

EQuIP Review Feedback



Lesson/Unit Name: Montgomery Bus Boycott Unit

Content Area: English language arts

Grade Level: 5

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.

Targeted Standards: The eight standards receiving focus in the Montgomery Bus Boycott unit are from three integrated strands: Reading for Information (RI.5.2, RI.5.3), Writing (W.5.2, W.5.3, W.5.9), and Speaking/Listening (SP.5.4). Specific portions of long standards like W.5.2 and W.5.3 note which areas are the focus if the full standard is not the focus.

In addition the developer lists nine general standards beyond the eight targeted standards. The lesson schedule outlines the focus and general standards (RI.5.9, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.5, W.5.4, W.5.5, W.5.8, L.5.4, and SL.5.2) for each of the 26 days. It is not clear why the focus standards are also repeated in the general standard list. The standards are mapped out by day in a Standards Matrix attachment on the Google site.

One strength of this unit is the ELL focus in the first five lessons and the Bridge portion mid-way through the unit. The unit only mentions one Language standard as a general target. The unit could be enhanced with a Language standard as a focus standard also.

Due to the synthesis across multiple texts the developer may want to consider inserting descriptions and actions on how students are supported in all three Reading for Information standards not just RI.5.9.

Purpose: The unit review outlines the process and products for the unit.

The purpose for instruction is listed as the essential questions and part of the unit overview: "At the end of the unit, students have the tools and knowledge to produce a piece of quality narrative nonfiction centered on historical figure from Freedom Walkers. Fifth graders will be able to synthesize information from several sources, including texts and websites, and use that information to write their own narrative nonfiction stories. Students wrap up the unit with oral presentations of their stories during Writing Workshop." It appears from the unit overview that the sequence of lessons align with the purpose.

The lessons also include structured comments and instructions on what to say to the students at the beginning of the unit – which sets up the purpose for the students.

Text Complexity: The selected text for the unit is Freedman's The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. A Lexile of 1110 (Scholastic website statistic) places the text as a read-aloud just outside the 740-1010 stretch Lexile band for the CCSS.

One book, Rosa Parks: Civil Rights Pioneer, has a Lexile of 690, which is low for 5th graders, but given the content and the fact that it is used on day 7

	<p>of a 26 day unit plan, it would be a useful book for this unit. The Lexiles for other books listed are: Rosa – 900 Lexile Rosa’s Bus – 840 Lexile Witnesses to Freedom – 970 Lexile Who is Martin Luther King, Jr.? – 720 Lexile</p> <p>It appears that the selected texts have a great deal of qualitative complexity because it addresses segregation and demands appropriately sophisticated tasks from the reader because of the writing demands. There is ample scaffolding and building of background knowledge to prepare students for such a complex text. It would be helpful to the user of the unit to see a brief text complexity analysis of each text.</p> <p>Integration and Synthesize: The unit integrates reading, writing, speaking, and listening to advance literacy skills by starting numerous lessons with oral language and small pieces of reading before progressing to longer texts and frequent small group or paired discussion. The integration is strategic because the reading and writing lessons focus on the same piece of text.</p> <p>Building Content Knowledge: The unit focuses squarely on the 1960’s civil rights movements and strategically selects texts that build background knowledge to support the comprehension of Freedom Walkers. Furthermore, students learn to write using history with the emphasis on writing narrative non-fiction.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</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"> ✓ 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- 	<p>Read Closely: The texts are definitely at the center of instruction. The students are comparing, analyzing, and synthesizing texts.</p> <p>The developer writes: The concept of close reading is not a process but rather, an end goal of gaining a thorough understanding of texts and the implications. Close reading lessons should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of brief, high-quality, complex texts, worthy of close reading, • Individual reading and/or group reading aloud texts, • Text-based questions that guide students to analyze authors’ words, rather than simply connect to their own experiences or opinions, and • Student discussion and/or writing in response to texts. <p>The unit accomplishes this with multiple readings that begin with basic comprehension of vocabulary and progress to evaluating the author's purpose behind writing the text in a particular fashion, promoting a deep understanding of the texts. A particularly notable example of this area is lesson 7 with the text-to-text comparison of the structure between narrative non-fiction and expository texts. Likewise, lessons that focus on chapters from Freedom Walkers always include a range of text-dependent questions.</p> <p>Text-Based Evidence: The unit author explains succinctly the purpose of text dependent questions as, "Students are expected to refer to texts and provide text evidence to support their thinking. Text-dependent questions</p>
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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 drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.

in this unit are intended to guide student thinking and scaffold students' access to texts' deeper ideas (e.g., author's purpose, theme, inference)." The text questions succeed at guiding student thinking and scaffolding about author's purpose, theme, etc. However, students are rarely asked questions that guide thinking about transferring what they're learning to their own life or making connections to the world around them. More opportunities for students to consider the implications of the text in their lives would address the "rich and rigorous" portion of the criteria.

The text-dependent questions, text comparisons, and activities such as the timeline encourage students to write from sources during the reading workshop portion of the unit. The notes written in service of composing the longer narrative non-fiction piece strategically uses the texts as sources to support student writing. For example in Lesson 10, the lesson calls for the students to "discuss possible answers and mark their chapter 2 copies for specific text evidence to support their answers" – so not only are they discussing the text, but also searching and marking the text to help them connect further to the topic.

Writing from Sources: The focus on using information from the unit (W.5.9) and developing a topic (W.5.2.b) in the PBA demonstrate that the unit goal is focused on drawing upon evidence. The instruction during both workshops guide and scaffold the students in short writing assignments that lead to the overall end product – the narrative nonfiction PBA.

Academic Vocabulary: Vocabulary is listed for each lesson. It covers both Tier II and III words.

Academic vocabulary is heavily emphasized in this unit with the frequent oral language activities at the outset of most lessons. Each lesson includes academic and content vocabulary words for the reading and writing workshops. These terms are chosen deliberately and typically pre-taught before students engage in activities where students will use the terms in discussion, reading, and writing. Many of the terms are also revisited later in the unit, for example when students draw on quotes to enrich their writing with dialogue.

Increasing Text Complexity: The text chosen for this unit provide ample content knowledge to help the students with the main text – Freedom Walkers – which has a high Lexile level. The students may struggle independently with this text, but will find success with teacher scaffolding and the building of background knowledge.

Build Disciplinary Knowledge: This unit makes use of other media sources to further provide opportunities for the students to build knowledge. There are lessons with pictures, videos and speeches that will complement the texts in the plan. The disciplinary knowledge begins with well-known figures like Rosa Parks and builds to lesser known actors, such as Claudette Colvin and Jo Ann Robinson.

Balance of Texts: There is a balance of informational and literary texts that is appropriate for the subject matter. Naturally, there should be a prevalence of narrative non-fiction and expository when those texts are in close alignment with the expected writing piece. The inclusion of a graphic novel as a source for building background knowledge and discussing the related text structures in one of the later units helped satisfy this criteria. The unit still could have been stronger if it included a list of fiction texts

	<p>that are set during segregation or address prejudice, as part of the independent reading portion of the unit.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: The final product from this plan is a performance based writing assessment. The activities in the writer's workshop guide the students toward this final task with daily writing pieces. The final piece is also given several days to plan, draft, edit and revise toward the end of the unit.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</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"> <input type="checkbox"/> 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. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <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. <input type="checkbox"/> 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>). 	<p>Student Interest: Freedom Writers would be an age-appropriate text for students to engage in. Good essential questions that utilize evidence are used consistently in the read-alouds. The unit provides opportunities for all students to read, write narratives, and engage in oracy.</p> <p>The unit addresses one of the essential questions: How does an author use narrative structure and techniques to tell a true story? However, students are not engaged by the question, "How can people effect social change?" when they never consider themselves as potentially one of those people. They exclusively consider this question as an observer, not a potential agent of change, diminishing the potential for engagement and interest in the topic.</p> <p>Teacher Friendly: The unit overview provides working links for Google Docs, Safari Montage, and Differentiation. The Google docs provide very specific daily lesson plans that follow a consistent sequence of clear information. Copy-ready visuals and worksheets with possible answers, teaching resources like Teaching for Bi-literacy, teacher notes, preparation reminders, materials lists, learning target reminders, teaching scripts with questions, vocabulary, and closure are examples of the specifics in the common daily lesson design.</p> <p>While nice to give users the option of selecting additional visuals for lessons (lesson 1, page 1) using Google images it would be nice if a selection of visuals was provided.</p> <p>All Students: The read aloud, and workshop lesson sections are designed for all students. The lessons consistently follow an I Do, We Do, and You Do sequence.</p> <p>All students are provided multiple opportunities to engage with the text of appropriate complexity for the grade level because as mentioned in previous comments there are a range of texts from basic to the higher end of the grade level. They are also sequenced in that order to prepare all students for the more complex texts. Students also read every text multiple times in reading workshop to ensure understanding of vocabulary before moving onto a deeper understanding. They also consider the texts from the perspective of an author, making those multiple exposures meaningful because they are for unique purposes.</p> <p>Challenging Section of Text: Page 4 says that every read-aloud should begin with oracy building, and preview content and vocabulary. The objectives of the CLO are appropriate.</p>
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✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

Guided discussion and modeling of both the questions and finding text evidence are embedded. The questions progress from basic recall to inferences that consider the author's purpose behind why he/she shared the information in the way he/she did.

Integration of Supports: The link to the differentiation files on the Denver District website is helpful for teachers unfamiliar with the options available to them for a range of students. It would be helpful to highlight several of those strategies rather than leaving it open-ended.

This lesson is targeted at ELL learners. The instruction for the first week is entirely in Spanish then it transitions to English for the remainder of the unit. Complex reading concepts are broken down day-by-day into understandable chunks. Graphic organizers, anchor charts and pictures/graphics are incorporated to further expand knowledge. Student notebooks are also used to help connect all the pieces.

Each lesson provides a variety of suggested strategies for ELL or those with disabilities, such as sentence stems for discussion and writing, pre-writing short responses in tasks where they need to categorize, or the ample graphic organizers provided in the unit that prepare them for longer writing tasks and analytical thinking. The unit could be stronger in this criteria if it provided suggestions, such as audio recordings of the text, for students that read well below the grade level text band. This is especially important for the Freedom Walkers because it is central to the writing and performance based assessment.

Extensions: The unit does not explicitly state how to provide extensions or advanced texts for students above the grade level band. There is a generic reference to literature circles and discussion, but these are not elaborated on. Students well-above grade level need to be provided additional materials and options for instruction to satisfy this criteria.

Progression of Learning: Reading skills progress over time as students begin with main idea and details, progress to paraphrasing and summarizing, until they are analyzing and synthesizing multiple texts about the same topic. Likewise their writing skills advance from researching and taking notes, to drawing an outline of their narrative non-fiction, to multiple drafts.

Gradually Removes Support: The progression of I Do/We Do and You do ensures a gradual release of support for each lesson. Teachers are also encouraged to provide additional instruction for students that need it before being asked to work independently. Overall, there is a progression as well of reading and writing skills that progress from less to more complicated. This sequencing prepares students to complete the more advanced tasks on their own.

Authentic Learning: The end product of the unit is coherent with the learning activities. Students are able to select the civil rights individual to write about.

Grammar, Conventions, Discussion: There is integrated instruction on grammar in lesson 1 with the metalinguistic analysis. There is instruction about quotes in lesson 4. The writing workshops provide a great deal of instruction on strategies. There is also instruction about discussion expectation in an attachment at the outset of the unit.

	<p>Independent Reading Accountability: The unit does not provide any indication of how students will read beyond the unit.</p> <p>Time is set aside for independent reading, but there is no indication about how to hold students accountable for it. It would help to provide a list of suggested texts that vary in complexity, for students to choose from that relate to the topic.</p> <p>Technology: The unit sets an expectation to use Google Docs to complete the PB (writing task) and speaks to the power of that strategy not just from a formative perspective but from an instructional perspective.</p> <p>The document camera draws attention to evidence and text frequently as part of the writing process. It's also used to help model many of the reading workshop activities with the entire class. Videos and images are used to build background knowledge and supplement the texts. Early in the unit students also use computers to research the topic.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</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"> ✓ 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. ✓ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures. 	<p>Independence: Based on the Performance Based Assessment the unit will elicit observable evidence so that students can meet W.5.2 , SL.5.4, as well as other targeted standards.</p> <p>Unbiased: The methods are unbiased because students are adequately prepared to complete the writing and speaking tasks. They are provided a limited degree of choice about whom to write about and are provided a great deal of support beforehand.</p> <p>Rubrics and Guidelines: The unit provides for students to both present and write about what they have learned about the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The performance-assessment task sheet, grading rubric, and sample narrative student product are provided. In lesson 1 the developer suggests teachers collect and create a notebook of quality exemplars to support the unit in the future. In LP 19 the assessment calls for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate during peer conferencing and listen to student discussions. • Provide supports for student pairs as needed (redirect them to the steps of the peer conference, provide sentence stems, etc.). • Ask students to verbally share their next steps for revision with the whole class. If there are any students who you feel require more scaffolding, individually conference with them to assess their progress and help them to determine next steps. <p>Varied Modes: There are numerous opportunities for students to self-assess with statements about what they're confident with and what they need to work on. There are other formative assessment such as the fist of 5 and 1-4 ranking for their familiarity with Martin Luther King Jr. The writing and speaking performance based assessments are ample summative assessments. Lesson 26 demonstrates the student reflection called for in the unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students 10-15 minutes to reflect on the presentations in their notebooks. Ask students the following questions to help guide their reflections: • What have you learned about the Montgomery bus boycott in this unit? Think about facts and details, but also think about overarching themes and lessons.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you learn in both Reading and Writing Workshop? Think specifically about your narrative nonfiction stories and all of the skills you needed to complete them successfully. • What part of the unit did you most enjoy? Why? • Partners share their thoughts. Close the unit with a meaningful discussion about how far students have come not only during the unit, but also over the course of the entire year.
Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension	

Summary Comments

The exemplary label for this unit is built on coherence. The PBA aligns to the targeted standards. Students and teacher know the targets for each lesson. The ELL provisions support the intended student population. Close reading is used to support getting each student to independence.

The unit could be improved in little but dramatic ways. The Language strand of the CCSS could receive additional support. The unit questions could stress the on-going struggle for civil rights in America. Options for advanced students could be added. Independent reading options would be an easy addition.

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.