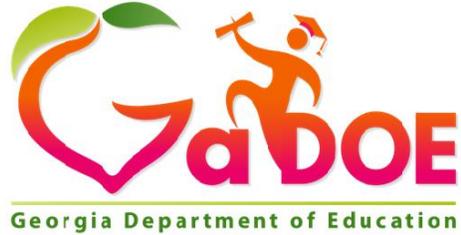


Increasing Lexile Levels to Improve Student Learning



February 25, 2016

Metro Area Instructional Leadership Conference
School and District Effectiveness Division
Georgia Department of Education

Presented by Zackory Kirk, Ed.D.
Literacy Coordinator (6-12), Atlanta Public Schools

Strong Students | Strong Schools | Strong Staff | Strong System



Warm-Up and Stretch



- Think of a skill or activity in which you have improved recently.
- Describe your skills before and after your improvement.
- How did you “measure” your improvement?

The Decline of Reading

- One in four secondary students are unable to read and understand textbook content, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education.
- “Today fewer than a third of America’s adolescents meet grade-level expectations for reading. Among low-income students, the number is closer to one in seven” (17).
- 1 out of 3 U.S. high school students drops out. (50% of Latinos and African Americans).
- 3,000 students who are poor readers drop out of school daily (*Readicide*, Gallagher, 3).
- Less than one out of three college graduates reads at a proficient high school level.
- Half of American adults don’t read themselves or to their children.



Read-i-cide

noun, the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools.

Today's Outcomes

- Increase understanding of reading practices that will promote reading growth and writing proficiency
- Provide building and district leaders with a framework for using Lexile scores to increase student achievement in literacy.
 - The Lexile Framework
 - Text Complexity
 - Relationship between Lexiles, Reading, Achievement, and CCRPI
 - Teacher Tool Kit

An Age-Old Analogy: Lexiles are like inches...



- A universal, accurate measurement system
- Used to measure a student's current "size" and growth over time
- Not grade specific - students come in different sizes and grow at different rates

The Lexile Framework[®] for Reading

Allows us to...

- Measure **reader ability** and **text readability** with a common metric: **Lexiles**
- Forecast the level of **comprehension** a reader is expected to experience with a particular text



Two Underlying Concepts of the Lexile Framework[®]

- **Reader Ability**
 - The ability of readers to construct meaning from text (as measured on tests)
- **Text Readability**
 - The difficulty of reading materials (based on dimensions or characteristics of the text)

Based on the relationship between **Reader Ability** and **Text Readability**, it is possible to...

- Predict Reading Comprehension
- Differentiate Instruction
- Measure Reader Progress and Growth



Determining Text Difficulty

- **Syntactic Complexity**
 - The number of words per sentence
 - Longer sentences are more complex and require more short-term memory to process
- **Semantic Difficulty**
 - The frequency of the words in a corpus of written text
 - Corpus has over 600-million words

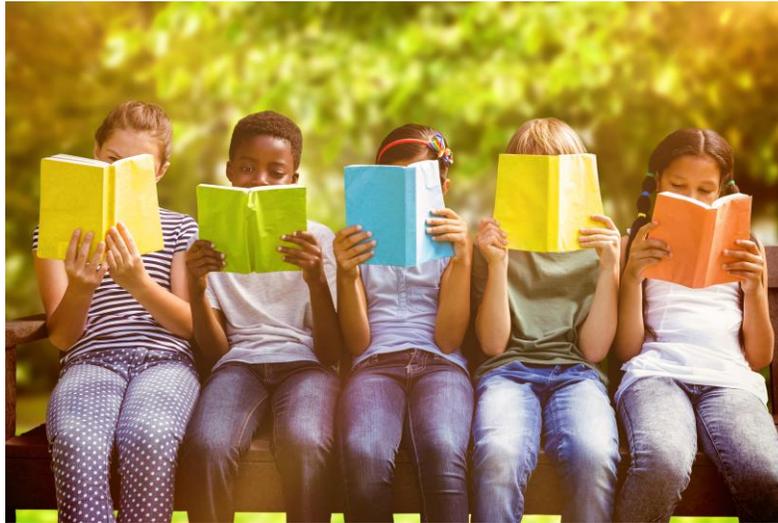


Limitations of Lexile Measures

What Lexiles don't address

■ Text Characteristics

- Age Appropriateness of Content
- Text Support
- Text Quality



■ Reader Characteristics

- Interest and Motivation
- Background Knowledge
- Reading Context and Purpose

✦ Lexiles only measure text readability.

✦ Therefore, input from readers, parents, teachers, and librarians is always necessary.

It's About More Than Lexiles!

What are the three components of the Georgia Standards of Excellence literacy framework needed to determine text complexity?

Answer: Qualitative factors, Quantitative factors, and Reader Task Considerations



It's About More Than Lexiles!

Lexiles would fall under which category:
qualitative, quantitative, or reader/task considerations?

Answer: Quantitative



It's About More Than Lexiles!

True or False:

Accelerated Reader is a credible, research based program, proven to increase Lexiles?

True!



It's About More Than Lexiles!

- **True or False:** Focusing solely on Lexiles is more than enough to prepare students for the next generation of Georgia assessments.

False!



The Georgia Standards of Excellence Model of Text Complexity

Take each of the following words and place them into their appropriate place on the Text Complexity placemat.

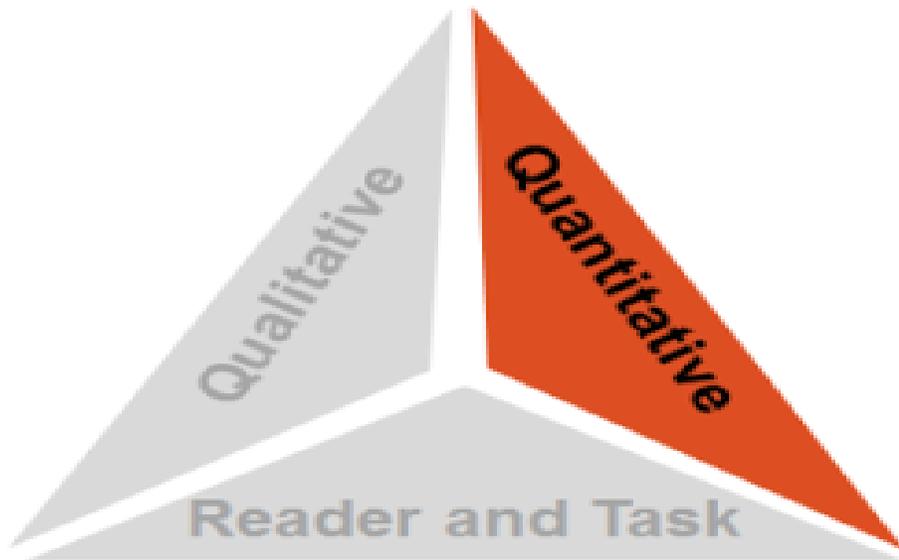
Example: structure should be placed on the qualitative measures triangle.



word length	word frequency	word difficulty
sentence length	text length	text cohesion
levels of meaning	levels of purpose	structure
organization	language conventionality	language clarity
prior knowledge demands	motivation	knowledge and experience
purpose for reading	complexity of task assigned regarding text	complexity of questions asked regarding text

PLACEMAT ANSWERS!

Step 1: Quantitative Measures

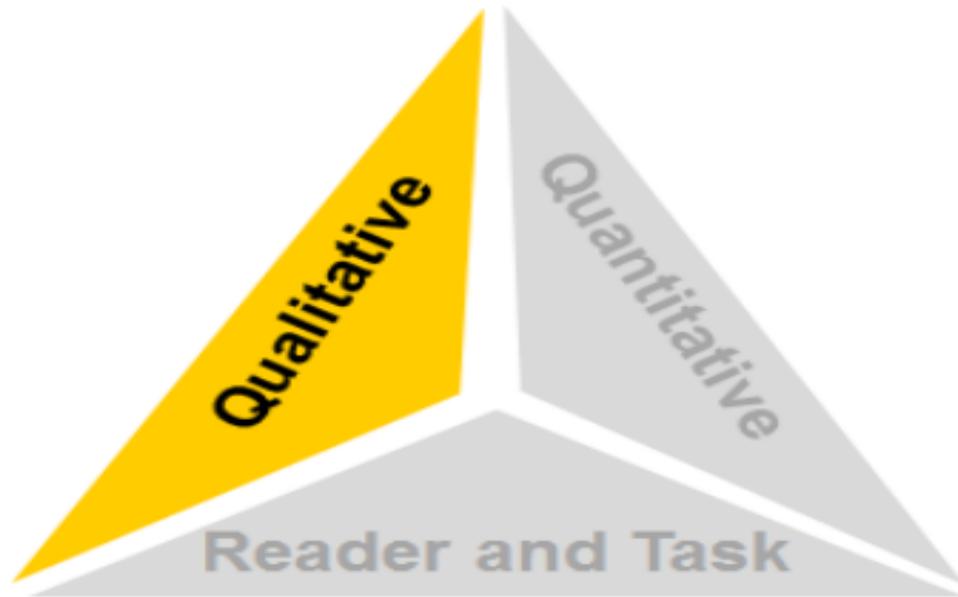


Measures such as:

- Word length
- Word frequency
- Word difficulty
- Sentence length
- Text length
- Text cohesion

LACEMAT ANSWERS!

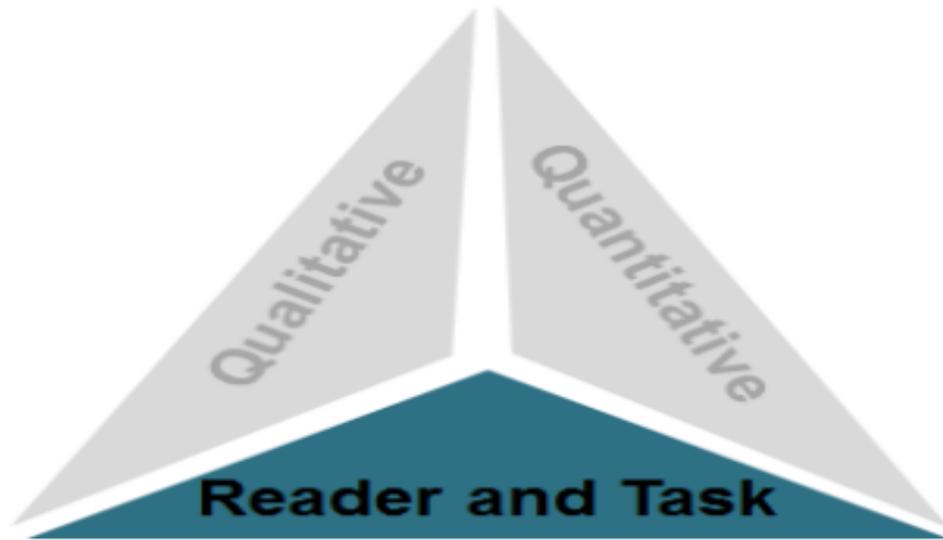
Step 2: Qualitative Measures



Measures such as:

- Levels of meaning
- Levels of purpose
- Structure
- Organization
- Language conventionality
- Language clarity
- Prior knowledge demands

PLACEMAT ANSWERS!



Step 3: Reader and Task

Considerations such as:

- Motivation
- Knowledge and experience
- Purpose for reading
- Complexity of task assigned regarding text
- Complexity of questions asked regarding text

How Do I Help Students Access Complex Texts?

Point One:

There is no MAGIC Program!

Point Two:

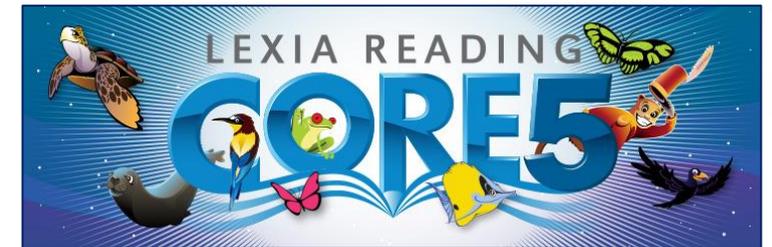
Reading is not the dominion of English classrooms!

All teachers are teachers of reading. Reading Achievement has to be schoolwide effort!

Point Three:

Use research based strategies that work!

- Incentivize reading for ALL students.
- Give students choice and VOICE in reading selections.
- Employ Close Reading in all classrooms!



Triumph
Online™



Accelerated
Reader®

What Do Good Readers Do?

They **skip, skim, and scan** text continually based on their purpose. They also **reread, slow down, and reread** again if it suits their purpose.

They know a purpose will help them **focus their reading and determine what is important**. They also know that purpose determines **how** they read the material.

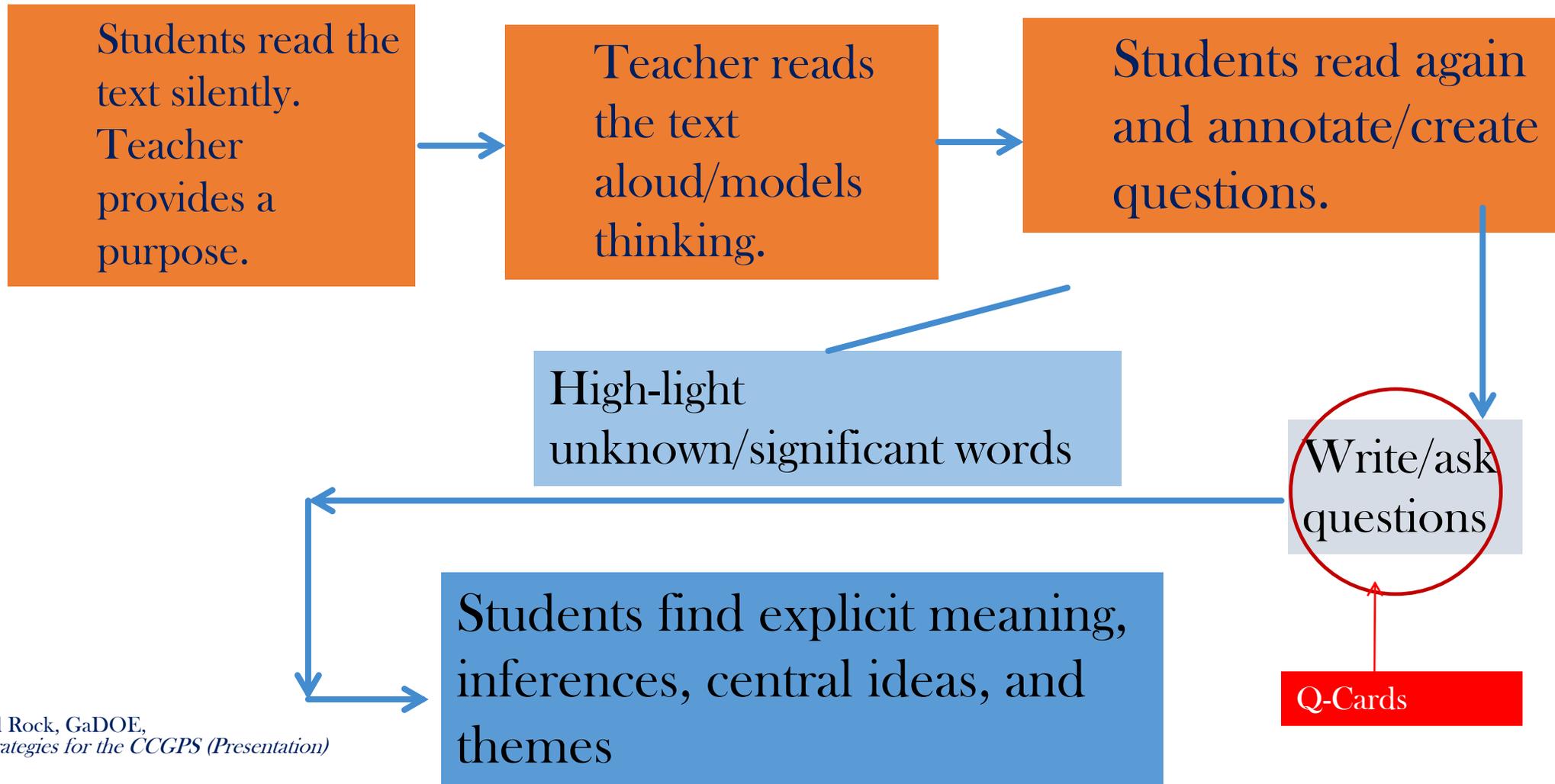
Good readers approach assigned text with a **result** in mind. They consider **what they have to do** with the information after reading.

Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?
by Cris Tovani

Students read deeply and analytically, able to comprehend and make inferences about what they read.

Reference: Daniel Rock, GaDOE, *Close Reading Strategies for the CCGPS (Presentation)*

The Close Reading Process



How is Georgia using Lexiles?



- Students receive a Lexile measure along with their regular scale score for Georgia Milestone's EOG and EOC.
- A student's Lexile measure is a tool for teachers to use in targeting reading material for students.
- A student's Lexile measure is a tool for parents to use in selecting reading material for their children.
- Instruction in ELA and math will be based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence that promotes literacy in these content areas as well as others.
- Teachers in such areas as social studies and science must also help students develop literacy.

Reference: The Georgia Department of Education, *Making Sense of a Reading Score and Partnering with the Classroom, Media Centers and Libraries, and Home (May 4, 2012)*

Lexile Bands

Grade Band	Current Lexile Band	“Stretch” Lexile Band
K-1	n/a	N/A
2-3	450L-725L	420L-820L
4-5	645L-845L	740L-1010L
6-8	860L-1010L	925L-1185L
9-10	960L-1115L	1050L-1335L
11-CCR	1070L-1220L	1185L-1385L

These “stretch” Lexile bands are based on the Common Core State Standards - Appendix A - updated in July 2012.

These “stretch” bands reflect the demand of text that students should be reading—and at which grades—to make sure they are ultimately prepared for the reading demands of college and careers.

Reference: The Georgia Department of Education, *Making Sense of a Reading Score and Partnering with the Classroom, Media Centers and Libraries, and Home (May 4, 2012)*

The Lexile Scale

- Lexiles typically range from 200 for beginning readers to 1700 for advanced readers.
- Lexile text below 200L represents beginning-reading material, and a student's Lexile score may have a number in the 100s or the code of BR. BR is a code that stands for Beginning Reading.
- Applies to both reader ability and text difficulty
 - When reader and text measures are the same, the student is expected to read with 75% comprehension.
- Can be used to track reading growth over time.

Reference: The Georgia Department of Education, *Making Sense of a Reading Score and Partnering with the Classroom, Media Centers and Libraries, and Home (May 4, 2012)*



Relationship between Time Spent Reading and Reading Achievement

Fifth-Grade Students

Percentile Rank	Minutes of Text Reading per Day	Estimated Number of Words Read per Year
98	90.7	4,733,000
90	40.4	2,357,000
70	21.7	1,168,000
50	12.9	601,000
20	3.1	134,000
10	1.6	51,000

from Anderson et al., 1988, Table 3, $N=155$.

Reference: Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)

Typical Lexile Growth

Grade Level	Typical Growth in One Year	Time Necessary to Observe a “True” Difference
3rd-5th	100L	37 weeks
6th-7th	70L	55 weeks
8th-9th	50L	110 weeks
10th-12th	25L	110 weeks

Reference: Dr. Rick Dills, *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (presentation)

What *all* teachers need...

- Classroom reports of their **students' Lexile scores**
 - Fall (to profile, group, and match text)
 - Spring (to chart and celebrate growth)
- **Lexile levels for their textbooks** and books in their classrooms and library
- **Access to the Internet and to resources** such as lexile.com, online databases, and other search tools
- **Opportunities to collaborate** and develop tiered reading/resource lists



Using Lexiles in the Classroom



Teachers can use Lexiles to help them:

- Develop individualized or classroom reading lists tailored to provide appropriately challenging reading.
- Enhance thematic teaching by building a bank of titles at varying levels that support the theme, but also allows all students to participate successfully in the theme with material at their own reading level.
- Sequence materials, for example by increasing the difficulty of read-aloud books throughout the year.

What teachers need to know

How to:

- Use Lexiles as a **reading measurement system**
- **Profile** students, **predict** comprehension, and **match** readers to text
- Access and use **online resources**
- Develop and use **tiered reading/resource lists** to support differentiation
- Understand, chart, and explain patterns of **Lexile growth**

Using Lexiles in the Classroom

Teachers can use Lexiles to help them:

- Develop a reading folder that goes home with students and comes back for weekly review. Folder might contain:
 - a reading list of books within the student's Lexile range
 - reports of recent assessments
 - a form for parents to record reading that occurs at home.
- Vary reading difficulty of material to the situation:
 - Choose texts lower in the student's Lexile range when factors make the reading situation more challenging, threatening or unfamiliar.
 - Select texts at or above the student's range to stimulate growth when a topic is of extreme interest to a student, or when you will be giving additional support such as background teaching or discussion.

More Instructional Uses of Lexiles

Lexiles can help teachers:

- Adjust materials to the purpose of reading.
 - For increased fluency and automaticity, teacher selects text that measures well below reader ability.
 - As a strategy for teaching students how to attack “hard” text, the teacher selects text that measures above reader ability.



More Instructional Uses of Lexiles

- Teachers can use Lexiles to target fiction and non-fiction material to students' abilities and thus promote learning of all subjects.
 - Avoids student frustration when reading text is too difficult.
 - Avoids undermining student self-confidence.
 - Avoids the fostering of bad work habits and unrealistic self-expectations when a student is always presented with too easy material.
 - Learning occurs best when the text material can be comprehended at a 75% rate.



Why 75% Comprehension?

Years of MM research suggests that at 75%...

- A reader can have a **successful reading experience** without frustration or boredom
- A reader can achieve “**functional comprehension**” of the text
- A reader will be **sufficiently challenged** (by vocabulary and syntax) to improve

75% is the “right amount of challenge”

Managing Comprehension

- Readers can experience **frustration** when...
 - Text readability is **100L+ above** their Lexile level
- Readers can experience **ease** when...
 - Text readability is **50-100L below** their Lexile level
- Readers can experience **growth** when...
 - Text readability is **within their Lexile range**

General Reading Recommendation:

Targeted text range of **100L below to 50L above** the student's Lexile level

Note: This range may vary based on text type, reading context and purpose, reading strategies and support, and reader motivation.

Using Lexiles to Promote Reading

- Improve students' reading fluency and increase enjoyment of reading.
 - Students who spend a minimum of 3 hrs/week reading at their own level for their own purposes develop reading fluency which leads to improved mastery.
- It is recommended that readers choose texts within their Lexile range.
 - A Lexile range is 50L above and 100L below a student's reported Lexile measure.
- Use Lexiles to set goals.
- Practice with a variety of texts.
- Challenge the **BEST** readers.
- Success breeds enjoyment.



Summer Reading Is Essential !

Research studies show that —

- students can have up to a 2-3 month loss in reading ability over summer.
- lower income students may suffer most due to lack of books in home and transportation access to public libraries.
- rural area students also lack easy access.
- innovative partnering of schools, publishers, and public libraries have great promise for solving the summer reading loss dilemma.

Reference: The Georgia Department of Education, *Making Sense of a Reading Score and Partnering with the Classroom, Media Centers and Libraries, and Home (May 4, 2012)*



Our Media Centers Have a Role to Play

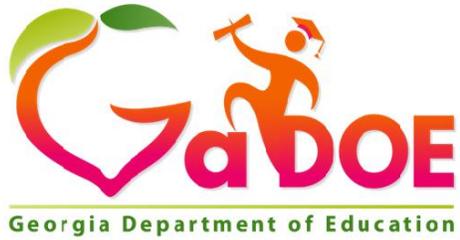
Media specialists and librarians can assist classroom instruction by

- Helping to develop individualized or classroom reading lists tailored to provide appropriately challenging reading.
- Guiding teachers in selecting a bank of titles at varying levels that support an instructional thematic unit. This allows all students to participate successfully in the theme with material at their own reading level.
- Locating and sequencing materials for classroom use. For example, increasing the difficulty of read-aloud books throughout the year.

Source: <https://d1jct5u2s0h3gkt.cloudfront.net/m/uploads/downloadablepdfs/Lexiles-in-the-Library.pdf>

Our Parents Have a Role to Play

- Promotes family-school connections.
- Know your child's Lexile measure.
- Know your child's Lexile range.
 - 50L above and 100L below their reported Lexile measure. This range represents the boundaries between the easiest kind of reading material for your child and the hardest level at which he/she can read successfully.
- Use the Lexile Find a Book Database (at <http://lexile.com/fab/GA>) to find books in the child's Lexile range.



Teacher Tools for *Increasing Lexile Levels to Improve Student Learning*

Accessing the Find a Book Tool <http://lexile.com/fab/GA>

The screenshot shows the Lexile Framework for Reading website. At the top left is the Lexile logo and the text 'The Lexile® Framework for Reading'. To the right is a 'Quick Book Search' box with a search bar and an 'Advanced Search' link. Below this is a navigation menu with tabs for 'About Lexile Measures', 'Using Lexile Measures', 'Common Core', and 'Lexile Tools'. A 'Lexile Training' link is also visible. The main content area is titled 'Find the Right Book for You!' and includes a search prompt: 'Enter your Lexile measure, select your interests, and find books you'd like to read!'. There are buttons for 'Buscando libros en español?', 'Pledge to read some great books this summer!', and 'Submit your Summer Reading Pledge'. A 'Find a Book' button is prominently displayed. Below this is a 'Step 1: Enter Lexile Measure or' section with two options: 'My Lexile measure is' and 'I don't know my Lexile measure'. The 'My Lexile measure is' option has input fields for 'Lexile Measure: [] L' and 'Lexile Range: [] L to [] L'. The 'I don't know my Lexile measure' option has a 'My Current Grade is:' dropdown menu set to 'Kindergarten' and three radio button options: 'I find the books I read for school difficult.', 'I find the books I read for school just right.', and 'I find the books I read for school easy.'. A 'Submit' button is at the bottom left. At the bottom of the page, it says '736 Books updated this month' and '142,627 Total books measured'.

Use the Lexile Analyzer – it's free, but you must register.

Create a text document (file extension is .txt) with multiple 175-word slices from the book or document.

Submit via the Lexile Analyzer.

Also can approximate the Lexile by seeing other books by the same author or in same series.

Lexile Analyzer

Text file

Betsy's Busy Summer

By the time school closed in the last week of June, everyone had decided that the hot weather had come to stay. All the fathers and mothers still complained about the heat, but never the children. Now that they did not have to go to school, they didn't seem to know that it was hot. The air was filled with their shouts as they raced and ran and played.

There was almost always a crowd of them playing in Betsy's yard. Betsy had a big yard to play in. It was all around the house, but the biggest part was in the back, where Betsy's mother had a garden. A path ran through the garden to the far end, where Betsy's father had made a pool. It was not very big and it was not very deep, but the eight goldfish that lived in it seemed to find it a pleasant place. At the end of Betsy's yard a stone wall ran between it and the Jackson's place.

It was soon very noticeable that Betsy's summer house was going to be the favorite spot for all the neighborhood children during their summer vacation. It was shaded by the trees, and Betsy's father had fastened a big old-fashioned electric fan in the center of the ceiling. It twirled away by the hour, sending a cooling breeze down on the head of the children when they played there.

One warm day, Betsy and her best friend Ellen were sitting in the summerhouse, sewing new dresses for their dolls. Betsy was making her doll a plaid school dress, and Ellen was making hers a party dress of pink silk.

Betsy's mother had taken the car and gone to the market. Betsy's little sister Star and Ellen's little sister Linda were in the garden, playing dress-up ladies. Star was blue with pink roses. It wrapped around her six times and was held on by a wide sash tied in a large bow in the back. She looked like a little sausage.

Linda had on a black satin dress that had once belonged to Star's grandmother. It was held on and held up with many safety pins. Underneath the dress she had on a pink-and-white-checked sun suit. The whole back of the tight little pants was covered with rows of ruffles, which gave the black satin dress a bustle in the rear. The dress had a fishtail train, which Linda wished as she walked up and down the garden path. She was also wearing a black lace scarf over her head.

"I'm a Duckess," said Linda to Star, as she stopped in the walk beside the pool.

"What's a Duckess?" asked Star, who was younger than Linda and didn't know much.

"Goodness!" said Linda. "Don't you know what a Duckess is?" Star shook her head.

Lexile Analyzer

The screenshot shows the Lexile Analyzer website in a browser window. The address bar shows <http://www.lexile.com/analyzer/>. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, "Find a Book", Lexile Analyzer, Resources, Research, Store, My Profile, My Reading Lists, and Logout. A "Quick Book Search" box is visible on the right. Below the navigation is a "Lexile Training" section with "Online Help" links:

- Step 1: [What kinds of texts can be measured](#)
- Step 2: [Prepare your text for measurement](#)
- Step 3: [Type or scan your text](#)
- Step 4: [Convert your text into a plain text file](#)
- Step 5: [Analyze your text and get results](#)
- [Using the Professional Analyzer®](#)

The main heading is "Get a Lexile® Text Measure". Below it, a text box contains the instruction: "You can use our online tools to determine the estimated Lexile® measure of edited, conventional prose text. Just follow our guidelines for preparing a text, upload it, and the Lexile measure will be displayed." There are "Browse..." and "Submit" buttons. Below this is a section for "Online help and user guides" with links to the English and Spanish Lexile Analyzers and a user guide.

Result

The screenshot shows the "Lexile Analyzer" result page. It includes a warning: "Please be sure to make note of this information. It will not be stored and may only be recreated by analyzing the file again." Below this, a box displays the "Lexile Analyzer Result" with a "Lexile Measure: 970L". A link at the bottom says "Click here to analyze another file."

