**Tips for selecting appropriate texts in the secondary classroom**

**Which Text?**

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| **TEXT EXAMINATION CHECKLIST:** |
| **READERS** |  |  |
| * High interest
 |  |  |
| * Appropriate background
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|  |  |  |
| **LANGUAGE** |  |  |
| * Manageable conceptual load
 |  |  |
| * Familiar/understandable structure
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|  |  |  |
| **CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT** |  |  |
| * Headings
 |  |  |
| * Graphics
 |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **TEXT FORMAT** |  |  |
| * Manageable length
 |  |  |
| * Appropriate font size
 |  |  |
| * Appropriate spacing/margins
 |  |  |



**Reader's Interest and Background**
Look for texts that tap into students' interests or texts in which readers already have some knowledge, as these tend to be easier to read. Familiarity with the topic and vocabulary helps readers make sense of the new information they encounter. Similarly, texts that match students' interests are likely to be more motivating, thus increasing the chance of a successful reading experience.

**Text Language**
Examine the language of the text. Unfamiliar and difficult-to-decode words tend to make a text more difficult. Exposure to challenging language/concepts is a great way to learn, but too many of these in one text can be a cognitive overload for students. Similarly, consider the structure of the text, which should be familiar to students. If not, explicit instruction in how to read the structure may be needed.

Lexile

**Contextual Support**
Texts may contain other contextual features that can make a text more or less difficult for readers. These features include clearly stated headings that properly describe levels of text for the reader; pictures, figures, and information that support the content; and pre-reading questions, overviews, or text organizers that allow the reader insight into the organization of the text. When selecting text, be attentive to the presence/absence of these supports, and also be able to judge the quality and appropriateness of these support features in aiding the reader's understanding.

**Text Format**
Be aware of how the text is visually presented. It’s important to consider what length of text might appropriately match your learning target or instructional goals. Size of font used in the text, print color, spacing between lines, and vertical and horizontal margin size are just some features that may cause a text to "look" more or less difficult. In addition, be cognizant of how tables, figures, footnotes, and margin notes may distract readers or draw their attention away from the main body of text.