



# Text Complexity Analysis of

Buried in Ash, Ancient Salvadoran Village Shows Images of Daily Life (*title*)

National Science Foundation (*author*)

Recommended Complexity Band: 9-10

## Qualitative Measures

**Meaning/Purpose:** (*Briefly explain the levels of meaning (Literary Text) or purpose (Informational Text.)*) The purpose of this text is to reveal the culture of the village of Ceren, preserved by volcanic ash. The author also describes the steps taken by a team of researchers over a period of several decades to unearth new details of the villagers and their suspected demise.

**Text Structure:** (*Briefly describe the structure, organization, and other features of the text.*) This article is largely organized using main idea and details text structure, and features short paragraphs with ample spacing in between. This organization helps to minimize the number of complex sentences and vocabulary words. The article has links to larger versions of the photographs to make the text easier to understand.

**Language Features:** (*Briefly describe the conventions and clarity of the language used in the text, including the complexity of the vocabulary and sentence structures.*) This text includes several complex sentences often containing multiple concepts. Subject-specific language is used frequently. For example, anthropological terms such as *indigenous* are used to describe the villagers displaced by the volcano. Occasionally, such terminology is offset with context clues to help determine word meanings.

**Knowledge Demands:** (*Briefly describe the knowledge demands the text requires of students.*) To read this text, students should be familiar with the geography and culture of Central America. Additionally, students will need to be familiar with *volcanology* including the *volcanic ejecta*.

## Text Description

**Briefly describe the text:** This informational text is designed to support reading in the content area. It describes the remains of a Salvadoran village preserved in volcanic ash, much like Europe's Pompeii. The unearthed village reveals artifacts that illustrate the daily lives of this ancient people. The authors use artifacts to infer religious, cultural and economic aspects of the Ceren village.

## Quantitative Measures

**Complexity Band Level (provide range):** Beyond 11-12

The text falls above the 11-12 grade band according to a quantitative reading measure.

## Considerations for Reader and Task

Below are factors to consider with respect to the reader and task.

### Potential Challenges this Text Poses:

This article unites Earth Science with archaeology and anthropology. Students at the 9-10 grade band will likely be familiar with the Earth Science terms related to volcanoes. However, the teacher may need to front load the article with an introduction to archaeological and anthropological terms such as shaman, sacbe, excavate, and manioc cultivation.

Not all of the ideas are smoothly connected from one section to the next. A notetaking guide or graphic organizer may help.

## Recommended Placement

**Briefly explain the recommended placement of the text in a particular grade band:** The quantitative measure puts this text beyond the 11-12 grade band. Based on reader and task considerations including text structure and subject-specific vocabulary with support, however, this text is more suitable for students at the 9-10 level. Though the article can be challenging to read, it holds a high interest level as it presents details about daily lives of ancient people likely studied by students in world history classes.