprehension of at/above level readers suffers

Text-Reader Gap	Reader Level	Mean Comp (%)
EASY (101-401L below)	Below	81
	At/Above	84
ON-LEVEL (100 below to 50L above)	Below	66
	At/Above	72
STRETCH (51 to 100L above)	Below	59
	At/Above	64
DIFFICULT (101 to 400L above)	Below	47
	At/Above	53

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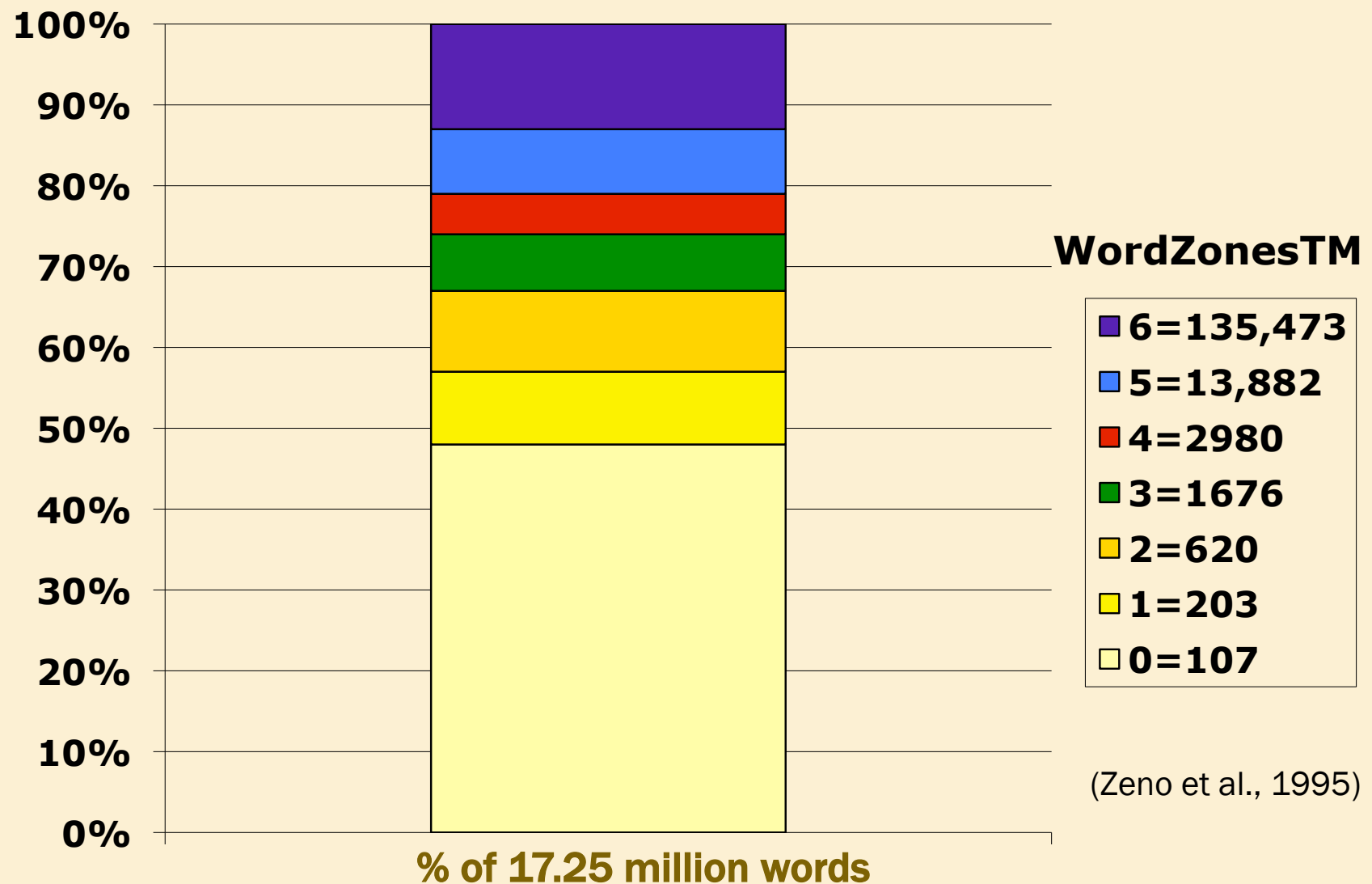
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III-b. How do you increase capacity for reading complex text? What students need:

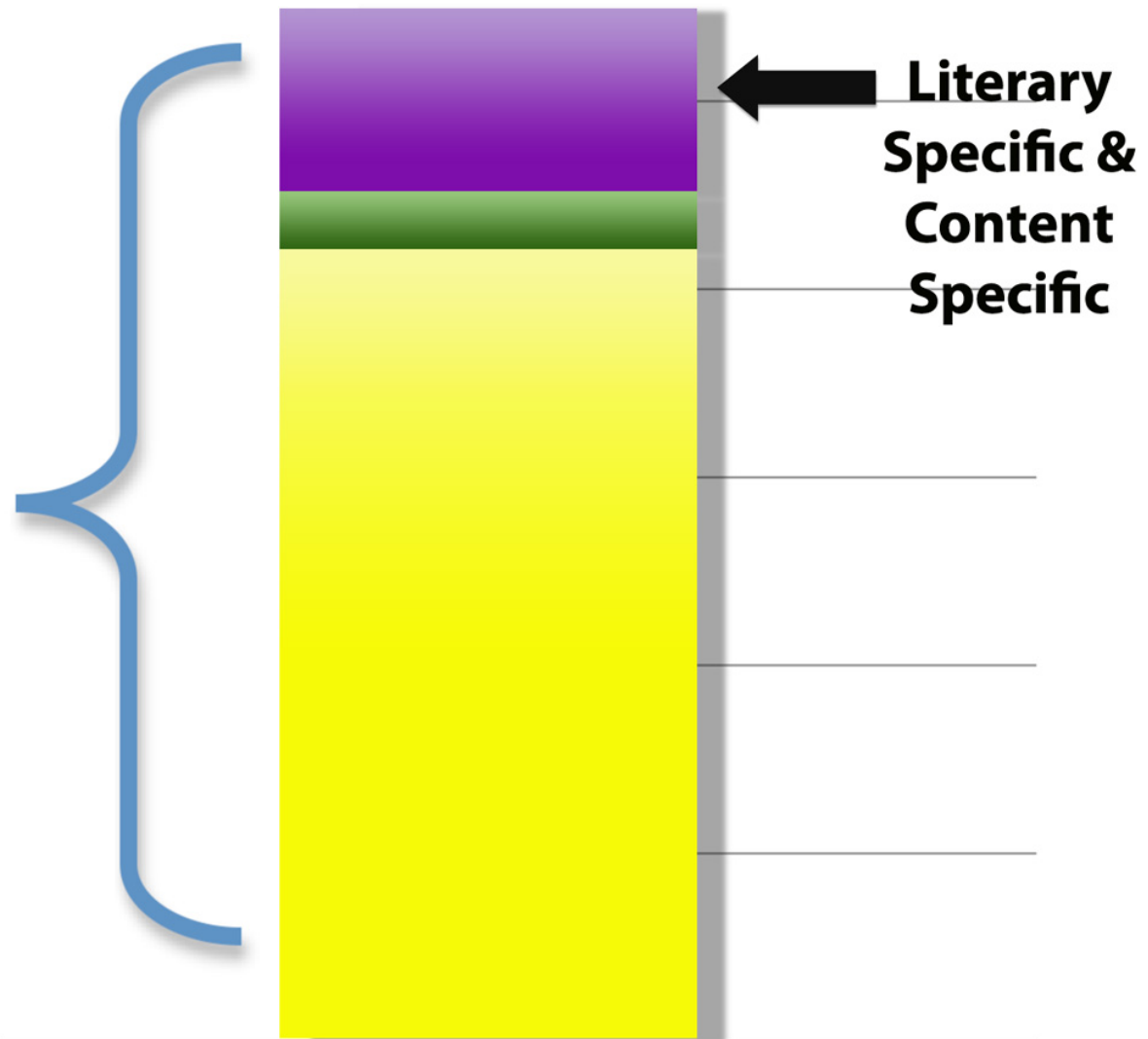
- i. Consistent opportunities with texts that support capacity with core vocabulary
- ii. Systematically extending vocabularies in informational & narrative texts
- iii. Opportunities to increase reading stamina
- iv. Support in developing funds of knowledge

III-b-i: Consistent opportunities with texts that support capacity with core vocabulary

Core and Extended Vocabularies: Words in American Textbooks



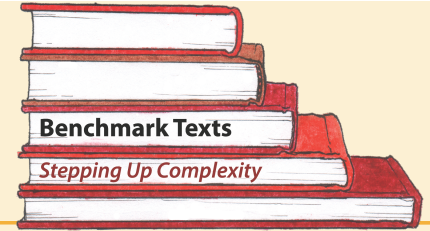
**Word
Flexibility**



Proportion of Vocabulary

 **Core**  **Core Morph.**  **Extended**

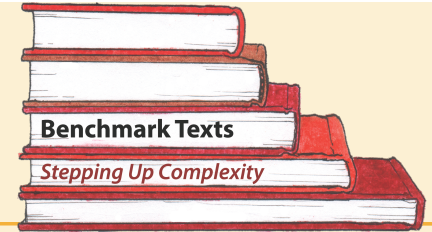
Stepping Up Complexity: Building Capacity with Core Vocabulary



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

Beginning
Reads™

Level 2
Set 2
Book 3

Get the Ball



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For more information about BeginningReads, visit www.textproject.org/beginningreads
v.1.0 © 2011 TextProject, Inc. Some rights reserved (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/>).

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.

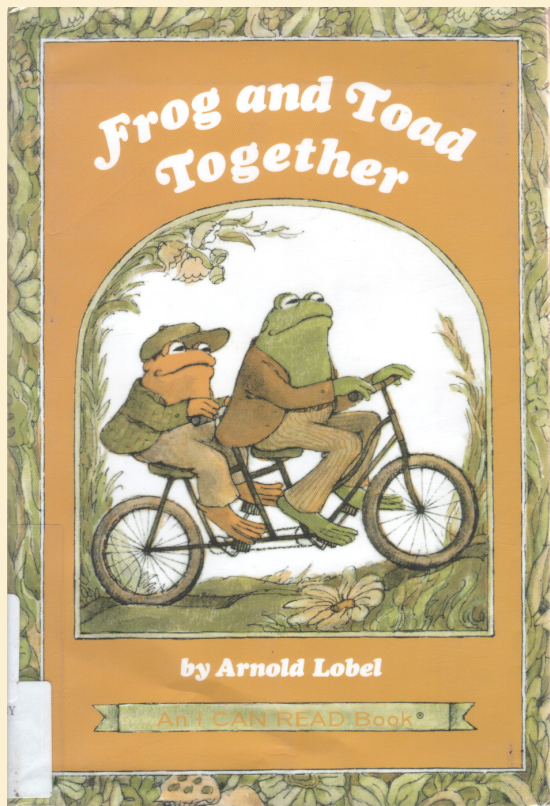
Dogs can run with balls. Cats **cannot** run with balls.

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

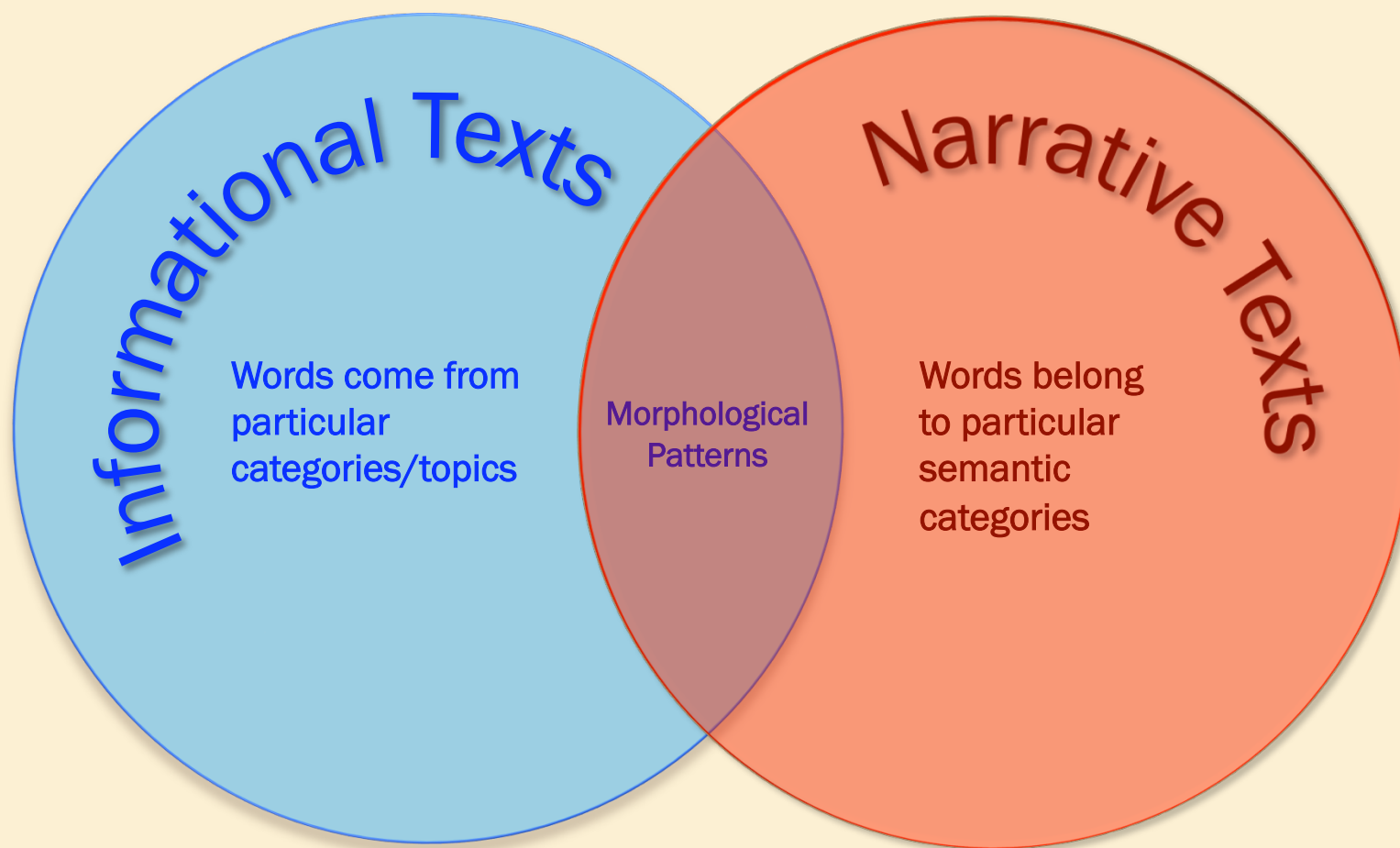
Music in Schools



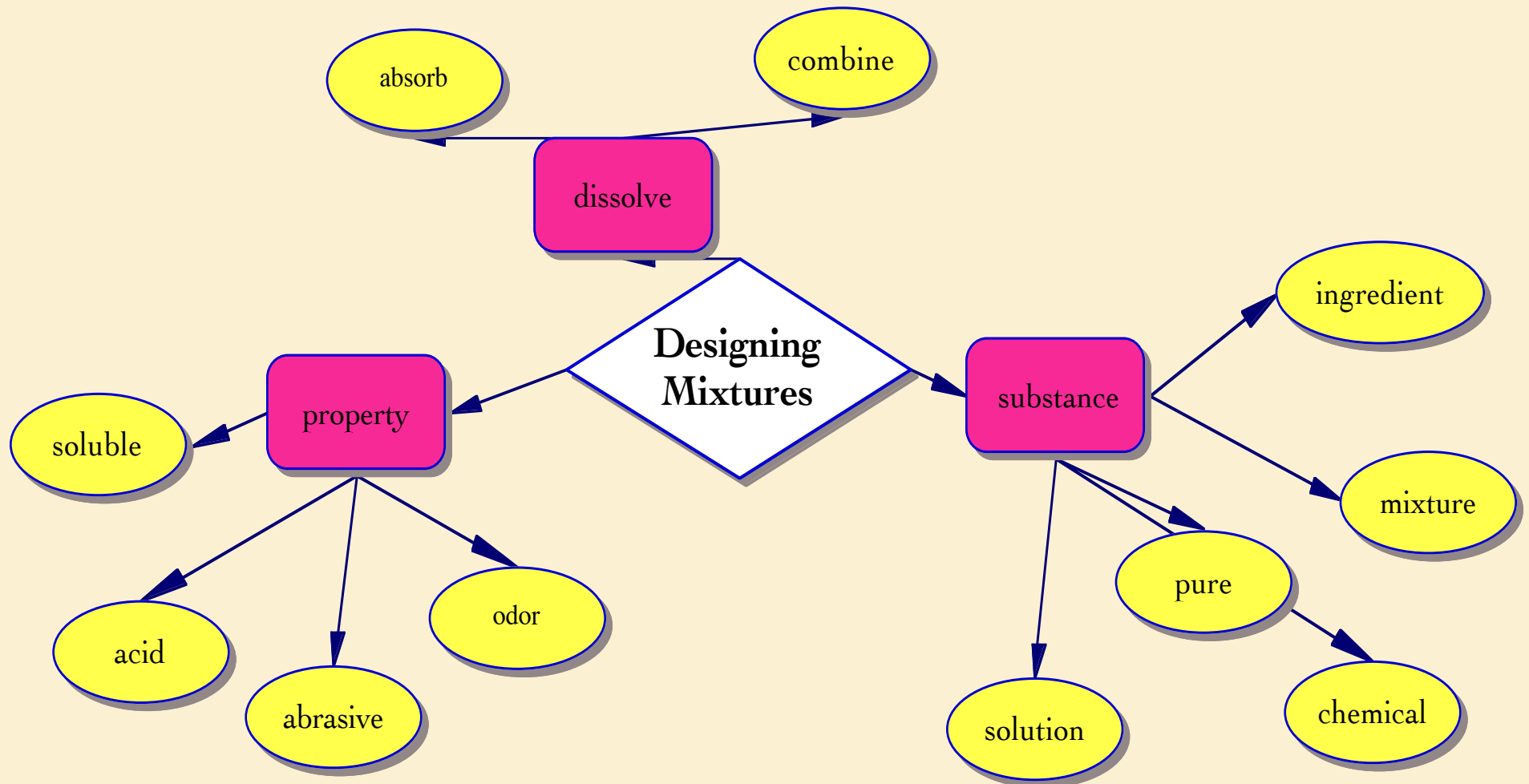
Written by Andrew Funk

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, school board members are faced with a hard choice. Music programs can be costly. **Violins, trumpets**, and pianos are expensive to buy. They are also expensive to repair. Further, usually not all of the students in a school take music classes. When faced with the choice of larger classes or music programs, school leaders will often focus on math, science, and language arts.

III-b-ii: Systematically extending vocabularies in informational & narrative texts



Teaching CORE CONCEPT Vocabulary: An Illustration





Natural Resources & the Economy



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

Middle: Refilling a 18L water jug. Released into public domain by Myke2020 in en:wikimedia.

Right: A child drinks water from a well built by Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 in Shant Abak. Released into public domain by the United States Navy.

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

Factories



Left Photo: Factory. September, 2010. ©2010 by Hugo.arg. In en:wikimedia. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA-3.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

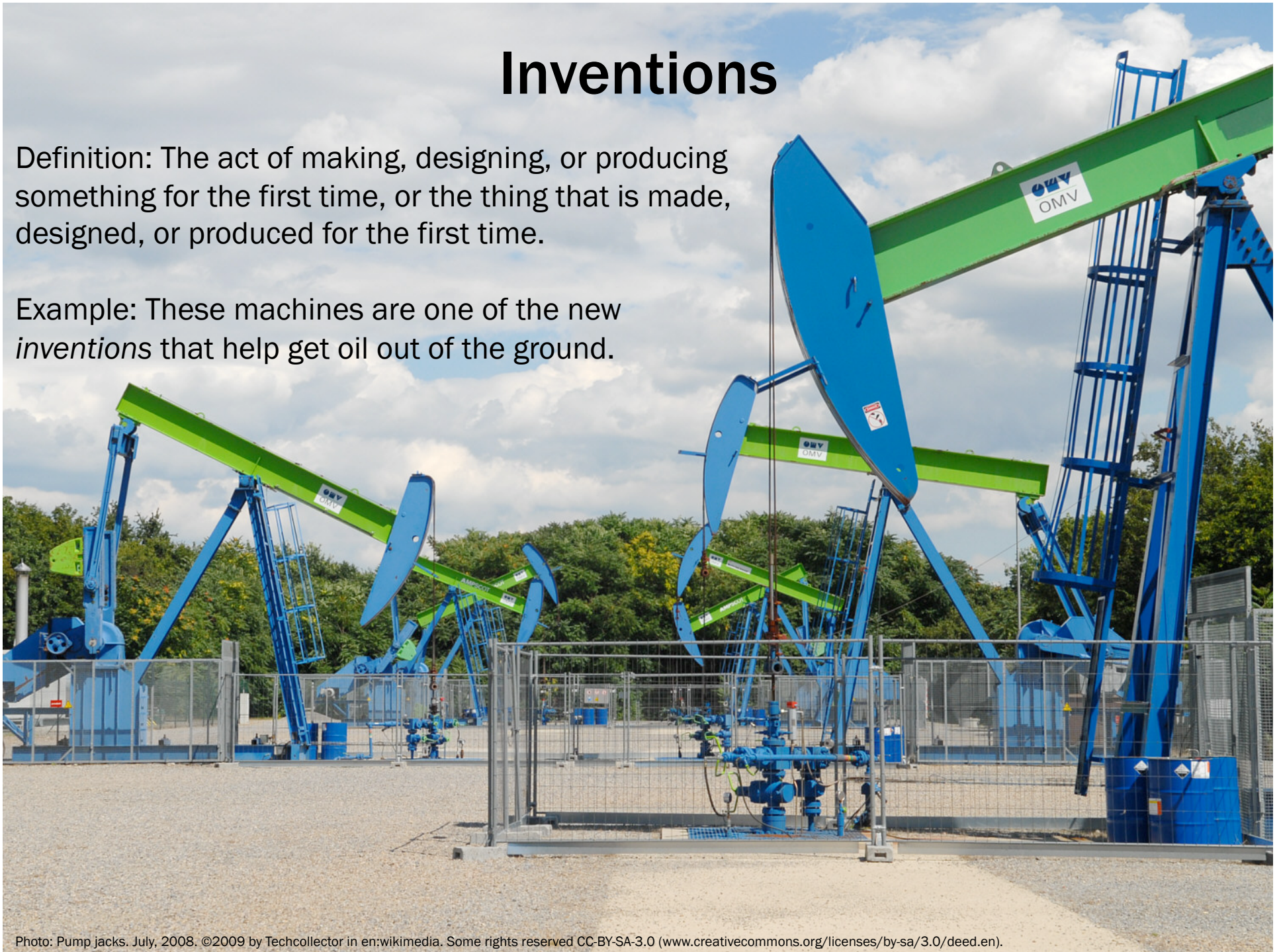
Top right: Worker in bottle factory. June, 2008. ©2008 by Seattle Municipal Archives. Some rights reserved CC-BY-2.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

Bottom right: Sugar Factory. Unknown date. Taken by Skuratov S S. in en:wikimedia. Released into public domain by the copyright holder, Skuratov S S.

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



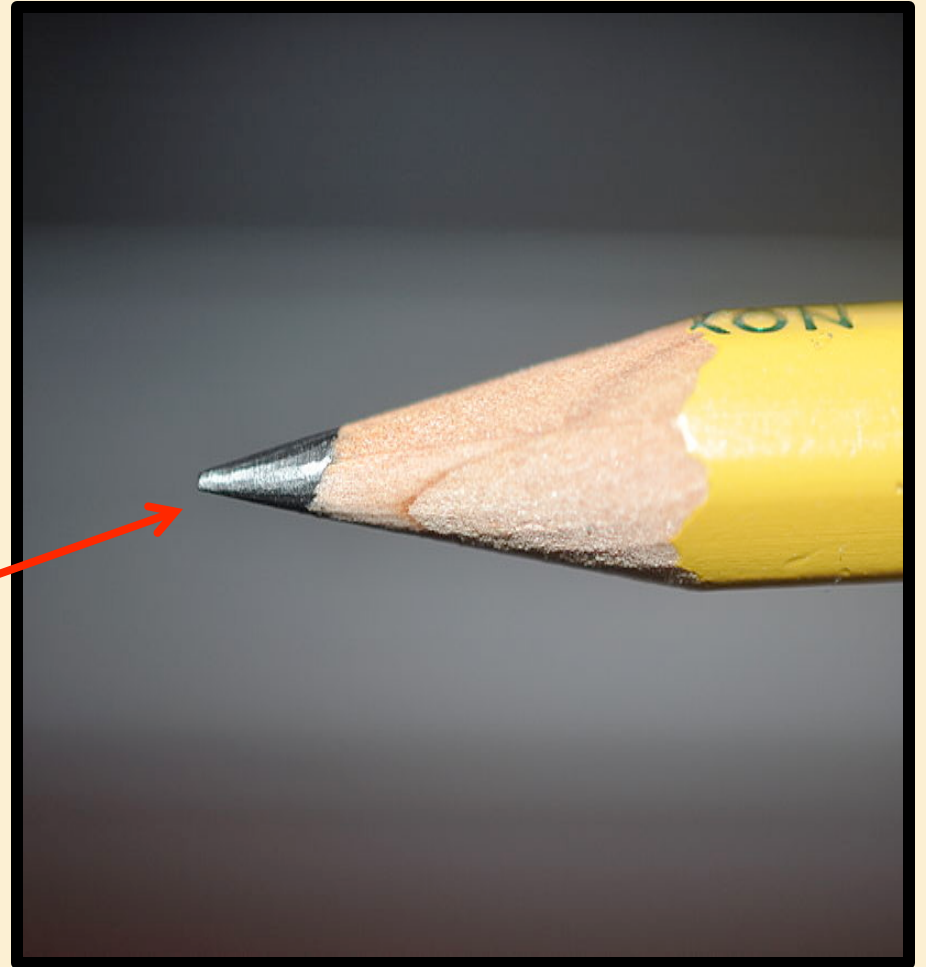
Definition: Something such as land, mineral, or natural energy that exists in a country and can be used in order to increase its wealth

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



Left Photo: New beech leaves, March, 2005. ©2007 by Malene Thiesen. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA-2.5 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/deed.en). Right: Two A7 notebook. January, 2011. ©2011 by Mk2010, in en.wikipedia. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA 3.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Graphite



Center photo: Graphite. June, 2009. ©2009 by Ra'ike. Some rights reserved CC-BY-SA-3.0 (www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en). Right: Pencil tip. May, 2011. Taken by Juliancolton in en:wikimedia. Released into public domain by the copyright holder, Juliancolton.

Teaching the Words of Stories

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

Talk as in a conversation (noun)

- conversation
- chat
- discussion
- slang
- dialogue
- chatter
- lecture
- address
- speech
- meeting
- conference
- summit
- utterance
- gossip
- comment
- debate

Talk as in to speak casually (verb)

- chat/chatter
- scuttlebutt
- gossip
- comment
- smooze
- mention
- say
- utter
- remark

Talk as in to speak (verb)

- speak
- verbalize
- converse
- vocalize
- articulate
- communicate
- confer
- dialogue

Talk as in to speak in a specific way (verb)

- whisper
- flirt
- snap
- shout
- yell
- orate
- lecture
- pontificate
- address
- drone
- stammer
- bark
- slur
- bay
- jabber
- chant
- preach
- boast
- debate
- enunciate
- pronounce
- question
- ask
- declare



Talk

COMMON PHRASES

- Talk to me
- Talk back
- Talk over
- We need to talk

IDIOMS

- Talk a mile a minute
- Spit it out
- Talk big
- Talk sense
- Dance around the topic
- Speak up
- Talk it up
- Talk down
- Talk is cheap
- Talk it over
- Talking to a brick wall
- Talk of the town
- Small talk
- Speak of the devil
- Sweet talk
- Talk your ear off
- Talk in circles/riddles
- Talk shop
- Walk the talk
- Talk your way out of a paper bag
- Talk until your blue in the face
- You're a fine one to talk
- Shooting the breeze

THE SPANISH CONNECTION

- conversation / conversación
- discussion / discusión
- to discuss / discutir
- dialogue / diálogo
- to have a dialogue / dialogar
- comment / comentario
- to comment / comentar
- to mention / mencionar
- to verbalize / verbalizar
- to converse / conversar
- to communicate / comunicar
- communication / comunicación
- pronounce / pronunciar
- to debate / debatir
- debate / debate
- enunciate / enunciar
- pronounce / pronunciar
- declare / declarar



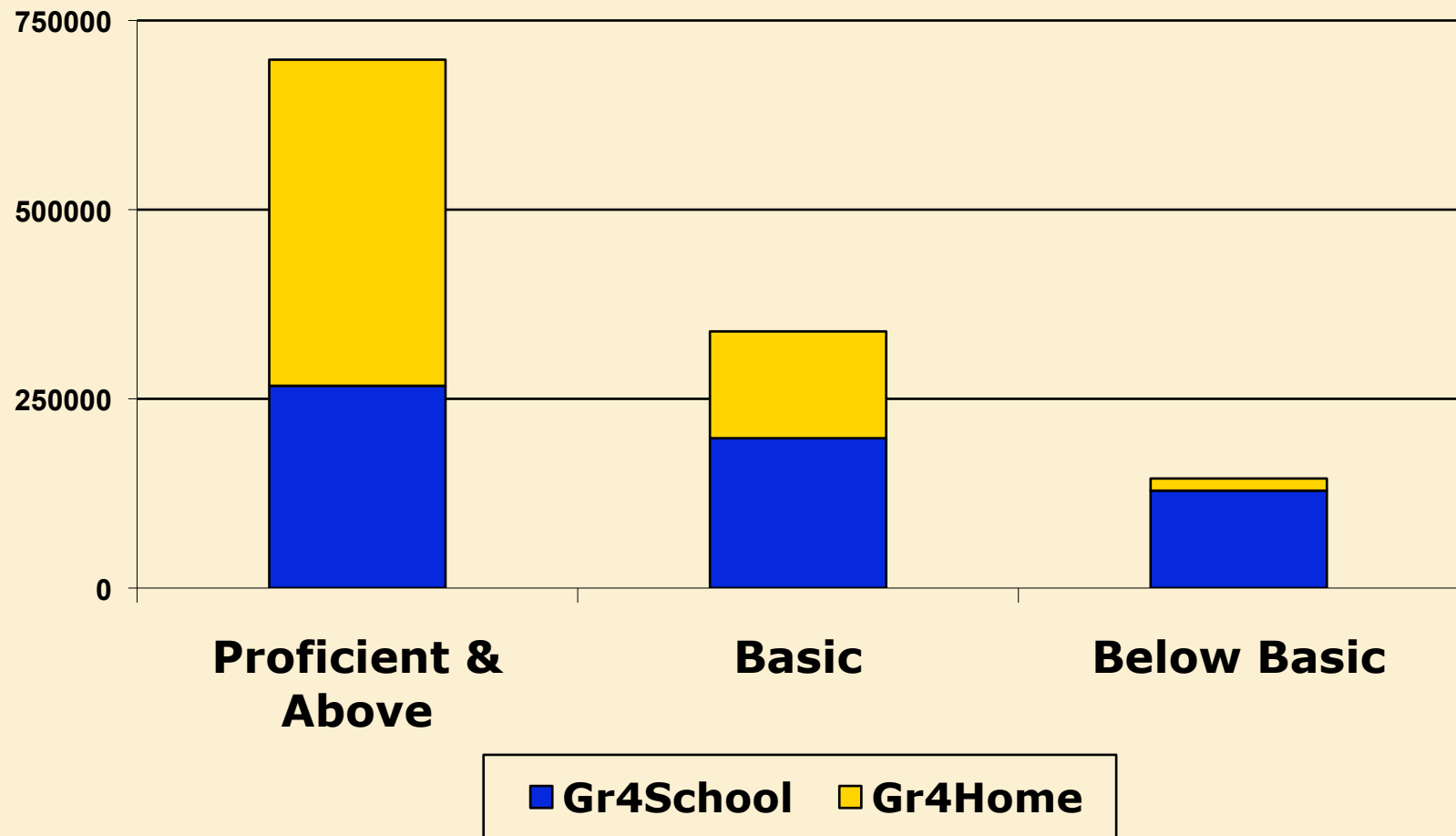
III-b-iii. Opportunities to increase reading stamina

Gr3 (Reading 1st): Amount students are reading

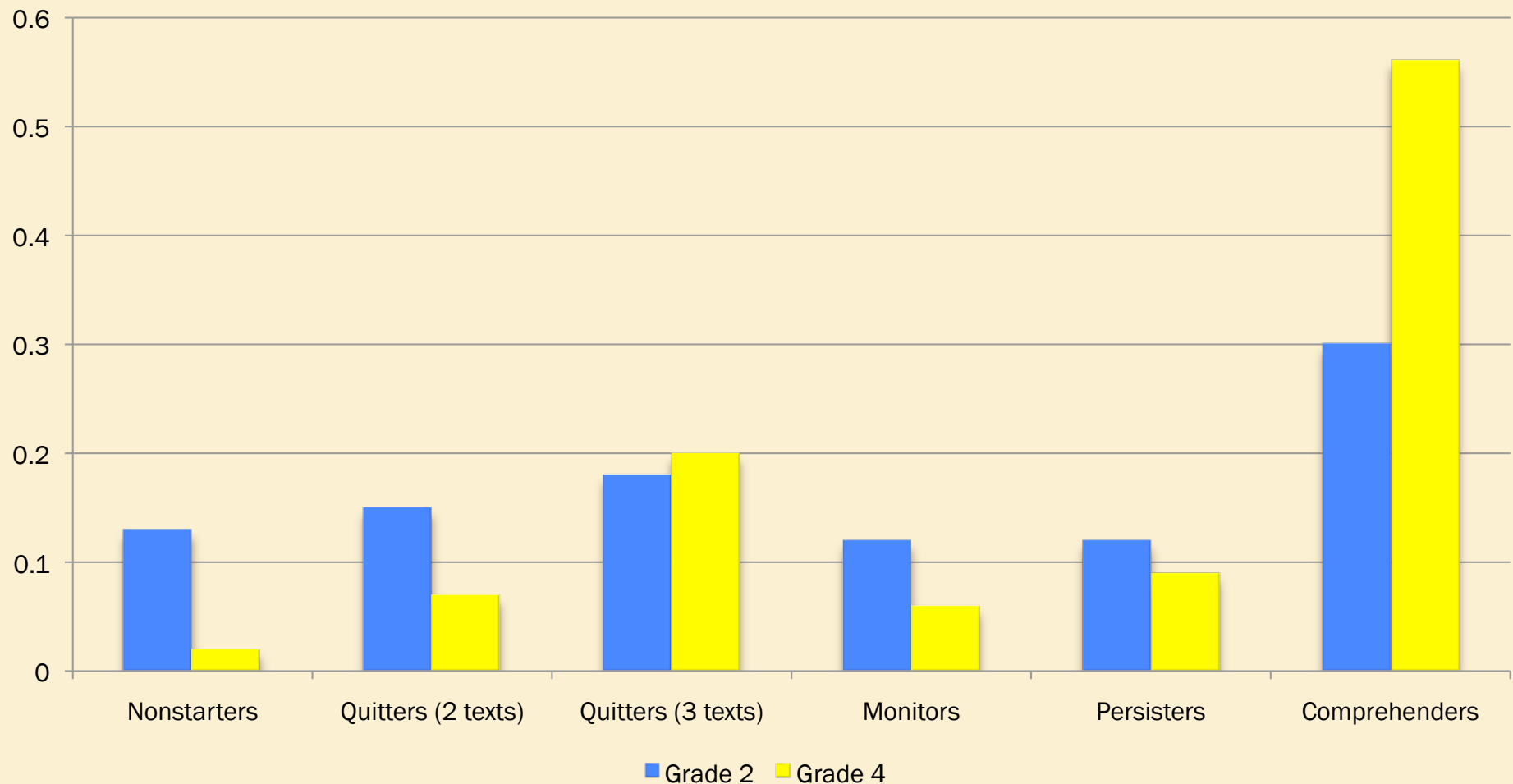
Length of Instructional Block	Time with eyes on text	% of entire Reading block spent with eyes on text
90-minute	17.57	20
100-minute	16.25	16
105-minute	18.49	18
120-minute	19.25	16
Overall	18.33	

(Brenner & Hiebert, 2010)

How much students are currently read: The gap widens



Reading Stamina: Students' ability/willingness to read long(er) texts



III-b-iv. Support in developing bodies of expertise/ knowledge with text

Marine life



Engineering & Building



Gardening



Organize new and prior knowledge

	I Read This	New Words I Learned	New Facts I Learned	What Else I Want to Learn About This Subject
Do Animals Talk?				
How Animals Communicate				
The Honeybee Dance				
Whales				
Dogs				
Danger Signals				
Insects				
What Is an Insect?				
An Animal with No Bones				
How Insects Move				
Where Insects Live				
How Insects Help and Hurt				
Trees				
What is a Tree?				
Make a Guess				
The Giants of Trees				
How Water Moves Through Trees				
Rings in Trees				

REVIEW Insects

Write words that will help you remember what you learned.

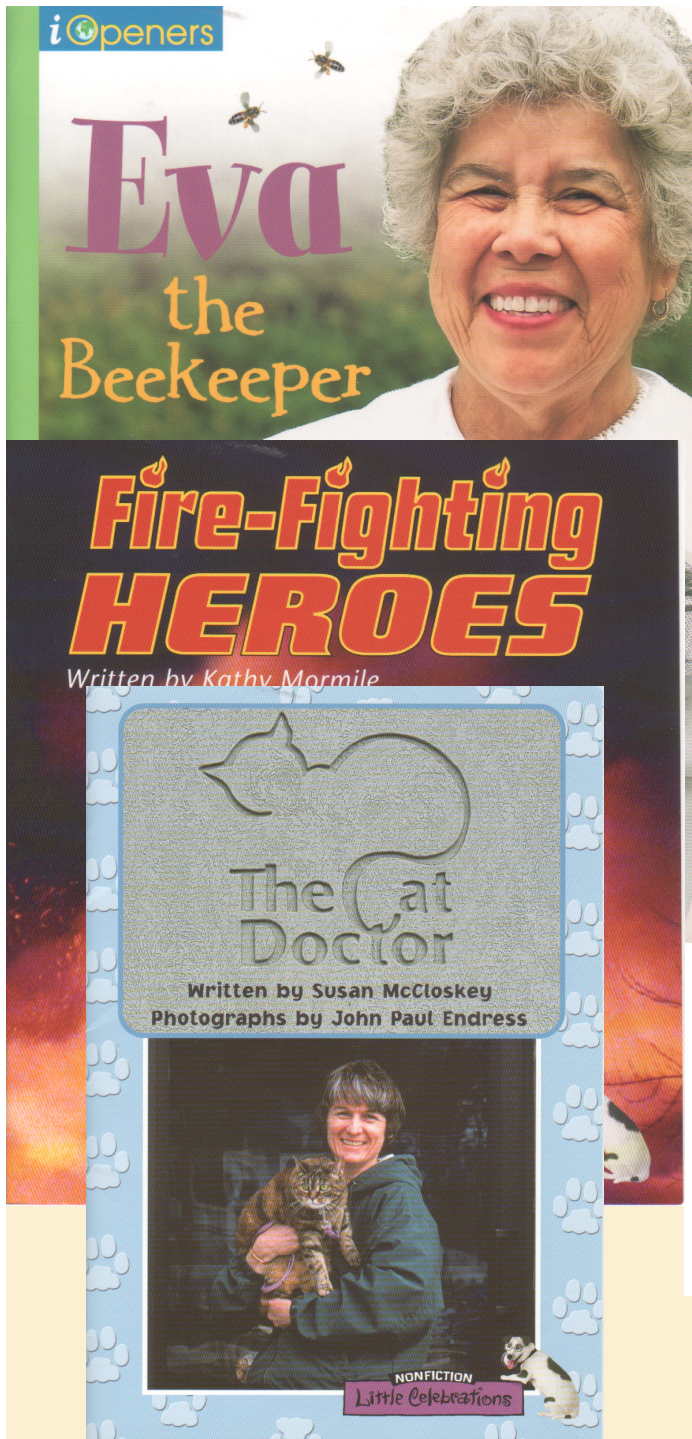
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An Animal with No Bones

How Insects Move

Where Insects Live

How Insects Help and Hurt



Extensive Reading: Be an Expert

QuickReads™
A Research-Based Fluency Program

Jobs Around Us

Level B
Book 2

What job do you want to Become an Expert about?

What Do You Know?

Think about 5 jobs that people around you do.

What Can You Find Out?

Choose one job and ask the person about it.
Here are some questions to get started:

- What are two things you do every day?
- What did you have to learn to do your job?
- What's the most important thing you do?
- Why do you like your job?

What Have You Learned?



How does the job help you
and others around you?

Write about it in your
Expert blog.

Modern
Curriculum
Press
Pearson Learning Group

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www.textproject.org



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
- Texts for Early Reading
- Vocabulary: Morphology
- Vocabulary: Informational and Narrative Texts
- Reading More/Silent Reading
- Fluency & Automaticity

Upcoming Events

Sep 28–28, 2011 in Fairfield, CA

Solano County Annual Conference

Nov 3–4, 2011 in Austin, Texas
CREATE 2011

The Washington Post Are 21st century 5-year-olds cognitively ready to read?

TextProject founder Elfrieda (Freddy) Hiebert's examination of assumptions in the Common Core State Standards regarding kindergarten instruction and the history of kindergarten text difficulty appeared Friday, August 12 in the Washington Post blog, The Answer Sheet.

TEtX Products

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



Among the leading classroom reading programs based on TEtX are QuickReads and ZipZoom.



SummerReads is TextProject's free summer reading program, based on the TEtX 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 with written words.

Talking Points for Kids is a prototype program that aims to increase meaningful discussion with students.

Teacher Support

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



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 complements those already identified by Jeanne Chall and the CCSS.

Word lists, such as the popular WordZones™ for 5,586 Most Frequent Words, focus on the

Reading activities promote fluency and vocabulary, including

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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