

EQuIP Review Feedback



Lesson/Unit Name: Freedom: Comparative Reading and Writing (Parts 1, 2 and 3)

Content Area: English language arts

Grade Level: 6

Overall Rating:

E

Exemplar

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:

- ✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
- ✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
- ✓ 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 & B).

A unit or longer lesson should:

- ✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
- ❑ (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.

The standards are identified and target a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards. LAFS.6.RL.1.2, LAFS.6.RL.2.4 and LAFS.6.W.3.9 are clearly identified in the lesson 1. LAFS.6.RL.1.1, LAFS.6.RL.1.2, LAFS.6.RL.2.4, LAFS.6.RL.3.9 and LAFS.6.RI.1.2 are addressed in lesson 2. LAFS.6.W.4.10, LAFS.6.W.3.9, LAFS.6.W.2.4, LAFS.6.W.1.1 are addressed in lesson 3.

The purpose of the piece is clearly identified for each lesson. Lesson one notes, "Students will need this evidence for the essay they will produce in lesson three of this unit. The goal of that essay is for students to explain their concept of freedom and explain whether or not these poems support their interpretation. The teacher should guide students toward collecting evidence that will help them to answer this prompt later." This is a great way to help identify the purpose for the teacher.

There are objectives clearly articulated in the individual parts. In addition, in Lesson 1, during the Teaching Phase and Guided Practice, precise notes to the teacher emphasize the importance of making the purpose(s) transparent to the students. For example, in the Teaching Phase of Lesson 1, the authors recommend the following notation to teachers: "NOTE: The teacher should explain to students that this concept of "freedom" is the basis for this entire unit. As they move through the unit, they will be exploring different views on freedom and those views may impact students' opinions. It is expected that their view of freedom will grow and develop as they read the pieces throughout the unit. They should not be "wedded" to their current definition of freedom, but they should instead allow the pieces of literature in this unit to affect their personal definition." This is again reiterated in the first and third bullets under #7 in the Guided Practice portion of Lesson 1, "The teacher should clearly express to students that their ideas about freedom should be evolving and maturing as they progress through this unit. The purpose is for students to refine their understanding of freedom, not simply gather evidence to support their initial idea. Their journals should reflect this evolution.... and NOTE: Students will need this evidence for the essay they will produce in lesson three of this unit. The goal of that essay is for students to make a claim to establish their view on freedom and include whether or not these poems support their interpretation. The teacher should make this ultimate goal clear to students and guide students towards collecting evidence that will help them to answer this prompt later." It should also be noted that the majority of guiding questions are ELA related.

There is a description of all considerations of the complexity of most of the texts. The authors of this unit considered quantitative measures, qualitative features and the match of the readers and the task. For example, Part 2 of this unit states, "...the folktale "The People Could Fly" is

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| | <p>being used with grade 6 students. The Lexile for this text is 540. Although the Lexile is low, the qualitative measures and reader and task considerations increase the complexity of the text. The Lexile for the passage by Nelson Mandela is a 1250. Students work on the Mandela passage with support from the teacher and their peers." The determination of text complexity was not addressed. It is mentioned "how" it will be directed, but not identifying the complexity. It states that it is added in the Additional Instructions/Information but not very clear. Text complexity is not fully addressed with only a mentioned of the Lexile. There are other factors that should be considered, not just quantitative measures. Other tools that can be used for the complexity of poetry are Burkins and Yaris, questarai.com, standardstoolkit.k12.hi.us. Also, the topic or subject matter should be another consideration.</p> |
| <p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p> | |

Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

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| <p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reading Text Closely: Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction. ✓ Text-Based Evidence: 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). ✓ Writing from Sources: 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). ☐ Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increasing Text Complexity: 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. ✓ Building Disciplinary Knowledge: Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts. ✓ Balance of Texts: Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5). ✓ Balance of Writing: Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple | <p>Text is the center of instruction in a majority of the lessons. There is re-reading of many of the texts for multiple purposes. Students are being asked to critically and deeply think about the readings. An indication of divergent thinking options is in Part 1, in the Feedback Section, when the authors state, "...help students arrive at reasonable interpretations that could be supported by textual evidence." This note to teachers serves as a reminder that multiple viewpoints and a variety of analysis are possible in deep meaning-making. In addition, the graphic organizers (i.e. Poetry Chart in Part 1) help guide students reading/understanding by moving from the superficial level and into pushing students into discerning deep meaning.</p> <p>Students do gather evidence from the texts. The lessons offer some text dependent questions which push students to grapple with the text to uncover deeper understandings. For example, for the text, "The People Could Fly", the following questions are included: '2. Why does the narrator keep saying "They say"? Who is "they"? and '4. List the words that the author uses to describe the Master, Overseer and Driver and their actions. Then list the words that the author uses to describe Toby, Sarah, and those who could fly. What patterns in language do you notice, and what does that show you about the author's attitude about the characters?' There are a series of text dependent questions also suggested for the Nelson Mandela text, providing a sequence of thought-provoking redirections back into the text, each time taking students one step closer to the ultimate purpose of the unit.</p> <p>The creators of this unit emphasize the instructional shift of 'building knowledge' from texts. The students are being required to read the texts to create, modify and/or refine their initial thoughts, not merely support an idea they had prior to reading. This is evidenced in Part 2, in the Guided Practice portion of the lesson: "Students add to their journal any evidence they could use from the article to support or modify the ideas about freedom about which they have already written, complete with direct quotes from the piece. The teacher should clearly express to students that their ideas about freedom should be evolving and maturing as they progress through this unit. The purpose is for students to refine their understanding of freedom, not simply gather evidence to support their initial idea. Their journals should reflect this evolution."</p> |
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| <p>drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.</p> | <p>Building academic vocabulary in context through instruction is lacking. The lesson refers to prior knowledge with students bringing vocabulary knowledge to the table such as poetic elements, figurative language, descriptive and sensory language, and literary elements. These are specific terms, but not necessary language used within the poem. Teaching vocabulary should be done by using context clues/information within the passage.</p> <p>The authors are intentional in the sequencing and scaffolds for the texts, based upon complexity. As stated in "Additional Information/Instructions" in Part 1: 'In lesson one, students will first read "Words Like Freedom"/"Refugee in America" with the assistance of the teacher and their peers. This short poem will introduce students to the topic of freedom while analyzing the poem for its literary elements with structured support and feedback by the teacher. The complexity of the lesson will then increase as students independently read and analyze a longer and more complex poem (based on qualitative factors since a Lexile level cannot be acquired for poetry), "Sympathy," on their own.'</p> <p>Throughout this unit, students are asked to focus on one topic, read multiple texts about that topic and build on original thoughts about that topic. The consistent reflection and/or adjustment of original thoughts based upon evidence from the texts is made abundantly clear to students.</p> <p>There are a variety of genre on a similar topic read within this unit. At minimum, there are poems, a folktale, and nonfiction pieces read. Students are engaged in a variety of writing tasks. Included in this unit are text marking, note-taking, journal writing and essay writing.</p> |
| <p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p> | |

Dimension III – Instructional Supports

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| <p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. ✓ 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. ✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence. ✓ 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. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> | <p>The different genres presented in the unit definitely help to build interest and motivation in the topics. The journal prompts also allow for personal knowledge and interest. The writing prompt also allows for student interest supported by the text based evidence. Although this is engaging, it is important to remind students that the evidence should guide their claim in the writing piece rather than the personal opinion supported by the evidence. Adding evidence from the text cultivates this motivation into the reading, additional writing and speaking.</p> <p>The general format of the lesson is very user-friendly and resources are easily accessible.</p> <p>The unit integrates appropriate supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band. There are modifications provided in each lesson to accommodate the needs of these students. Graphic organizers, translation dictionaries and modification of assignments are provided for those students in need. The unit also provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. These extensions include completing a Venn diagram or reading an additional more complex piece of poetry.</p> <p>There are times when the text is read aloud, allowing all students access. The use of student discourse also permits all students the opportunity to engage in grade appropriate complex text. All of the texts are treated equally and a focus on most difficult portions is not noted. There is some</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection. ✓ Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5. ✓ 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>). ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. | <p>guidance (in the form of text-dependent questions), allowing student discourse to grapple with deeper meaning of text.</p> <p>There are suggestions offered for extensions. A few examples from Part 2 include: 'Students may complete a research project in which they find a folk tale and present it to the class. It is recommended that students find a folk tale that represents their heritage if possible. Or, students could find a folk tale that addresses the topic of freedom and compare and contrast the approach to freedom in that folk tale to "The People Could Fly." If the teacher wants to have an independent reading portion of the lesson, he/she could ask students to read an appropriate text that has similar themes and compare/contrast the text to the pieces they have read as a class. Students can also write a paragraph expressing how their independent text either supports or further refines their definition of freedom.' There are specific titles suggested.</p> <p>There are instances when the teacher is modeling a skill or strategy. For example, Part 2 recommends the teacher model strategies students could use to determine the meaning of unknown words. Another example of the gradual release is the peer review opportunities offered in Part 3. The Gradual Release of Responsibility can be identified over the course of the lessons. For example: In Lesson 1, the first poem is discussed with partners; pairs do the poetry chart; the teacher offers feedback; the supports are removed in the second poem.</p> <p>A strength of this unit is the unique use of the personal connection at the onset... with the constant revision of this initial thought based upon evidence from texts. The authors stress the need to be sure students are truly analyzing and evaluating their own thoughts and making adjustments based on what is read.</p> <p>Suggestions for mini-lessons are offered, such as parenthetical documentation prior to Part 3. Reading requires note-taking of some sort and is usually followed by partner discussion. Part 2 does offer an opportunity to possibly include an independent reading portion in the lesson. Titles are offered for student choice.</p> |
| <p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p> | |

Dimension IV – Assessment

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| <p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s). ✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> | <p>Each lesson offers multiple suggestions for both formative and summative assessment opportunities. In Lesson 2, for example, formative opportunities are recommended for the hook, the Nelson Mandela article, "The People Could Fly". In addition, suggestions for feedback possibilities are detailed. There is no indication of bias in the assessments.</p> <p>The rubric and scoring elements are very clearly defined for the writing in Part 3. Care is taken to make the criteria transparent to the students for the written product in Part 3. These requirements, however, could be limiting the creativity and development of thought. A suggestion would be to allow for more diverse response formats within the rubric. (i.e. Permit varying number of paragraphs.) Peer review was to be throughout every stage in the development of the final essay. The lesson indicates that Peer review is after the first body paragraph and the conclusion only. The purpose of the Peer feedback should be stated. Information about the exit ticket used should also be stated.</p> |
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| <p>✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p> | <p>There are a variety of assessment opportunities within this unit. A strength of this unit are the suggestions for formative assessments. Summative assessments, peer reviews and self-checks are also available.</p> |
| <p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p> | |

Summary Comments

This unit is a solid one, offering a good model for other lessons. This unit received a rating of Exemplar.

Strengths of this unit include:

- The chosen texts would allow for rigorous conversation and writing. (See detailed comments in Dimension I.)
- The developers of this unit makes the content relevant for students with the initial Journal Writing. This encourages engagement and motivation. (See detailed comments in Dimensions II and III.)
- There is a balance of both texts and writing. (See detailed comments in Dimension III.)
- This unit offers many suggestions for formative assessments. (See detailed comments in Dimension IV.)
- A strength of this unit is the recommendation of accommodations for striving readers. (See detailed comments in Dimension III.)
- The extensions and accommodations provided throughout the units allow for specific differentiation for many students.

Suggestion for improvement include:

- Move away from the rigid graphic organizer to allow for creativity and expression in the writing piece.
- Vocabulary instruction should be included throughout the unit and focus on academic vocabulary found throughout the text rather than only focusing on terminology.

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.