

# What does this look like in practice?

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Take 5 minutes to read these texts considering the information that was just shared with you about passage selection.

- ✓ Are different genres and styles represented?
- ✓ Are the passages fair, interesting, and accessible to a wide variety of students?
- ✓ Can they be used to assess several learning standards?

View the Text Complexity Metrics for the passages. This will allow you to see and compare the range of text complexity represented on the whole assessment.

**Take a minute to discuss with your colleagues how your classroom practice may change as a result of today's presentation.**



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



**Directions**  
Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

*Minna is on her way to a cello lesson and is worried about playing her cello with a vibrato effect, a skill of vibrating the strings with a bow or fingers, to produce a richer sound.*

## Excerpt from *The Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt*

by Patricia MacLachlan



- 1 The streets were grimy with spring. Willie played Tchaikovsky on the corner, music that made Minna feel sad and peaceful at the same time. Next to the violin case the small brown dog slept, curled like a sausage on Willie's jacket. A woman in a fur coat with worn elbows stood in front of Minna, a baby peering over her shoulder, his head bobbing as he stared at Minna. The baby grinned suddenly and drooled down his mother's back, leaving a wet trail of fur where his mother couldn't see. A slimy secret between Minna and the baby. Minna touched his hand and moved off through the crowd, standing on the steps for a moment, watching Willie. She sighed and looked up at the gargoyles. *Willie on the street corner has a vibrato. Where is mine?*
- 2 Inside it was dark and quiet and cool. Porch beckoned Minna in and unzipped her cello case. Minna slumped in a chair.
- 3 "Min?" asked Porch. He sat down next to her. "Problems?"

**GO ON**

4 “It’s my vibrato,” said Minna, looking at him.  
5 “What about it?”  
6 “Where is it?” Minna’s voice was loud in the empty room. “I mean,” she  
leaned forward, “Lucas has a vibrato. Even Willie has one. Where is mine?”  
7 Porch frowned at Minna.  
8 “William Gray?” he said sharply. “What do you mean ‘even’ Willie? What do  
you know about Willie?”  
9 Minna’s face reddened. She had not even known Willie’s full name.  
10 “Nothing, except that he’s always there, playing on the street corner. He  
always gives me my money back,” she added softly.  
11 Porch’s face softened.  
12 “He does, does he? A gift. Willie is a fine musician, Minna. And he was a  
fine musician before he got his vibrato. Did you know he plays in the symphony  
chamber group?”  
13 “But why does he play on the street?” asked Minna, surprised.  
14 “For his own reasons, Minna,” said Porch. “You might ask him that yourself.”  
15 “We never talk about anything but music,” said Minna.  
16 “Well,” said Porch, sitting down and leaning back in his chair, “life and music  
are not separate, you know.”  
17 There was a silence.  
18 “Min,” said Porch, “your vibrato is not something that is there, I mean that  
exists, like fingernails, or hair about to grow longer. It is something you can work  
at, yes, and think about, yes, but it is much more like . . .” Porch folded his arms,  
“like understanding something for the first time, or suddenly knowing what a  
book you’re reading is all about.” He peered at Minna. “It is like a light going on  
over your head. Do you know what I mean?”  
19 “No,” said Minna, staring at Porch. She was thinking about her past life;  
the moments along the way when she needed something to make things right.  
When she was seven it had been a plaid skirt, at ten it had been a bicycle. Then it  
had been her first full-size cello. Now it was a vibrato. Would it end there?  
20 “You will understand,” said Porch. “You will.” He tapped her knee. “Ready for  
Mozart?”

- 21 Minna sat up, gripping her cello by its neck. She stared at the music, thinking about Willie and her mother and father. Did she know them at all, even the slightest little bit?
- 22 “I’ll never be ready for Mozart,” said Minna.
- 23 “Ah,” said Porch, “but Mozart is ready for you, Minna Pratt. Come on, let’s do K. 158. Your favorite key.”
- 24 Minna couldn’t help smiling. Porch was right, it was her favorite key. Sometimes, *most* of the time, Porch knew Minna as well as anyone else did. Except for McGrew; McGrew who knew, for instance, that in spite of Minna’s grumbling, in spite of her complaints, Minna played the cello because she wanted to.
- 25 Porch picked up his violin.
- 26 “Let’s play the repeats,” said Porch. He turned to look at Minna. “And we will play it wonderfully. In tune. With or without a vibrato.”
- 27 And they did.

**GO ON**

**Directions**  
Read this article. Then answer questions 13 through 18.

## The Story of Chocolate

by Katie Daynes

- 1 A thousand years ago, chocolate was a big secret. Only a few people drank it and nobody ate it.
- 2 The first chocolate drinkers were farmers who lived by the rainforest in Central America.
- 3 The rainforest was a jungle full of tropical plants, wild animals, and creepy crawlies. It was also home to the small cacao tree that grew strange, bright pods.



- 4 Monkeys knew all about the pods.
- 5 They liked to break them open and suck out the sweet, white pulp.
- 6 Then they spat out the bitter beans that were in the middle. If a bean landed on an earthy patch of forest floor, it grew into another cacao tree.
- 7 One day, a farmer copied the monkeys and tasted a pod. "Yum!" he cried, sucking the pulp. "Yuck!" he added, spitting out a bean. Soon everyone was sucking pulp and spitting beans.
- 8 But then, some villagers noticed a delicious smell, drifting up from a pile of rotting beans.
- 9 Over the next few months, the farmers discovered a way to capture this smell by turning the beans into a drink.
- 10 They let the beans rot for a few days under banana leaves . . . then put them out to dry in the hot sun.

**GO ON**

- 11 Next, they roasted the beans over a fire . . . ground them into a paste . . . and stirred in water and spices. They called their new drink *chocol haa*. It tasted very bitter, but they liked it.
- 12 To avoid hiking into the jungle for pods, the farmers planted cacao trees in their own fields. The farmers were members of a huge group of people called Mayans. Before long, *chocol haa*—or chocolate—was an important part of Mayan life.
- 13 Hundreds of years later, the chocolate secret spread, first to a fierce group of Central American people called the Aztecs and then to Spanish explorers who fought and conquered the Aztecs.
- 14 The Spanish took the chocolate secret back home to Europe. But they decided the drink tasted better hot and with lots of sugar.
- 15 Soon people across Europe were talking about chocolate. But the method of turning cacao beans into chocolate paste hadn't changed much from Mayan times. It took hard work and a long time. Unless they were rich, most people drank chocolate only as a special treat.
- 16 It wasn't until inventors came up with the steam engine that things changed.
- 17 Factories were set up, and suddenly, lots of goods could be made more easily—including chocolate.
- 18 Before long, the drink had stopped being just a handmade treat for the rich.
- 19 Gradually, chocolate makers discovered ways to turn chocolate paste into solid bars. They learned how to make smooth, creamy milk chocolate.
- 20 They began making chocolates in all shapes and sizes.
- 21 They mixed chocolate with other scrumptious ingredients.
- 22 Today, you can buy chocolates almost anywhere in the world, and they're nothing like the Mayans' bitter drink.
- 23 When the Mayans first caught a whiff of rotting cacao beans, they knew they had found something exciting. But they had no idea how popular chocolate would become.

### Mayan Chocolate

Want to know what spicy Mayan chocolate tasted like?

Stir  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of cinnamon and a pinch of cloves or chili powder into a cup of hot chocolate or chocolate milk.

**GO ON**

### Text Complexity Metrics for 2016 Grade 4 Passages

Passage Title	Word Count	Lexile	Flesch-Kincaid	Reading Maturity Metric*	Degrees of Reading Power*	Qualitative Review
Excerpt from the Facts and Fictions of Minna Pratt	687	610L	3.4	7.0		Appropriate
The Story of Chocolate	550	900L	3.6		57	Appropriate
Excerpt from Swimming with Sharks	771	840L	4.1	5.4		Appropriate
Rushing West	740	740L	6.3	5.1		Appropriate
Excerpt from Sheep	717	660L	4.3	5.3		Appropriate
The Kite Fighters	771	860L	4.4		53	Appropriate
Beware of Frogs!	649	820L	5.5	7.3		Appropriate
Looking Out for Lizards	719	840L	4.9	5.1		Appropriate

\* Depending on when the passage was selected, either the Reading Maturity Metric or Degrees of Reading Power was used as the third quantitative metric.

### New York State 2016 Quantitative Text Complexity Chart for Assessment and Curriculum

To determine if a text's quantitative complexity is at the appropriate grade level, New York State uses the table below. In cases where a text is excerpted from a large work, only the complexity of the excerpt that students see on the test is measured, not the large work, so it is possible that the complexity of a book might be above or below grade level, but the text used on the assessment is at grade level. Because the measurement of text complexity is inexact, quantitative measures of complexity are defined by grade band rather than by individual grade level and then paired with the qualitative review by an educator.

Grade Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2 <sup>nd</sup> –3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4 <sup>th</sup> –5 <sup>th</sup>	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6 <sup>th</sup> –8 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9 <sup>th</sup> –10 <sup>th</sup>	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11 <sup>th</sup> –12 <sup>th</sup>	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.20	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

Source: Student Achievement Partners