Levels of Complexity
Targets for Instruction and Assessment

Level 1 – Low Complexity
Involves recall, observing and representing basic facts that demonstrate a surface level of understanding of text. Usually requires a student to perform a one step process by:
- Locating details
- Finding details on charts, graphs, or diagrams
- Recognizing chronological order
- Identifying correct meaning of words in explicit context
- Identifying figurative language in text

Level 2 – Moderate Complexity
Involves summarizing, inferring, classifying, comparing, gathering information, explaining, describing, while demonstrating a more complex level of understanding. Usually requires a student to perform a 2-step process by:
- Using context clues to identify the meanings of unfamiliar words
- Interpreting the information in graphs, charts, and diagrams
- Recognizing patterns of organization
- Comparing meanings
- Determining how details support main idea
- Determining author’s main purpose or point of view
- Demonstrating an understanding of plot development
- Identifying cause and effect relationships
- Summarizing the major points of the text
- Identifying similarities and differences
- Determine fact or opinion

Level 3 – High Complexity
Involves higher order thinking, conceptual understanding, generalizing abstract reasoning, theme identification and complex inferencing within and across text. This level requires a student to perform multiple steps by:
- Analyzing the use of figurative language in text
- Showing how graphs, charts and diagrams contribute to a text
- Analyzing in depth similarities and differences
- Analyzing cause and effect relationships
- Determining author’s purpose and/or point of view and how it affects the text
- Describing and illustrating how common themes are found across texts
- Applying text-based information to a similar situation
- Identifying and evaluating devices of persuasion
- Evaluating strong vs. weak argument
- Describing and analyzing the characteristics of various types of text