

EQuIP Review Feedback



Lesson/Unit Name: Mr. Popper's Penguins
Content Area: English/language arts in grades K-2
Grade Level: 2

Overall Rating:

E/I

Exemplar if Improved

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 K-2 ELA/Literacy CCSS for teaching and learning.
- ✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
- ✓ Selects quality text(s) that align with the requirements outlined in the standards, presents characteristics similar to CCSS K-2 exemplars (Appendix B), and are of sufficient scope for the stated purpose.
- ✓ Provides opportunities for students to present ideas and information through writing and/or drawing and speaking experiences.

A unit or longer lesson should:

- Emphasize the explicit, systematic development of foundational literacy skills (concepts of print, phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, high frequency sight words, and phonics).
- Regularly include specific fluency-building techniques supported by research (e.g., monitored partner reading, choral reading, repeated readings with text, following along in the text when teacher or other fluent reader is reading aloud, short timed practice that is slightly challenging to the reader).
- Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
- Build students' content knowledge in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through a coherent sequence of texts and series of questions that build knowledge within a topic.

Standards:

This lesson identifies and addresses a wide range of ELA standards specific to grade two, including reading, writing, speaking/listening and language. Most outstanding are standards that relate to comprehending a literary text from multiple angles. Those include basic understanding of explicit and implicit ideas connected to textual evidence; comprehension of story elements, including basic characterization and plot; grasp of characters' motivation and character development/point of view; work around literary techniques such as humor and subtleties conveyed in illustrations and foreshadowing; and interpretation of illustrations and their contribution to story elements, such as characterization. Students continuously participate in collaborative conversations based on the shared listening experience. After they hear sections of the story, they respond to teacher probes; some of the time peer paired structure is used for conversation. There is a substantial broad and commendable emphasis on learning vocabulary in every lesson. The teacher highlights challenging new words and introduces a variety of strategies for determining and deepening understanding of word meanings, including the use of context, support from illustrations ("precision"), word structure, and grammar. For example, students see how the essential term "curiosity" is related to "curious". Students relate pompous" to "pompously". They explore shades of meaning and learn to discriminate between closely related words, such as "curious" and "inquisitive". The lesson provides additional ideas for exploring related words, which are not found in the text ("meager"). Learning is deepened by role plays ("promenade") and a look at idioms ("at sixes and sevens"). Student-friendly word definitions are embedded at appropriate points, across the lessons and at the end in the provided "Vocabulary Tracker" section. Through writing students compose an explanatory text in response to a question related to the read-aloud. They recall and gather information and write a piece that includes topic, text-based facts, and concluding statement. In addition, there is a large amount of science related knowledge presented in the book and extended through story discussion, including penguins as social animals, the Arctic, the Antarctic, animal habitat, and adaptation.

Quality Text:

The single text used in this lesson is Mr. Popper's Penguins. Text and illustrations are not included in the lesson. Therefore, the teacher must obtain at least one copy of this trade book. Mr. Popper's Penguins is a notable Newbery Honor children's classic that is at an appropriate interest level for primary students who are fascinated by penguins, and enticed by humorous fantastical stories with animal characters. At 910L, this book presents a healthy stretch for second graders. With sophisticated content and language, this book's characteristics are in line with the CCSS exemplars (Appendix B). Mr. Popper's Penguins offers generous opportunities for content, language and literary learning, and the targets

	<p>set by the developer-all of which appear to be attainable for second graders, with teacher scaffolding.</p> <p>Clarity and Purpose for Instruction: As stated in the “Teacher Instructions” section, in addition to the listed learning standards, the teacher has selected to focus on one of the themes of the book. That is the practice of “continuously seeking to broaden knowledge and experience”, which is exemplified by Mr. Popper as he leans on curiosity and imagination to respond to the events of his life. The theme and final focus question “How did Mr. Popper use his knowledge and experience to help him respond to the situations and challenges in his life?” are tied together. It may be helpful for the teacher to consider a means to display the focus question and/or refer to it during every lesson to ensure that they are considering it throughout the duration of this study. The key understandings and synopsis (pages 1-2) provides a helpful summary of the story, and the chapter-by-chapter lesson plan clearly maps out the guiding questions for the day. For purposes of clarification, it may be helpful to explicitly state at the onset that the entire book is presented as a read-aloud.</p> <p>Presenting Ideas: Students frequently present ideas in a variety of ways, throughout the course of the read aloud and in the culminating activity. They see their evidence recorded (chapter one; they use role playing as Mr. or Mrs. Popper (chapter two); they read chorally and write sentences (chapter three); and they act out words like strutting and marching (chapter four). Music is used in chapter thirteen, and partners to make predications in discussion about how they think life might change for the Popper family and the penguins in the upcoming ten weeks. In chapter twenty, students formulate, share and write their opinion and use evidence from the text to support their answer.</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 (including read alouds) a central focus of instruction and includes regular opportunities for students to ask and answer text-dependent questions. ✓ Text-Based Evidence: Facilitates rich text-based discussions and writing through specific, thought-provoking questions about common texts (including read alouds and, when applicable, illustrations, audio/video and other media). ✓ Academic Vocabulary: Focuses on explicitly building students’ academic vocabulary and concepts of syntax throughout instruction. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Grade-Level Reading: Include a progression of texts as students learn to read (e.g., additional phonic patterns are introduced, increasing sentence length). Provides text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and 	<p>Reading Text Closely: The close-read is a central focus of instruction and students have regular opportunities to answer high-quality text-dependent questions in discussion and in writing in chapters one through twenty, as they delve more deeply into the story and illustrations through teacher questions and close rereading/revisiting the text. Students chorally read a few short sections of this complex text (for example: chapter one, page four). Students revisit the text for multiple purposes: to identify key ideas and details; to explore author’s craft and text structure; and to integrate knowledge and ideas. Discussion may be improved with notes that suggest prime opportunities for the teacher to prompt “curious” students to raise their own questions.</p> <p>Text-Based Evidence: Throughout the lesson, the teacher facilitates student discussion and text response in rich discussions and writing assignments that include specific, thought-provoking questions about the shared text. The questions tap comprehension on many levels, including key ideas and details that are explicit and implicit; ideas related to craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas. (Expanded under Dimension I-Standards.) The learning chart that the teacher composes and uses throughout the book, makes the connection between ideas and evidence visible to the students.</p>
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<p>supported to advance students toward independent grade-level reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Balance of Texts: Focus instruction equally on literary and informational texts as stipulated in the CCSS (p.5) and indicated by instructional time (<i>may be more applicable across a year or several units</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> Balance of Writing: Include prominent and varied writing opportunities for students that balance communicating thinking and answering questions with self-expression and exploration. 	<p>The culminating writing activity requires students to revisit this evidence and connect it to the theme of the story.</p> <p>Academic Vocabulary: This lesson is exemplary in the amount, type, and depth of explicit instruction around vocabulary, based on the read-aloud. (Expanded under Dimension 1 – Standards.) One of the advantages of reading a complex or challenging text aloud to students is that it presents an opportunity to expose them to literary language that is not typically heard or acquired through everyday speech. This plan emphasizes critical Tier two vocabulary and offers multiple strategies for discerning word meanings, including context clues, root words, grammar, and dramatization. In this lesson, students have substantial opportunities to add to their knowledge of word meanings and how words and language work.</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"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use for teachers (e.g., clear directions, sample proficient student responses, sections that build teacher understanding of the whys and how of the material). <input type="checkbox"/> Integrates targeted instruction in multiple areas such as grammar and syntax, writing strategies, discussion rules and aspects of foundational reading. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides substantial materials to support students who need more time and attention to achieve automaticity with decoding, phonemic awareness, fluency and/or vocabulary acquisition. ✓ Provides <i>all</i> students (including emergent and beginning readers) with extensive opportunities to engage with grade-level texts and read alouds that are at high levels of complexity including appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of text. ✓ Focuses on sections of rich text(s) (including read alouds) that present the greatest challenge; provides discussion questions and other supports to promote student engagement, understanding and progress toward independence. <input type="checkbox"/> Integrates appropriate, extensive and easily implemented supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities and/or read or write below grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read or write above grade level. 	<p>Student Interest/Engagement: Mr. Popper’s Penguins is an award-winning high quality literary text. The unusual penguin characters and type of text and situations (humorous/fantastical) have great appeal to second graders. Additionally, the read-aloud is lively and well-paced for second grade. Teacher probes, student discussion and the variety of activities and response tasks (read aloud, charting, role-playing, arguing, writing) foster interaction and ever-deepening comprehension of the text.</p> <p>Instructional Expectations/ Teacher Use: This submission is quite considerate of the user. The teacher is able to see the intended Goals at a glance. The two-column format is easy to navigate. Questions/ Activities /Vocabulary /Tasks are clearly arranged in the first column and the Expected Outcomes or Responses are aligned in the second column. Text in both columns is clearly written and elaborated as necessary. The developer includes story synopsis, themes, select vocabulary with student-appropriate definitions at the end, as well embedded vocabulary terms at their points of use. High-quality questions to stimulate collaborative conversations around the literary text are provided in every section. And there are easy to follow directions to execute the culminating activity.</p> <p>Integrate Targeted Instruction in Multiple Areas: There is some attention to grammar and there are structures to support a group writing activity. The developer outlines several steps to work with students over two days. In day one students return to the text for specific information to gather information to support the statement: Mr. Popper used his knowledge and experiences to help him respond to situations and challenges in this life. The teacher is reminded to work with the students by rereading sections of the text and charting the ideas. An example is provided, and the chart serves as support for the writing task on the second day when the class collaborates to compose a paragraph. Student writing is supported with direct teacher assistance in creating a focus statement, directing students to refer to the previously created chart for evidence to support the focus statement, and collaboratively developing and writing a shared conclusion.</p> <p>Students engage in group and peer discussions, for which there is some guidance around the content of the discussion. The addition of a protocol</p>
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<p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Include a progression of learning where concepts, knowledge and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> Gradually remove supports, allowing students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). <input type="checkbox"/> Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills and/or student-directed inquiry. <input type="checkbox"/> Indicate how students are accountable for independent engaged 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>). <input type="checkbox"/> Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. 	<p>or basic rules for discussion could strengthen this lesson. Foundational skills are not directly addressed. The lesson could be improved with some attention to grade two foundational skills.</p> <p>Materials to Support Students and Supports for ELL, SWD, and Below Grade Level Students: The language used in this book is sophisticated, and in choosing this book, the developer provided rich content to extend second graders' grasp of ELA standards related to reading literature and language. Since the entire study is teacher-directed and scaffolded, most students will be supported within the group. With read-aloud design and whole class writing activities, many striving readers and writers will have sufficient support to participate in all aspects of the lesson.</p> <p>There is no mention of materials nor means for accommodating struggling students who may need more time or attention. The lesson can be improved with the addition of specialized supports for striving students who will struggle with some of the more basic language in the text and ability to retain information. Some specific suggestions to support ELL students, who may experience challenges with many Tier one words, would be helpful. Navigating a lengthy text is new for most second graders. Some students with learning disabilities and/or others may have difficulty retaining the events and key details over the multiple weeks of instructions. It is suggested that the developer include one or more recommendations to the teacher for tracking, charting (or recording in some other fashion), and periodically revisiting the sequence of events and key ideas.</p> <p>Engage with GL Texts at High Level of Complexity: The entire close read is highly teacher-directed and well-scaffolded in every lesson. This allows students to directly experience the complexities of the text.</p> <p>Focus on Sections of Rich Text with Challenge: There are abundant discussion opportunities around challenging vocabulary and ideas in the text. (See earlier comments.)</p> <p>Extensions for Above Grade Level Students: There is a list of "Fun Extension Activities for the Book" at the end of the lesson. These activities are multimodal and creative. They integrate whole body movement, interpretation, art-drawing/painting, writing-poetry/lyrics, additional reading-text/other media, and music. Perhaps one or more of these activities can be integrated within the plan to accommodate diverse learners. Students who read and/or write at or above grade level might benefit from opportunities to read and write more text, and complete the culminating activity on their own.</p>
<p>Rating: 2 – Meets many 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"> <input type="checkbox"/> Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate foundational skills and targeted grade level literacy CCSS (e.g., reading, writing, speaking and listening and/or language). 	<p>Observable Evidence: Throughout the close-read and other activities, students have ample opportunities for learning, and the teacher would have opportunities to observe targeted grade level CCSS for reading, listening and speaking, with an assessment strategy that is fleshed-out. Since the activities are all group-based, including the culminating activity, it would be difficult to gather evidence of individual student growth. Therefore, the lesson can be</p>
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<p>✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</p> <p>❑ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance and responding to areas where students are not yet meeting standards.</p> <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> <p>❑ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	<p>improved with a plan for systematically gathering evidence and measuring individual student growth in relation to the targeted standards. Including techniques such as quick writes, jottings on post-its, or a short writing task (dictated, if necessary) to be executed independently, either at the end of the lesson or periodically throughout the read aloud, would be examples of possible strategies for gathering such evidence.</p> <p>Unbiased and Accessible Methods: Students have regular opportunities to participate in book discussion. This permits below level readers/writers to demonstrate their progress in understanding key ideas and details, author’s craft and structure and ability to integrate ideas. Students who lack confidence or those who are weak language users may not participate in a group discussion design as fully as others. They might not have an opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension and learning. This criterion can be strengthened by incorporating alternate response modes, such as drawing or other short tasks that would permit a student to demonstrate learning in alternate ways.</p> <p>Aligned Rubrics or Assessment Guidelines: There is full description for exemplary expected outcomes or responses throughout the lesson and for the culminating activity. However, a clearly articulated guidance for determining which standards have been met or not met by each student is not included. It is suggested that students be brought into the assessment process, as well. As an example, if expectations for accountable talk were posted and/or articulated, students might rate themselves on their performance. A rubric and/or guidelines for measuring students’ progress toward attaining the articulated learning goals/standards would strengthen this plan.</p>
<p>Rating: 1 – Meets some of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Summary Comments

This lesson is approaching CCSS quality and received a rating of Exemplar if improved. It is aligned to the standards and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.

This lesson strongly meets criteria for dimensions one and two. It is an excellent example of a well-designed close-read of a challenging and high quality literary text that offers abundant opportunities for students to exercise grade two learning standards for ELA, engage with a complex literary text, develop reading comprehension and understandings about how literary text works, expand vocabulary knowledge, and understanding of how words, language and texts work, and acquire knowledge of the world. The developer meticulously identifies key points and offers well-crafted guiding questions that are relevant and challenging to young learners, and stimulate students’ understanding and deep thinking around a common text. Teachers will find the format accessible and reader-friendly. The plan includes clear instructions and other supports that make the lesson easy to follow.

The following suggestions are mostly related to dimensions three and four. By addressing these areas, this lesson could easily advance to Exemplar status.

- Include suggestions for supporting students’ recall of key ideas, events and information from chapter-to-chapter, across the study.
- Consider embedding some opportunities for exercising CCSS Foundation skills.
- Suggest strategies for supporting ELLs, students with learning disabilities, speech/language limitations, or other deficits.
- Incorporate differentiated teaching/learning opportunities for advanced literacy learners.
- Clarify the means by which a teacher may assess whether or not individual students are mastering standards-based content and skills. Include suggestions (rubrics/observational checklists/tasks or other strategies) for tracking and assessing individual student growth related to the selected standards, across the four-five week time frame and at the conclusion of the study.

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.