Worksheet for Analysis of Text-Complexity of a Nonfiction Text

Title of the Text: _____

Quantitative Measures: Lexile (Other) Score _____ Grade level suggested by quantitative measures: _____

Qualitative Dimensions:

Ideas Presented			
Offers basic information. Simple, single meaning. Explicit and direct. Purpose or stance clear.	Much explicit, but moves to some implied meaning. Possibly two perspectives. Requires some inferential reasoning.	Probably requires weighing of multiple perspectives. Some analysis of bias and author's motivations. Some ambiguity.	Complex, subtle arguments, implied meanings. Author's intent may be concealed. Difficult ideas, evidence hard to assess; main idea must be inferred across many pages

Easier ◄—————————————————————————————————► More Demanding

Evidence:

Structure Used			
Easily identified text structure; photographs or illustrations help provide the meaning. Text features such as headings guide reading.	Primarily explicit; primarily one perspective; may vary from simple chronological order. Graphics and text features clarify points.	More complex, multiple perspectives may be presented; more deviation from chronology. Tables and figures support understanding.	Complex, multiple text structures & perspectives. In some texts, almost no graphics are used; in others overuse can interfere with reading.

Easier ◄—————————————————————————————————► More Demanding

Evidence:

Language Used			
Explicit, literal, contemporary, familiar language. Vocabulary simple. Mostly Tier I words. Mostly simple sentence structure with one idea or fact presented. More similes than metaphors.	Mostly explicit. Tier II and III words are defined in context and used sparingly. Sentence structure more complex with perhaps more than one idea presented in a sentence.	Vocabulary not defined at point of use. Mostly Tier II and III words. Metaphor (rather than similes) used more; Multiple technical words may be used in one sentence.	Implied meanings, allusive. Language may hide speaker's biases or affiliations. Compound, complex sentences requiring much unpacking. In some texts, Tier III vocab is used extensively.

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Evidence:

Knowledge Required			
Requires no special knowledge or experience. Settings, problems familiar or easily envisioned.	Some references to events or other texts. Most of text deals with common or easily imagined experience.	More complex problems. Experiences may be less familiar to many. Cultural or historical references.	Explores complex ideas; refers to texts or ideas that may be beyond students' experiences. Expected prior knowledge is not explained in the text. May require specialized knowledge.

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Evidence:

Qualitative dimensions indicate text makes demands that are: Mostly easier . . . . Mostly more demanding

Grade level suggested by qualitative assessment _____

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Reader-Task Considerations

This is perhaps the most important element in judging the complexity of the text, and the most subtle. At issue is the suitability of a particular text for a particular reader. What follows are some questions to consider in making such a judgment. As you think about these questions with students in mind, make comments in the space provided.

Interest

▶ Is the student/class likely to be interested in the situation, theme, topic, issue, subject matter, or genre?

Background and Ability

▶ Does the student/class have background knowledge or experience necessary to deal with the text?

▶ Is the student/class intellectually capable of dealing with the issues presented in the text?

▶ Does the student/class have vocabulary and inferential skills necessary for this text?

Attitudes and Maturity

▶ Is the student/class sufficiently mature and sophisticated to deal with the subject matter?

▶ Does the text raise issues that might embarrass readers or be in some other way problematic?

▶ Potential for Stimulating Thought, Discussion, and Further Reading:

▶ Is there potential in the reading of this text for good conversation among readers?

▶ Does this text raise issues or questions likely to inspire the student/class to further reading, research, and writing?

Comments Summarizing the Assessments on the Three Dimensions (quantitative, qualitative, and reader-task):

How much support will be needed with this text at grade _____ ?

Final recommendation for use and placement of text: _____

(Grade level? Early or late in the year? For independent reading, guided group instruction, full class?)