



Qualitative Measures

Levels of Meaning (Explain the levels of meaning or purpose):

This book has at least two levels of meaning. Beals' autobiography relates her confrontation with "normal" young adult issues such as dating and relationships with parents while she also participates as one of the historic "Little Rock Nine" who integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. Beals also provides a first-hand account of what segregation and events like the *Brown v Board of Education* decision were like for African Americans in the 1950s.

Text Structure (Structure, organization and other features):

The text is straight forward. Beals describes her own experiences, including some of her most painful memories. The reader experiences segregation, the threat of a mob, the desire to quit, and the courage to continue through Beals' eyes.

Language Conventionalty and Clarity (including vocabulary complexity and sentence structures):

Beals tells about her experience in an easy to understand, conversational way. She discusses her thoughts and fears for herself and the others at several points, using the voice of her teenage self in many instances.

Knowledge Demands (What does the text require of students?):

Students need to tap into their own experiences with their parents to relate to Melba's decision to enroll in Central High School even though her parents are against it. Identifying with a community and a higher purpose are also present.

Quantitative Measures

(Include complexity band levels provided at www.lexile.com and other measures)

The Lexile level is 1000 which is within the 6th -8th grade range. The ATOS book level is 6.5, but the content would better suit upper middle school.

Reader-Task Considerations

(Consider potential challenges, major areas of instructional focus and differentiation/supports needed)

Potential Challenges: The severe legal and social obstacles placed on African Americans because of segregation may be hard for students to grasp.

Differentiation/supports: Educators may want to discuss the *Plessy v Ferguson* and *Brown v Board of Education* Supreme Court decisions to help prepare students.

Instructional Focus: RL 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.10

Please note that after the *Brown v Board* decision, an angry white man tries to rape Melba, but she is able to escape before being physically harmed. Also, Beals relates her story using the language she heard, so racial slurs are present.

Rationale for Placement

(Explain the recommended placement of the text in a particular grade level or grade band)

The book level is appropriate for middle school, and during the Anne Frank unit, it is overwhelmingly evident that students are thirsty for more information on the AMERICAN Civil Rights Movement. Since American history in 8th grade only covers through the Civil War and Reconstruction, non-fiction texts such as this provide a venue for thought and discussion in the 8th grade language arts classroom about a topic that is interesting to the students and with which the United States still struggles.