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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Global Alliance
to Monitor Learning

WG/GAML/4

4.1.1 GLOBAL PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK

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GLOBAL PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORK FOR READING

Grades 1 to 9

OCTOBER 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document, the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF or framework) for Reading, grades one to nine, was developed by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS); the US Agency for International Development (USAID); the World Bank; the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)--formerly the UK Department for International Development (DFID); the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER); the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and representatives of many other development partner organizations, including several university professors. A complete list of participants who lent their considerable expertise to this initiative can be found in the contributors section of this document.

The GPF for Reading defines important reading-related knowledge and skills learners should develop in primary and lower secondary school. It also describes the minimum proficiency levels learners are expected to demonstrate, with respect to the defined knowledge and skills, at each grade level, from grades one to nine.

This important resource would not have been developed without the immense contributions of all participants and stakeholders. Without their time and dedication, this framework would not exist.

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ACRONYMS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	UK Department for International Development
IBE	International Bureau of Education (UNESCO)
GAML	Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning
GCFRR	Global Content Framework of Reference for Reading
GPD	Global Proficiency Descriptor
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPF	Global Proficiency Framework
GPL	Global Minimum Proficiency Level
IBE	International Bureau of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLM	Policy Linking Method to set global benchmarks
PLT	Policy Linking Toolkit to set global benchmarks
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nation's Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID	US Agency for International Development

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OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Global Proficiency Framework (also referred to as the GPF or the framework) defines the *global minimum proficiency levels* that learners are expected to demonstrate at the end of each grade level, from grades one to nine. The GPF was developed by reading educators, curriculum experts, and psychometricians with extensive experience developing and implementing reading programs in a wide range of countries and contexts. Their names and affiliations are listed in the contributors section of this document.

The development process was an extensive one. It began in October 2018 with the development by the UNESCO International Bureau for Education (IBE) of the Global Content Framework of Reference for Reading (GCFRR). The GCFRM synthesizes content and assessment framework information from more than 50 countries from around the globe, providing a picture of the common expectations countries have for learners' performance in reading.

In April and June 2019, reading educators, curriculum specialists, and psychometricians from around the world met in Washington, DC, to outline, based on the GCFRR and other national and regional curriculum and assessment frameworks developed for reading, a research-based progression of the minimum knowledge and skills learners in grade two (or primary two) to grade six (or primary six) should be able to demonstrate with respect to the key domains of reading. The draft framework outlined, for each skill or knowledge item retained, the performance of learners of in four proficiency levels: *Below Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency*, *Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency*, *Meets Global Minimum Proficiency*, and *Exceeds Global Minimum Proficiency.*

The draft framework was field tested in at least nine countries, including Bangladesh, Djibouti, the Gambia, Ghana, India, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, and Senegal during the 2019-2020 academic year. The lessons learned from those field tests informed the organization, beginning

in May of 2020, of a second round of consultations with reading educators, curriculum experts, and psychometricians from the global community, many of whom had participated in the first round. During on-line deliberations between May and August 2020, experts revised the initial GPF and added grades one (primary one) and seven, eight and nine. The result is a GPF that covers the entire nine years of basic education.

The GPF is the product of extended discussions and rich, lively debates over an eighteen-month period. This ongoing exchange of expertise has resulted in a comprehensive, evidence-based evaluation framework for reading that represents the consensus of the global community about what learners should know and be able to do when it comes to reading.

The GPF is also the product of extensive collaboration between donor agencies and assessment organizations committed to developing and implementing common methods for measuring and reporting on progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDGs), including the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly the UK Department for International Development - DFID), the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. These organizations provided critical technical and financial support for the development and field testing of the GPF. UIS, as “the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education” for the SDGs (Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2015), is the lead organization for this collaborative effort, including through its role in organizing the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) and the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG).

PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The overarching purpose of the GPF is to provide countries and regional/international assessment organizations with a common reference or scale, in the form of a common definition of the minimum knowledge and skills learners must demonstrate at key points along their learning trajectory, for reporting progress on indicator 4.1.1 of the SDGs. This indicator commits signatories to tracking the:

> *Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3 (b) at the end of primary, and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.*

The GPF allows the results of different national, regional, or international assessments to be interpreted against a common reference or scale. When countries or jurisdictions link their assessments to the GPF through a process called policy linking, which is outlined in the Policy Linking Toolkit,[1] they are able to set benchmarks for their assessments that allow them to determine the percentage of learners that have partially met, met, or exceeded *Global Minimum Proficiency* for reporting against SDG 4.1.1.. This linking of existing - and future – reading assessments via a common scale (the GPF) allows for the comparison of results from different assessments, within and across countries; aggregation of country and global reading outcomes; and tracking of outcomes over time.

Although the framework's main purpose is to provide a common reference or scale for global reporting and interpretation of the results of national, regional, and international assessments

[1] The Policy Linking Toolkit walks countries and assessment organizations through a step-by-step process for establishing internationally aligned benchmarks or standards for their own assessments. The process uses an internationally recognized methodology called the Modified Angoff.

of reading, the framework has proven to be a valuable tool for countries and organizations interested in developing new assessments to measure progress against common, global standards, or in critically examining the extent to which existing curricula are developing skills identified by the international community as critical to supporting learning over time. The GPF also offers countries a lens for examining alignment between their standards, curricula, assessments, teacher training programs, instructional materials, and classroom practices and the minimal learner expectations in the GPF. The use of the GPF for these additional purposes has resulted in deep reflections on the quality of teaching and learning and on the nature of robust assessments.

Finally, many of the partner organizations supporting this initiative, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID), have adjusted their evaluation indicators to align with those of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 4.1.1. The GPF provides these organizations with a valuable tool for monitoring progress over time.

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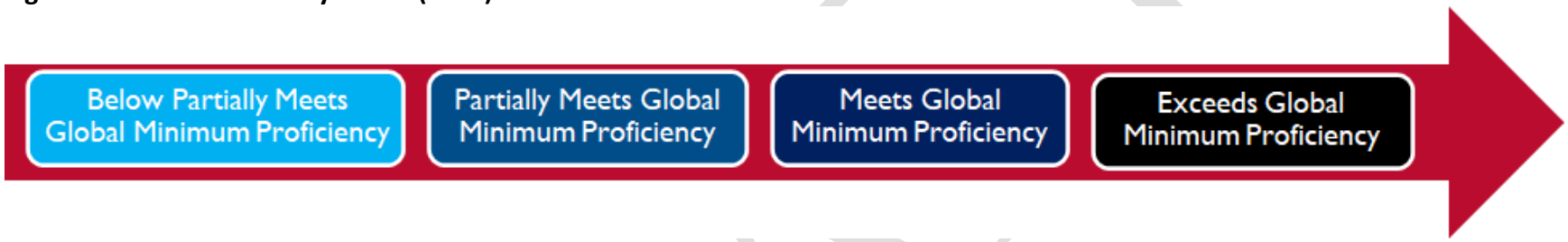
USING THE FRAMEWORK

The GPF contains five tables:

Table 1 outlines the four Global Proficiency Levels (GPLs) and provides brief, general definitions of each of the four levels, as defined by the team of experts (see diagram 1 below for a depiction of the levels).

Figure 1. Global Proficiency Levels (GPLs)



The four levels apply to all targeted grade levels and to both reading and mathematics (the latter of which is detailed under the Global Proficiency Framework for Mathematics).

The *Meets Global Minimum Proficiency* level describes the knowledge and skills learners who have met minimum expectations for SDG Indicator 4.1.1, and for USAID reporting requirements. Although SDG reporting only requires countries to report on the percentage of learners who have met or exceeded this minimum level, the GPF describes the performance of learners at three other levels: *Exceeds Global Minimum Proficiency*, *Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency*, and B*elow Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency*. The GPF team established these additional proficiency levels to help countries and assessment organizations build a more nuanced picture of country progress toward all learners meeting, or exceeding, global minimum proficiency. The framework does not, however, include performance descriptors for the *Below Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency* level. Rather, the performance of learners at this level is below benchmarks set for learners in the *Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency* level.

Table 2 provides an overview of the Reading GPF. It outlines the different domains retained and the specific constructs and subconstructs addressed in each domain as well as the grade levels at which they are addressed.

Table 3 provides a second, more detailed overview of the GPF. It lists, for each domain, construct, subconstruct, the key knowledge and/or skills[2] addressed, by grade level. This table allows curriculum and evaluation specialists to quickly identify the items on a given assessment that evaluate the knowledge and skills addressed in the GPF. The resulting analysis provides an indication of the degree of alignment between an assessment and the knowledge and skills in the GPF. This process of alignment is the first task, Task 1, in the policy linking process, described in detail in the Policy Linking Toolkit.

Table 4 summarizes, for each knowledge and skill retained, at each grade level, a description of what in the *Meets Global Minimum Proficiency* level can do (this is called a performance descriptor). It provides an overview of the progression of knowledge and skills as learners move up the grade levels. The table is particularly useful for governments or assessment organizations interested in establishing a single benchmark for an assessment, namely the minimum score required to meet global minimum proficiency requirements.

Table 5 contains the full GPF, with descriptors of the performance of learners in all four proficiency levels, by grade level for every knowledge and skill retained. This table is particularly useful for governments or assessment organizations interested in

[2] Knowledge or skills are sometimes referred to as content standards in countries. However, the authors have deliberately not used this term, as it is expected that countries will have their own national content standards, which may not align directly with this framework. Nonetheless, countries that do not have national content standards or that may wish to revise their standards to better align with global expectations and developmental progressions might use the knowledge or skills presented in this table to guide their discussions and planning. It is also critical to note that well-functioning education systems have content and performance standards that align with one another as well as their curricula, teacher training, materials, classroom instruction, and assessments.

establishing multiple benchmarks, corresponding to the lowest performance in each performance category, to provide a more nuanced picture of the percentage of learners in each category.

Table 5 also includes, for some grade levels, illustrative examples of the types of texts learners at each grade level should be able to read, and the types of questions they should be able to answer. The examples are included to clarify the descriptions of the type of reading questions or activities learners should be able to complete.

Glossary - A glossary of key terms follows the tables.

Description of text complexity - Finally, the appendices to the GPF includes specifications as to the nature (e.g., length, level of difficulty, and content) of the texts learners at each grade level are expected to read, as well as the types of reading activities they are expected to complete. These are important, as many of the performance descriptors include reference to grade-level texts. Yet, countries define grade-level texts in vastly different ways. Thus, in an effort to create comparability of outcomes across countries, the framework authors have provided a base description of the types of texts that qualify as "grade-level" texts for each grade, taking into account the varying levels of complexity with regards to language of assessment. Some of the texts cited were developed for use in assessments led by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Others were developed for recent iterations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-led Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)[3] . The authors acknowledge the contribution of both ACER and PISA to the finalisation of the GPF. Additional PISA-released items for reading can be found at http://www.oecd.org/pisa/test/PISA2018_Released_REA_Items_12112019.pdf and in Annex C of the 2018 PISA 2018 report, Volume 1: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5f07c754-en.pdf?expires=1599841296&id=id&accname=ocid84004878&checksum=5397EC1BFF924BE51593FE683BD8F40B.

[3] See OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What learners Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I)*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264091450-en.

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TABLE 1: DEFINITIONS OF THE GLOBAL MINIMUM PROFICIENCY LEVELS

GLOBAL MINIMUM PROFICIENCY LEVEL	DEFINITION
Below Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency	Learners lack the most basic knowledge and skills. As a result, they generally cannot complete the most basic grade-level tasks.
Partially Meets Global Minimum Proficiency	Learners have limited knowledge and skills. As a result, they can partially complete basic grade-level tasks.
Meets Global Minimum Proficiency	Learners have developed sufficient knowledge and skills. As a result, they can successfully complete the most basic grade-level tasks.
Exceeds Global Minimum Proficiency	Learners have developed superior knowledge and skills. As a result, they can complete complex grade-level tasks.

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TABLE 2: STRUCTURE OF THE GPF

An 'x' means there are global proficiency descriptors (GPDs) for the grade in question. If there is no ‘x’, that means there are no GPDs for that grade level. Learners have either developed the knowledge and skills for these subconstructs at earlier grade levels or they are not yet ready to demonstrate this knowledge or skill.

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TABLE 3: KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, BY GRADE LEVEL

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TABLE 4: 'MEETS MINIMUM PROFICIENCY' LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

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TABLE 5: DESCRIPTORS FOR ALL FOUR PROFICIENCY LEVELS

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GLOSSARY

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GPF TEXT COMPLEXITY CONTINUUM AND EXAMPLES

DOCUMENT DESIGN

The main purpose of this document is to describe a continuum of text complexity from the start of primary to the end of lower secondary in order to support the interpretation of the Global Proficiency Framework Reading proficiency indicators and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.1.1 and in particular the minimum proficiency levels (MPLs) given in indicator 4.1.1.

> **SDG Goal 4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
>
> **Indicator 4.1.1** Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

The Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) for Reading breaks reading into domains, constructs, sub-constructs and descriptors within each domain. The framework describes proficiency in terms of 'partially meets', 'meets' and 'exceeds' for each descriptor at each grade from Grade 1 to Grade 9. The distinctions between the grade levels are heavily reliant on references to 'grade-level texts'. Accordingly, it is essential to provide some definition of grade-level texts. This paper aims to support that definition by describing a continuum of text complexity, and examples of texts at designated grade levels. In this context, the term 'text' applies to written or printed artefacts, whether paper-based or digital, that comprise language arranged in sentences and paragraphs (continuous texts) or other meaningful structures such as lists, tables or labelled diagrams (non-continuous texts). While Grade 1 is included in the GPF, it is not included in this description of text complexity because the Grade 1 focus is on single words, rather than longer continuous or non-continuous texts.

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A CONTINUUM OF TEXT COMPLEXITY

Many factors

Evaluating text complexity requires complex judgments based on consideration of many factors that can make reading a text with comprehension more or less difficult. The text itself – the length, the structure, the vocabulary, the extent of the challenge involved in interpretation – need to be considered. The student's context also matters, as what is familiar, whether through formal teaching or through general background knowledge, influences the extent to which learners will find it easier or harder to understand the text.

In this document, broad guidelines are provided about key factors that affect the complexity of a text at various grade levels. Sample texts are offered for illustration.

Grade-appropriate

The assumption is that a grade-appropriate text is one that most learners in that grade would be able to read independently and largely understand. That is, they would understand the main ideas and important details, but may not understand every aspect of the text. (Note that in the early years of school, learners' aural comprehension will be considerably more advanced than the texts they are able to read independently.) For text complexity to be reflected in assessment results, the items must address the main ideas and important details, so that student understanding of the overall text is assessed. A further important assumption is that, in general, the complexity of the text will be reflected in the difficulty of the items: that is, simple texts will support easy items and complex texts will have items that require learners to think carefully about the meaning of the text.[4]

On-balance judgments

[4] It should be noted that this is not always the case, and indeed in some assessments part of the design is to include items with a range of difficulty that are based on a single text. This allows learners with low reading skills and learners with strong reading skills to demonstrate the extent of their proficiency.

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As texts become more complex, the factors that affect how difficult the text is to comprehend also become more complex. This is not a uniform trajectory. The overall complexity of a text must be an on-balance judgment, based on consideration of the interplay of all of the factors mentioned above, including the learners' context.

The intention in this paper is to describe the key factors that affect complexity when these are relatively evenly balanced within a text. This helps to support differentiating text complexity between grade-levels, but many texts may not exhibit such even balance, especially as texts become more complex. Some factors in a text may be easier than those suggested at a grade level and others may be harder. An on-balance judgment is required about where the text best fits.

The intention here is also to describe and illustrate an average text that sits within a designated grade and would be considered on balance, too easy for most learners in the grade above and too hard for most learners in the grade below. An average text is positioned, as much as possible, in the middle of a continuum of text complexity for a grade. There is no hard boundary between grade levels for text complexity, and there will be many texts that are borderline and fall into grey areas of being possibly suitable for many learners in two adjacent grades. Some parts of a text may be simple and some parts more complex. Considered judgements are required about overall complexity and the extent to which this is appropriate for most learners in a given grade.

Continuum and MPLs

There are many clear differences between a grade 2-level text, a grade 3-level text and a grade 4-level text, making it reasonably straightforward to describe and differentiate texts at each of these grades. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to make fine, between-grade-level distinctions above Grade 4. From Grade 5 on there is an increasing number of ways in which each of the factors that affect complexity (for example, length, familiarity of content or vocabulary) might be made more challenging and the interplay of factors also becomes more

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complex. The wider range of text types that learners are expected to encounter as they become more proficient readers also makes comparisons of text complexity more challenging. It is more meaningful to make broader distinctions. Accordingly, because the focus of the MPLs is on Grades 2/3, end of primary (typically Grade 6) and end of lower secondary (typically Grade 9), this document focuses on the factors that affect text complexity at Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9. Sample texts at these levels are described in terms of the key factors affecting text complexity. Additional texts are located along the continuum – at the intermediate grades, Grades 4 and 5, and Grades 7 and 8 – but no descriptions of the factors affecting text complexity are provided for these grades. The intermediary grade texts have been ranked based on on-balance judgments.

Making comparisons

Ranking through pairwise comparison of texts is strongly recommended as a strategy to support allocating a text to a grade-level of complexity.

A new text can be compared with sample texts at a grade level within this document, making a judgment each time, about whether the new text is harder or easier than the sample texts. If it is generally harder than the texts at one level, the new text can be compared with texts at the next level and so on, until an appropriate position is identified in the continuum of complexity.

CONTEXT RELEVANCE

This document is intended to provide guidance about determining text complexity with the important caveat that guidance should always be adjusted according to the language and context.

Text length, which is of critical importance in Grades 2 and 3, is only specified approximately. An indicative word count is given in English on the understanding that languages with longer words may adopt a shorter word count. Similarly, where a sentence count is given, this is on the

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understanding that more very short sentences, or fewer longer sentences, might also be appropriate. The sample texts provide guidance about the scope of the content that is expected to be covered in a grade-level text.

Familiarity is of critical importance at all grades. Content, structure and vocabulary should be very familiar at lower grades, and the degree of familiarity will depend on what has been taught as well as personal experience, at home and in the local community. As texts become more complex, most factors start to become less familiar. Again, what 'less familiar' means will depend on what has been taught and what most learners are likely to have encountered outside school.

In some languages – languages with 'transparent orthographies' – there is a consistent relationship between graphemes and phonemes (that is, a given sound in the language is always represented by the same written symbol). Children who are learning to read in their mother tongue in such languages will be able to understand written language sooner and more easily than children in other circumstances. These 'other circumstances' can take a variety of forms. In diglossic languages, languages with large symbol sets, character-based languages and languages with deep orthographies, the words learners are able to read with understanding may depend on what they have been taught. This also applies in contexts where the school language is not the home or community language of the learners. The words that are used in grade-appropriate texts should be limited to words that learners have been taught to recognise and understand, or that they should be able to decode and understand.

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GRADE 2

TABLE 1: GENERAL FEATURES OF GRADE 2-LEVEL TEXTS

Feature	Scope	Elaboration	Contextualisation
Length	Very short	A few sentences: approximately 20-30 words in English.	Fewer words in agglutinated or highly synthetic languages
Familiarity	Very familiar	Everyday experiences, events and objects that are likely to be familiar to the learners.	Context dependent
Predictability	Medium	Context or setting is familiar and somewhat predictable but includes details that cannot be predicted to ensure that learners are required to make meaning from the text.	
Challenge	As little as possible	Little or no implied information, minimal competing information and possibly also supportive illustrations	
Text structure	Very simple	Familiar structure with a clear main idea, only one or two characters, few details.	
Vocabulary	Very common	Simple words that are likely to have been encountered often and typically describe concrete concepts; may include a highly-supported, uncommon word.	Depends on the transparency of the orthography and the language background of the learners
Sentence structure	Simple and common	Simple sentences or simple compound sentences that are commonly encountered.	Language dependent

TEXT TYPES AT GRADE 2

At Grade 2 texts are so short that they are mainly simple descriptions. Texts typically have a single character engaged in a simple action, or a very brief description of a single object or event.

A reading assessment is intended to measure reading comprehension, which means a set of questions about a text must require learners to read the whole text. It should not be possible for learners to use general or prior knowledge to answer any questions without reading the

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text, or to accurately predict the answers to most questions after reading the title, or the first line. Each question may be based on a small part of the text, but as a set, the questions should require learners to read all the text.

GRADE 2 EXAMPLE 1 INFORMATION (DESCRIPTION): VAN

> Van is at school. He has new pencils.
>
> Van draws a picture of a big tree with green leaves and red flowers.

Explanation: This extremely short text (22 words) describes a familiar activity of a child drawing a picture using very common words. There is one longer sentence which is a list of the things Van draws. There is minimal competing information; the colours of the leaves are predictably green and the flowers are red. There is a very simple implied connection that Van is using the new pencils to draw.

See appendix for sample Van items

GRADE 2 EXAMPLE 2 INFORMATION (DESCRIPTION): MAYA

> My name is Maya. When I come home from school, I always sweep the yard. Then I have a snack. Mum likes having a nice clean yard.

Explanation: This extremely short text (27 words) describes a familiar short sequence of three events: coming home from school, sweeping the yard and having a snack using very common words. There is minimal competing information as a second person, Mum, is mentioned once. There is a simple, predictable implication that Mum will be pleased with Maya's work.

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GRADE 2 EXAMPLE 3 INFORMATION: THE PIPPI

The Pippi

This is a shell. The shell is shut.
The animal that lives in this shell is called a pippi.

If you open the shell, you can see the pippi.

Explanation: This very short text (29 words) presents a simple idea about a familiar concept of a seashell (the text is not suitable for learners with no concept of a seashell). All the words are very common except for 'pippi'. However, this is the name of the animal and is strongly supported by the illustrations.

See appendix for sample Pippi items

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GRADE 3

TABLE 2: GENERAL FEATURES OF GRADE 3-LEVEL TEXTS

Feature	Scope	Elaboration	Contextualisation
Length	short	Six or more sentences: approximately 60-80 words in English	Fewer words in agglutinated or highly synthetic languages; fewer sentences if long sentences are commonly used
Familiarity	Familiar	Common everyday experiences, events and objects.	Context dependent
Predictability	Medium	Context or setting is familiar and somewhat predictable, but includes details that cannot be predicted to ensure that learners are required to make meaning from the text.	
Challenge	Minimal	Limited competing information; simple implied information	
Text structure	Very simple	Familiar, straightforward structure; a clear main idea with some supporting details; logical progression	
Vocabulary	Very common	A range of words with familiar meanings that typically describe concrete concepts and some common abstract concepts; may include a highly-supported uncommon word	Depends on the transparency of the orthography and the language background of the learners
Sentence structure	Simple and common	A variety of simple sentence structures that are commonly encountered.	Language dependent

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A reading assessment is intended to measure reading comprehension, which means a set of questions about a text must require learners to read the whole text. It should not be possible for learners to use general, or prior knowledge, to answer any questions without reading the text, or to accurately predict the answers to most questions after reading the title, or the first line. Each question may be based on a small part of the text, but as a set, the questions should require learners to read all the text.

TABLE 3: TEXT TYPES AT GRADE 3

Text type	Key elements of text type	Features at Grade 3
Stories	A problem is resolved.	The focus is on characters and how they resolve a dilemma. Typically ,any interactions are between two characters only, though there may be an additional minor character. Actions are limited and clearly related to a consequence.
Information (descriptions)	An event, location, lifestyle, daily habit, object, plant or animal is described.	The focus is on presenting an idea or an event rather than characters. Typically gives an account of a familiar activity, description of a familiar setting or simple factual information. Details are limited. Multiple people may be named, but they are not developed as characters.

GRADE 3 EXAMPLE 1 STORY: THE MANGO

Abdul was walking home. It was a hot day and Abdul was cross. He was feeling tired and hungry. He sat down under a big mango tree. It was nice and cool, so he fell asleep. Suddenly a big mango fell on him and woke him up. Abdul ate the mango. Now he was happy.

Explanation: This is a short text (55 words) of 8 sentences that uses common words. The setting

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of walking along on a hot day should be familiar to most learners, even those from cool climates.

In this story, Abdul's problem is that he is hot, tired, hungry and cross. The consequence is that he lies under a cool tree to sleep. His problem is resolved when a mango drops on his head. This is a simple, straightforward story with a single character. While the outcome, Abdul's happiness, might be predictable, the way the outcome happens is not.

The character's name, gender and the kind of fruit tree can be changed to make them familiar to learners.

See appendix for sample Mango items

GRADE 3 EXAMPLE 2 STORY: TADALA'S DEED

> One day Tadala found a bag and he picked it up. He took the bag to the village chief. The next week the chief called Tadala to come speak with him. The chief told him that the woman who owned the bag was very thankful that Tadala had returned the bag. The chief gave Tadala a football and a box of oranges from the woman, to say thank you. Tadala loved football. He was so happy he had found the bag.

Explanation: This is a short text (76 words) and 7 sentences that uses common words. The context of finding and handing in a lost article should be familiar to learners, as should be the idea of being rewarded for providing assistance.

In this story, the problem is that Tadala finds a bag which he gives to the chief. As a result, he receives an unexpected reward. This is a simple, straightforward story. While the outcome of

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Tadala being rewarded in some way for doing the right thing might be predictable, the nature of the reward is not.

The character's name, and the gifts given as a reward can be changed so that they are familiar... The village chief can be changed to an appropriate person to manage lost property. The gender of the characters can also be changed.

GRADE 3 EXAMPLE 3 STORY: THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A proud young fox saw some grapes hanging over a fence. They looked delicious.

'I am strong. I will get some grapes,' said the fox. He jumped up, but it was not high enough. He jumped again, and again. Then the fox heard a donkey laughing.

'You were boasting and now you look silly,' said the donkey.

'I don't want those grapes,' said the fox. 'They look horrible.'

'You are only saying that because you cannot get them', said the donkey.

Explanation: This is a short text (81 words) with 11 sentences including some very short sentences. There are two less common words, 'laughing' and 'boasting', that are supported in context and are also predictable. The context should be familiar to learners.
In this story, the problem is that the fox wants some grapes and boasts that he is strong enough to jump up and get them. The fox fails and a donkey laughs at him. The reason for the donkey's amusement and the fox's consequent change in attitude is explicitly stated. There is a clear implication that the fox is humiliated or embarrassed. This is a straightforward, familiar interaction between two characters, with details that are specific to this story.

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The kinds of animals and the kind of overhanging fruit can be changed so that they are familiar to learners.

GRADE 3 EXAMPLE 4 INFORMATION (DESCRIPTION): GRASS

> Grass grows in soil. It grows quickly with water and warm sun. Grass cannot grow on bare rock, but it can grow in cracks in the rock. This happens when the wind or rain fills the cracks with soil. Grass seeds that are blown in the wind can land in the cracks filled with soil. If the seeds get warmth and water, then grass will grow in these little pockets of soil.

Explanation: This is a short text (72 words) with six mainly longer sentences. Most of the vocabulary is common. learners should be familiar with the idea of soil, even if they are not used to reading this word.

This is a simple description of how grass can grow in the cracks of rocks. Grass is likely to be a familiar plant for all learners, but the detail about how the soil and seeds get into the cracks of rocks is unlikely to be prior knowledge. learners may not realise that water and warmth are also essential for the grass to grow.

It should not be necessary to modify this text for different contexts.

GRADE 3 EXAMPLE 5 INFORMATION (DESCRIPTION): ALIYAH

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My name is Aliyah. I live in the mountains with my family. In the summer, we take our sheep up to the mountain meadows where there is lots of grass for them to eat. We all have strong legs from walking up and down the steep mountain tracks. During the cold winter months, the sheep stay in the shed to keep warm. Ice makes the tracks slippery. I play sliding games with my brothers and sisters on the icy tracks. We have fun.

Explanation: This is a short text (83 words) with eight sentences. Most of the vocabulary is common. 'Meadows' is supported by the context and learners should be familiar with the base words 'slip' and 'slide' even if they have not read 'slippery' and 'sliding' before.
This is a simple description of Aliyah's life in the mountains. There is a simple contrast between life with the sheep in the summer and the winter, and a brief description of how the mountain tracks make legs strong and are used for playing a game.

The text is appropriate for learners with some understanding of cold weather and ice, even if they have not experienced this kind of weather themselves. The name and gender of the person providing the description can be changed.

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GRADE 4

Grade 4 texts are typically slightly longer than Grade 3 texts and contain more detail. However, greater complexity in one factor may be balanced by less complexity in another. For example, a shorter text may contain some less familiar content, or some less common vocabulary.

GRADE 4 EXAMPLE 1 STORY: THE ACCIDENT

> Than was walking down the stairs at home when he slipped. He fell all the way to the bottom. When he looked at his leg, he could see it was bent up in a strange position.
>
> Mum came running. She touched Than's leg very gently, but it still hurt him. There was no blood, but his ankle was swelling up fast.
>
> 'Ring the ambulance,' Mum called to Dad.
>
> Mum and Dad sat with Than on the stairs while they waited for the ambulance to arrive. Dad told Than not to move in case he made it worse.

Explanation: This text is only slightly longer (97 words) than the Grade 3 texts, but it has more complexity. It includes less common vocabulary: ‘position’, ankle’, ‘swelling’, ‘ambulance’ and ‘worse’. learners need to know the meaning of most of these words as there is only limited contextual support.

In this story, Than has badly hurt his leg. His parents respond by providing comfort and calling the ambulance. There are three characters who all interact with each other, and a sequence of four events: Than falling, Mum coming, Dad ringing the ambulance and then the three characters waiting on the stairs. Most of the ideas are explicit, but some simple ideas are implied, such as that Than has broken his leg, or damaged his ankle.

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The names and genders can be adjusted for context and the ambulance can also be changed to a contextually appropriate health care vehicle or person.

GRADE 4 EXAMPLE 2 STORY: NOGA THE SMALL GIRL

Noga is the smallest girl in her class. Noga does not like being small.

Her mother tells her not to worry. “It’s ok to be small,” she says. But Noga does not think it is ok to be small.

One day, when Noga is out walking, she hears a chirping sound coming from a small hole in a tree. Noga crawls into the hole and sees a baby bird. Noga gently picks up the bird.

She crawls out of the hole and gently places the bird onto a branch of the tree. The bird chirps happily.

“How lucky that I was walking past, and not some big kid,” Noga thinks. She smiles and walks home. She keeps smiling the whole way home.

NOTE: This text can also be used for G3 aural comprehension

Explanation: This text is considerably longer (122 words) than the Grade 3 texts, but it is straightforward. It includes some direct speech. Most of the vocabulary is common, with ‘worry’ and ‘chirps’ both supported by the context and predictable.

Noga’s problem is her small size, but she discovers there are benefits. Noga is the main character and only has one interaction with Mum. There is some detail in a simple

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sequence of three events: Noga hears the bird, crawls into the hole to get the bird and puts the bird on a branch. There is one clearly implied idea about why Noga is happy at the end.

GRADE 4 EXAMPLE 3 INFORMATION: THE DWARF LANTERN SHARK

> Are you afraid of sharks?
>
> Some sharks are harmless. The Dwarf Lantern Shark cannot hurt you. You might think sharks are large but this one is not. It is so small you can hold it in one hand.
>
> Another unusual thing about Dwarf Lantern Sharks is that they glow in the dark. They live at the bottom of very deep oceans. There is no light where they live. They make their own light.

Explanation: At 73 words, this text is no longer than a typical Grade 3 text, but it contains less familiar information, and the information is contrary to expectations (and therefore surprising), so is likely to present more of a challenge to the reader. There is some less familiar vocabulary, with the meaning of 'harmless' and 'glow' being strongly supported in context.

This text should not require adjusting for context. learners should be familiar with the idea of a shark, but learners are not expected to be familiar with the details about the Dwarf Lantern Shark. The concept of light and darkness should also be familiar to all.

GRADE 4 EXAMPLE 4 INFORMATION: ANIMALS IN NATURE

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In nature, certain animals eat other animals. These animals are called predators. The animals that predators eat are called prey. Prey do not want to be eaten. So, they have found many ways to avoid being eaten!

Animals like the porcupine have sharp spikes on their bodies to keep predators away.

Animals like spiders and snakes bite poison into their predators. This hurts or kills predators.

Animals like chameleons and octopuses use camouflage so that predators cannot see them.

Animals like gazelles and wildebeest can run fast to get away from predators.

Sometimes prey are lucky and do not get caught and other times, they are eaten. This is how nature works.

NOTE: This text can also be used for G3 aural comprehension

Explanation: This text is longer than Grade 3 texts (110 words) and contains a significant amount of information. The concepts of 'prey' and 'predator' may be unfamiliar, but they are explained at the beginning of the text. There is a large amount of detail in comparison with a Grade 3-level text.

This text refers to several kinds of animals, some of which are likely to be familiar and some less familiar to learners. It is important that some animals and their behaviour are unfamiliar, as learners should not be able to answer the questions based on prior knowledge. If necessary, some less familiar animal examples may need to be used

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GRADE 5

Texts may be of varying lengths and are mainly narrative (stories) and informational. Some instructional texts may also be used. Simple non-continuous texts such as lists and tables are introduced at this level. There may be some non-conventional genre elements in the texts.

Narrative texts include details such as some limited character development, or a simple description of the setting. Information texts may include basic paratextual features: for example, subheadings, or captions.

Vocabulary includes a wide range of familiar words describing concrete concepts and abstract concepts as well as less familiar words where the context strongly supports the meaning. For example, a common technical or discipline-specific term may be used where the meaning can be inferred from prominent clues.

GRADE 5 EXAMPLE 1 INFORMATION: THE GIANT COCONUT CRAB

The Giant Coconut Crab lives in Asia. It looks the same as any small crab you might see in a rock pool at the beach, but the Giant Coconut Crab can grow to nearly one metre wide. Take one really big step. That is how big this crab can grow, from its legs on one side to its legs on the other side!

The Giant Coconut Crab eats fruit, seeds and nuts. It can climb coconut palms and pick the coconuts. It uses its strong front claws to make a hole in the tough coconut shell and then it eats the fruit inside.

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It has a very good sense of smell, which helps it to look for food at night. Sometimes, it picks up shiny things that someone has dropped, like a silver watch or sparkly jewellery, and takes them away.

Giant Coconut Crabs can live for up to 40 years. Their only enemy is people who like to catch and eat them.

The Giant Coconut Crab is sometimes also called the 'Robber Crab' or 'Palm Thief'.

Explanation: This is a longer text, at 177 words, with a significant amount of information and detailed description. There is some variation from the conventional objective style of an information text (in the second half of the first paragraph: 'Take one really big step …'), which may introduce a challenge to the student reader. Most of the vocabulary is common with, 'enemy' supported in context. The structure of an information text that describes an unfamiliar animal in terms of location, size, food and other features should be familiar to learners. There is one implied idea about the reason for the alternative names of 'Robber Crab' or 'Palm Thief'.

This text is suitable for learners who are familiar with the crab as an animal, but do not know the details about this particular type of crab. learners do need to be familiar with a coconut and a coconut palm tree. A simple, labelled illustration of a coconut palm with coconuts would be appropriate if learners are likely to require support.

GRADE 5 EXAMPLE 2 INFORMATION: SALT

Salt is something we use every day. You probably eat it in your food to make it taste better.

But did you know that salt is important in many other ways?

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Salt is very important for your body to work. Your body uses salt to make your muscles move and to help your blood flow. Salt also helps your body use the food you eat. If you have too little salt in you, you may feel dizzy and tired. But, watch out, too much salt can also make you sick!

Salt is also used for cleaning. Some people use it to clean away soot from chimneys or mix it in water to clean burned pots and pans.

Salt is also used to keep food from spoiling. For example, you can add salt to fresh meat or fish to dry it out so it will keep it to eat later.

Salt has many uses and is important for people to survive!

NOTE: This text can also be used in grade 4 for aural comprehension

Explanation: This is also a longer text (157 words) with a significant amount of information about the different uses for salt.

The structure of the text as a list of different uses should be familiar. Most of the vocabulary is common, but learners need to know words like 'muscles', 'flow', and 'dizzy' as there is minimal support. Also, learners who do not know the word 'chimneys' are unlikely to know, or be able to work out, the meaning of 'soot'. The meaning of 'survive' is supported by the context. There are no implied ideas.

learners should be familiar with salt and most of the contexts in which salt is used. It may be appropriate to change the example of cleaning soot from chimneys to a more familiar context for some learners.

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GRADE 5 EXAMPLE 3 STORY: CHIUMBO AND THE GOATS

Every day Chiumbo took the goats out to find new grass. At night he brought them home again. Every day was the same.

One day Chiumbo was so bored that he fell asleep. The goats started walking off down the road, but an old man saw them. He brought the goats back and woke Chiumbo up. 'Thank you, old man,' said Chiumbo.

The next day Chiumbo fell asleep again. An eagle saw Chiumbo and flew down hoping to have a baby goat for dinner, but all the other birds made so much noise they woke Chiumbo.

'Thank you, birds,' said Chiumbo as he waved a big stick to frighten the eagle away. 'This is good,' said Chiumbo, 'I can sleep every day.'

The next day Chiumbo was asleep in the grass when a thief crept up and stole two of Chiumbo's goats. When Chiumbo finally woke up, he searched and searched but he could not find the missing goats. Chiumbo was very frightened.

When he got home, his father was waiting. Chiumbo told his father the truth straight away and said that he was very sorry.

'Have you learned your lesson now?' his father said angrily. Then he added, 'You are a very lucky boy. A policeman caught the thief and so we've got our two goats

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back.’

And after that, Chiumbo became the best goat minder in the village.

NOTE: This text can also be used in grade grade 4 aural comprehension

Explanation: This is a considerably longer text (229 words), but it has a simple, repetitive structure and most of the ideas are explicitly stated. The vocabulary is mainly common with ‘frighten’ ‘crept’ and ‘truth’ supported by the context.

There is one main character and multiple minor characters, but the story itself is simple. Chiumbo sleeps and his goats are saved first by the old man and then by birds, but the third time the goats are stolen. Chiumbo confesses his crime of sleeping on the job, the policeman rescues the goats and Chiumbo learns his lesson.

The name and gender of the main character and the kind of animals being herded can be changed and the policeman can also be changed to a contextually appropriate law and order enforcement person.

GRADE 5 EXAMPLE 4 PROCEDURAL: ORANGE AND CARDAMOM FRUIT SALAD

Ingredients

4 oranges

1/2 cup of raisins

1 tablespoon of honey

½ a teaspoon of cardamom powder (a spice)

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Instructions

1. Peel 3 oranges. Cut into slices and put in a bowl.
2. Pick over the raisins to remove any stalks and add to the bowl.
3. Put the juice of one orange into a saucepan with the cardamom. Stir over a gentle heat for 5 minutes.
4. Pour the hot sauce over the fruit in the bowl and mix gently.
5. If you don't eat it immediately, keep it cool.

Explanation: This non-continuous text is in the form of a recipe. It has two parts: a simple list (the ingredients) and a numbered list of steps in the procedure (the instructions). The subheadings, 'Ingredients' and 'Instructions' are paratextual features with a different print format. learners may not be familiar with cardamom, but it is enough that they are told it is a spice.

The main challenge is for learners to realise that only one of the oranges is juiced and the other two oranges are mixed with the raisins in the bowl. This aspect is implied. The ingredients could be changed according to local context, but the challenges in the process should remain the same and have some novelty for learners. The recipe is not suitable to use in contexts where it is so familiar that many learners can answer the questions based on prior knowledge.

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GRADE 6

TABLE 4: GENERAL FEATURES OF GRADE 6-LEVEL TEXTS

Feature	Scope	Elaboration	Contextualisation
Length	Medium	Up to 300 words. Texts may be considerably shorter depending on the kinds of complexities that are included.	Fewer words in agglutinated or highly synthetic languages
Familiarity	Familiar	Generally familiar experiences and concepts, that may rely on direct personal experience or school-based learning.	Context dependent
Predictability	Medium	Context is familiar but detail of information is unfamiliar and possibly unpredictable (contrary to expectations).	
Challenge	Moderate	Some competing information, simple implied information	
Text structure	Simple, with some variation	Text types include continuous and non-continuous formats. May have some unconventional features or may be mixed in format (for example, combined continuous and non-continuous features).	
Vocabulary		Vocabulary includes a wide range of familiar words describing concrete concepts and abstract concepts as well as less familiar words where the context strongly supports the meaning. For example, the meaning of common technical or discipline-specific terms can be inferred from prominent clues.	Depends on the transparency of the orthography and the language background of the learners
Sentence structure	Varied	Some sentence complexity and a variety of sentence forms.	Language dependent

A reading assessment is intended to measure reading comprehension, which means a set of questions about a text must require learners to read the whole text. It should not be possible for learners to use general or prior knowledge to answer any questions without reading the text, or to accurately predict the answers to most questions after reading the title, or the first

line. Each question may be based on a small part of the text, but as a set, the questions should require learners to read all of the text.

Complexity of content and format affect the text length. More complex content may be balanced by reduced word length. Non-continuous texts typically comprise fewer words than continuous texts conveying the same information.

TABLE 5: TEXT TYPES AT GRADE 6

Text type	Key elements of text type	Features at Grade 6
Narrative (stories)	A problem is resolved	The focus is on characters and how they resolve a dilemma. Interactions may be among several characters. Characters are developed so that motivation and emotional responses are clear, either explicitly or through low-level inference. Actions are clearly related to a consequence.
Information (descriptions)	An event, location, lifestyle, daily habit, object, plant or animal is described	The focus is on understanding an idea or an event rather than characters. Contexts have some degree of familiarity but with some unfamiliar content and some minor complexities. The information may be presented in continuous format (paragraphs) or in non-continuous format (for example, tables, lists, labelled diagrams.) Some familiar paratextual features may be used (e.g. captions, sub-headings).
Persuasive (arguments)	A point of view or opinion is presented.	The opinion is explicit or clearly implied. It may take the form of a single argument or several, short, contrasting arguments or opinions on the same subject.
Instructional (procedural)	A procedure or method of doing something is presented.	The format is conventional and familiar. It may be presented in continuous (paragraphs) or in non-continuous format (for example, numbered steps or a flow chart).

GRADE 6 EXAMPLE 1 INFORMATION: SEVAN TROUT

The Sevan trout only lives in Lake Sevan in Armenia. It has been in danger of becoming extinct for quite some time.

One reason is that about 50 years ago whitefish, goldfish and crayfish were put in the lake to provide more fish for people to catch and eat. The problem was that the new fish ate a lot of the food that the Sevan trout used to eat. Another problem was that more people came to the lake to catch the new fish and they also caught a lot of Sevan trout.

The government banned fishing in the lake and this has helped, but the fish are still endangered because there is often not enough water in the lake for them to breed. The water levels in the lake have dropped because farmers need the lake water for their crops and towns need water for industry and household use. We still need to find a way to save the Sevan trout.

Explanation: This text is a similar length (161 words) to 'Salt', the information text in Grade 5. The additional complexity here is the causal relationship between the main ideas. An initially good idea of putting more fish into the lake goes wrong for two different reasons. An attempt to rectify the problem is not successful for different reasons again. The text includes place names and nouns that are likely to be unfamiliar, but only need to be recognised as place names or the names of fish. 'Endangered' and 'extinct' are explained in context.

The structure of an information text as an outline of issues and problematic solutions may also be less familiar to learners. The idea of fishing and using water from a lake should be familiar to all, even if the location is not.

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GRADE 6 EXAMPLE 2 STORY: SPOOKY HOUSE

Chang was feeling very cold and Lee was very tired. They needed somewhere to rest so they knocked on the door of an old house. The door slowly creaked open.

‘No-one lives here anymore. Let’s go in,’ whispered Chang.

‘How can you be sure?’ whispered Lee back.

'The door wasn’t even locked!’ Chang said boldly. ‘You go first’ he added, pushing Lee forward.

The old door swung open with a groan. The bottom hinge fell off and hit a rock. The sharp sound made them jump. They slipped inside.

Through the dust, Lee could see the shape of a bed. He could hear the drip, drip of a leaky tap and something clattering on the iron roof above.

‘What’s that noise?’ said Lee grabbing Chang’s arm.

‘Probably just a bat or a bird or a …’ his voice trailed off.

A strong gust of wind pushed the hanging door back and the loud scraping sound and made Lee jump again.

'We might be warm and out of the wind,' he hissed to Chang. 'But I don't like this place. It's too scary.’

‘It’s better than being outside,’ Chang said bravely. ‘We are warm and we can rest until we are ready to walk again.’

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Lee rubbed his tired feet and heard the howling wind outside. He decided that Chang was right.

Explanation: This is a longer text (221 words). Atmosphere and suspense are created through descriptive language and the dialogue between the characters. Some literary devices are also used to create mood: Chang's unfinished sentence (' … ') and repetition (the 'drip, drip' of the tap). The emotions of and relationship between the characters is enacted through direct speech and nuances of language ('hissed', 'whispered').

GRADE 6 EXAMPLE 3 INFORMATION (NON-CONTINUOUS): SEB'S DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Seb lives on a small island and owns a shop. Twice a day boats come to the island bringing goods for her to sell in the shop. This is what the boats bring her each day.

	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**
Morning	Fish	Fish	Fish	Meat
	Ice	-	Ice	Milk
Afternoon	Batteries	Fruit	Flour	Fruit
	Soap	Vegetables	Dried Beans	Vegetables
	Candles	Tea	Rice	Rice
	Rope	Coffee	Sugar	Candy

Explanation: Schedules and timetables are likely to be familiar types of non-continuous texts to learners at this grade level. This table is slightly more complex than a straightforward row x

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column structure, as there are two main ‘row’ categories (Morning and Afternoon) as well as the cells containing individual items brought by the boat each day. Some features of the organisation are implied only: non-food goods are only delivered once a week; perishable goods are only delivered in the morning; some goods are brought several times and others only once each week.

The content of the table can be adapted for local/cultural contexts, but the features described above should be retained to support inferential questions and questions about features of the content and structure of the table.

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GRADE 7

Texts are of varying lengths, with longer texts typically being straightforward and shorter texts a little more complex. A range of familiar text types include narrative (stories), informational, persuasive and instructional texts are used at this grade level. A range of simple non-continuous formats includes tables, diagrams, maps and graphs.

Texts typically include several minor complexities such as unfamiliar content that is clearly explained, less common vocabulary supported in context, significant implied ideas, or a less familiar structure.

GRADE 7 EXAMPLE 1 STORY: THE HOLE

'I can see something shiny at the bottom,' said Samsur. 'Maybe it's a gold coin.'

'Don't be silly,' said Nazneen, peering into the hole. Her younger brother was always seeing things, creating objects out of nothing.

'Maybe it's a sword,' continued Samsur. 'Maybe a king buried a gold sword in the ground many years ago, and then forgot about it.'

'Maybe it's dirt, covered in dirt, covered in more dirt,' said Nazneen. 'It's just a hole, probably made by a wild animal.'

'You are wrong!' exclaimed Samsur. 'No animal could make a hold as big as this!'

'Well, if you are so sure this is not an animal's hole, perhaps you should climb down into it.'

Samsur began to turn pale. 'Erm … No. I cannot go in the hole … because … I have a sore foot!'

Nazneen smiled; it had nothing to do with Samsur's foot. A big hole could mean a big animal.

'I have an idea,' she said, picking up a stone that lay beside her. 'I will drop this into the hole. If we hear a clink, there is treasure. If we hear a thud, there is dirt. If we hear a yelp, there is an animal.'

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Nazneen dropped the stone and they heard nothing for a moment.

Then they heard a splash.

Explanation: This is a moderately lengthy story (218 words). The contrasting characters of the brother and sister and their relationship are strong elements, alongside the narrative development. The problem of the story – the mystery of what is in the hole – is the context for Nazneen and Samsur's character portrayal. The solution to the mystery is implied, not stated.

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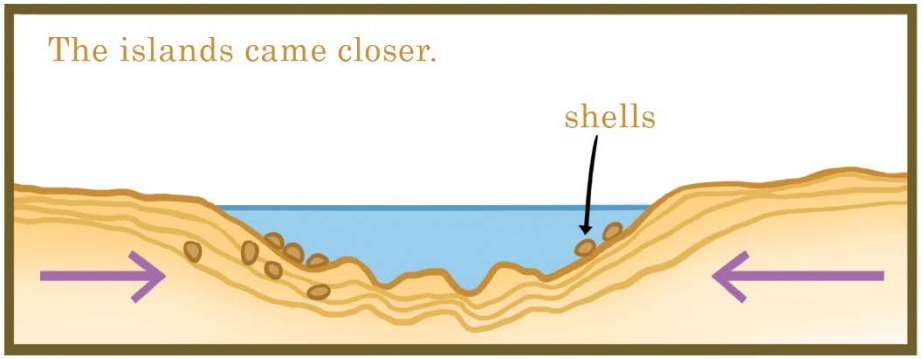
GRADE 7 EXAMPLE 2 INFORMATION: HOW SHELLS CLIMB MOUNTAINS

How shells climb mountains

People find shells at the tops of high mountains. The tallest mountain in the world has shells near the top, inside the rocks. But shells are usually found on a beach, or in the sea! How did they get from the sea to a high mountain top? Did a wind blow them? Did people move them?

This is what happened, a long time ago. There were two islands close to each other in the sea. Shellfish lived on the bottom of the sea between the two islands. Over a long, long time, the islands came closer together.



Closer and closer they came, and the sea floor between them got squashed. It wrinkled, like bed sheets, or fallen-down socks. Some of the sea floor wrinkles went up, and some went down. The shellfish were carried up or down on the wrinkles as the islands moved towards each other.

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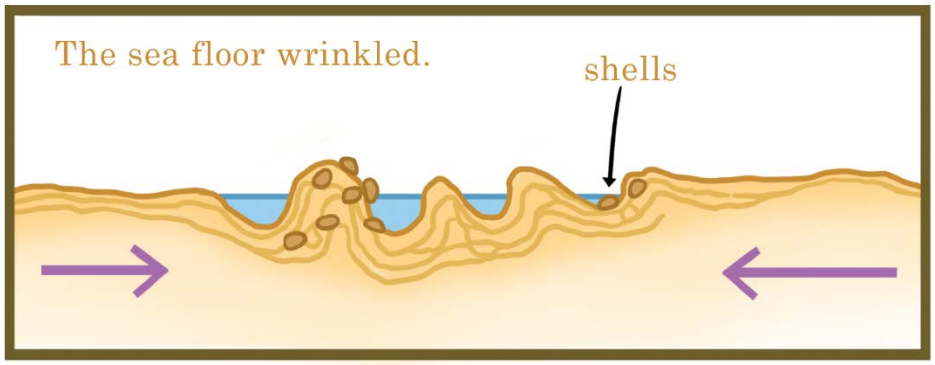

As the islands moved even closer, the sea floor wrinkles got much higher above the sea. Finally, the islands joined together and formed one large, new land. Some of the shells from the sea floor were now at the top of tall mountains!

Explanation: This mixed text, combining elements that are continuous (paragraphs) and non-continuous (labelled diagrams) is typical of textbook formats in subjects such as science and geography. The concepts of changes over long periods of time, and geological movements, are beyond everyday experience, as is appropriate for learners in lower secondary school. On the other hand, the language use is everyday rather than technical ('squashed', 'wrinkled, like bed sheets'), which should make the content relatively approachable.

GRADE 7 EXAMPLE 3 PERSUASIVE: DEAR UNCLE AND AUNTY

Dear Uncle and Aunty,

I hope this letter finds you well.

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Five months have passed since I moved to the city to begin my training at a bank. I thank you both for helping me to have this chance. Next month my training will end and I will be free to look for work elsewhere. My training has been very useful, but I am now thinking of becoming a teacher instead of working in a bank.

As you know, I live in a large apartment block. There are many families with children. In my spare time I have been teaching reading and mathematics to some of these children, because the local school cannot find enough teachers for all the learners. I enjoy teaching very much. It makes me very happy to see the children improve each day and want to learn more. They become more confident and they share their new skills with their families. The older children have also started helping the younger children. If every child in this apartment block can read and count well, I am sure they will all grow up to lead good lives for themselves and their families. Two sisters told me they want to work in a bank when they grow up!

Uncle, Aunty – I hope you can understand the reason now why I want to be a teacher. I am always grateful for your support.

Your niece,

Jenny

Explanation: This is a persuasive text, with the writer building a case to convince her uncle and aunt about a decision. She gives reasons that are both personal ('It makes me very happy' and outward looking ('they will all grow up to lead good lives') for wanting to change her career path. The reason that she needs to convince her uncle and aunt about the value of her decision is implied, rather than stated. (They gave her the opportunity to go to the city for training at a bank.) The degree of complexity of the text is created through its multiple implications and causal relationships among different elements.

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GRADE 8

Texts may be somewhat longer and more complex than Grade 7 texts. Text types including narrative, informational, persuasive and instruction are used at this grade level. A range of non-continuous formats includes tables, diagrams, maps and graphs.

Texts typically include several minor complexities such as unfamiliar content that is clearly explained, less common vocabulary supported in context, significant implied ideas, or a less familiar structure.

GRADE 8 EXAMPLE 1 INFORMATION: BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

Do our teeth become cleaner and cleaner the longer and harder we brush them?

British researchers say no. They have actually tried out many different alternatives, and ended up with the perfect way to brush your teeth. A two minute brush, without brushing too hard, gives the best result. If you brush hard, you harm your tooth enamel and your gums without loosening food remnants or plaque.

Bente Hansen, an expert on tooth brushing, says that it is a good idea to hold the toothbrush the way you hold a pen. “Start in one corner and brush your way along the whole row,” she says. “Don’t forget your tongue either! It can actually contain loads of

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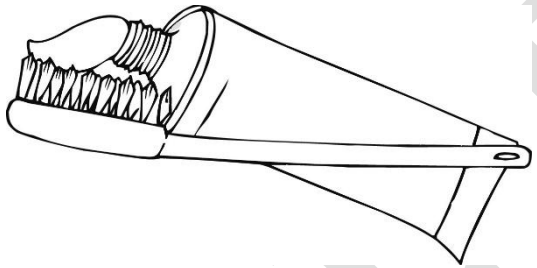
bacteria that may cause bad breath."



OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What learners Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I)*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264091450-en

Explanation: Although this is a relatively short text (122 words) it has some implicit challenges. It presents several pieces of advice from various sources and contains contradictory points of view and elements that are contrary to expectations. The topic is an everyday topic, but the information is surprising and therefore will present some challenge to readers.

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GRADE 8 EXAMPLE 2 INFORMATION (NON-CONTINUOUS TEXT - TABLE): COUNTRY FACT

Country fact file

	Afghanistan	Vietnam	Philippines	Nepal
Climate	arid to semi-arid; freezing winters and hot summers	tropical in south; monsoonal in north	usually hot and humid	subtropical in south; cool summers and severe winters in north
Geography	landlocked and mountainous	the fertile Mekong river delta covers a large part of south western Vietnam	made up of 7,107 islands	landlocked; contains eight of the world's 10 highest peaks
Main crops	wheat, fruits, nuts, wool, sheepskins	paddy rice, coffee, rubber, cotton; fish	sugarcane, coconuts, rice	rice, corn, wheat, sugarcane, milk
Typical exports (goods sold to other countries)	fruits and nuts, carpets, saffron	crude oil, marine products, rice, coffee, rubber, garments	electronic equipment, transport equipment, garments	carpets, clothing, leather goods
Wildlife	the Marco Polo sheep: it has the longest horns of any sheep	the saola (a kind of antelope): one of the world's rarest mammals	the Philippine Eagle: the largest eagle in the world	the one-horned rhinoceros: the world's fourth largest land mammal

Explanation: This table has a straightforward row x column format, but the information content is more complex than that shown in the example of a table presented for Grade 6. learners are only likely to have encountered this kind of information and several of the concepts at school or through wide general knowledge: a range of climatic and geographical conditions, for example. The term 'export' is explained but it may be a novel concept for learners at this stage of

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schooling. Comparisons and contrasts between the features of the four countries may be used as the subject of questions, as well as the individual content of each cell.

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GRADE 8 EXAMPLE 3 STORY: LAZY RABBIT

Lazy Rabbit never did any work. He had not dug the fields for his wife to sow their vegetable crop. Finally his wife chased him out of their house and would not let him back. Lazy Rabbit thought of a plan.

He found Big Elephant and started to tease him. 'I'm so fast that you could never catch me,' he called out as he darted in between the elephant's legs and round and round his feet. Big Elephant was very bad tempered by the time he finally caught Lazy Rabbit's little white tail under his foot.

'Now, I'm going to stamp on you,' roared Big Elephant.

But Lazy Rabbit was thinking fast. 'You have to lift your foot to stamp on me and then I will run away,' cried out the crafty rabbit. 'We should have a competition to see who is the strongest. I will try to pull you into the sea. If I can't do it then I will lie here nice and still and you can stamp on me all you like.'

Big Elephant thought he would easily win, so he let Lazy Rabbit tie a red rope around his middle. Lazy Rabbit took one end of the red rope and ran through the forest to his fields and tied the red rope to his plough. Then he got another rope, a blue one, and tied it to the other end of the plough and ran over his fields to the sea.

'Hey, Giant Whale,' he called out, 'I'm so strong I bet I could pull you out of the sea.' Giant Whale was furious. He swam to the shore to teach Lazy Rabbit a lesson. He let Lazy Rabbit tie the other end of the blue rope around him and then he swam off as fast as he could.

Suddenly, to Giant Whale's surprise, the blue rope pulled tight and no matter how hard he swam he could not pull Lazy Rabbit into the sea.

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In the forest Big Elephant was pulling on the red rope with all his might. He was amazed by how strong Lazy Rabbit was. All day and all night the whale and the elephant pulled and pulled. First the elephant pulled the red rope and the plough dug through the fields towards the forest. Then the whale pulled on the blue rope and the plough dug back through the fields towards the sea. As the whale and the elephant pulled backwards and forwards, the plough was pulled up and down the field, digging up the earth.

Finally, in the morning, Big Elephant and Giant Whale gave up. They were so embarrassed that each quietly untied his end of the rope and slunk away. They both hoped that no-one had seen them being beaten by a rabbit.

Meanwhile Lazy Rabbit went home and proudly showed his wife their fields that were all nicely dug up and ready for planting.

Explanation: This is an example of a longer text, at 482 words, but the narrative is quite straightforward: every action and feeling is explicit. In this case, the relatively challenging length is balanced by content in a conventional narrative mode.

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GRADE 9

TABLE 6: GENERAL FEATURES OF GRADE 9-LEVEL TEXTS

Feature		Elaboration	Contextualisation
Length	short	Generally continuous texts of at least 250 words. Non-continuous texts are shorter. Length is highly dependent on complexity of content.	Fewer words in agglutinated or highly synthetic languages
Familiarity	Familiar	Broad context may be familiar but will introduce substantial unfamiliar elements. Draws on school-based learning and some wider world knowledge.	Context dependent
Predictability	Medium	Content is not predictable, though text format and type are broadly familiar.	
Challenge	Minimal	May include substantial competing information, figurative language, and meanings that need to be inferred by the reader.	
Text structure	Very simple	Familiar text formats and structures but may have some unconventional features. (For example, chronology of a narrative may not follow the sequence of information as presented.)	
Vocabulary	Very common	A range of words with both familiar and unfamiliar meanings. General meaning (at least) can be inferred from context. Subject-specific language may be used.	Depends on the transparency of the orthography and the language background of the learners
Sentence structure	Simple and common	In continuous texts, a variety of sentence structures and sentence lengths.	Language dependent

A reading assessment is intended to measure reading comprehension, which means a set of questions about a text must require learners to read the whole text. It should not be possible for learners to use general or prior knowledge to answer any questions without reading the

text, or to accurately predict the answers to most questions after reading the title, or the first line. Each question may be based on a small part of the text, but as a set, the questions should require learners to read all the text.

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TABLE 7: TEXT TYPES AT GRADE 9

Text type	Key elements of text type	Features at Grade 6
Stories	a problem is resolved	The focus is on characters and how they resolve a dilemma. Interactions may be among several characters. Characters are developed so that motivation and emotional responses need to be inferred. Characters may evolve in the course of the narrative.
Information (descriptions)	an event, location, lifestyle, daily habit, object, plant or animal is described	The focus is on understanding an idea or an event. Contexts have some degree of familiarity but with some unfamiliar content and some complexities. The information may be presented in continuous format (paragraphs), non-continuous format (for example, tables, lists, labelled diagrams) or mixed format. Paratextual features may be used (e.g. captions, sub-headings, a key to a map, a footnote).
Persuasive (arguments)	One or more points of view or opinions are presented	The opinions may need to be inferred by the reader. A single or contrasting points of view may be presented. The arguments may include main ideas and supporting details, and my present both facts and unsupported assertions. May use persuasive language.
Instructional (procedural)	A procedure or method of doing something is presented	The format has conventional and familiar features but may vary from highly conventional formats. It may be presented in continuous (paragraphs) or in non-continuous format (for example, numbered steps or a flow chart).

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GRADE 9 EXAMPLE 1 INFORMATION (NON-CONTINUOUS TEXT – LABELLED DIAGRAMS):

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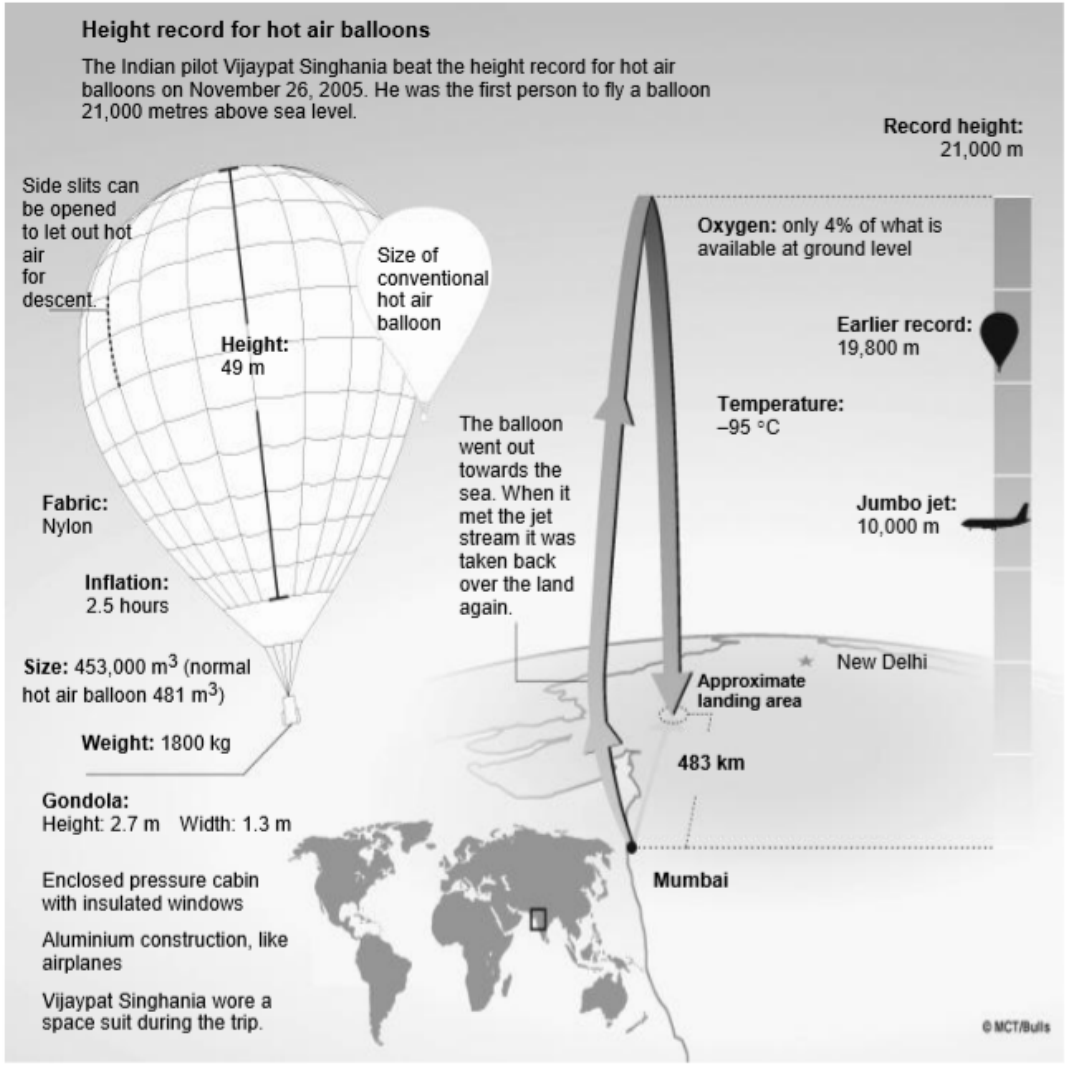
BALLOON


Height record for hot air balloons
The Indian pilot Vijaypat Singhania beat the height record for hot air balloons on November 26, 2005. He was the first person to fly a balloon 21,000 metres above sea level.
Record height: 21,000 m
Side slits can be opened to let out hot air for descent.
Size of conventional hot air balloon
Height: 49 m
Oxygen: only 4% of what is available at ground level
Earlier record: 19,800 m
Temperature: –95 °C
The balloon went out towards the sea. When it met the jet stream it was taken back over the land again.
Jumbo jet: 10,000 m
Fabric: Nylon
Inflation: 2.5 hours
Size: 453,000 m3 (normal hot air balloon 481 m3)
New Delhi
Approximate landing area
Weight: 1800 kg
483 km
Gondola: Height: 2.7 m Width: 1.3 m
Mumbai
Enclosed pressure cabin with insulated windows
Aluminium construction, like airplanes
Vijaypat Singhania wore a space suit during the trip.
© MCT/Bulls

OECD (2010), *PISA 2009 Results: What learners Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I)*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264091450-en

Explanation: This text is in a largely non-continuous format of labelled diagram. In fact it comprises a network of diagrams including sketches, a vertical scale and a map, as well as several short pieces of prose. Its complex format is likely to create some challenge for the reader. There is only a small number of words included in the text but text offers opportunities for thinking about the purpose for including elements of the text as well as plenty of material for straightforward locating of information.

GRADE 9 EXAMPLE 2 STORY: MISER

THE MISER AND HIS GOLD
A fable by Aesop

A miser sold all that he had and bought a lump of gold, which he buried in a hole in the ground by the side of an old wall. He went to look at it daily. One of his workmen observed the miser's frequent visits to the spot and decided to watch his movements. The workman soon discovered the secret of the hidden treasure, and digging down, came to the lump of gold, and stole it. The miser, on his next visit, found the hole empty and began to tear his hair and to make loud lamentations. A neighbour, seeing him overcome with grief and learning the cause, said, "Pray do not grieve so; but go and take a stone, and place it in the hole, and fancy that the

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gold is still lying there. It will do you quite the same service; for when the gold was there, you had it not, as you did not make the slightest use of it."

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Explanation: This is another short text in a conventional style (a fable). The rather archaic language ('Pray do not grieve so …'), which adds a layer of challenge, would need to be preserved in translation. The story is condensed and understanding its gist requires a degree of inference.

GRADE 9 EXAMPLE 3 INFORMATION (MIXED CONTINUOUS AND NON-CONTINUOUS): FIRST CAR

A hundred and fifty years ago motor cars did not exist, and - if they did not walk - people usually travelled in carts or wagons pulled by animals such as horses, oxen or donkeys.

However, engineers and business people had started to think about building machines that used their own power source, such as oil or steam or electricity. It's almost impossible to say who actually invented the car, since many inventors contributed their knowledge and ideas over many years, but the first vehicle that we recognise as a car was built in Germany in 1885 by Karl Benz.

It looked like a small horse-drawn carriage but was powered by petrol. It travelled at what then seemed the tremendous speed of 16 kilometres per hour and was powered by a 0.75-hp one-cylinder four stroke engine (about enough to pump water from a well to supply a few households).

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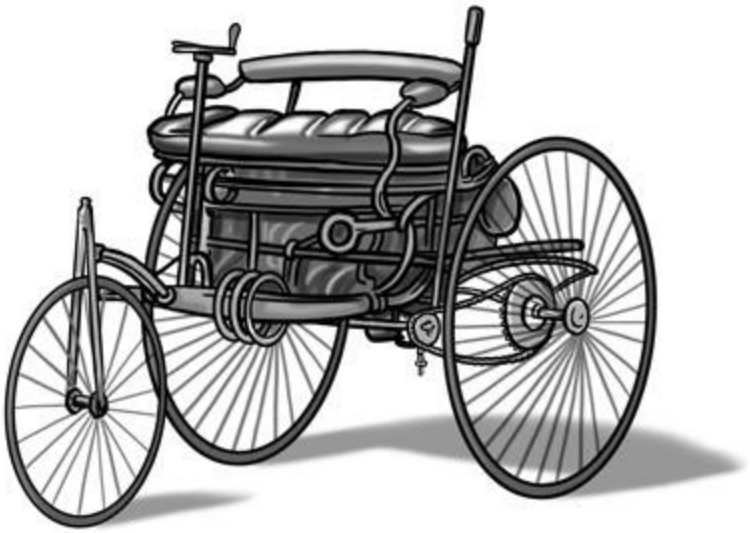

It had three wire wheels, rather like those of a bicycle, not wooden ones used in carriages. Benz's wife, Bertha Benz, was the first to drive it over a long distance, when she went on a 100 kilometre trip, with her two sons, to visit her mother. This pioneering trip demonstrated the value of the new vehicle for everyday travel by ordinary people.

The car has of course changed out of all recognition since that time, and become a normal mode of transport around the world.

Some significant cars in history

Years of production	Name	Number Sold (approximately)	Maximum speed in first year of production	Cost in first year of production
1886-1889	Karl Benz's horseless carriage	25	16 kilometres per hour	$1000 58,000 AFN
1908-1927	Model T Ford	17 million	72 kilometres per hour	$825 48,000 AFN
1938-2003	Volkswagen Beetle	22 million	100 kilometres per hour	$133 8,000 AFN
1966-present	Toyota Corolla	40 million	154 kilometres per hour	$1,830 106,000 AFN
2005-present	Bugati-Veyron	400	409 kilometres per hour	$1m 58m AFN

Explanation: This is a mixed text, combining continuous and non-continuous elements (prose and a table). The units of measurement in the prose passage and the table, and the currency in the table, should be adapted to local metrics. Apart from those features, the text should be usable as it stands.

The phenomenon of cars is widely familiar, but the information about the way cars have evolved is likely to be new to most learners. Some understanding of the wider world (the notion of power, the development of mass industry, the concepts of cost and monetary inflation) will support understanding of the text, especially the table. Some elements of word choice may be moderately challenging.

GRADE 9 EXAMPLE 4 PERSUASIVE: CLEVER OR HARDWORKING?

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IS IT BETTER TO BE CLEVER OR HARDWORKING?

Two people give their responses to this question.

It is obviously better to be hardworking than it is to be clever and only 'smart people' think otherwise.

We all know gifted learners who believe that their cleverness is enough to ensure their success, but if you're clever and lazy you are unlikely to succeed. It takes effort to turn any brilliant idea into something real. It is more rewarding to struggle, perhaps to fail, to keep struggling and finally to succeed, than always to succeed without effort. You learn more that way, and you value your work.

I would rather be hardworking than clever, because clever people are under constant pressure to perform. I prefer to impress my parents and others with persistence than disappoint them despite my supposed brilliance.

FOUAD

I prefer to be clever rather than hardworking. Clever people can think of great ideas which contribute more to our society than hard work alone. This makes clever people much more exciting.

Many people feel they are entitled to a reward as long as they devote long hours to doing something, but clever people can be economical in their efforts, so they get more for less: a little bit of efficient thinking can save a lot of wasted hours.

I pity conscientious people. They always need their efforts to be noticed and confuse appearing busy with achievement.

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Clever people know when their ideas are worthy and by virtue of being clever, ideas come to them easily. Clever people are also often able to identify problems caused by others, which is the first step towards solving them.

My parents tell me that being clever is my greatest strength. Sometimes that involves hard work and sometimes it doesn't. That's the clever way to do things.

Alba

Explanation: The attitudes of learners to studying or to life ambition in general is a topic that is likely to have personal meaning for learners at this stage of their education. The two texts put opposing opinions on the topic – which is explicitly labelled in the title of the unit. Both arguments are laced with opinions, so discriminating between fact and opinion is an important part of making sense of these texts.

APPENDIX B – ITEM EXAMPLES

GRADE 2 ITEM EXAMPLES

Van items

	Partially meets	Meets	Exceeds
B1 Retrieve information			
1.1 Identify information in a grade-level text by direct word matching	Retrieve a single piece of prominent, explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information.	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching when there is limited competing information

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Van items	Where is Van? Who is at school?	What does Van draw?	What colour are the flowers?
Explanation of alignment of items with each level	Prominent as it appears in the first sentence	No competing information and information is adjacent and not prominent	There is competing information as two colours are mentioned and the information is not prominent.

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Pippi items

	Partially meets	Meets	Exceeds
B1 Retrieve information			
1.1 Identify information in a grade-level text by direct word matching	**Retrieve a single piece of prominent, explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information.**	**Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information**	**Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 2-level continuous text by direct or close word matching when there is limited competing information**
Pippi items	**What is this?** 	**What lives in the shell?** **Answer: an animal / pippi**	**How can you see the pippi?** **Answer: if you open the shell / inside the shell**
Explanation of alignment of items with each level	**Prominent as it appears in the first sentence**	**No competing information; Information is adjacent and not prominent**	**There is competing information shut and open are mentioned and the information is not prominent**

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GRADE 3 ITEM EXAMPLES

Mango examples

	Partially meets	Meets	Exceeds
B1 Retrieve information			
1.1 Identify information in a grade-level text by direct word matching	Retrieve a single piece of prominent, explicit information from a grade 3-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is no competing information	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 3-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is limited competing information	Retrieve multiple pieces of explicit information from a grade 3-level continuous text by direct or close word matching (e.g., differences in verb tenses) when the information required is adjacent to the matched word and there is limited competing information
Abdul questions	Where was Abdul walking? Who was walking home?	What was the day like?	How was Abdul feeling at the beginning? Copy 2 words.
Explanation of alignment of items with each level	Prominent as it appears in the first sentence	The competing information is that it was a hot day, but cool under the tree	the competing information is that his feelings changed throughout the text
B1.3: Identify information in a grade-level text by synonymous matching		Retrieve a single piece of prominent, explicit information from a grade 3-level continuous text by synonymous word matching when there is no competing information	Retrieve a single piece of explicit information from a grade 3-level text by synonymous word matching when the information required is not prominent and there is limited competing information
		Where was Abdul going? What did Abdul eat?	How did Abdul feel after eating?

			the competing information is that his feelings changed throughout the text
B2.2: Make inferences in a grade-level text read by the learner	Make simple inferences in a grade 3-level text by relating two pieces of explicit information from across consecutive sentences when there is no competing information	Make simple inferences in a grade 3-level text by relating two pieces of explicit information from across consecutive sentences when there is limited competing information	Make simple inferences in a grade 3-level text by relating two pieces of explicit information from across one or more paragraphs when there is more distance or more competing information
Mango items	Who was tired and hungry?	Where did Abdul fall asleep?' or 'Where was it nice and cool?'	
Explanation of alignment of items with each level		the competing information comes from the fact that two locations are mentioned - home and under the tree	
B2.3: Identify the main and secondary ideas in a grade-level text read by the learner		Identify the general topic in a grade 3-level text when it is prominent but not explicitly stated	Identify the general topic in a grade 3-level text when it is less prominent and not explicitly stated

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