

Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
Created by:	Rachel Liscinsky	Event/Date:	TeachFest – Hartford, CT July 29, 2014
Text and Author	“Give me Liberty or Give me Death” by Patrick Henry	Where to Access Text	http://www.history.org/almanack/life/politics/giveme.cf m
Text Description			
Patrick Henry is presenting an appeal to the Second Virginia Convention that Virginia needs to prepare to fight against England and cannot wait for England or forgive England. Henry posits that separation is the only way to achieve true freedom.			
Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	Lexile 830 Grade 10	Text Length	1221 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
<p>Moderately Complex - Henry makes it evident throughout the speech that he is arguing for separation from the British, however, his strongest most explicit reference to this idea is not made until the end of the text. There are some subtle points in the speech, but overall determining the central idea is a moderately complex task.</p>		<p>Slightly Complex - The text does not feature any graphics, subheadings, or other text features that students would need to decode to understand the meaning of the text. The organization is straightforward and Henry’s meaning is, for the most part explicitly stated, making this a slightly complex text.</p>	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
<p>Very Complex - In order to fully engage in this task, students need to have an understanding of the events leading up to the Revolutionary War. Patrick Henry helps persuade numerous colonists that aligning with Britain and remaining under British rule will not benefit the country, and the only solution is going to war. Students will need to understand the conditions that led to the friction between the British and the colonies, including the Stamp Act, the government structures in place in the US and Britain, and the Biblical allusions made by Henry. These should not be entirely foreign subjects to students, but because 10th graders have not had American History since 8th grade, they may have difficulty recalling the necessary background information. In addition to textual background knowledge, students will also need to recall the definitions of ethos, pathos, logos, and rhetoric in order to correctly identify and analyze the rhetorical devices being used by Henry.</p>		<p>Moderately Complex - The language of the text is somewhat archaic, contains figurative language, and many of the references Henry makes are specific to the time in which he lived. The sentence structure may be somewhat unfamiliar to students because of the formal nature of the speech. In addition, the use of rhetorical questions is also new to students and the vocabulary is complex, with many words that may be unfamiliar or challenging to students.</p>	

Potential Reader/Task Challenges

The biggest struggles for students will be unpacking the vocabulary of the text and understanding the occasion and audience of the text. Only once students understand these elements will they be able to begin identifying how Henry's use of ethos, pathos, and logos in the speech help convey his purpose.

Big Takeaway

Students will analyze the seminal U.S. document, Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" speech to the Second Virginia Convention, to determine how Henry's use of rhetorical appeals and word choice advance his point of view and purpose.

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	Disrespectful Ought Fulfill Offense Apt Judging Gale Idle Inevitable Illusions	Freedom Slavery (need to be clear we are not referring to the Civil War) Illusion Majesty Transforms Anguish Submission Tyrannical Ceremony
Words that cannot be determined in context	Sentiments Proportion Solace House Indulge Siren	Patriotism Liberty Magnitude Treason Temporal Salvation Arduous Disposed British Ministry Insidious