

***I Survived Hurricane Katrina, 2005*, by Lauren Tarshis – Lexile 590, 112 pages**

I love using this simple text with upper elementary students because the story is written for their age group, despite its low quantitative level. They will love learning about the events of this real-life natural disaster through the fictional story. I recommend placing your students who are reading below grade level in this text. You might also place students who have little reading stamina in this text.

***I Survived Hurricane Katrina, 2005*, Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p>Levels of Meaning Multiple themes throughout the book increase the challenge for readers of this text. The main theme is that in order to survive, people must stick together and help each other. Other themes include but are not limited to survival, bravery, responsibility, camaraderie, and how determination can create unexpected heroes. The themes emerge through the actions of the people living in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina.</p> <p>Structure Overall, the narrative uses a fairly simple, explicit, and conventional story structure. A slightly more complex structure is used in the very beginning of the story, in the form of a flash-forward. The story begins in the middle of the hurricane, with Barry struggling to survive. The next chapter flashes back to before the hurricane begins, and the story then continues chronologically until the end.</p> <p>Language Conventionalty and Clarity Lauren Tarshis uses language that is generally clear and accessible.</p> <p>Knowledge Demands While the theme is fairly simple, there are multiple themes represented in the book. General background knowledge about hurricanes, floods, and cause and effect relationships related to natural disasters is necessary. Students will also have to have a basic understanding of canals, channels, levees, and the layout of the Lower Ninth Ward.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>I Survived Hurricane Katrina, 2005</i> is 590, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the middle range of the complexity band for 2nd–3rd grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to the purpose and complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

***Kensuke’s Kingdom*, by Michael Morpurgo – Lexile 730, 176 pages**

This is a beautifully written story with high-level vocabulary. I recommend placing your students who are on grade level in this text. Students will need considerable reading stamina to tackle the length of this text and may need to take the book home for nightly reading to keep up with book club assignments.

***Kensuke’s Kingdom*, Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p>Levels of Meaning The main theme of <i>Kensuke’s Kingdom</i> is that human companionship is important to survival. There are other themes included too, about never giving up hope, trusting in others, and the importance of living harmoniously with nature.</p> <p>Structure Overall, the narrative uses a fairly simple, explicit, and conventional story structure. A slightly more complex structure is used in the very beginning of the story, when a grown-up Michael explains how ten years have passed since he made a promise to keep Kensuke’s secret. He briefly lists what has happened in his life during those ten years. Then, Michael goes back and begins the story eleven years in the past, when he was eleven years old. The story then continues chronologically until the end.</p> <p>Language Conventinality and Clarity Michael Morpurgo uses language that includes very high-level vocabulary and complex sentence structures. He also includes a language barrier between Michael and Kensuke. Their struggle to communicate raises comprehension challenges for the reader as well.</p> <p>Knowledge Demands There are multiple complex themes represented in this book. General background knowledge about sailing, geography, and using maps is necessary.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>Kensuke’s Kingdom</i> is 730, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the upper range of the complexity band for 2nd–3rd grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to the purpose and complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

***Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen – Lexile 1020, 181 pages**

This classic story of survival is for students who are reading above grade level as fifth-graders. Students will need a high level of stamina for this text and may need to take the book home for nightly reading to keep up with book club assignments.

***Hatchet* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p>Levels of Meaning The main theme of <i>Hatchet</i> is that one has to think through problems and solve them in order to survive. There are other themes included too, about never giving up hope, personal strength, the importance of living harmoniously with nature, and how self-pity never helps solve problems.</p> <p>Structure Although the story is told mostly in chronological order, there are occasional flashbacks to an event Brian refers to as “The Secret.” “The Secret” is a memory Brian has from before his parents’ divorce. These flashbacks share bits and parts of the memory over the course of the novel. Additionally, Brian has a life-changing revelation in the middle of the book that causes a time gap of 42 days in the story. Brian recalls only the most important events from those 42 days, so readers will have to pay close attention to how much time has passed. This time gap makes the structure of this text complex.</p> <p>Language Conventinality and Clarity Gary Paulsen uses language that includes high-level vocabulary and complex sentence structures.</p> <p>Knowledge Demands There are multiple complex themes represented in this book. General background knowledge about survival and the wilderness is required.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>Hatchet</i> is 1020, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the lower range of the complexity band for 6th–8th grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to the purpose and complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>