TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS OF
Feathers: Not Just for Flying

by Melissa Steward

Text Type: Informational

TEXT DESCRIPTION	PLACEMENT
This book introduces the reader to the many ways feathers help birds to survive. The main text poetically explains the function of each feather by comparing it to a common object like a blanket or umbrella. Informative sidebars add detail and examples. Realistic, scrapbook style illustrations support and deepen understanding of sixteen different birds and their very useful feathers.	Although the text relies on similes, once students are taught this complex structure, these sentences are fairly easy to understand and serve to clarify science concepts. Illustrations also support understanding, making this text appropriate for first graders when read aloud with guidance.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE OF THE TEXT: 910L
ASSOCIATED BAND LEVEL: 4-5

QUALITATIVE MEASURES

MEANING/PURPOSE: Slightly Complex
The purpose of the book, to explain that "feathers have so many different jobs to do" is explicitly stated on the first page. The book is narrowly focused on the functions of feathers.

TEXT STRUCTURE: Slightly Complex
The connections between ideas and examples are explicit and clear. The text has a predictable structure. A key detail that supports the main idea is expressed in a simile at the top of the page and related information is given in sidebars and illustrations. Text features help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential to understanding content. Illustrations support and assist readers in understanding the written text.

LANGUAGE FEATURES: Very Complex
Although the text uses figurative language, most of the similes chosen connect feathers to familiar objects and serve to clarify the science concept being addressed. The text contains a number of academic words and verbs with precise meanings which may be unfamiliar to students. The sentence structure, although repetitive, is complex, with subordinate clauses and transition words.

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS: Moderately Complex
The text connects discipline-specific content knowledge to common practical knowledge and includes a mix of simple and more complicated ideas. Understanding of the similes at the top of the page is dependent on familiarity with the object the feather is being compared to and may require additional context.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR READER AND TASK

Although the text uses figurative language, most of the similes chosen connect feathers to familiar objects and serve to clarify the science concept being addressed. Because of this, fairly abstract concepts can be explained using a minimum of domain specific words and phrases. Similes are taught and worked with in the lessons. Once students understand this complex construction, the repeated pattern of the sentences supports comprehension. While most of the objects used in the similes will be familiar to students, some, like a forklift or a fishing sinker, may require additional context.

Specific supports for English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students who need enrichment are included in the module.

RATIONALE

In a simple and engaging way, *Feathers: Not Just for Flying* introduces students to the idea that feathers help birds to survive. The book compares the function of feathers to familiar objects like a blanket or an umbrella and features beautifully detailed, scrapbook style illustrations. Students read this informational text to prepare for a structured Science Talk, building vocabulary and content knowledge (RI.1.2, RI.1.4) using the words, illustrations and text features (RI.1.5, RI.1.6, RI.1.7). The text is also used for whole class research, generating group notes, and creating a shared writing piece in response to the research question: "How do birds use their body parts to survive?" (W.1.7, W.1.8, W.1.2).

1M3.3 #9