

## Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis			
<b>Created by:</b>	Lisa Bernstein	<b>Event/Date:</b>	CT Summer Academy July 29, 2014
<b>Text and Author</b>	Robert Kennedy's Speech: April, 1968 Indianapolis-Announcing death of Martin Luther King	<b>Where to Access Text</b>	Public Domain <a href="http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/rfkonmlkdeath.html">http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/rfkonmlkdeath.html</a>
Text Description			
<p>RFK's speech delivered April 4, 1968 and transcribed directly from audio. An address to a crisis with the potential for fury or transcendence. Upon arriving in Indianapolis, Indiana as a senator from NY pursuing a presidential nomination, RFK learns of MLK's assassination and uses the opportunity to speak to the nation, to it's pain, and to its deepest failures as a society. Many call it the greatest speech ever given . . .</p>			
Quantitative			
<b>Lexile and Grade Level</b>	1220L, 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grade	<b>Text Length</b>	615 words
Qualitative			
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization	
<p>The central meaning in this speech is an illumination of a vision for the future in which blacks and whites are able to live in harmony. By articulating this vision and drawing a personal connection with his audience, RFK attempts to inspire love at a tragic and volatile time and stave off swelling hatred and violence.</p>		<p>This speech is generally agreed upon to have been given "on-the-fly" (although there is debate about whether or not RFK drafted his remarks in advance). Regardless, there is very minimal "formal" structure to the speech, other than its introduction and closure ("Ladies and gentlemen" and "thank you very much"). Otherwise, the speech reads almost haphazard and meandering with an attempt to be circular by the end.</p> <p>Despite this, RFK creates a rhythm through repetition in sets of three, e.g., "It's not the end of..." ("Rule of 3") in many paragraphs.</p>	
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features	
<p>The prior knowledge demands on readers to comprehend this text are very high. This is likely to pose the greatest challenge for deep comprehension. Students should understand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Civil Rights Movement</li> <li>2. MLK's ascendancy in the Movement</li> <li>3. JFK's assassination</li> <li>4. Race relations in the US leading up to this day</li> </ol>		<p>The inclusion of an ancient poem by Aeschylus and a Greek saying pose challenges for deeper comprehension that a reader must connect to the author's overall purpose.</p> <p>Analysis of the text must consider the oral delivery of the speech when interpreting syntax and punctuation (repeated words, dashes).</p>	

### Potential Reader/Task Challenges

World knowledge of events in the 1960's and interpretation of the Aeschylus poem and Greek saying ("to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world") pose the biggest challenges to understanding the big ideas in this text.

Background knowledge of Civil Rights Movement and MLK's role.

Although the actual vocabulary demands are minimal, the elements of the text that make it an effective speech are critical to comprehension.

### Big Takeaway

By balancing tragic news with optimism for a future of justice and directly calling on the audience to respond with prayer and a commitment to gentleness, RFK brilliantly staves off the violence that raged around the rest of the country on April 4, 1968.

## Vocabulary Analysis Template

	Words that demand less teaching time (i.e. the definition is singular and concrete)	Words that demand more teaching time (i.e. there are multiple meanings and/or are part of a word family)
Words that can be determined in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assassination (Tier 2)</li> <li>• savageness (Tier 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• polarization (Tier 2)</li> <li>• tame (Tier 2)</li> <li>• dedicated (Tier 2)</li> <li>• lawlessness (Tier 2)</li> <li>• vast (Tier 2)</li> </ul>
Words that cannot be determined in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• despair (Tier 2)</li> <li>• compassion (Tier 2)</li> </ul>	