What makes this text complex?

mary

the text

of the First Fire, or How the Water Spider Got Its Red Bowl

ll name

m a Cherokee Legend

ption

a fictional narrative that retells a Cherokee legend from *Myths and Legends of the Great Plains*. The text is written in a straightforward styl
me to the world and how different animals got their markings and colorings as an effect of trying to retrieve the fire. The legend is an origi
s it seeks to explain attributes of the natural world. It compares details of multiple characters and explores themes related to the success
The text contains cultural elements and students may benefit from acquisition of knowledge about tribes of the Great Plains prior to readi

ive features

grade level

, grade 4

approximately 2 pages, single spaced)

re features

entral Ideas/Purpose

s purpose is explicitly stated at the end of the text, but the theme is subtly conveyed to the reader over the entirety of the text through rep
e purpose can be anticipated by the title if students understand that legends often offer explanations for why things are as they are, but is
e final paragraph of text. The author's message/theme ("creativity and patience can be more powerful than physical strength" or "don't ju
by what you see") is not directly stated by characters, but can be inferred by the reader by interpreting the actions and reactions of the ch
ultiple levels of meaning of the word spark ("spark" can be interpreted in reference to fire and curiosity).

ure/Organization

moderately complex as it includes multiple characters within a clear, chronological order (variety of transition words in text). The pattern o
titive as several characters receive similar consequences as a result of their efforts. The story emphasizes cause and effect within a setti
. It is presented in third person omniscient point of view, but provides only minimal insight into characters' thoughts. Connections betwe
t and implied.

Features

style of the legend has been replaced by contemporary language in this retelling. There are several examples of figurative language use (
onification of animals) in the text. Overall, the vocabulary is likely to be familiar to students, with minimal words whose meanings cannot b
in context.

edge demands

sion of the text would benefit from prior knowledge of the process and vocabulary related to fire and its effects (spark, flames, coals). Prio
of cultures of Great Plains Native American tribes as well as an understanding of origin stories may be beneficial. Familiarity with myths an
e reader. Teacher should expose students to additional texts to expand their knowledge of this genre and its structure. As this text expla
mals have markings or colors, students would benefit from prior knowledge of those animals' appearances through the use of images.

eader/Task Challenges

ging and age appropriate for fourth grade students, but may pose a challenge for students in understanding the concept of supreme bein
(the Thunders). Students may show confusion regarding the description of animals that have been personified by the author. Finding the

of the text may be challenging for some readers since these ideas must be inferred.

ocabulary in this text

plays a critical role in text complexity and readers' ability to make meaning of complex text.

"Identifying and sorting vocabulary words," also on page 49 of your TeachFest Guide
e 33 of Common Core State Standards Appendix A.
at words do I teach and how?" (Short Article by David Liben, Student Achievement Partners)

	Words that demand less teaching time (i.e., the definition is singular and concrete)	Words that demand more teaching time (i.e. there a multiple meanings and/or are part of a word family
can be in context	• secured (tier 2) • shivered (tier 2) • sycamore (tier 3) • perched (tier 2) • confidence (tier 2) • unique (tier 2) • jabbered (tier 2) • mission (tier 2) • blackened (tier 2)	• desperate/desperation (tier 2) • uninhabited (tier 2) • "piped up" (tier 2) • "spun a thread" (tier 3)
cannot be in context		• "the Thunders" (tier 3)