

# EQulP Review Feedback



**Lesson/Unit Name:** Slavery Unit  
**Content Area:** English language arts  
**Grade Level:** 7

<p><b>Overall Rating:</b></p> <p style="font-size: 2em;"><b>E</b></p> <p>Exemplar</p>
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## Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.</li> <li>✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.</li> <li>✓ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A &amp; B).</li> </ul> <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.</li> <li>☐ (Grades 3-5) Build students’ content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Targeted Standards:</b> This unit targets numerous CCSS ELA standards, including: RH.6-8.1, SL.8.1, WHST.6-8.1, and WHST.6-8.1a. Additional supporting standards are listed in the various lessons. It would be helpful if these standards were also listed in the introduction alongside the focus standards.</p> <p><b>Note to the developers:</b> WHST.6-8.1a is listed twice in the standards section on page 2.</p> <p><b>Clear and Explicit Purpose for Instruction:</b> The purpose of this unit, outlined on the first page, is to deepen students' existing understanding of slavery by having them examine the various arguments for and against the institution. They then develop their understanding of the anti-slavery arguments by synthesizing them into a pamphlet or other similar product.</p> <p><b>Selected Texts:</b> On page 3, there is a listing of the texts used throughout the unit. They range from a Lexile of 890 to 1330. This range is appropriate for the grade level targeted, especially considering that it is primarily designed for gifted students.</p> <p><b>Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking:</b> Students do have the opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak as they engage in the unit. The students read many primary sources as they prepare their arguments for the final written piece. The students speak in partner and group discussions as a way to share their learning and digest their thinking and listen to videos and teacher read-alouds.</p>
<p><b>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

## Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

<p><i>The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Reading Text Closely:</b> Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction.</li> <li>✓ <b>Text-Based Evidence:</b> Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading Text Closely:</b> There are several places in the unit where students are reading closely to discern deep meaning. In the beginning of the unit, they are reading and summarizing the various pro-slavery arguments, and making decisions about the most and least effective. As they read the anti-slavery writings, they are synthesizing their own arguments and placing them in opposition to the previously filled-out pro-slavery arguments.</p> <p>Students are guided through close reading using several graphic organizers. For example, there is a Crania America close read graphic organizer, circling words with a positive connotation and underlining those with a negative connotation</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Writing from Sources:</b> Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).</li> <li>❑ <b>Academic Vocabulary:</b> Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.</li> </ul> <p><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Increasing Text Complexity:</b> Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.</li> <li>✓ <b>Building Disciplinary Knowledge:</b> Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.</li> <li>✓ <b>Balance of Texts:</b> Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).</li> <li>❑ <b>Balance of Writing:</b> Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Text-based Evidence/Writing From Sources: Throughout the unit, students are expected to gather evidence from their reading that will be used either to develop their understanding of the institution of slavery or to write their anti-slavery argument at the end.</p> <p>Academic Vocabulary: There is a great deal of academic vocabulary in this unit. On page 4, there is a box containing key academic vocabulary targeted in this unit, including that previously addressed and that specifically contained in the lessons. Throughout the lessons, there are additional terms added. However, instruction on identifying these words in context is not specifically called out; rather, it's up to the teacher to determine how they want to address them with students. One suggestion would be to create a graphic organizer where students are capturing the most important terms and their definitions along the way. Another would be to take some of the less-important but still unfamiliar terms and define them directly on the readings.</p> <p>Increasing Text Complexity: The text complexity does build over the course of the unit, both in terms of quantitative measurement and structure. In the beginning of the unit, students are reading shorter, more structured pieces and at the end, are expected to glean evidence from longer, less-structured narratives. This is appropriate, especially given that the target audience is gifted students.</p> <p>Building Disciplinary Knowledge: The purpose of this unit is primarily to deepen students' understanding of the institution of slavery in the United States. Throughout the readings, core content-specific words are highlighted to draw students' attention and promote discussion.</p> <p>Balance of Texts: The unit focuses primarily on the use of primary sources, but does include a couple of poems.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: The students do engage in both on-demand and extended writing. They engage in on-demand writing through various journal writes and developing notes in their notecatchers. The extended piece is the summative assessment in which students are creating an anti-slavery argument.</p> <p>The criteria is not fully met, though, because, the writing process is not explicitly called out in the unit. While the rubric for the summative writing piece does note that students should revise if they are at the C level and must if they are at the D level, all students are not expected to engage in revision. There is an opportunity on page 8 and 9 for students to write in a journal and then revise their thinking after a discussion with their classmates. Adding opportunities for students to engage in more specific pre-writing activities and revisions would be helpful.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

### Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts.</li> <li>✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.</li> </ul>	<p>Cultivates Student Interest and Engagement: The topic of slavery is generally of high interest to students and having this large number of primary sources in which to engage on this topic would only fuel that interest. Having discussion as such a key piece of the unit also would help elicit student interest.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides <i>all</i> students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.</li> <li>✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.</li> <li>☐ Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.</li> <li>✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.</li> </ul> <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.</li> <li>☐ Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5.</li> <li>☐ Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</li> <li>✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Instructional Expectations: The unit is well-laid-out and is easy to follow. It is clearly thoughtfully designed and organized. Having all of the texts together in one appendix is especially helpful. For experienced teachers, it should be no problem to implement, but for new teachers, they may need more support.</p> <p>There are a large number of texts and supporting documents used; perhaps organizing them by letter or some other notation in the appendix and lesson plans would be helpful.</p> <p>Also, the lessons vary quite a bit on how much time is needed for each. Either noting this in the introduction and explaining how the different time might be used, or within each lesson giving a total time needed would be helpful.</p> <p>Engagement with Complex Text/Focus on Challenging Sections of Text: All students are expected to engage with complex text throughout the unit, guided by text-dependent and deeper analysis questions along the way. In the more complex sections of text, students are able to engage in discussions with their classmates to support their learning.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

**Dimension IV – Assessment**

<p><i>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).</li> <li>✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</li> </ul>	<p>Direct, Observable Evidence: On page 2, there is a box listing the "Measurable Objectives" that students will demonstrate over the course of the unit. On page 13, there is a box listing the various assessments used throughout the unit. Student understanding can be measured through the T-chart and other graphic organizers, exit ticket, and final product.</p> <p>Assesses Student Proficiency: All students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency throughout the unit, including both formative and summative assessments. Most of these opportunities are in written form and so may be challenging for some students, but the designers specifically call out the use of discussion as a way of supporting student understanding.</p>
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<p>✓ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance. <i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></p> <p>✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</p>	<p>Aligned Rubrics or Assessment Guidelines: The unit includes a rubric for the final project on page 52.</p> <p>Use Varied Modes of Assessment: In addition to the culminating summative assessment at the end of the unit, the authors also specifically call out the use of formative assessment; for example, students are assigned an exit ticket in one of the lessons. In addition, there is a self-assessment rubric for students on page 53.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

## Summary Comments

This unit is well-designed and clearly supports the shifts of the CCSS. It immerses students in using primary sources in order to deepen their learning about the arguments for and against slavery. They must glean evidence from each text in order to build that understanding and then use that information to write an argument for an anti-slavery publication.

There are a few areas where more attention might be paid in order to add support for teachers and students:

There is a great deal of academic vocabulary in the unit, but little attention paid to providing instruction for teachers for how they might teach this vocabulary. There are also no specific graphic organizers for keeping the vocabulary learned over time. Including a section in the introduction where teachers are pointed to the work of Kate Kinsella or Marzano would be helpful, for example.

This unit is specifically written for middle school gifted students and while there are supports provided for diverse learners such as visuals and discussions, it may not be enough. Providing additional versions of the readings with the text chunked or vocabulary defined would be very helpful.

The students engage in a summative assessment to demonstrate their understanding of the anti-slavery arguments. Revision is mentioned as needed for students in the C and D range, but it would be helpful to all students to engage in the full writing process along the way.

Note to the developers: There are several typos in the unit that need correction. For example, the second question in the Essential Questions on page two is missing a word.

### 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.