

FRAMEWORK FOR ESTIMATING TEXT DIFFICULTY

Title and source: *"Logging Native Forests: Conflicting Views"*

(from *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*)

Author: *Nancy Swarbrick*

Curriculum level and area: *Level 4, Social Studies*

Factors affecting text difficulty	Reading year level	Notes
Age appropriateness Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of the main character(s) prior knowledge assumed by the text maturity required to deal with the themes familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter likely interests and experiences of readers. 	8	<i>Assumes some familiarity with conservation issues, conflict and protest, political background</i> <i>ELLs students may not be familiar with NZ political background</i> <i>Maturity needed to deal with opposing viewpoints (conservationists/commercial interests)</i>
Complexity of ideas Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer) irony or ambiguity abstract ideas metaphors and other figurative or connotative language technical information support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on. 	8-9	<i>Many complex abstract ideas ("selective logging"; "social and economic interests")</i> <i>Connotative/metaphorical language ("Public opposition to logging swelled", communities "faded away")</i> <i>Lots of historical and political information</i> <i>Support from photos and videos (online version)</i>
Structure and coherence of the text Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flashbacks or time shifts narrative point of view mixed text types connections across the text examples and explanations competing information length of paragraphs unattributed dialogue use of headings and subheadings. 	7	<i>Subheadings make structure clear</i> <i>Chronological structure helps reader make meaning</i> <i>Features of a report - topic sentences followed by examples</i> <i>Mostly short paragraphs</i> <i>Connected ideas - e.g., about protest and conflict</i>
Syntactic structure of the text Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sentence length the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences use of passive voice or nominalisation repetition of words or phrases changes in verb tense. 	8-9	<i>Some long and complicated sentences, including complex and compound sentences</i> <i>Frequent use of passive voice</i>
Vocabulary difficulty Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unfamiliar vocabulary technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns sentence-level and/or visual support contextual clues the use of a glossary or footnotes. 	8-9	<i>Many proper names may be unfamiliar to ELLs</i> <i>Many terms used in a specialised way, e.g., "privatised", "scenic and recreational value", "confrontations", "deregulation"</i>
Length of the text	7-8	<i>A short text for this level, but a lot compressed into it</i>

Estimated reading year level:

8

Notes: *Because of the many unfamiliar words, some long and complicated sentences, and the large amount of detail compressed into a short text, this will be challenging for most of my yr 7-8 students. Best used with a shared reading approach and modelling of appropriate strategies.*

Story: Logging native forests

Page 6 – Conflicting views

The conservation lobby

In the 19th century some people wanted to preserve native forest for its scenic and recreational value. Their influence grew from the 1890s, and conservation organisations were set up around the time of the First World War.

After the Second World War, more people took part in outdoor recreation and began to appreciate New Zealand's forests. There was growing support for scenic reserves and national parks.

In 1952, after a long public campaign, Waipoua kauri forest in Northland was made a forest sanctuary, where logging was banned. In 1954 the Tararua State Forest Park was created. Supporting activities from logging to recreation, it was an attempt to please both conservationists and foresters. By 1970, the Forest Service managed six state forest parks and six forest sanctuaries.

A change of policy

In the mid-1970s, because of conservation concerns, the Forest Service announced a new native forest management policy that aimed at sustainability, using techniques to encourage steady regrowth such as selective logging – evenly thinning out a forest, cutting trees of all ages.

However, selective logging reduced the amount of timber that could be taken and the area of land that could be made available for exotic plantations. Treasury opposed the policy for economic reasons, and the Forest Service did not receive enough funding to carry out its plans. Also, because of the demand for wood, selective logging often went too far and resembled clearfelling.

Growing criticism

Conservationists argued that trees could not be selectively logged without damaging the complex structure of the surrounding forest.

The Forest Service stopped logging kauri, but insisted that other native forests were still needed for timber. This led to a series of clashes in the 1970s, first over beech forests on the West Coast and in Southland, then over the central North Island podocarp forests at Pureora and Whirinaki. Public opposition to logging swelled. The Maruia Declaration, calling for the protection of native forests, had 341,159 signatures when it was presented to Parliament in 1977.

At loggerheads

The conservationists' ideals sometimes conflicted with social and economic interests. Many small sawmills still depended on native forests, and people in nearby villages relied on the mills for work. In 1976 it was estimated that native sawmills employed over 2,000 people in rural areas where there were few other job options. At Pureora and Whirinaki, there were confrontations between conservationists and forestry workers. When logging stopped at Pureora in 1982, the small King Country communities of Pureora and Barryville faded away.

From timber to tourism

The West Coast Forest Accord of 1986 aimed to ease the transition from logging native forest in the region. Some native forest was reserved, but clearfelling was to continue in North Westland and Buller until the exotic forests there had matured. This compromise was unacceptable to some conservationists, and there were more protests. In 1999, the government announced that logging would end by 31 March 2002. To compensate locals, a \$120 million fund was set up to create other jobs, such as in ecotourism.

Political change

The Labour government elected in 1984 supported both conservation concerns and deregulation. It separated the commercial and non-commercial functions of several government departments, and in 1987 the Forest Service was disbanded. Exotic forests were managed by a state-owned Forestry Corporation until 1989, and were then gradually privatised. Most of the state's native forests passed into the care of the new Department of Conservation (DOC). DOC was responsible for national parks, reserves and indigenous forests not intended for wood production.

From 1975 to 1987, production of native timber from publicly owned forests declined dramatically. Political changes put an end to the logging of most native forest on public land, and to a way of life for many people.

subheadings

many long and complicated sentences

opposing views

lots of historical and political information

frequent use of passive voice

many complex abstract ideas

metaphorical language

many proper nouns

specialised terms