

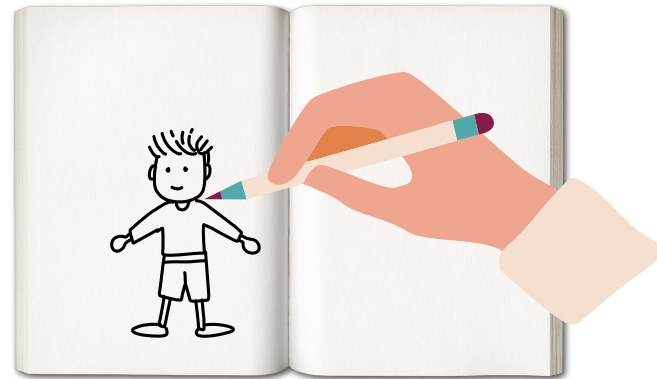
# How to Read for Complex Representation in Grade School Books

When reviewing curricular texts, ask the following questions about how people, groups, and topics are represented to ensure there is complexity. Each question offers examples of what to look for. The examples are listed in order of most complex to least complex representation.

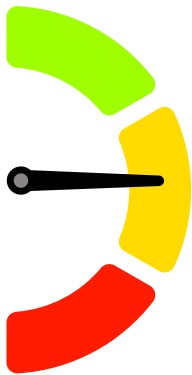
Questions to ask:

## 1: Creator and Character Identity

Who are the storytellers, and whose stories are being told?



## 2: People



### 1. Are historically marginalized people **multidimensional**?

The person is described, and they undergo change

The person is described, or they undergo change

The person has no or limited description and does not change

The person is not given a historically marginalized identity

### 2. Do historically marginalized people have **agency**?

The person conducts major decisions or actions with consequences for others

The person conducts major decisions or actions with consequences only for themselves

The person does not conduct major decisions or actions

The person is not given a historically marginalized identity

### 3. Are historically marginalized people **positively influential**?

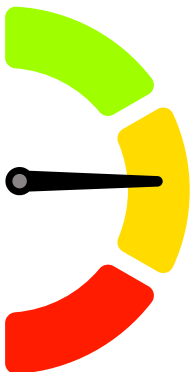
The person is primarily described by their assets, or they have a positive role in major decisions or actions

The person is described neutrally, or they are absent from major decisions or actions

The person is primarily described by their deficits, or they have a negative role in major decisions or actions

The person is not given a historically marginalized identity

## 3: Groups



### 1. Are historically marginalized groups **represented without superficiality**?

The text and its images do not include forms of superficial representation (e.g., stereotypes, counterstereotypes, tokenism, marginalizing tropes)

The text or its images do include forms of superficial representation

### 2. Are historically marginalized people **immersed in groups and cultures**?

There is description connecting a historically marginalized person to culture, and the description extends to other people to present a group with a shared culture

There is description connecting a historically marginalized person to culture, but the description does not extend to other people

There is no description connecting a historically marginalized person to culture

The text does not include groups or cultures that are given a historically marginalized identity

### 3. Are historically marginalized groups **presented positively or as assets**?

A historically marginalized group is portrayed positively or as an asset

A historically marginalized group is portrayed without explicit or implicit judgement

A historically marginalized group is portrayed negatively or as a deficit

The text does not include a historically marginalized group

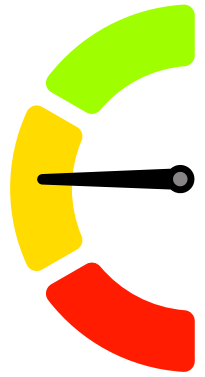
#### 4. Are multiple groups portrayed as equally valuable?

Multiple groups, including a historically marginalized group, are portrayed in relationship to one another and as equally valuable

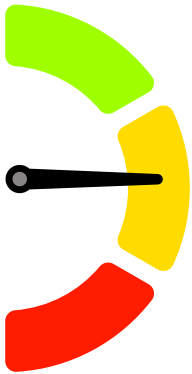
The text focuses on a single historically marginalized group, or multiple groups are portrayed without a clear relationship to one another

A group is portrayed as less than, subordinate to, or dependent upon another

The text does not include groups or cultures that could be considered marginalized



## 4: Topics



### 1. Are historical and social topics presented without sanitization?

A reader would reasonably recognize a historical or social topic in the text and is presented with a version that has not been sanitized

A reader would reasonably recognize a historical or social topic in the text and is presented with a version that has been sanitized

A reader would not reasonably recognize a historical or social topic in the text

### 2. Do historical and social topic presentations include historically marginalized perspectives?

The creator presents a historical or social topic through multiple perspectives, including a historically marginalized perspective

The creator presents a historical or social topic, and it is presented through a historically marginalized perspective

The creator does not present any historical or social topics, or topics are included with ambiguity

The creator presents a topic but does not include a historically marginalized perspective

### 3. Is there a connection between historical and social topics presentations and the real experiences of students?

The creator presents a historical or social topic as complex, as an issue of the past and present, or as linked to structures like laws and events

The creator does not present any historical or social topics, or topics are included with ambiguity

The creator presents a historical or social topic as solved, as an issue exclusively of the past, or as an individual problem

