

Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
Created by:	Matthew West	Event/Date:	Teachfest Summer Academy – July 2014
Text and Author	“Joyas Voladores” – By Brian Doyle	Where to Access Text	http://theamericanscholar.org/joyas-voladores/#.U9jbTfdWSo
Text Description			
<p>Discusses, on a factual, near-scientific level, the hearts of a hummingbird and a blue whale (the smallest and largest hearts in the world, respectively), before transitioning to a more metaphorical, figurative discussion of the emotional and nuanced experiential elements that connect all living things.</p>			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	1240 – Grade 11	Text Length	1025 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning is both explicitly and implicitly stated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ explicit – all living things share some physiological similarities, despite differences ○ implicit – emotional vulnerability is intrinsic to all humans, yet unique to each individual, simultaneously—it both binds us as a race and separates us, subtly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No graphics • Organization – literal, near-scientific anecdotes at the start of the passage; transitions to a metaphoric discussion of emotions vis-à-vis human experience and connection – some implicit transitions/connections necessary 	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some basic scientific knowledge – anatomy of a heart; cellular structure/features 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of vocabulary—conversational language to scientific/advanced terms and words • Figurative/connotative usage of some words • 	
Potential Reader/Task Challenges			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional ending—potentially “jarring” personal connections (as intended by the author) • Some “listy”, repetitive sections (again, intentional by the author, for a purpose) • Inferential jump needed from scientific anecdotes/examples to metaphoric takeaway 			
Big Takeaway			
<p>Despite the disparate “hearts” and experiences of individuals, all people experience emotional vulnerability and a shared humanity, and those emotions are what connect us all ultimately. The author achieves his message/purpose by beginning with explicit, duality-based, anecdotal evidence before transitioning to a more implicit, figurative discussion of the unity of human emotional experience.</p>			
CCSS			
R.I. 4: Determine meaning of words and phrases, incl. figurative, connotative, and technical meanings analyze how an author uses and refines meaning of a key term(s) over course of a text.			
R.L. 5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • torpor (2) • taut (2) 	
Words that cannot be determined in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elephantine (2) • infinitesimal (2) • metabolic (2) • mitochondria (3) • aneurysms (3) • ken (2) • mollusks (3) • yearning (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inertia (2) • harrowed (2) • scored (as in etched or damaged) (2) • impregnable (2)