

# Appendix A: Text Complexity

Great Minds® carefully selects content-rich, complex module texts. Module texts, especially the core texts, must be appropriately challenging so that students develop their literacy skills and progress toward meeting Anchor Standard for Reading 10 by year’s end. Great Minds evaluates each core module text using quantitative and qualitative criteria outlined in both the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (<http://witeng.link/0483>) and the updated CCSS Appendix A guidance on text complexity (<http://witeng.link/0093>).

This Appendix provides text-complexity details for each core text in order of appearance in the module. The analysis supports teachers and administrators in understanding the texts’ richness and complexity and the module’s knowledge building and goals. Alongside the Family Tip Sheets, this information can also support conversations with families about texts.

For ideas to support multilingual learners, see the Wit & Wisdom® Multilingual Learner Resource.

Core module texts:

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| Title and Author    | <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i> , Norton Juster   |  |
| Description of Text | First published in 1961, this imaginative novel follows a discontented and purposeless young Milo on an unexpected journey to the Lands Beyond, where he encounters unusual settings and characters whose names describe their behaviors. Milo forms unlikely friendships and attempts to return the princesses Rhyme and Reason to their rightful place in the Kingdom of Wisdom. |  |
| Complexity Ratings  | <b>Quantitative:</b><br><br>1000L  | <b>Qualitative:</b><br><br>Meaning/Purpose: On its surface, the book is a story of a young boy who embarks on a fantastical journey. Beneath this surface are many life messages about the value of time, the possibilities of life, and the joys of learning.<br><br>Structure: The structure is straightforward and grade-level appropriate. The narrative voice is consistent and events proceed chronologically.<br><br>Language: While the story appeals to a wide range of students and is grade-level appropriate, it is a fantasy, rich in challenging vocabulary, which may need explanation and explicit instruction. As Juster himself said, “To kids, there are no difficult words, there are just words they have never come across before.” Character and place names, idioms, adages/proverbs, puns, and complex vocabulary may be challenging to some, particularly multilingual learners and those reading below grade level.<br><br>Knowledge Demands: Many students will identify with Milo’s attitude toward school and learning and with his responses to the situations in which he finds himself. |

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| <b>Text-Reader-Task Considerations</b> | The story provides an excellent opportunity for students to analyze how authors play with words to create meaning and engage readers. As Milo's experiences transform him, so too do students discover both the importance of using precise language and the positive impact of taking responsibility for their own learning and experience of the world. To understand and appreciate wordplay, students must understand English homophones, homographs, and idioms; multilingual learners will need tailored support. |
| <b>Rationale for Placement</b>         | After the emotionally charged first module, Grade 5 students will be ready for a more lighthearted reading experience. Norton Juster's <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i> , a modern classic that pulses with clever puns and playful use of words, offers the perfect focus for an examination of wordplay. Experiencing this fun of language and internalizing Juster's themes about the joy of learning are perfect messages for Grade 5 students preparing to move beyond elementary school learning.                     |