

EQuIP Review Feedback



Lesson/Unit Name: Informational Text: Reading for Inquiry and Writing a Report

Content Area: English/language arts in grades K-2

Grade Level: 2

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 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.

Target Standards

This unit targets a variety of standards (see below) that build literacy in informational texts. There are a large number of them but they are taught in conjunction with one another. For example, students engage in various Speaking and Listening standards throughout the unit, in whole class discussions, small group work, and presentations to kindergarten buddies. The Reading Informational Texts standards help provide a model for the writing which is a meaningful context to teach the Language Standards. Target Standards: CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI.2.1; RI.2.4; RI.2.5; RI.2.10; SL.2.1; SL.2.1.c; SL.2.6; L.2.3; W.2.2; W.2.7; W.2.8. The complete set of target standards is located in "Stage 1 - Desired Results". A subset of these standards is located at the beginning of each cluster of lessons (1-4, 5-9, 10-13).

Clear Purpose

The unit overview provides a clear framework for teachers and makes it easy to understand what students will know, understand, and be able to do as a result of engagement with the unit. The unit's structure is consistent with an "Understanding by Design" (UBD) framework that begins with the desired outcomes and culminating performance assessment. An introductory "Desired Results" section states that the teaching/learning goal is for students to write a report based on reading, and it describes the details of that performance task. The Results section also presents a substantial categorized list of appropriate grade-level standards for ELA and objectives that clearly point out the specific understandings, knowledge and skills that are developed in the unit.

Quality Texts

This unit meets the criteria in the area of text selection. The whole class texts that are read aloud are broad in respects to quantitative measurement: National Geographic Readers: Frogs! by Elizabeth Carney has a Lexile of 410. Face to Face with Frogs, by Mark Moffett is at the end of the spectrum of 940. Both texts are informational and share similar qualitative features regarding structure. They also share a purpose for reader task and purpose, to co-write a report and learn about the features of this text structure. Appendix 1 is an excellent resource in this respect to assure that all students have access to adequately complex text and provide suggestions about how to continue challenging students. Suggestion: A brief text complexity analysis statement, providing quantitative measurements and examples of qualitative and reader task considerations of the central texts would be helpful. While the developer is clear about the use of expected texts, instructors need to ensure they have adequate access to texts in order to satisfy the unit's guidelines.

Opportunities to Present Ideas

	<p>The daily experience of presenting facts provides students with regular opportunities to read, write, and think. The culminating project is focused on presenting information to Kindergarten buddies. Throughout the unit students also regularly share from their reading response journals with the entire class, and in the middle of the unit they share their co-written paragraphs.</p> <p>Foundational Skills This criterion did not factor into scoring for this review because it is beyond the scope of the unit. The “General Resources and Notes” section clearly states that lessons are designed for approximately 60 minutes, which will allow time to include additional reading and writing instruction required by the district (basal anthologies, phonics, guided reading, writing workshop, etc.) for the remainder of the literacy block.</p> <p>Fluency Building Techniques In the area of Foundational skills, fluency receives attention. There is sufficient opportunity for students to apply their developing basic skills as they engage in a range of reading and writing activities, and discussions throughout the unit and beyond, at which point they read their books to kindergarten buddies. Fluency-Building techniques would also take place in the additional reading and writing instruction time outside of the 60 minutes allotted to each lesson.</p> <p>Integrate Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening This unit provides standards-based instruction and application of learning in reading, writing, speaking and listening, within a meaningful and integrated inquiry unit that is centered on using multiple informational texts to gain information. The unit synthesizes literacy skills by having students read with the intention of writing a similar type of text, discuss what they are reading and writing about with a variety of audiences (i.e. whole class, Turn and Talk, Think/Pair/Share) and in a variety of ways (Reading Response Journals and a report).</p> <p>Build Content Knowledge While the focus of the unit and text selection is on animals, it does not include a strategic set of questions or texts that significantly deepen understanding in the sciences. Suggestion: Delving deeper into the relationships between animals and their environment, once they can navigate informational texts, would help the unit satisfy this criteria.</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). 	<p>Reading Text Closely The text and evidence contained within are the focus of the lessons. Students search for specific types of evidence throughout the unit to gather information for their class report and analyze text structure. They also read self-selected texts closely for the purposes of sharing facts and writing their own reports. There are also a couple of lessons devoted to students asking questions while reading. Suggestion: To build deeper meaning, students could consider how different features of an animal contribute to its survival or relationship with humans.</p> <p>Text-Based Evidence</p>
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- ✓ **Academic Vocabulary:** Focuses on explicitly building students' academic vocabulary and concepts of syntax throughout instruction.

A unit or longer lesson should:

- ✓ **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 supported to advance students toward independent grade-level reading.
- ✓ **Balance of Texts:** Focus instruction equally on literary and informational texts as stipulated in the CCSS (p.5) and indicated by instructional time (*may be more applicable across a year or several units*).
- ✓ **Balance of Writing:** Include prominent and varied writing opportunities for students that balance communicating thinking and answering questions with self-expression and exploration.

Selecting specific and accurate text-based information from a read-aloud is modeled and practiced in cooperative groupings in earlier sessions. By the end of the unit, every student is expected to demonstrate an ability to gather accurate text based evidence from independently read books, and use their findings in their written mini-reports.

Suggestion: Consider formulating larger thought provoking questions about how a particular animal's features play a role in its survival, and what would happen if they were different, as a way to enrich student discussions. Also consider the inclusion of activities that encourage students to construct a short piece of learning that pulls their thoughts and ideas together.

Academic Vocabulary

Students engage with books on similar topics and with common high quality texts containing interesting content and rich language. They learn new vocabulary and build knowledge in different contexts, from texts at different levels of challenge. These include highly accessible read-alouds and books for beginning and transitional readers to moderately and very complex texts. Vocabulary is also reinforced by the expectation that students will use this language when writing about what the animal looks like, where it lives, and interesting facts. In this unit the focus of vocabulary instruction focuses both on giving students the academic language of the standards (i.e. informational text, main idea, fiction,) and as vocabulary of the domain (i.e. amphibians, prey, predators, hibernate, creatures, gills, metamorphosis, camouflage) before the students encounter these words in the reading. Lesson 5 teaches students the vocabulary strategy of Apposition ("Tell students that many vocabulary words in informational text are actually defined in the text").

Grade-Level Reading

Appendix 1 includes a progression of texts to advance Grade-Level Reading and the teacher is charged with using professional judgment in terms of text selection. Student Books are sorted into "very complex text", "moderately complex text", and "readily accessible text" for a variety of reading levels for children in the class.

Students may read easier books to develop the necessary background knowledge and vocabulary that will prepare them to tackle more complex and challenging selections. The central texts increase in difficulty with the progression of the unit. It is only scheduled to last for three weeks, so this progression should not be dramatic.

Balance of Texts

Teaching and learning targets are almost exclusively focused on informational reading and writing. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that full emphasis is placed on informational texts during this particular study. The developer did include "Frog and Toad" as a read aloud and fiction text. The activities and instruction centered on the differences between fiction and non-fiction is a meaningful way to encourage balance while remaining focused on the targeted standards.

Balance of Writing:

This unit justifiably dedicates a large amount of time for students to practice drawing evidence from text with smaller types of writing, before they craft larger pieces that synthesize from multiple sources. Students are provided with varied writing opportunities. They work together during Lessons 5-9 (Co-constructing Text) to sequence the facts, write a cohesive paragraph, and revise it to make their writing flow from one idea to the next. In lessons 10-13, they work through the 11 steps of writing a report

	(Constructing Text). The sharing of reader response journals with their kindergarten buddies serves as forms of self-exploration and expression. Suggestion: The unit could be stronger if it dedicated a greater amount of time to revision. Consider adding direct instruction on peer-editing to reinforce the importance of this criteria.
Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension	

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). ☐ Integrates targeted instruction in multiple areas such as grammar and syntax, writing strategies, discussion rules and aspects of foundational reading. ✓ 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. ✓ Integrates appropriate, extensive and easily implemented supports for students who are ELL, have disabilities and/or read or write below grade level. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read or write above grade level. <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, knowledge and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, allowing students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). 	<p>Cultivates Student Engagement The unit engages student interest with excellent texts selected for read alouds and student choice regarding what they research and write about. Active learning supports cognition and recall, and it is also a motivational strategy. In this unit, students actively construct meaning and build knowledge and skills through purposeful, experience-based learning activities and project. Suggestion: Some of the essential questions may not be as provocative to a second grader as they could be (i.e. "Why do we read informational texts?"). A more engaging question specific to the survival of animals or their relationship with humans, along with the questions about the purpose of informational text would help the unit fulfill this criteria.</p> <p>Easy to Understand The unit is easy to use because the lessons are chunked logically, into smaller topics, with the respective target standards, and objectives that are logically sequenced. Learning spirals upward. Initially, students are supported as they analyze informational texts. Teachers are alerted to misconceptions that may arise, and guidance for instructing vocabulary is included. The next set of lessons provides a supportive context for modeling the development of a mini class report. Finally, students apply their new learning by using informational texts to write their own mini reports. The appendix at the end is also useful, and as mentioned in the first dimension comments, its organization of different types of understandings, knowledge and skills provides a rationale and organization of information that is useful for instruction.</p> <p>Integrates Targeted Instruction Strategies for writing a research report is the targeted instruction for this unit. Targeted instruction in Lessons 1-4 focuses on deconstructing informational text, teaching students to determine characteristics of fiction and informational texts and learn the purpose of text features. Lessons 5-9 focus on co-constructing a report with the teacher, from collecting and organizing facts to writing a cohesive paragraph. Lessons 10-13 focus on teaching the steps for writing a research report. However, targeted instruction in multiple areas such as grammar and syntax, discussion rules, and aspects of foundational reading is not included. Suggestion: Consider adding targeted instruction in grammar and syntax during the editing phase of writing process on the report.</p> <p>Materials for Students Who Need More Materials leveled for complexity are a resource identified in this unit for students who need more support to access informational text.</p> <p>Extensive Opportunities to Engage with Grade-Level Texts and Read Alouds The read aloud texts are complex for the reader purpose of understanding and eventually applying the text structure. Throughout the lessons there are accommodations mentioned specifically for students reading below</p>
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- ❑ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills and/or student-directed inquiry.
- ❑ Indicate how students are accountable for independent engaged reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- ❑ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

grade-level. To ensure that all students have equal access to the text, a flexible grouping model is used, where students read the text in small, homogeneous groups with varying levels of teacher support as needed. In the remaining lessons of the unit, students read text at their instructional or independent level. Other tips relate specifically to the type of study. For instance, teachers are directed to point out the organizational structure of the book, and read titles and subtitles to students before having them read, or provide less challenging books on the same topic for students about the same topic to provide background knowledge before reading the more difficult books (a staircase of text complexity).

Focuses on Rich Text

The Unit does not outline how to address the areas in the text that pose difficulty for the learner.

Integrates Support for Students (ELL, disabilities, below grade level) Suggestions for differentiating instruction and arranging accommodations for students with disabilities are presented in the introduction and within the lessons. Some tips reflect general strategies, such as choral reading or reading aloud. Other tips relate specifically to certain populations. For example, to benefit ELL students, the teacher is reminded to address certain phrases like “Table of Contents”, or clarify unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts in their text. Still other suggestions are focused on tips that relate specifically to the current study. For example, teachers point out the organizational structure of the book and read titles and subtitles to students before having them read, or else they may choose to read aloud an easier selection on the same topic to enhance learners’ background knowledge, in preparation for reading the more difficult books (a staircase of text complexity.) The teacher is reminded to consider eliciting additional professional support from the reading specialist, special education teacher, and the ELL teacher. Additionally, the student-to-student partnerships and quads are designed to provide support for striving learners.

Extension for Advanced Students

There are extensions mentioned for advanced students in regard to the type of writing that is expected of them (i.e. additional research project with report published for the class library). The large amount of self-selected reading throughout the unit provides these students opportunities to read at their level as well. Suggestions on how advanced students could incorporate writing from their journals into their reports would make the unit stronger.

Suggestion: The closure at the end of the day encourages reflection on the lesson objectives, but they never consider what the text means to them or how it connects to the larger world. Consider adding reflection questions for this purpose. The developer could also make explicit connections for students as to how each days’ task will assist them with the final performance task.

Progression of Learning

The progression of learning deepens when students de-construct, co-construct, and construct text in the process of learning how to construct a report.

Gradually Remove Supports:

Throughout the first nine lessons, students de-construct and co-construct text supported by instruction from the teacher. In Lessons 10-13, students work independently to complete their written reports.

	<p>Student-Directed Inquiry: The self-selected facts about animals to include in the reports encourage student choice, but they are not engaging in inquiry or authentic learning because they are not trying to answer a larger question. They apply literacy skills by writing in the same style of text that they are closely reading. There would be more critical thinking and analysis if students considered a question or determined the purpose and scope for their research.</p> <p>Engaged Reading Based on Student Choice Students are given time to choose a self-selected informational textbook at the “just right” level to read when their work is finished.</p> <p>Use Technology and Media Technology is only considered in regard to the report written by the class. While there is a great degree of variety in terms of access, some suggestions for the teachers would be helpful if included. Suggestion: Consider adding digital media in the form of digital text, or videos about frogs to enhance the subject matter.</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"> ✓ 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). ✓ 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 and responding to areas where students are not yet meeting standards. <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</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>Direct Observable Evidence This unit meets all of the assessment criteria. Following targeted lessons and guided practice, students are required to apply their new learning with reduced support. Through daily readings, writing, and discussions, teachers are able to directly observe evidence of students' strengths and needs related to foundational skills and acquisition of grade level standards. There are ample opportunities for speaking and listening, with a suggestion that the teacher track which students share their facts throughout the unit. The embedded performance assessment ensures that students are assessed in those areas independently. The presentation for the kindergarten buddies is essential for assessing the entire class.</p> <p>Unbiased and Accessible Methods of Assessing Students The assignments are adequately scaffolded to make them unbiased to all students. There is an appropriate amount of guidance in what the expectations are for the "What makes a good informational text" chart, and it is open ended enough to make it accessible. Furthermore, the teacher’s ability to guide students on topics and suggestions for below grade level students to write about the same animal is a way to support these students while giving them an opportunity to grapple with the text and writing.</p> <p>Rubrics or Assessment Guidelines There is a well-developed assessment rubric for the summative mini-research project. It considers student work in relation to five or more critical writings and reading/research qualities. A blank row is provided on the physical template for the teacher who would like to assess an additional related writing quality. The qualities selected for the rubric encompass general writing skills, such as "standard English conventions," as well as other skills that relate to the targets for the informational study/research report unit, including "accuracy - uses facts and information</p>
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accurately." Descriptors detail each quality at four different score points or levels. This rubric generates a holistic score and it provides teachers with information that can inform subsequent instruction. The language in the rubric does not provide a great deal of guidance or specificity on how to differentiate between categories.

Suggestions:

- Consider connecting examples from the shared text and the anchor chart as to what makes a good informational text. This will strengthen the utility of this rubric and reinforce the value of the shared read aloud.
- The Speaking and Listening standards are not addressed on the rubric. Co-writing about these standards as a class and self-evaluating when they practice with their peers before going to kindergarten would be helpful for the students.
- Consider adding a parallel rubric with "student-friendly" language. If the teacher holds one-on-one assessment conferences with students, using a kid-friendly rubric alongside their writing as a reference, students can be encouraged to set their own personal goals for improvement as writers.

Varied Modes of Assessment

This unit provides opportunities for self and formative assessments when the teacher: inquires about which animals students are interested in; lists facts students know about frogs and about features of an informational text. The closure at the end of each day serves as formative assessments throughout the unit. Providing suggestions for how students can individually share responses to these questions would strengthen this as an assessment. The presentation and writing tasks are sufficient summative assessments.

Rating: **3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension**

Summary Comments

This is an exemplar ELA standards aligned unit for second grade, in which students actively construct meaning and build knowledge and skills through purposeful, experience-based learning activities and project. Students will perceive themselves as writers with an authentic audience by the end.

Strengths of the Unit:

- Most or all of the criteria in each dimension were met. It exemplifies the quality of the CCSS. Grade level standards (and beyond) are tackled, and all teaching and learning engagement reflects the shifts in the CCSS. There are numerous practical and helpful supports to ensure that all students achieve the stated learning goals along with opportunities to determine if students have achieved them.
- The unit includes a great deal of modeling with central texts and mentoring in the writing process before students are released to independent writing.
- The time spent on analyzing text structure is meaningful because it is an expectation in the student writing.
- The unit selects a set of standards that are broad and diverse enough to complement one another, while not being spread overly thin. It also dedicates time to the explicit instruction behind each one.
- The variety and intention behind the grouping strategies serve to build student literacy and engagement.

Suggestions to Enhance the Unit:

- Consider providing a student-friendly checklist or rubric as a resource for students as they construct their reports or work with students to create a simple one.
- Consider providing an opportunity for students to compare their writing pieces (generated for pre-assessment) to their final reports to identify the improvements made between first drafts and final copies.
- Consider a technology integration component in addition to the brief mentions in the plan.

- Additional time and explicit guidance dedicated to the editing process could be useful in the later lessons. The two lessons that are dedicated to this do an excellent job differentiating between proofreading and revising on a structural level.
- Including a more essential question that encourages students to consider animals and their connection to the world would increase engagement and provide more avenues for close reading and discussing texts.
- An opportunity for students to reflect on the entire process and how they might transfer what they learn in the future would help crystallize their knowledge and reinforce positive attitudes about reading and writing.

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.