



Choosing “Juicy” Complex Excerpts and Sentences

“Juicy” texts are complex, compelling, and connected to an *Essential Question*.

The excerpt must be tied closely to the *Essential Question* you are exploring. It must push the content and the concept. Since you will be spending some time exploring *how the sentence unfolds and probing for meaning*, pay special attention to both—

- a “juicy” excerpt that uncovers key ideas, *AND*
- the language that frames these ideas.



For training and additional resources, visit <https://www.cgcs.org/Page/667>.



1. Select sentences that contain layered vocabulary to make content and meaning clearer.

Choose sentences with layered academic Tier 2 vocabulary. Often, key ideas or concepts reside within these words, and they connect to content and build meaning to the larger excerpt. New vocabulary should be accompanied by instructional conversations to uncover meaning and to help students understand the power and intent in the choice of these academic words.

2. Select complex sentences that help build comprehension.

Choose sentences that are long and embedded with main and dangling clauses, parts, or phrases. Complex texts often feature complex syntax that students might find difficult to navigate. Instructional conversations that help students uncover how the sentence unfolds, how to unpack meaning, and ultimately, how to map meaning back to text are key to comprehension.

3. Select sentences that include *figurative language* that merits attention.

Through purposeful instructional moves, teachers help students demystify figurative language for its meaning, and help students understand why and how such figurative language works, given the concept embedded in its use.

4. Select sentences that contain content-specific language functions with interesting language forms.

Forms that merit attention in a sentence include—

- a. prepositional or adverbial phrases that either begin the sentence or add information
- b. cohesive devices that connect, compare, give examples, etc.
- c. phraseology (e.g., idiomatic and content-specific expressions)

Teachers should chart or display precise content-specific language functions of cause and effect, compare and contrast, hypothesizing, etc., for students’ reference when reading and writing in the respective content area.