

# ADAPTING PRIMARY SOURCES

## STRATEGIES

1. Consider which vocabulary words are important to the main ideas of this text and cannot be changed. Select no more than 3-5 new words to teach for one document or day – more than this and it will be difficult for students to retain them. Then, replace advanced vocabulary remaining with synonyms. Eliminate unnecessary or repetitive words.

Example:

Original Text	Adapted Text
John L. O'Sullivan "The Great Nation of Futurity" 1839	
We must onward to the fulfilment of our mission -- to the entire development of the principle of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality. This is our high <b>destiny</b> , and in nature's eternal, inevitable decree of cause and effect we must accomplish it.	We must move forward to fulfill our mission -- to the entire development of the values of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade, spread of freedom and equality. This is our high <b>destiny</b> , and it is natural that we must accomplish it.

2. Look at sentence length. Simplify one complex sentence into 2-3 short sentences that include only basic subject – verb – object structure.

Example:

Original Text	Adapted Text
Andrew Jackson "First Inaugural Address" March 4, 1829	
It will be my sincere and constant desire to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.	My desire is to make a just and liberal policy towards the Indian tribes. I want to give humane and considerate attention to their rights and wants. Our policy will be consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.

3. Eliminate dependent clauses that give interesting, insightful, but ultimately unnecessary details about the main ideas.

Example:

Original Text	Adapted Text
Andrew Jackson "First Inaugural Address" March 4, 1829	

As long as our Government is administered for the good of the people, and is regulated by their will; as long as it secures to us the rights of person and of property, liberty of conscience and of the press, it will be worth defending;	As long as our Government is administered for the good of the people and is regulated by their will ... it will be worth defending.
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4. Consider creating new sentences from dependent clauses, if the information contained is necessary to understanding the main ideas.

Example:

Original Text	Adapted Text
Andrew Jackson "First Inaugural Address" March 4, 1829	
As long as our Government is administered for the good of the people, and is regulated by their will; as long as it secures to us the rights of person and of property, liberty of conscience and of the press, it will be worth defending;	As long as our Government is administered for the good of the people and is regulated by their will it will be worth defending. As long as it secures to us the rights of person and of property, liberty of conscience and of the press, it will be worth defending.

5. Let the original go a little. Rather than edit the original document, look at it and then generate your adaptation from scratch. This will allow you to let go of the details and focus on the main ideas.

Example:

Original Text	Adapted Text
Andrew Jackson "First Inaugural Address" March 4, 1829	
It will be my sincere and constant desire to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.	My desire is to make a fair policy for the Indian tribes. I want to consider their rights and wants in a humane way. Our policy will agree with the processes of our Government and the feelings of our people.

6. Use a website like Lexile Analyzer or Readability-Score.com to measure the reading level of your adaptation and ensure that it is appropriate for your student's level.

Original Text	Adapted Text
Andrew Jackson "First Inaugural Address" March 4, 1829	
It will be my sincere and constant desire to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.	My desire is to make a fair policy for the Indian tribes. I want to consider their rights and wants in a humane way. Our policy will agree with the processes of our Government and the feelings of our people.

Readability-Score Avg. Grade Level: 19.9	Readability-Score Avg. Grade Level: 7.4
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