

Characteristics of Complex Text as Defined by ACT:

Relationships: Interactions among ideas or characters in the text are subtle, involved, or deeply embedded.

Richness: The text possesses a sizeable amount of highly sophisticated information conveyed through data or literary devices.

Structure: The text is organized in ways that are elaborate and sometimes unconventional.

Style: The author's tone and use of language are often intricate.

Vocabulary: The author's choice of words is demanding and highly context dependent.

Purpose: The author's intent in writing the text is implicit and sometimes ambiguous.

Recommendations from High Schools That Work and ACT's "On Course for Success"

All Students should complete a rigorous English Language Arts curriculum in which they:

- Read 8-10 books and demonstrate understanding
- Write short papers (1-3 pages) weekly that are scored with a rubric
- Write 4 formal essays per quarter
- Write a major research paper annually
- Speak or present 3 to 5 times per year
- Discuss or debate topics monthly
- Take and organize notes weekly
- Maintain a portfolio of personal reading and writing

Reading Skills Assessed on the ACT

Main Ideas and Author's Approach: Students identify or infer the key ideas or purposes of paragraphs or entire texts, as well as determine the perspectives from which texts are written.

Supporting Details: Students focus on the location, recall, and interpretation of facts in a text and the purposes that details or elements of a passage serve within the text as a whole (for example, to support or undermine a main point).

Relationships: Students focus on identifying or inferring the interrelationships (sequential, comparative, or cause and effect) among people, ideas, facts, or perspectives within the texts.

Meaning of Words: Students determine the meaning of words, phrases, or statements in context. Students determine how particular words, phrases, and statements are used within a given piece of writing. Students distinguish between literal and figurative uses of language, between words with subtle differences in connotation, or between everyday and specialized uses of words or phrases.

Generalizations and Conclusions: Students focus on using information in a text to come up with general statements or reasoned judgments about people, ideas, concepts, facts, or perspectives.

Degree of Text Complexity			
Aspect of Text	Uncomplicated	More Challenging	Complex
Relationships	Basic, Straightforward	Sometimes implicit	Subtle, involved, deeply embedded
Richness	Minimal/limited	Moderate/more detailed	Sizable/highly sophisticated
Structure	Simple, conventional	More involved	Elaborate, sometimes unconventional
Style	Plain, accessible	Richer, less plain	Often intricate
Vocabulary	Familiar	Some difficult, context-dependant words	Demanding, highly context dependent
Purpose	Clear	Conveyed with some subtlety	Implicit, sometimes ambiguous