

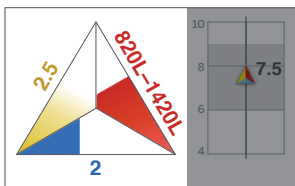
# Grade overviews

## Progression of content and skills

The following grade overviews illustrate how the Amplify ELA curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of California middle school students. To develop and refine the scope and sequence of the content, skills, and texts, Amplify paid close attention to three parts of text complexity and conducted significant classroom testing to understand the impact of these texts on adolescent readers. In addition to designing a path of growing text complexity, Amplify ELA sequenced and grouped texts to intentionally build students' knowledge and skills as they progress throughout each grade and the whole program.

### Path of text complexity

To help teachers and administrators see quickly the way that content, skills, and text complexity builds in our ELA curriculum, Amplify has represented this information graphically in the following pages, deriving the approach from the CA ELA/ELD Framework. For the purposes of this guide, the triangle, commonly used to represent the three parts of text complexity for one text, here aggregates the texts' complexity for a whole unit. This approach makes it easy to make comparisons from unit to unit and grade to grade.



#### Sample unit: 7C Brain science

Quantitative measure

Qualitative measure

Reader and task measure

The **quantitative measure** in red reflects the Lexile band, defined in the Common Core State Standards (as seen below), and based on the Lexile scores of the range of texts within the unit. Lexile scores are based on a measurement of vocabulary word frequency and sentence complexity.

**Band 1 - Lexile 450-790**

**Band 2 - Lexile 770-980**

**Band 3 - Lexile 955-1155**

**Band 4 - Lexile 1080-1305**

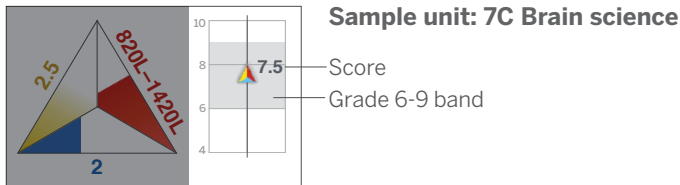
**Band 5 - Lexile 1215-1355**

The **qualitative measure** in yellow reflects the texts' structural and stylistic complexity, the layers of meaning, and the background knowledge required to understand the text. The scale is from 0-5, with 5 indicating the highest level of complexity.

The **reader and task measure** in blue reflects the demands the activities make on students in the lessons in Amplify ELA, with consideration of both a) their place in the curriculum sequence and the cumulative knowledge and skills they have gained by this time, as well as b) how much support and scaffolding they receive to understand both literal and deeper layers of meaning. The scale is from 0-5, with 5 indicating the highest level of complexity.

### The Amplify Complexity Index

To better assess the combined impact of these three factors, Amplify developed a Complexity Index, which assesses each unit's overall complexity. The Complexity Index reflects the aggregate score within the context of the grade 6-9 band. While we recognize that no single metric can fully capture the nuanced lesson-to-lesson, unit-to-unit progression of a curriculum, we use the Complexity Index as a guideline to present appropriate curriculum materials and track students' path through each grade.



Carefully selected for their adherence to the CA ELA/ELD Framework, the texts in the Amplify curriculum balance literary and informational text, and include a rich representation of genres: novels, plays, poetry, biographies, and other full-length texts.

In the following pages, units and subunits are also labeled with the below icons to indicate whether they are informational or literary texts.



**Informational texts**



**Literary texts**

## Path of skill development and knowledge building

**I. As students move from earlier units to later units within a single grade,** they learn, practice, and gradually master reading and writing skills that grow increasingly sophisticated, and learn how to apply these skills on texts that grow increasingly complex. The Complexity Index includes both the quantitative as well as qualitative and reader and task considerations. As the curriculum introduces more challenging tasks, like working independently to pull together an analysis of a whole novel, the units sometimes focus on texts with lower Lexiles. And, when the units challenge students to master sentences of great complexity and new vocabulary, the lesson activities pose carefully calibrated and scaffolded tasks.

Students move from applying these skills while working with one text to learning how to synthesize information they've drawn from more than one text. Earlier in the year, they are noticing and describing differences in perspective or differences in characters' approaches to the closed world of a particular text, and later in the year, they are explaining the implications of those differences on the author's view of the world.

**II. As students move from grade to grade,** students begin again in each grade by learning to focus on specific passages from the text, to describe precisely what they see in those passages, and to explain fully what they think about them. They need to practice and work on these skills again because they are a year older, with more knowledge and complicated ideas about text, and, when they develop these ideas, they will find more layers of complexity in their own writing.

The ability to write more layered and complex sentences, paragraphs, and essays enables students to demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated approach to the greater complexity of what they are reading. That is, they learn to appreciate the texts they're reading as works of art made from a series of choices and designed to accomplish specific purposes. Thus, for example, while grade 6 students focus largely on the plot when they decide whether the boys or the adults cause more trouble in Roald Dahl's *Boy: Tales of Childhood*, by grade 8, students are ready to analyze the rhetorical choices that Lincoln makes in The Gettysburg Address, and how those choices shape the way his audience understands the phrase, "All men are created equal."

When students approach the research projects at the end of eighth grade, they are able to seek knowledge purposefully, synthesizing information from a whole archive of sources, understanding that the sources' authors have made choices that impact the perspective of each text.