

## Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
Created by:	Carolyn Didden	Event/Date:	Teachfest Connecticut Summer Academy
Text and Author	"Spaghetti" by Cynthia Rylant	Where to Access Text	<a href="http://angela-wisemanwiki.wikispaces.com/file/view/Lucy+3_5book5+Literary+Essays+One+pagers.pdf">http://angela-wisemanwiki.wikispaces.com/file/view/Lucy+3_5book5+Literary+Essays+One+pagers.pdf</a>
Text Description			
<p><b>This short story by Cynthia Rylant gives a vivid description of an evening adventure of a young boy from the city, who dreams escaping his life and living outdoors. From his spot on the stoop Gabriel hears a cry from the street. He goes to investigate the source of the noise and finds a small, gray kitten that smells of spaghetti. He brings the kitten into his apartment and his life, leaving his dreams behind.</b></p>			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	880L Grade 4	Text Length	488 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Character traits of dreamer</li> <li>*Feelings of loneliness and longing, dreaming of a different life and acceptance</li> <li>*Loneliness is explicitly stated</li> <li>*Concept of poverty and despair are implied</li> <li>*Loneliness is abated when Gabriel finds a stray kitten and brings it home</li> <li>*The text says that Gabriel is serious but can't think seriously when he holds the purring kitten near his ear.</li> <li>*The kitten smells like spaghetti, and Gabriel thinks that he belongs to a small Italian man</li> </ul>		<p>The text is written as a short narrative story. Ideas of poverty, dissatisfaction, yearning, and hope are inferred in the author's description of Gabriel and his evening on the stoop of his apartment building.</p>	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
<p>Comprehension of the text would require students to have a background of living in an apartment building in a city. Words like stoop and "tall building of crumbling bricks and rotting wood." Students would also need to have a sense of empathy for Gabriel and his loneliness.</p>		<p>This story is very visual, asking the reader to see the setting to understand Gabriel's longing.</p> <p>The author uses figurative language - "The cry was so weak and faraway in his mind that, for him, it could have been the slow lifting of a stubborn window. It could have been the creak of an old man's legs. It could have been the wind. But it was not the wind, and it came to Gabriel slowly that he did, indeed, hear something, and that it did, indeed, sound like a cry from the street."</p>	
Potential Reader/Task Challenges			
<p>*To deeply understand the character and the story the reader needs to understand that Gabriel lives in poverty and dreams not of riches but of open spaces and nature. As the reader rereads to story they can experience the richness of Gabriel's character. Students will need to empathize with Gabriel's loneliness and his need for someone or something to love.</p> <p>"Gabriel was thinking about things. He remembered being the only boy in class with the right answer that day, and he remembered the butter sandwich he had had for lunch. Gabriel was thinking that he would like to live outside all the time. He imagined himself carrying a pack of food and a few tools and a heavy cloth to erect a hasty tent. Gabriel saw himself sleeping among coyotes. But next he saw himself sleeping beneath the glittering lights of a movie theater, near the bus stop."</p>			

### Big Takeaway

Readers should take away from this story the idea of strength of character. We infer that Gabriel is a strong and resilient character. From the description of his surroundings it appears that he lives in a poorer section of a city. He eats butter sandwiches for lunch and has no friends to hang out with. Yet despite this he is serious and intelligent. Even smart, resilient, strong characters need someone to love. The kitten appears at the perfect time to give him company and a warm body to love and care for. We can also look at the decision Gabriel makes to keep the kitten even though he feels he knows where the kitten belongs because of its pasta smell. Is he a good person if he keeps the kitten that might belong to another? This could start an interesting conversation.

RL4.3 – Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. a character’s thoughts, words or actions)

## Vocabulary Analysis Template

	Words that demand less teaching time (i.e. the definition is singular and concrete)	Words that demand more teaching time (i.e. words with multiple meanings and/or that are part of a word family)
<b>Words that can be determined in context</b>		
<b>Words that cannot be determined in context</b>	<p>Coyotes – this word cannot be determined in context but should be a work that the students understand when decoded.</p> <p>Glittering - this word brings helps add description to the passage and should be identified and discussed</p> <p>Wobbling This word helps to describe the kitten and should be discussed.</p>	<p>Stoop this word has multiple meanings and should be taught explicitly as the outdoor entrance to a building instead of a hunched over stance.</p> <p>Dusk could be taught as a word family or as a synonym for twilight or evening.</p> <p>Stubborn – This word could give students trouble in understanding</p>