

# EQuIP Review Feedback



**Lesson/Unit Name:** “Yearning to Breathe Free”\* Changing Attitudes about Immigration 1880-1920  
**Content Area:** English language arts  
**Grade Level:** 8

**Overall Rating:**

E

Exemplar

## Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.</li> <li>✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.</li> <li>✓ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A &amp; B).</li> </ul> <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Grades 3-5) Build students’ content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Targeted Standards:</b> This unit references numerous Common Core standards in writing, reading, speaking and listening, and language. The unit is primarily built around W.8.2 and all of its various components. RI.8.1 also was a key standard in the unit. Connecticut social studies standards are also referenced.</p> <p>There are many standards listed in the introduction, and it would be helpful to know which of those are the major targeted standards and which are supporting standards. Another idea would be to have a chart that shows which activity meets which standard.</p> <p><b>Clear and Explicit Purpose for Instruction:</b> The first pages of the unit clearly lay out the purpose, with relation to both the content learning and the literacy skills being developed. This unit builds knowledge on immigration in order to write an expository piece, which fits well with the Call to Action. Student preparation for writing includes reading, oral processing, and other activities designed to build the knowledge and understanding to be communicated in the culminating writing piece.</p> <p><b>Selected Texts:</b> There are texts included in the unit that range from a Flesch Kincaid level of 4.4 to 10.8, with the major text used at a 9.1 level. This range is appropriate for the grade level and the purpose of the unit and activities. Many of the sources included are primary sources, which is a particular strength in this unit.</p>
<p><b>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

## Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Reading Text Closely:</b> Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction.</li> <li>✓ <b>Text-Based Evidence:</b> Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading Text Closely/Writing From Sources:</b> Throughout the unit, students are expected to read many types of text, eliciting evidence that will support their writing of the summative expository essay. Activities 4 and 13 exemplify attention to reading closely and analysis of word choice.</p> <p><b>Text-based Evidence:</b> Students gather text-based evidence over the course of the unit. Appendix D contains many different text-based questions about the Lee Chew reading, which would engage the student in reading the text closely. There are several graphic organizers to support students in pulling out specific evidence.</p> <p><b>Academic Vocabulary:</b> There are several places in the unit where the author has called out specific vocabulary that students may need to study.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing from Sources:</b> Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).</li> <li>✓ <b>Academic Vocabulary:</b> Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.</li> </ul> <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Increasing Text Complexity:</b> Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.</li> <li>✓ <b>Building Disciplinary Knowledge:</b> Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.</li> <li>✓ <b>Balance of Texts:</b> Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).</li> <li>✓ <b>Balance of Writing:</b> Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>At one point, the Frayer model is given as a way of engaging students with a specific term. Later, there is discussion of studying various forms of a word like "immigration" to deepen student understanding. There is a clear expectation that students will be able to use some of the terms they're learning in their writing, such as in Activity 8.</p> <p>Increasing Text Complexity: The texts in this unit do not build in difficulty over time in terms of readability, but the designer of the unit brings in many different types of text, including political cartoons and first-person narratives. The purpose of the inclusion of these texts is to push students to elicit more and more evidence about the experience of immigrants. So, while the complexity of the text does not increase over time, what students are being asked to do with the text does increase in complexity.</p> <p>Building Disciplinary Knowledge: This is a really rich unit that would engage students in a deep study of immigration in the United States at the turn of the century, while also making links to today.</p> <p>One key skill in social studies is understanding propaganda, bias, and stereotype. There is a missed opportunity in this unit to enhance student ability to analyze propaganda and how messages are being delivered.</p> <p>Balance of Texts: There are many types of texts included, such as poetry, historical fiction, first-person narrative, and images such as photos and political cartoons.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: Students are expected to write several times in the unit, including a shorter 20-minute write on a topic in Activity 12 and a longer summative piece that includes the full writing process and peer editing.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

### Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts.</li> <li>✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.</li> <li>✓ Provides <i>all</i> students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.</li> <li>✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.</li> <li>✓ Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.</li> </ul>	<p>Cultivates Student Interest and Engagement: This unit would absolutely engage students. It's an interesting time in history and there are so many links that can be made today. The author also mentions engaging students in sharing their own family history and stories, which would make the unit so much more personal. There's also an optional activity where students can interview an immigrant to add to their understanding of immigration.</p> <p>Instructional Expectations: This unit is clearly laid out with all resources readily available. It would be easy to use for both veteran and novice teachers.</p> <p>One piece of feedback is that it would be helpful to know how long the unit is expected to last. A strength of the unit is having a sequence of activities that is not marked into days and specific times, but having that information about the unit would make it easier to plan without being required to follow a calendar.</p> <p>Engagement with Complex Text/Focus on Challenging Sections of Text: All students have the opportunity to engage with complex text and there are several supports for them along the way. One is questions for both the poem and Lee Chew piece that would get students directly into the meaty sections of the text.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.</li> </ul> <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.</li> <li>☐ Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5.</li> <li>☐ Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Supports for Diverse Learners: There are several ways students with diverse abilities are supported in this unit. There are many scaffolds built directly into the activities, such as defining difficult words on the page. The author provides a range of text levels in the immigrant studies so that a teacher could assign an appropriate story for the student. The author calls out specific academic vocabulary for which students might need more support. The author also adapted a couple of the texts to shorten them for readers who may not be able to access the full piece. There are also activities where the text is read aloud to support students before they engage independently.</p> <p>One strength of this lesson is the number of embedded supports for all students in reading. It would be helpful to call attention to some of these supports so that teachers can see how they might use these supports for their students with diverse needs. While there are a lot of supports available in reading, there are not many for those who struggle with writing.</p> <p>Extension Opportunities: There are several extension opportunities given in the introduction, including exploration of Ellis Island information and current issues around immigration.</p> <p>Progression of Learning/Gradual Removal of Supports: The unit starts with the teacher reading the Emma Lazarus poem aloud and guiding students through the discussion. There are also several places where students are placed in groups to support and extend each other's learning. Over time, students are reading more independently, gathering evidence, and end up writing their own summative piece. In Activity 10 and 11, students are responsible for independently reading and eliciting evidence to support a later group discussion.</p> <p>Targeted Instruction: There is no targeted instruction in any of these areas; in fact, the author specifically states that there is an expectation that students have learned the writing process and conventions usage prior to engaging in this unit. These skills are assessed on the writing rubric, so teachers may need to supplement their teaching in this area if students are not writing to standard. Specifically, students are assessed on transitions, but there is no specific instruction in this area.</p> <p>Independent Reading: While there are extension opportunities given, they are purely option and students are not expected to do them.</p> <p>Technology and Media: Many of the resources for the unit are available online and could be accessed by either the teacher or the students. The author of the unit provides several different links where students can engage in further study about past and current immigration. The links include websites and videos. It would be nice to see students more specifically engaged in the use of technology.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

**Dimension IV – Assessment**

<p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently</li> </ul>	<p>Direct, Observable Evidence/Assesses Student Proficiency: Throughout the unit, there are many opportunities for students to demonstrate their developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. All students would be able to engage in these tasks, though the lack of supports in</p>
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<p>demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</li> <li>✓ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.</li> </ul> <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</li> </ul>	<p>writing may make it difficult for some students to communicate their understanding. Because so much of the assessment relies on writing, it's possible that students may have proficiency with the historical content and/or supporting their arguments with evidence, but may not be able to communicate that understanding effectively.</p> <p>Aligned Rubrics or Assessment Guidelines: There is a rubric given for the summative task. It could be helpful to have exemplars for the text-dependent questions and criteria for success for the discussions.</p> <p>Use Varied Modes of Assessment: This unit includes formative, summative, and peer assessment.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

## Summary Comments

This unit is well-constructed and exemplifies the shifts in the Common Core standards. Throughout the unit, students are engaged in deep reading to elicit evidence which they then use to build their summative writing piece about the immigrant experience. At the same time, they're building deep content knowledge about this period in American history. For these reasons, it supports the Topical Writing Call to Action well.

One major strength of the unit is the variety of primary and secondary sources the students use in the course of their study of this topic. They are expected to draw evidence from all of these types of media, which is precisely what historians do in their academic work.

Another strength of the unit is that it manages to be concise and tightly focused on meeting the targeted standards, but there are also several places where teachers are given ideas for other places they could take the learning for students.

One suggestion would be including more supports for writing instruction, especially in the area of supporting struggling writers.

### Rating Scales

#### Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3:** Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension
- 2:** Meets many of the criteria in the dimension
- 1:** Meets some of the criteria in the dimension
- 0:** Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

#### Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

- E:** Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (**total 11 – 12**)
- E/I:** Exemplar *if Improved* – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (**total 8 – 10**)
- R:** Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (**total 3 – 7**)
- N:** Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (**total 0 – 2**)

### Rating Descriptors

#### Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

- 3: Exemplifies CCSS Quality** - meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.
- 2: Approaching CCSS Quality** - meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 1: Developing toward CCSS Quality** - needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.
- 0: Not representing CCSS Quality** - does not address the criteria in the dimension.

#### Descriptor for Overall Ratings:

- E: Exemplifies CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.
- E/I: Approaching CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.
- R: Developing toward CCSS Quality** – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.

**N: Not representing CCSS Quality** – Not aligned and does not address criteria.