New York State Testing Program
Grade 7 Common Core
English Language Arts Test

Annotated Passages

November 2014
New York State Testing Program Common Core English Language Arts
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With the adoption of the New York P–12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in ELA/Literacy and Mathematics, the Board of Regents signaled a shift in both instruction and assessment. Starting in the Spring 2013, New York State (NYS) began administering tests designed to assess student performance in accordance with the instructional shifts and the rigor demanded by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). To aid in the transition to new assessments, New York State has released a number of resources, including test blueprints and specifications, sample questions, and criteria for writing assessment questions. These resources can be found at http://www.engageny.org/common-core-assessments.

New York State administered the ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Common Core tests in April 2014 and is now making a portion of the questions and passages from those ELA tests available for review and use. These released questions and passages will help students, families, educators, and the public better understand how tests have changed to assess the instructional shifts demanded by the Common Core and to assess the rigor required to ensure that all students are on track to college and career readiness.

Annotated Passages Are Teaching Tools

The released annotated passages herein are intended to help educators, students, families, and the public understand how the Common Core is different. The annotated passages demonstrate the rich, authentic, and complex texts necessary to support instruction and measurement of the knowledge, skills, and proficiencies described in the Common Core Learning Standards. These annotated passages are intended to illustrate how NYS uses quantitative metrics and qualitative rubrics to select and place passages for inclusion on the tests. In addition, the annotation can help educators understand in depth the text complexity demands that are a key requirement for growing students’ reading abilities as articulated by the Common Core.

Passage selection for Common Core English Language Arts Assessments

Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate passages requires both objective text complexity metrics and expert judgment. For NYS Common Core English Language Arts Tests, both quantitative metrics and qualitative rubrics are used to determine the complexity of the texts and their appropriate placement within a grade-level ELA exam.

Quantitative Measures of Text Complexity

Quantitative measures of text complexity are used to measure aspects of text complexity that are difficult for a human reader to evaluate when examining a text. These aspects include word frequency, word length (number of characters per word), sentence length, and text cohesion. These aspects are efficiently measured by computer programs, and all of the measures listed below can be accessed for
free online. (For more information about these metrics, including how to access these measures online, please see http://achievethecore.org/page/642/text-complexity-collection.)

Based on research and the guidance of nationally-recognized literacy experts¹, the following ranges for quantitative measures were used to guide initial passage selection to place a passage within a possible grade-level band for the Grades 3–8 exams. (Note: in instances where the quantitative measures do not place the text in the same grade level, the different grade bands resulting are noted and the selection process continues to the qualitative analysis.)

**Updated Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Ranges from Multiple Measures²**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Core Band</th>
<th>Degrees of Reading Power¹</th>
<th>Flesch-Kincaid³</th>
<th>The Lexile Framework⁴</th>
<th>Reading Maturity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note in looking at all of these quantitative ranges, there are wide ranges within grade bands, and considerable degrees of overlap between the 3–8 grade bands. (See Appendix A of this document for tables visually representing this overlap for these readability metrics.) The overlap within and between grades reflects the range of developmental reading abilities in regards to various facets of literacy. Put simply, different types of texts, text structures, and language demands will challenge individual students within and between grades differently.

**Qualitative Measures of Text Complexity**

While quantitative text complexity metrics are a helpful start, they are far from definitive. Many aspects of writing cause text complexity metrics to produce flawed results. For example, a canonical high school-level novel such as John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath has a lexile level of 680, which would place it in the Grade 2–3 band. To account for these known shortcomings, qualitative measures are a

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¹ Nelson, Jessica; Perfetti, Charles; Liben, David; and Liben, Meredith, “Measures of Text Difficulty: Testing Their Predictive Value for Grade Levels and Student Performance,” 2012.

² The band levels themselves have been expanded slightly over the original CCSS scale that appears in Appendix A at both the top and bottom of each band to provide for a more modulated climb toward college and career readiness and offer slightly more overlap between bands. The wider band width allows more flexibility in the younger grades where students enter school with widely varied preparation levels. This change was provided in response to feedback received since publication of the original scale (published in terms of the Lexile® metric) in Appendix A.

³ Since Flesch-Kincaid has no ‘caretaker’ that oversees or maintains the formula, the research leads worked to bring the measure in line with college and career readiness levels of text complexity based on the version of the formula used by Coh-Metrix.

⁴ Since Lexile Banding has no overlap, it was determined that the highest Lexile Banding range for each grade band would be the best option.
crucial complement to quantitative measures. In the Steinbeck example, a qualitative review reveals that even though the author uses short sentences and common words, the level of meaning in his novel, as well as the knowledge demands and emotional maturity required for comprehension, would make it more appropriate for use in a high school classroom.

Using qualitative measures of text complexity involves making an informed decision about the difficulty of a text in terms of one or more factors discernible to a human reader applying trained judgment to the task. The following passage annotations illustrate the application of a qualitative rubric based largely on the qualitative resources from PARCC and the SCASS rubrics from Student Achievement Partners. The qualitative criteria used in these rubrics and the qualitative rubric used for qualitative analysis by NYS uses four required qualitative factors and one optional qualitative factor. The rating on these criteria will result in an overall qualitative rating of the text along a continuum of readily accessible, moderately complex, and very complex.

These criteria are described below:

1. **Meaning (literary texts) or Purpose (informational texts).** Literary texts with a single and obvious level of meaning tend to be easier to read than literary texts with multiple levels of meaning (such as satires, in which the author’s literal message is intentionally at odds with his or her underlying message). Similarly, informational texts with an explicitly stated purpose are generally easier to comprehend than informational texts with an implicit, hidden, or obscure purpose.

2. **Text Structure.** Texts that are readily accessible within a grade-band tend to have simple, well-marked, and conventional structures, whereas very complex texts tend to have complex, implicit, and (particularly in literary texts) unconventional structures. Simple literary texts tend to relate events in chronological order, while complex literary texts make more frequent use of flashbacks, flash-forward, and other manipulations of time and sequence. Simple informational texts are likely not to deviate from the conventions of common genres and subgenres, while complex informational texts are more likely to conform to the norms and conventions of a specific discipline.

3. **Language Features.** Texts that rely on literal, clear, contemporary, and conversational language tend to be easier to read than texts that rely on figurative, ironic, ambiguous, purposefully misleading, archaic, or otherwise unfamiliar language or on general academic and domain-specific vocabulary. The relative complexity of sentence structures is also an aspect of this criterion, with the presence of mostly simple sentences being an indication of a readily accessible text and the presence of many complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses being a feature of a very complex text.

4. **Knowledge Demands.** Texts that make few assumptions about the extent of readers’ life experiences and the depth of their cultural/literary and content/discipline knowledge are generally less complex than are texts that are written for a specific audience with a specific schema of knowledge on a topic.

5. **Optional Graphics.** Graphics elements that accompany the passages that are indicators of a readily accessible text can be images or features that are simple and/or supplementary images to the meaning of texts, with a primary focus being to orient the reader to the topic. Complex and detailed graphics

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*See IV, #3 of Key Considerations in Implementing Text Complexity recommendations from the [Supplemental Information for Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: New Research on Text Complexity](https://www.corestandards.org/research-and-development/supplemental-information-for-appendix-a-of-the-common-core-state-standards-for-english-language-arts-and-literacy/) for more information about exceptions to using quantitative measures to place texts within grade bands.*
and/or graphics whose interpretation is essential to understanding the text, and graphics that provide an independent source of information within a text are graphic features common to moderately and very complex texts.

**Passages in the classroom vs. Passages on a test.**

Passages serve different purposes depending on the context in which they are used. As stated in Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards, in an instructional context (including a student's independent reading for the purpose of this discussion) there are aspects of individual readers that will impact comprehension—emotional maturity/thematic concerns, background knowledge, and motivations are some considerations that may impact understanding. Good instruction supports these individual aspects of comprehension in an effort to grow learning. In a summative assessment context, however, the task is considerably more constrained; the task is to determine the degree to which students can independently make meaning of texts. As such, there are no scaffolds, no opportunities for collaboration with peers, and no framing by adults before the student is accessing the content. In the testing context, students work independently to read the texts and answer questions that measure their abilities to make meaning of the texts and topics they are reading about. Using texts that are grade-level complex according to the CCSS helps to determine where the student is in terms of his/her pathway to college and career-readiness, and as such fulfills a crucial purpose of the Grades 3–8 ELA testing program.
Appendix A: Text Complexity Grade Ranges for Quantitative Measures

Table 1: Text Complexity Grade Ranges for Grades 3–8 as represented by Degrees of Reading Power® Metric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2-3</th>
<th>Grade 4-5</th>
<th>Grade 6-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Text Complexity Grade Ranges for Grades 3–8 as represented by Flesch-Kincaid® readability metric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2-3</th>
<th>Grade 4-5</th>
<th>Grade 6-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{5}\) Since Flesch-Kincaid has no ‘caretaker’ that oversees or maintains the formula, the research leads worked to bring the measure in line with college and career readiness levels of text complexity based on the version of the formula used by Coh-Metrix.
Table 3: Text Complexity Grade Ranges for Grades 3–8 as represented by Lexile Framework

Table 4: Text Complexity Grade Ranges for Grades 3–8 as represented by Reading Maturity Matrix
Our Expedition

by Shaun Tan

My brother and I could easily spend hours arguing about the correct lyrics to a TV jingle, the impossibility of firing a gun in outer space, where cashew nuts come from, or whether we really did see a saltwater croc in the neighbor’s pool that one time. Once we had a huge argument about why the street directory in Dad’s car stopped at Map 268. It was my contention that obviously certain pages had fallen out. Map 268 itself was packed full of streets, avenues, crescents and cul-de-sacs, right up to the edge—I mean, it’s not like it faded off into nothing. It made no sense.

Yet my brother insisted, with an irritating tone of authority enjoyed by many older siblings, that the map was literally correct, because it would otherwise have “joins Map 269” in small print up the side. If the map says it is so, then so it is. My brother was like this about most things. Annoying.

Verbal combat ensued; “It’s right” — “it’s not” — “it is” — “not” — “is” — “not” — a ping-pong mantra performed while eating dinner, playing computer games, brushing teeth, or lying wide awake in bed, calling out through the thin partition between our rooms until Dad got angry and told us to stop.

Eventually we decided there was only one solution: go and see for ourselves. We shook hands over a mighty twenty-dollar bet, a staggering amount to gamble even on a sure thing, and planned an official scientific expedition to the mysterious outer suburbs.

My brother and I took the number 441 bus as far as it would go and set off on foot after that. We had filled our backpacks with all the necessities for such a journey: chocolate, orange juice, little boxes of sultanas and, of course, the contentious street directory.

It was exciting to be on a real expedition, like venturing into a desert or jungle wilderness, only much better signposted. How great it must have been long ago, before shops and freeways and fast-food outlets, when the world was still unknown. Armed with sticks, we hacked our way through slightly overgrown alleys, followed our compass along endless footpaths, scaled multilevel parking garages for a better view, and made careful notes in an exercise book. Despite starting out bright and early, however, we were nowhere

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1 *street directory*: a book of gridded maps showing the layout of streets within a city
near the area in question by mid-afternoon, when we had planned to be already back home on our beanbags, watching cartoons.

The novelty of our adventure was wearing thin, but not because our feet hurt and we were constantly blaming each other for the forgotten sunscreen. There was some other thing that we could not clearly explain. The farther we ventured, the more everything looked the same, as if each new street, park, or shopping mall was simply another version of our own, made from the same giant assembly kit. Only the names were different.

By the time we reached the last uphill stretch, the sky was turning pink, the trees dark, and we were both looking forward to nothing more than sitting down and resting our feet. The inevitable victory speech I had been mentally preparing all along now seemed like a meaningless bunch of words. I wasn’t in the mood for gloating.

I guess my brother felt much the same. Always the impatient walking companion, he was some distance ahead, and by the time I caught up he was sitting with his back to me, right in the middle of the road, with his legs hanging over the edge.

“I guess I owe you twenty bucks,” I said.

“Yup,” he said.

One annoying thing I forgot to mention about my brother: He is almost always right.
**Our Expedition** by Shaun Tan

- **Lexile:** 1190
- **Flesch-Kincaid:** 8.8
- **Reading Maturity Metric (RMM):** 7.5

**Quantitative Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Reading Power (DRP):</th>
<th>62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Summary of Grade 7 Assessment Placement**

- **Overall rating:** Moderately complex
- The text follows a largely chronological structure and is focused in its theme, using a first person narration, contemporary language with some complex sentence structures. The text’s complexity comes from the ‘surprise’ ending which introduce an ambiguous element and requires some inferential thinking on the part of the reader with regard to authorial choices. Even so, the text can be understood and appreciated on a literal level, and as such is appropriate for placement on a 7th grade assessment.

**Qualitative Analysis LITERARY TEXT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Very Complex</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Moderately Complex</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Readily Accessible</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>Multiple levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit, subtle, or ambiguous and may be revealed over the entirety of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple levels of meaning that are relatively easy to identify; theme is clear, but may be conveyed with some subtlety.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are multiple levels of meaning and thematic concerns with this text; one, regarding the brothers’ relationship, is clear, explicit, and revealed early in the text. The related theme about the expedition and the resolution of the argument is really only revealed at the conclusion of the passage with the “twist” ending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>Prose or poetry contains more intricate elements such as, subplots, shifts in point-of-view, shifts in time, or non-standard text structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prose includes two or more storylines or has a plot that is somewhat difficult to predict (e.g.; , in the case of a non-linear plot); poetry has some implicit or unpredictable structural elements.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Prose or poetry is organized clearly and/or chronologically; the events in a prose work are easy to predict easy to predict because the plot is linear; poetry has explicit and predictable structural elements.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The text’s structure allows a chronological narrative to end in a way that is unexpected and may challenge readers’ assumptions (i.e., many will expect the brothers to end up at odds over the bet). That said, it is only at the end that the unpredictable structural element is present, and the preceding chronological structure helps to orient to the reader to the conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Features</strong></td>
<td>Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, , and/or figurative language, and regularly includes archaic, unfamiliar, and academic words; text uses a variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Language is often explicit and literal, but includes academic, archaic, or other words with complex meaning (e.g; figurative language); text uses a variety of sentence structures.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary; text uses mostly simple sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The text contains a variety of sentence structures and some figurative language. Vocabulary is challenging in spots (sultanas, contentious), but there are no instances where vocabulary precludes understanding of the text. The first person narration uses contemporary and informal language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Demands</strong></td>
<td>The text explores complex, sophisticated, or abstract themes; text is dependent on allusions to other texts or cultural elements; allusions or references have no context and require inference and evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The text explores several themes; text makes few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements; the meaning of references or allusions may be partially explained in context.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>The text explores a single theme; if there are any references or allusions, they are fully explained in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Requiring no background knowledge, the central relationship allows an easy point of reference for readers. There is complexity in the thematic elements, however, with the surreal ending requiring requires a level of inference on the part of the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optional Graphics</strong></td>
<td>When graphics are present, the connection between the text and graphics is subtle and requires interpretation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Graphics support interpretation of selected parts of the corresponding written text; they may introduce some new and relevant information.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Graphics support and assist in interpreting text by directly representing important concepts from the corresponding written text.</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bringing Solar Power to Indian Country

by Harriet Rohmer

Debby Tewa is a solar electrician—and a light-bringer. She brings electric light and power to some of the most isolated places on the Hopi and Navajo reservations—communities like the one where she grew up. “I can identify with the people I’m helping,” she says. “I really understand their excitement when they turn on a light for the first time.”

Hopi land has been home to Debby’s family for many generations. It is a beautiful, dry desert environment, with three major mesas (rocky tables of land) that rise as high as 7,200 feet (nearly 2,200 meters). Surrounding the mesas are low-altitude deserts and gullies. Most people live either in the 12 traditional villages on top of the mesas or in modern communities below. The high-mesa villages are famous around the world for their culture and long history. Old Oraibi, for example, is believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited community in the United States—established more than 850 years ago, around the year 1150.

Many Hopi households are connected to the electrical grid, which means they get electricity from the power company’s lines, like most city-dwellers all over the country. But several hundred households on the 1.6 million-acre (647,000-hectare) reservation are too far away from the power lines to hook into the grid.

Debby was in the fourth grade and living with her parents off the reservation when she first had electricity at home. “I liked being able to study at night and watch TV,” she remembers. She started thinking about how she could help bring electricity to places like her grandmother’s community.

After graduating at the top of her class from Sherman Indian High School in California, Debby returned to the Hopi Reservation, where she took a job helping other young people find summer work. One day, a woman came to the office to recruit boys to attend trade school. “Can girls go too?” Debby asked. When the woman said yes, Debby jumped at the chance.

“We could choose electricity or plumbing,” Debby remembers. “At first, I chose plumbing because I was scared of electricity. Then a couple of Hopi classmates wanted me to come over to electricity. They promised they would help me out if I did. And sure enough, they did help.” Later, she got to help them when they worked together on jobs. “I’m lucky because I’ve always had a lot of support for what I’m doing.”
Debby’s next big opportunity came in 1987, when The Hopi Foundation, created by Hopi people to improve life on the reservation, started an organization called Native Sun. The idea was to bring energy to isolated Hopi communities in a way that would fit in with their traditional way of life. Solar energy seemed like a perfect solution. It didn’t cause the pollution and health problems that coal-powered plants did. It was silent, it was easy to install, and it required very little maintenance. Best of all, since the energy was coming from the sun, it was “renewable” energy, meaning the supply wouldn’t get used up.

Solar power would also enable Hopi households to be “energy independent,” because they wouldn’t have to rely on energy from power companies outside their land. To spread the word about solar energy, The Hopi Foundation recruited several members of the tribe who could speak the Hopi language. One of them was Debby Tewa.

Part of Debby’s job was to teach people about solar energy—how to choose the right solar electric system, how to use it, and how to take care of it. “I wanted them to feel that it was theirs.” But first she had to get people interested.

Debby set up demonstration solar power systems in three villages on the mesas. People came to see how solar panels could be wired into their houses so they could have electricity. A 90-year-old woman was amazed that she could flick a switch and light would come on. A seamstress could use an electric sewing machine. Kids could do schoolwork and watch TV at night. And they didn’t have to pay for the new system all at once, because Native Sun offered loans to their customers.

When people wanted to try it out, Debby loaned them a small trailer-mounted system for a week. This helped them decide how large a system they wanted, and then Debby would drive out and install it.

She would strap on her tool belt, climb up a ladder onto the roof, and go to work. Sometimes she would be on top of a 200-year-old stone house, looking out over a hundred miles of low desert and high mesas. In the next few years, Debby installed more than 300 solar panels on Hopi houses, and people on the reservation started calling her “Solar Debby.” She also installed solar panels on the neighboring Navajo Reservation and trained other electricians, especially women, in places as far away as Ecuador in South America.

Debby has four solar panels on her own house on the reservation. That’s enough for lights and TV. “It’s not like the power lines bring,” she says, “but it’s enough.”
For people like Debby’s aunt and her aunt’s 90-year-old neighbor, who had never had electricity before, solar power has made a life-changing difference. They no longer have to read by the light of a propane lamp. But best of all, they know that they have control over their own electricity.

“When you get your own solar electrical system, it’s yours,” Debby explains. “You’re not dependent on a power company. With solar energy, we can be independent.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Title and Author: Bringing Solar Power to Indian Country by Harriet Rohmer</th>
<th>Word count: 990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Analysis</th>
<th>Summary of Grade 7 Assessment Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of Reading Power (DRP):</td>
<td>Overall rating: Moderately Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexile:</td>
<td>This passage features a clear and focused purpose, but allows for the perspective of Debby Tewa to give context and authenticity to the article. On the whole, it represents a detailed, but accessible, article about solar energy and the value of energy independence for the Hopi reservation that is appropriate for placement on a 7th grade assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flesch-Kincaid:</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Maturity Metric (RMM):</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Analysis for INFORMATIONAL TEXT</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Very Complex</th>
<th>Moderately Complex</th>
<th>Readily Accessible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The text contains multiple purposes, and the primary purpose is subtle, intricate, and/or abstract.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>The text has a clear and concrete purpose that is indicated early in the passage, but it also includes multiple perspectives in a manner typical of a journalistic article.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Connections among an expanded range of ideas, processes, or events are often implicit, subtle, or ambiguous. Organization exhibits some discipline-specific traits. Text features are essential to comprehension of content.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Connections between ideas, processes, and events are explicit and clear; organization is chronological, sequential, or easy to predict because it is linear; any text features help readers navigate content but are not critical to understanding content.</td>
<td>Organization and structure is generally evident and sequential; the passage explores the links between the opportunity for energy independence that solar power offers and the story of Debby Tewa. Some of the connections are subtle, such as, the link between energy independence and the needs of isolated communities on the Hopi and Navajo reservations, but there are enough explicit connections between other ideas in the passage to facilitate comprehension. The text box also helps readers understand the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Features</td>
<td>Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and archaic and academic vocabulary and domain-specific words that are not otherwise defined; text uses many complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary; text uses mostly simple sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Demands</td>
<td>The subject matter of the text relies on specialized, discipline-specific knowledge; the text makes many references or allusions to other texts or outside areas; allusions or references have no context and require inference.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>The subject matter of the text relies on little or no discipline-specific knowledge; if there are any references or allusions, they are fully explained in the text.</td>
<td>There is little, if any, discipline-specific knowledge needed to access the content; the passage explains everything necessary to understand the explicit benefit of solar energy to these communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Graphics</td>
<td>Graphics are essential to understanding the text; they may clarify or expand information in the text and may require close reading and thoughtful analysis in relation to the text.</td>
<td>Graphics are mainly supplementary to understanding the text; they generally contain or reinforce information found in the text.</td>
<td>Graphics are simple and may be unnecessary to understanding the text.</td>
<td>Graphic in text box shows a solar panel, which reinforces information in the text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A few summers ago, I was lucky to travel to Tibet, the “roof of the world.” Tibet is a small country surrounded on all sides by gigantic snowy mountain peaks. For thousands of years, these towering mountains acted like a fence, keeping people from entering the country. That’s one reason why explorers and writers have called Tibet the roof of the world. It’s hard to get to. The other reason is Tibet’s high elevation. When I climbed mountain passes over 17,000 feet above sea level, I gasped for air. I was more than three miles high!

Years ago, the people of Tibet were nomads—people without permanent homes. The ground in Tibet is much too rocky and thin to grow crops, so Tibetans centered their daily life and survival on the yak. The yaks provided the nomads with nearly everything they needed—milk, butter, meat, and wool for clothes and ropes. Even yak dung was used for fires.

Tibetan nomads would lead their herds of yak and sheep across pastures, valleys, and mountainsides in search of the best grazing lands. They did not live in permanent homes made of wood, brick, or stone.

Times are changing in Tibet, and more and more people live and work in villages and cities. But there are still nomads who survive on the high plateau just as their ancestors did.

**Becoming a Modern Nomad**

Some friends and I were traveling with our teacher, Dudjom Dorjee, to Kham, in the eastern part of Tibet. Dudjom was born in Tibet and lived the first years of his life as a traditional nomad. Because of political problems, Dudjom’s family had to flee to India when he was still young. We were following Dudjom back to his birthplace and getting a taste of that ancient, nomadic way of life—with a few modern updates.
We had the advantage of automobiles—a luxury that nomads have gladly survived without. When it comes time for a nomad family to move, they pack all their things into large backpacks that they strap over their yaks. A typical family might need from 30 to 50 yaks to carry all their supplies. My friends and I had more than 50 bags to carry. We stuffed them into a bus, while we piled into four-wheel drives.

Problems Along the Way

When it comes to crossing rough country, yaks are the true all-terrain travelers. Many times, the nomads have to cross raging rivers. For the loyal and determined yaks, crossing is not a problem. But when we had to cross a river, our four-wheel drives turned out to be not so loyal and reliable. We got stuck in the muddy banks of the river, and it took at least a dozen people pushing to get us out.

When nomads arrive at their destination, they are so skilled at setting up their large yak-hair tents that they have them up in minutes. My friends and I, with our fancy super-modern tents, weren't quite as quick. At one campsite, I remember wrestling with one of my tent poles trying to pass it through the loops of my tent. Some smiling nomad kids approached and had me set up in no time, though they'd never seen a tent like that before.

It's Cold Up There!

The weather in Tibet is cold, and the brutal wind seems to show no mercy. Sitting inside a nomad tent, though, you'd never know it. With a warm fire burning in the mud stove and the snug black walls of the tent, you are as comfortable as can be. This was not the case in the fancy modern tents my friends and I slept in. I remember shivering through my four sweaters, three pairs of pants, and blanket, listening to the chill rain hit my tent.

Having the Right Attitude

On this trip, I learned that it takes much more than snug tents and thick, hearty tea to survive. You need the right attitude. Everywhere we traveled, the Tibetans were generous, happy, and curious. It might be a monk warming my frozen hands in his fur robes. It might be a family of nomads taking a break to dance and sing in a circle, or a handful of kids watching me with beaming smiles.

Though their lives are full of challenges, the nomads never take their day-to-day problems too seriously. They know how impermanent things are, including their homes. We modern nomads learned some of these lessons. Perhaps when we cross the raging rivers or face the cold bitter days of our lives, we'll do it with a lot more of the right attitude—the same attitude that shines from the bright smiles of the Tibetan nomads.
### Qualitative Analysis for INFORMATIONAL TEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Very Complex</th>
<th>Moderately Complex</th>
<th>Readily Accessible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The text contains multiple purposes, and the primary purpose is subtle, intricate, and/or abstract.</td>
<td>The primary purpose of the text is not stated explicitly, but is easy to infer based on the content or source. The text may include multiple perspectives.</td>
<td>The primary purpose of the text is clear, concrete, narrowly focused, and explicitly stated. The text has a singular perspective.</td>
<td>The purpose of the text is stated explicitly but includes some comparison between the author’s mode of travelling and that of the nomads that introduce some complexity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>Connections among an expanded range of ideas, processes, or events are often implicit, subtle, or ambiguous. Organization exhibits some discipline-specific traits. Text features are essential to comprehension of content.</td>
<td>Connections between some ideas, processes, or events are implicit or subtle; organization is generally evident and sequential; any text features help facilitate comprehension of content.</td>
<td>Connections between ideas, processes, and events are explicit and clear; organization is chronological, sequential, or easy to predict because it is linear; any text features help readers navigate content, but are not critical to understanding content.</td>
<td>The text explores connections between aspects of the nomads’ way of living and attitude in a manner that is not explicit, but connected through the author’s perspective and the author’s comparisons to the modern approach. The headings also help facilitate comprehension of the content.</td>
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<td><strong>Language Features</strong></td>
<td>Language is generally complex, with abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language, and archaic and academic vocabulary and domain-specific words that are not otherwise defined; text uses many complex sentences with subordinate phrases and clauses.</td>
<td>Language is often explicit and literal, but includes some academic, archaic, or other words with complex meaning; text uses some complex sentences with subordinate phrases or clauses.</td>
<td>Language is explicit and literal, with mostly contemporary and familiar vocabulary; text uses mostly simple sentences.</td>
<td>The text contains some complex sentences and content-specific vocabulary (yak, nomad, plateau) and infrequent proper nouns throughout (Tibet, Dudjom Dorjee, Kham). Many of the vocabulary words (impermanence, nomad) can be determined from context.</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge Demands</strong></td>
<td>The subject matter of the text relies on specialized, discipline-specific knowledge; the text makes many references or allusions to other texts or outside areas; allusions or references have no context and require inference.</td>
<td>The subject matter of the text involves some discipline-specific knowledge; the text makes some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas; the meaning of references or allusions may be partially explained in context.</td>
<td>The subject matter of the text relies on little or no discipline-specific knowledge; if there are any references or allusions, they are fully explained in the text.</td>
<td>Text relies on little discipline-specific knowledge and explains any references in the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Optional Graphics</strong></td>
<td>Graphics are essential to understanding the text; they may clarify or expand information in the text and may require close reading and thoughtful analysis in relation to the text.</td>
<td>Graphics are mainly supplementary to understanding the text; they generally contain or reinforce information found in the text.</td>
<td>Graphics are simple and may be unnecessary to understanding the text.</td>
<td>Graphics help to orient the reader and illustrate and reinforce the information found in the text. For example, the photo and caption of the Yak provides supplementary understanding to the role of the animal in the nomad’s life, but isn't essential to understanding the text.</td>
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