

Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
Created by:	Melinda Jackson	Event/Date:	TeachFest Summer Academy July 2014
Text and Author	“The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin	Where to Access Text	http://my.hrw.com/support/hos/hostpdf/host_text_219.pdf
Text Description			
<p>This text is a short story that enriches student’s understanding of story elements while introducing irony and figurative language. In this story, the main character, Mrs. Mallard, is informed of her husband’s tragic death, but instead of feeling sadness she feels freedom. There are hints that lead readers to assume that Mrs. Mallard has been unhappy in her marriage. Given that the story was published in 1894, and women were still considered the property of their husbands, it can be inferred that the author wanted readers to consider the implications of this type of relationship between man and woman. The tale ends abruptly with the return of Mr. Mallard, unharmed. This news shocks Mrs. Mallard and she dies without warning, thus revealing the ironic ending of the story.</p>			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	1030 - 6-8th grade	Text Length	508 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
<p>The main idea of the story (that Mrs. Mallard has been unhappy, even trapped in her marriage) is somewhat explicitly stated in the text, but can be inferred through word choice and structure of the story. Comparisons and references between Mrs. Mallard and a bird help reveal to readers the theme of freedom. Readers must contemplate the irony of the freedom Mrs. Mallard wanted, and the freedom she received.</p>		<p>No graphics. Plot is sequential and fairly simplistic. Some reference to other minor characters; main character and husband’s names are only mentioned twice in the story.</p>	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
<p>Students will need understanding of plot elements (setting, conflict, climax, resolution, theme, and character), irony, figurative language, and author’s purpose. They will need some understanding of the time period in which Chopin wrote, and the general conceptions regarding women and marriage during that time. They will need background information regarding conceptions of marriage in the past, and compare to modern-day conceptions.</p>		<p>The language has both literal and figurative components; including metaphor, imagery and irony. Most vocabulary will be familiar to students, aside from some time-period-specific vocabulary.</p>	
Potential Reader/Task Challenges			
<p>Accessible length and text complexity related to main ideas of story. Most students should have knowledge of story elements to comprehend the central ideas. Students will likely struggle with the purposeful sentence structure the author uses to develop tone, mood and suspense. Determining the author’s purpose in including an ironic ending, and what underlying meaning it serves may be difficult for some students.</p>			
Big Takeaway			
<p>The main character of the story, Mrs. Mallard, serves as a reminder of the oppression women faced in the past. Her struggle to find happiness is a universal message that many readers can connect with. However, more importantly, Chopin uses specific techniques to develop character, tone, suspense and irony. Students will be able to analyze how Chopin’s choices, especially the ironic ending, contribute to its overall structure and meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact. They will answer the big question: “What was Kate Chopin’s purpose for including a surprise ending? How does the surprise ending impact the meaning of the story?”</p>			

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)
Words that can be determined in context	<p>Veiled Hastened Self-assertion Exhaustion</p>	<p>Aquiver Peddler Yonder Keen Forestall Elixir</p>
Words that cannot be determined in context	<p>Afflicted Subtle Latchkey Grip-sack</p>	<p>Bespoke Repression Elusive Tumultuously Exalted Imploring Importunities Unwittingly</p>