TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS OF
The Little Red Pen

by Janet Stevens

Text Type: Literary

TEXT DESCRIPTION	PLACEMENT
The Little Red Pen is a fun and creative reimagining of a classic tale that not only expounds the virtues of hard work, but also teaches that the hardest jobs can only be done with perseverance and collaboration. Who will help the little red pen grade all these papers? At first no one, not Stapler, or Scissors, or even Eraser will help. Eventually though, when disaster strikes and Little Red Pen falls into the trash can, the classroom tools work together to come to her rescue and grade all the papers.	Contemporary language, detailed illustrations and the familiar setting of this book support students as they explore the more complex central message of the text. The book is read aloud, providing adult guidance with the unusual use of text style, size, layout and color throughout the text. When quantitative level, qualitative level and tasks are considered, this is an appropriately complex read- aloud for first graders.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE OF THE TEXT: AD300L
ASSOCIATED BAND LEVEL: N/A

QUALITATIVE MEASURES

MEANING/PURPOSE: Moderately Complex
Although fairly easy to infer, the central message about the value of working together is implied and developed over the course of the book. Some events are not explicitly described in the text and must be inferred from dialogue and illustrations.

TEXT STRUCTURE: Moderately Complex
The basic plot is chronological, but the story is told almost entirely through the dialogue of six central characters. The style, size, layout and color of the font varies throughout the text and is used to distinguish the multiple speakers on each page and to signal emotion. The illustrations both support and extend the meaning of the text.

LANGUAGE FEATURES: Moderately Complex
The vocabulary is contemporary and should be familiar to most students. The language is conversational and consists mainly of simple sentences. Main events are communicated almost entirely by the dialogue between the six central characters. The number of characters can sometimes make the conversation difficult to follow.

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS: Slightly Complex
The experiences portrayed are imaginative, but involve familiar objects (office supplies) in a familiar setting (a school room) and will be easily understood by most readers. References or allusions to classic folktales throughout the text enhance the story, but are not necessary for basic comprehension. Some young students may need an explanation of what it means to grade and correct papers and a discussion on why the main characters see this as so important.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR READER AND TASK

This text builds upon students' literary and character analysis as they continue to analyze how the characters' actions and words reveal habits of character and how those habits help the characters accomplish the ultimate goal of the story. This less-scaffolded, focused read-aloud serves as the Unit 2 Assessment: Students continue to engage in asking and answering questions specific to the characters' words and actions, vocabulary from the text, and the connection between the illustrations and the text. Students write in response to the final focusing questions: "How are the characters showing collaboration in this part of the text? What work does this help them do? Use evidence to support your answer" (RL.1.1, RL.1.3, RL.1.4, RL.1.7). *The Little Red Pen* also supports students in working toward their performance task, in which they must work together in small groups toward the common goal of designing and creating their own magnificent thing.

RATIONALE

This text deepens students' understanding of tools and work by examining how habits of character help people do work. Using this text, students explore the ideas of initiative, collaboration, and perseverance as they study the main character's behavior and actions as she initiates, collaborates, and perseveres through challenges in creating a "magnificent thing." *The Most Magnificent Thing* is also used to examine and describe key details of the text (RL.1.1, RL.1.3), develop vocabulary (RL.1.4), and use illustrations and details to describe story elements (RL.1.7). This text supports students in working toward their performance task, in which they design and create their own "magnificent thing" to meet a need in the classroom, write about their creation, and present to an audience.

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