

# EQuIP Review Feedback



**Lesson/Unit Name:** The Scarlet Letter and Hester Prynne

**Content Area:** English language arts

**Grade Level:** 11

**Overall Rating:**

**E**

Exemplar

## 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>A unit or longer lesson should:</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>Targets a set of grade-level standards: The unit aligns with specific CCSS standards, state standards, and ACT College/Career Ready standards. All are addressed throughout the unit with activities; however, do students have to incorporate counterclaims in their final essay? The reviewer could not find evidence of the theme standard (partially or complete) in the unit - is this a secondary standard that was focused on while the students read the novel itself rather than completing this particular unit? This unit targets a set of CCSS Standards, specifically, RL.11-12.1, RL.11-12.2, and RL.11-12.4, W.11-12.1, W.11-12.4, W.11-12.5, W.11-12.9. Standards RL.11-12.7 does not appear to apply in that students do not examine multiple interpretations of the work, and Standards RL.11-12.10 and W.11-12.10 that demonstrate knowledge over time are more suited to a document such as a curriculum map.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider identifying primary or assessed standards vs. secondary or supporting standards. The list of standards addressed in the unit is lengthy. How are counterclaims, rebuttal, and refutation addressed in the final essay? How is the theme standard demonstrated in the unit?</p> <p>Clear &amp; explicit purpose: The purpose is to build knowledge for students to be able to write the argumentative essay addressing if Hester was a virtuous woman or not (as aligned with Proverbs 31).</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Tests within grade level: The text, The Scarlet Letter, is well-situated to the grade level as is the Biblical passage (Lexile appropriate and sufficient quality and scope to stated purpose) The texts, The Scarlett Letter and Psalm 31:10-30, have Lexile scores of 930L and 580L respectively that falls below the targeted grade band. However, the qualitative measures such as vocabulary, syntax, text structures, and levels of meaning/purpose are sufficiently complex for the grade band and for the task.</p> <p>The unit offers opportunities for student reading, writing, speaking and listening.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Integrates reading, writing, speaking &amp; listening: Students repeatedly have activities that require them to read passages, speak &amp; listen to one another on topics/texts, writing was integrated during activities prior to the final essay; students also completed several other types of writing prior to starting the unit.</p> <p>Areas for improvement:None.</p>
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Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

*The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:*

- ✓ **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.

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ **Increasing Text Complexity:** Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.
- ✓ **Building Disciplinary Knowledge:** Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.
- ✓ **Balance of Texts:** Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).
- ✓ **Balance of Writing:** Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.

Reading Text Closely: Students are expected to annotate and read the Proverbs passage closely; discerning a deep meaning is essential for students to successfully master the summative assessment/essay. The unit makes reading text closely a focus. Students are asked to identify key features of a descriptive text, *The Scarlett Letter*, and apply those features to a secondary text, Psalms 31. Students are also asked to identify the central point and main supporting elements of a text. In terms of text based evidence, students are asked to identify appropriate text evidence for argument support: Is Hester Prynne a virtuous woman? Through annotations, students are asked to read purposefully and select relevant information and to make connections and create commentary to explain importance. The expectation that students write from both sources is central to the unit.

Areas for Improvement: None.

Text-based Evidence: Text dependent questions are lacking in relation to the secondary text and how it relates to the primary text; however, students are searching for evidence in the texts for how to support/defend their argument.

Areas for Improvement: Consider building in text dependent questions for the secondary text requiring students to return to it and deeply analyze it.

Writing from Sources: The final argumentative essay requires students to use the Proverbs 31 text to measure Hester's virtuosity with textual evidence & presumably textual evidence from the primary text as well.

Areas for Improvement: Identify that students will have to use evidence from *The Scarlet Letter* as well in the final essay.

Academic Vocabulary: In the annotation stage with the Proverbs passage, students are expected to record unfamiliar terms in a notebook and define them. This is the only vocabulary instruction found in the unit. Since students have a notebook for vocabulary this seems to be a standard expectation in the classroom. Students also keep a list of rhetorical strategies that they add to during the unit. The unit does include a focus on academic vocabulary. Part of the annotation guide instructs students to circle unfamiliar words. As part of the instructional process, “student can add to their vocabulary section of the notebook words they do not know and find the definition,” (p. 12 of 19). Also, students are expected to “have an ongoing note section of their binders/notebooks where they list and define rhetorical devices,” (p. 13 of 19) as part of regular instruction. And, the teacher is instructed to “ask some students to share definitions of terms that others overlooked or misunderstood that they have found in *The Scarlet Letter*.”

Areas for Improvement: Consider doing more with vocabulary during the unit to reinforce vocabulary acquisition - perhaps have them using the new terms in their writing or in discussions.

	<p>Increasing Text Complexity: From the primary text, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>, a progression to the Biblical passage seems appropriate. Scaffolding &amp; support were included for students who found the Biblical passage difficult to navigate, understand, &amp; discuss.</p> <p>Areas for Improvement: Consider incorporating another more advanced text excerpt for advanced students to read independently and incorporate into the essay. Consider locating other literary definitions of a virtuous woman for them to review and measure Hester by.</p> <p>Building Disciplinary Knowledge: The unit builds students' knowledge of the theocracy Puritans lived under as the measuring stick for Hester's punishment. Students' knowledge of writing and revising is also built by using the AP exemplar samples &amp; the ACT standards of ability. By using the ACT College/Career Ready standards, students are able to see and understand the level of their performance as it relates to the larger picture rather than by using a teacher-created rubric.</p> <p>Areas for Improvement: None.</p> <p>Balance of Texts: The unit started with students reading <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> then delving into a Biblical passage to measure Hester's punishment. By doing so students are evaluating Hawthorne's choices as an author &amp; evaluate his punishment of her vs. the theocracy she lived in.</p> <p>Areas for Improvement: For more advanced students, consider having them expand their knowledge &amp; evaluation of her punishment through the lens of another text.</p> <p>Balance of Writing: Evidence of multiple drafts is located with the final essay assignment, other writing was also used in activities prior to writing the final essay. The indicator suggests incorporating digital texts where appropriate; this could be another extension opportunity for advanced students.</p> <p>Areas for Improvement: Consider a digital text addition to the unit as an extension for advanced students.</p>
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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"> <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> <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> </ul>	<p>Cultivates student interest: Student interest can be high depending on how the reading of the primary text went. Activities in the unit do encourage student engagement through reading the secondary text, writing the final essay, and discussing the aspects before the final essay. The unit makes an effort to engage student interest in reading, writing and speaking about texts. The lesson begins with a background for students that frames the unit within the context of what they have been learning and how the new lesson connects. “You started out the year with analysis of texts and then creating your analysis writing. Then, last unit we analyzed arguments and then writing our own arguments. For this assignment, we will utilize both areas while looking more deeply at <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> and Hawthorne's characterization of Hester Prynne,” (page 9 of 19). Students are encouraged to read and compare two texts in writing, and students are expected to practice speaking and listening through class discussions, share outs, and a Socratic seminar.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>A unit or longer lesson should:</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>Areas for improvement: Could an art piece be incorporated to assist with interest &amp; engagement.</p> <p>Addresses instructional expectations: The unit addresses all instructional expectations and is very easy to use and navigate.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Provides all students: Multiple opportunities for engaging with the secondary text is minimal after they read it for the first time. An activity where the teacher gives excerpts from the primary text is offered for subsequent analysis on page 13. Scaffolding is offered in the instructional strategies in various sections.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider incorporating multiple assignments that have students return to the Proverbs passage again after the initial annotation/vocabulary reading prior to using it in the final stages with the essay.</p> <p>Focuses on challenging sections: The teacher pulls excerpts from the novel for subsequent analysis; however, if the passage is truly a "challenging section" it is unclear to the reviewer because the passages are not identified or included (for the activity on pg. 12); passages for the activity are identified on pg. 13. The nature of the alignment of the unit as a whole builds toward independence in the final essay.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider including or identifying the challenging sections that students revisit from the primary text after reading the secondary text.</p> <p>Integrates appropriate supports: Suggestions for scaffolding like read aloud, etc. are noted in the instructional strategies column of the template. Graphic organizers are also a good scaffold for struggling students.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Provides extensions: The Scarlet Letter is inherently an advanced text; however, students reading above grade level need to be pushed &amp; exposed to another text that incorporates another perspective and expands the purpose/scope of the unit, if desired. The "who is worst morally" activity is a nice detour from the intended essay focus, but truly isn't an extension since it's for everyone. The unit does not provide any extension. Reviewers noted that the inclusion of an additional text (such as an excerpt from the Quran, or a poem or song lyrics) that characterized woman as virtuous (or not) would provide an additional layer of analysis and sophistication to enrich advanced students. In addition, reviewers characterized this learning as inauthentic and teacher-driven. Is it possible really to argue that Hester Prynne is not virtuous? The argument in the negative is based solely on Prynne's adultery which leads to a simplistic, unrefined argument. (Here reviewers call attention to the thesis of least developed student writing sample!) Similarly, the question and biblical characterization are teacher driven. Having students come up with their own definitions of virtue, or researching to find other literary characterizations of virtue would increase student inquiry and authenticity.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: For the scope &amp; sequence of the unit's purpose, an extension may not be required for the final essay; however, consider</p>
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	<p>offering an extension to challenge the advanced students and help them grow.</p> <p>Includes a progression: The progression of learning occurs from reading the primary text to examine a secondary text and applying it to the main character.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Gradually removes supports: Little to no evidence of removing scaffolds is found in the unit. Scaffolds remain from reading the secondary text through the final essay.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider identifying how scaffolds will be removed so struggling learners become more independent throughout the unit.</p> <p>Provides for authentic learning: Students apply literary skills in the unit; however, student-directed inquiry is not present since the secondary text is teacher-selected. Additionally, the reviewers have concern that the argument is one-sided. Will any student be able to argue Hester IS a virtuous woman? The analysis and evaluation of the texts may not yield essays to the contrary. Reflection can be seen through the drafting process and the ACT level indicators.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider incorporating more student-directed inquiry in the unit by allowing students to find subsequent texts to support their argument.</p> <p>Integrates targeted instruction: Targeted instruction for the discussion is seen as well as writing strategies (AP exemplars, etc.)</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Indicates how students are accountable: It is unclear if students read the primary text independently or not. The secondary text is not student-choice driven; however, through the primary and secondary texts students can build stamina, confidence, and motivation - reading the primary text alone should build these.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider allowing more student-choice in the unit through a list of additional texts, art analysis, etc.</p> <p>Use technology: None is found by the reviewer except for the one video link for the teacher to see what the discussion should look like.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Include a relevant video that students could incorporate in their evidence gathering process for the final essay.</p>
<p>Rating: <b>2 – Meets many 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</li> </ul>	<p>The unit elicits direct, observable evidence of a student’s ability to demonstrate understanding of the targeted CCSS standards. Students' shorter on-demand writing such as their response to the prompt and the conversion of Psalms into prose can be collected and scored. Student discussion in small group and in the Socratic seminars can be monitored. Student pre-writing organizers, drafts and revision are also evidence.</p>
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<p>CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.</li> <li>✓ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.</li> </ul> <p><u>A unit or longer lesson should:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.</li> </ul>	<p>Student proficiency is assessed using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students. Rubrics for annotating, student discussion, and student written work are included in the unit. Moreover, the teacher is instructed to review guidelines with students to ensure "shared expectations."</p> <p>Elicits direct, observable evidence: Students are able to demonstrate their mastery of the CCSS standards by the end of the unit based on the activities.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Assesses student proficiency: All materials are unbiased and accessible to all.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None.</p> <p>Includes aligned rubrics: Rubrics and assessment guidelines guide students through many of the processes throughout the unit.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: None, the AP exemplars and UDL rubrics are wonderful.</p> <p>Uses varied modes of assessment: No pre-assessment of standards/skills is located in the unit. Activities function as formative assessment. The essay is the summative assessment. Writing process/revisions can function as self-assessment.</p> <p>Areas for improvement: Consider starting the unit with a pre-assessment, especially since the opening information states argumentation was studied prior to this unit. If students mastered the skill prior to this unit, what differentiation is embedded for their progress?</p>
<p>Rating: <b>3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</b></p>	

### Summary Comments

<p>Total Score: 11</p> <p>The reviewers enjoyed the unit, its focus, and the connection between the primary and secondary texts. With a few minor adjustments or considerations, the unit can be improved upon. Consider incorporating more student-choice for inquiry and how they will approach the final argument. It seems that based on the texts, students can only successfully argue the topic one way without sounding low level like the low level exemplar illustrates ("she is a hussy"). A great deal of thought and work went into the unit, and it is appreciated.</p> <p>Overall, this unit aligns very closely to the CCSS for reading, writing and speaking. The unit incorporates all of the Key Shifts, including reading text closely, text based evidence, writing from sources, and academic vocabulary as well as a balance of various writing types. The unit is easy to use and works to cultivate student engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. It also provides multiple opportunities for students to return to the text, including challenging sections, and support a range of students through scaffolding and differentiated activities. Finally, the assessment is aligned to instruction and provides grading expectations that are accessible to all students.</p> <p>Areas for improvement include an extension for more advanced students and ways to incorporate more authentic and student directed inquiry into the assignment. The reviewers would be interested to see the prior unit to this lesson to take a look at text dependent questions as well as how the text was read. Did the students risk productive struggle while reading? Dimension III requires the most revisions.</p>
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### **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

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**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)**

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.