

Gradients in Complexity: Informational Texts

| | Simple Texts | Somewhat Complex Texts | Complex Texts | Very Complex Texts |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Layout | Consistent placement of text, regular word and line spacing, often large plain font | May have longer passages of uninterrupted text, often plain font | Longer passages of uninterrupted text may include columns or other variations in layout, often smaller more elaborate font | Very long passages of uninterrupted text that may include columns or other variations in layout, often small densely packed print |
| | Graphics and pictures that directly support and help interpret the written text | Graphs, pictures, tables, charts that directly support the text | Essential integrated graphics, tables, charts, formula (necessary to make meaning of text) | Extensive, intricate, essential integrated tables, charts, formulas necessary to make meaning of text |
| | Simple indexes, glossaries | Indexes, glossaries, occasional quotes, references | Quotes, concluding appendices, indexes, glossaries, bibliography | Abstracts, footnotes, citations and detailed indexes, appendices, bibliography |
| | Supportive signposting and enhancements | Reduced signposting and enhancements | Minimal signposting and/or enhancements | Integrated signposting conforming to disciplinary formats. No enhancements |
| Purpose and Meaning | A single or simple purpose conveying clear or factual information | Purpose involves conveying a range of more detailed information | Purpose includes explaining or interpreting information | Purpose may include examining/evaluating complex, sometimes theoretical and contested information |
| | Meaning is clear, concrete with a narrow focus | Meaning is more involved with a broader focus | Meaning includes more complex concepts and a higher level of detail | Meaning is intricate, with abstract theoretical elements |
| Structure | The organization of the text is clear or chronological and/or easy to predict | The organization of the text may include a thesis or reasoned explanation in addition to facts | The organization of the text may contain multiple pathways, more than one thesis and/or several genres | The organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline |
| | Connections among events or ideas are explicit and clear. | Connections among events or ideas are sometimes implicit or subtle. | Connections among events or ideas are often implicit or subtle | Connections among events or ideas are implicit or subtle throughout the text. |
| | One mode of communication is evident | May include different modes of communication | Includes smaller sections that utilize different modes of communication of varying complexity | Includes sustained sections that utilize different modes of communication and/or hybrid or non-linear texts |
| Language Features | Mainly simple sentences | Simple and compound sentences with some more complex constructions | Many complex sentences with increased subordinate phrases and clauses or transition words | Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts |
| | Simple language style, sometimes with narrative elements | Increased objective style and passive constructions with higher factual content | Objective/passive style with higher conceptual content and increasing nominalization | Specialized disciplinary style with dense conceptual content and high nominalization |
| | Vocabulary is mostly familiar | Vocabulary includes some unfamiliar, context-dependent words | Includes much academic vocabulary and some domain specific (content) vocabulary | Includes extensive academic and domain specific (content) vocabulary |
| Knowledge Demands Informational | General topic is familiar, with details known by reader | General topic is familiar, with some details new to reader | General topic is somewhat familiar but with many details unknown to reader | General topic is mostly unfamiliar with most details unknown to reader |
| | Simple, concrete ideas | Both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas | A range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts | Many new ideas and/or complex, challenging, abstract and theoretical concepts |