

***A Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt*, by C. Coco De Young – Lexile 690, 105 pages**

This book explores the effects of the Great Depression on people who owned stores and lived in towns or cities. Students will also learn about the inspiring work of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and the help she gave to the American people during this time of great hardship. Students will be challenged by the qualitative demands of this book. Background knowledge gained through the read-aloud will make this topic more accessible. I recommend placing your students who are reading below grade level in this text, as well as students who may be challenged by longer text.

***A Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to overcoming hardships, the Great Depression, and the determination of the American people.</p> <p><b>Structure</b> This narrative is told mostly chronologically, with a flash-forward at the beginning of the book. Chapter 1 begins in 1929, and chapter 2 begins in 1933.</p> <p><b>Language Conventionality and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds some complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genre historical fiction. In addition, students will need to rely on background knowledge of the Great Depression.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>A Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt</i> is 690, 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><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

### ***Sylvia & Aki*, by Winifred Conkling – Lexile 760, 143 pages**

In this book, students will read about what was happening in California immediately after the Great Depression. This book takes place in Westminister, California, between 1941 and 1945. In December 1941 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States declared war on Japan. This book explores the life of one Japanese American family who was sent to live in an internment camp, and the life of the Mexican American family who leases their farm while they are gone. Readers learn about the segregation of schools in California during this time and about the *Mendez v. Westminister* case that put an end to segregation in California. Readers will be intrigued by Conkling’s account of this actual event!

This book is challenging not only due to the background knowledge needed to access this text but also because it follows an unconventional story structure. Chapters alternate between the story of Sylvia and the story of Aki. Readers will have to keep track of separate plots as they read. I recommend placing your students who are reading slightly below grade level and on grade level in this text.

### ***Sylvia & Aki* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to overcoming hardships, segregation in schools, WWII, Japanese internment, and the determination of the American people.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>Sylvia &amp; Aki</i> is 760, 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><b>Structure</b> This narrative follows an unconventional story structure. Chapters about Sylvia and her life alternate with chapters about Aki and her life. The reader has to pay close attention to dates mentioned in the text in order to understand how much time has passed.</p>	<p><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>
<p><b>Language Conventionalty and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds some complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging.</p>	
<p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genre historical fiction. In addition, students will need to rely on background knowledge of the Great Depression, segregation in schools, and WWII.</p>	

***Out of the Dust*, by Karen Hesse – Lexile 1040, 227 pages**

In this book, students will read about what it was like for the families who stayed in the Dust Bowl region during the time of the dust storms and the Great Depression. Written in free verse, this book challenges readers to draw inferences from the text and recognize how the author conveys her message through the use of symbolism. I recommend placing students who are reading on and above grade level in this text.

***Out of the Dust* Text Complexity**

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p><b>Levels of Meaning</b> The text offers multiple levels of meaning and nuances of abstract concepts related to overcoming hardships, the Great Depression, and the determination of the American people.</p> <p><b>Structure</b> The text is written in free verse, with each poem having a title and date. Poems fit together chronologically so that together they tell a cohesive story.</p> <p><b>Language Conventionality and Clarity</b> The genre of this story adds complexity to the language. Dialogue that incorporates historical and regional language makes this text qualitatively challenging. Figurative language and symbolism add qualitative depth.</p> <p><b>Knowledge Demands</b> This text requires knowledge of the genres historical fiction and poetry. In addition, students will need to rely on their understanding of the causes and effects of the dust storms and the Great Depression.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>Out of the Dust</i> is 1040, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the upper range of the complexity band for 6th–8th grade according to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p><b>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</b></p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to purpose and the complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>