Text Complexity Analysis of *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor

Qualitative Measures

Levels of Meaning:
The novel has a single level of meaning: a contemporary girl's struggles with a moral dilemma to solve economic hardship and family troubles.

Structure:
A simple structure told by a single narrator with events in chronological order. The novel does employ foreshadowing but flashbacks are not used.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:
Simple figurative language and imagery is used. The voice of the narrator is conversational, familiar, and contemporary.

Knowledge Demands:
Themes include poverty, family relationships, and moral dilemma. Events of the novel are everyday experiences common to our contemporary world.

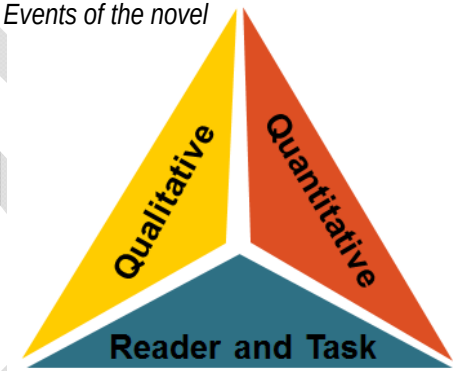
Quantitative Measures

Various readability measures of How to Steal a Dog *are largely in agreement that is of appropriate complexity for grades 4-7. The ATOS formula (used with the Accelerated Reader program) identifies this title as having a book level of 4.0 . A Lexile measure for this novel is 700L .*

Reader-Task Considerations

These are to be determined locally with reference to such variables as a student's motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as purpose and the complexity of the task assigned and the question posed.

Here in Kansas, educators might want to examine the following elements or issues: the ethics of stealing, the consequences of poverty, and the creation of personal standards of behavior.



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Recommended Placement

How to Steal a Dog *is a 2010 William Allen White winner. Both the qualitative and quantitative measures support the novel's placement in the grades 4-5 text complexity band. This book also ties into financial literacy standard.*