

Supporting Students in Complex Texts

CRITICAL QUESTIONS and **INSTRUCTIONAL SCAFFOLDS** for teacher consideration.

Why are students reading this text?

- Learn or explore a concept.
- Analyze or evaluate an argument.

- Engage in the imagined world of the author.
- Understand/explore humanity.

INFORMATIONAL


? Is the author's **PURPOSE** subtle or difficult to determine?

 Provide a guiding question for reading.
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/middle-school-ela-unit-persuasion>


? Does the **STRUCTURE** of the text make it difficult to determine the main idea(s)?

 "Get the Gist in Baby Steps"
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://youtu.be/9emLkXIMcOs>

? Is the **LANGUAGE** dense, unfamiliar, and content-specific?

 Teach decoding strategies for vocabulary.
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://vimeo.com/99825098>

? Is the text difficult to understand because of complex **SENTENCE STRUCTURE**?

 Teach students to unpack complex structures.
VIDEO EXAMPLE (START @ 2:25)
<https://vimeo.com/47315992>

? Does understanding the text require significant **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**?

 Use a word sort to access background knowledge and create connections to text.
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/teaching-slavery>


NARRATIVE

? Are there several layers and levels of **MEANING**?


? Is the **STRUCTURE** of the text intricate, with shifting points of view and multiple storylines?

 Use "interrupted passages" to focus students on one layer at a time.
VIDEO EXAMPLE (START @ 1:40)
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/analyzing-author-choices-nea>

? Is the **LANGUAGE** complex, figurative or unfamiliar?

 Use the "sift" method to tease out symbolic and figurative meanings.
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/sift-method-analyze-literature>

? Is the **SENTENCE STRUCTURE** complex, often containing multiple thoughts or concepts?

 Break down the sentence to its basic parts, isolating meaningful chunks.
(EXPLANATION BEGINS ON PAGE 22)
https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/25/ELA_retreat-Wong%20Fillmorepart2.pdf

? Does the text assume the reader's **EXPERIENCE AND CULTURAL/HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE** of the topic?

 Preview the text, exploring social, cultural and historical contexts.
VIDEO EXAMPLE LINK
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/preview-challenging-topics>

? Where is the **BALANCE** between text complexity and task?

 Layer less complex texts to support more complex texts.
VIDEO EXPLANATION
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/simplifying-text-complexity>

Weave context, texture and fulcrum texts in a unit of study.

MORE INFORMATION HERE

http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Books/Supp_Students_9_12/49447_20-40.pdf



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