

# EQulP Review Feedback



**Lesson/Unit Name:** Finding Home: Refugees

**Content Area:** English/language arts

**Grade Level:** 8

**Overall Rating:**

**E**

Exemplar

## Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

*The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:*

- ✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
- ✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
- ☐ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A & B).

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
- ☐ (Grades 3-5) Build students' content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.

Grade Level CCSS Lit Standards:

- The final performance task addresses RL8.1, RL8.2, W8.3abd, W8.4, W8.5, W8.7, W8.9, L8.1, L8.2, L8.6.
- Speaking and Listening standards are identified within the unit also.
- There appears to be alignment between the Writing, Language and Speaking/Listening Standards and the instructional plan. (An example of this is articulated in the Learning Targets on p. 7.) RL8.2 is also aligned with the activities of this unit. There are portions of the unit, however, where the alignment of Standard RL8.1 is not completely clear and could be more specifically detailed.
- When analyzing the long-term and supporting targets, there is not always grade specificity identified. For example, in Lesson 1 overview, the long-term learning target is identified as 'I can use evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W.8.9)' 8th grade specifics for Writing Standard 8 includes 'generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration'. As the learning target is written, it is worded generically, and is equivalent to the 6th grade expectation. A suggestion for revision would be to be more grade specific in identifying the learning targets, calling out the demands of the 8th grade standards.

Explicit Purpose:

- The purpose of this unit is articulated on p. 2 of the Unit 3 Overview. The authors state, 'In Unit 3, students will draw upon their study of the universal refugee experience to write two research-based poems that reflect the "inside out" and "back again" aspect of a refugee experience.' Additional outcomes of this unit are hoped to include students' understanding of craft, structure, word choice and figurative language.

Grade Appropriate Complex Texts:

- The identified text 'Inside Out and Back Again' measures at 800L (3rd to 5th grade) according to the Lexile Analyzer Find-A-Book tool. Qualitative characteristics of the text which would support the use of this book at the 8th grade level should be identified to meet this criteria.
- Other texts are referenced (in Unit 2, Lesson 18), but are not available in the materials provided. Quantitative and qualitative traits could not be identified. It would be helpful to have this information.

Integration and Synthesis of Literacy Skills:

- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are all addressed in individual lessons within this unit.

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

## 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> <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><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></u></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><b>Academic Vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both academic and content-specific vocabulary are identified, taught and utilized within this unit. (Examples include the teaching of discipline specific vocabulary [free verse, narrative, figurative language] on p. 21-22 and academic vocabulary [align] on p. 75.)</li> <li>- Learning targets consistently utilize academic vocabulary. The daily analysis of these targets fosters a deeper understanding of these key terms.</li> <li>- More Tier 3 words (in comparison to Tier 2 words) are included in Unit 3. A suggestion would be to specifically target additional Tier 2 words in the revision.</li> <li>- It has been noted by the developers that due to the reading focus in Units 1 and 2, academic vocabulary is more intentionally addressed in those specific units.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increasing Text Complexity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Without a description of text complexity, there is no evidence to determine if an appropriate progression is provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Building Disciplinary Knowledge:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Successful interaction with the instruction in this unit will provide students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of refugees, along with a clearer grasp on structure, tone, meaning and word choice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Balance of Texts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The reading in this particular unit focuses on the reading and analysis of poems. There is evidence, however, of the reading of informational texts within the entire module in the Workbook (ie. p. 53-54 [Children of War] and p. 60-68 [Refugee Children in Canada]. Upon viewing the document <a href="http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ela_ma_p_grade_8.pdf">http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ela_ma_p_grade_8.pdf</a>, it is evident that there is a balance of texts across the entire module. A suggestion would be to add this link to each individual unit so that it is easily accessible to the user.</li> </ul> <p><b>Balance of Writing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is an integration of writing with and responding to reading. Students take notes and create multiple drafts of 2 poems in this unit.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rating: 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> <li>✓ Provides <i>all</i> students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interest and Engagement in Texts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this unit, students have the opportunity to actively apply some of their learnings in writing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ease of Use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The organization of this unit is a strength of this unit. Details are provided which make it easy to follow and user-friendly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Provides All Students Multiple Opportunities to Engage with Grade-Appropriate Texts:</b></p>
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<p>includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although there is not a description of text complexity, all students are given opportunities to engage. Providing the link to the readings in Units 1 and 2 would be a great benefit.</li> <li>- Graphic organizers and scaffolds (such as the Action Verbs Resource Sheet on p. 68) do provide appropriate scaffolds for all learners.</li> </ul> <p>Focus on Challenging Portions of Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students are engaged in determining meaning of figurative language, which often is extremely challenging for students.</li> </ul> <p>Supports for ELL, Students with Disabilities and Readers Below Grade Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are times when suggestions for striving students are identified (ie. ELL pairings on p. 17 and visual supports for students with auditory processing issues on p. 24). The scaffolds, however, are very generic in nature and basically repeated in subsequent lessons. A suggestion would be to include more specifics for these supports based on the instruction of the individual lessons.</li> </ul> <p>Extensions and Advanced Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The optional extensions offer suggestions for an authentic audience, but not truly an extension or deepening of the learning.</li> <li>- There is a note on p. 10 that students who finish the main text 'should be encouraged to complete independent reading related to the topic of the unit,' thereby providing evidence that this indicator could be credited. Again, more specific details would be a benefit. A recommendation would be to include the link to the advanced text offerings contained in Units 1 and 2.</li> </ul> <p>Gradual Removal of Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is evidence of modeling prior to students practicing in pairs or independently. On p. 21, the authors of the unit recognize a potential challenge for students, so modeling the completion of the graphic organizer with an example is included.</li> </ul> <p>Authentic Learning, Student Analysis and Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students have the opportunity to first analyze literacy techniques and then apply those skills and techniques in their own poems.</li> <li>- The careful analysis of the performance task prompt during Lesson 1 provides students with 'the why' of the learning.</li> <li>- Optional authentic audience is suggested on p. 10</li> </ul> <p>Instruction on Grammar, Conventions, Etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing strategies are highlighted in some instruction. (An example is on p. 62 with explicit instruction in word choice - strong action verbs.)</li> <li>- There are clear directions on appropriate behaviors during peer critique.</li> </ul> <p>Independent Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no evidence directly stated within this unit for this criterion. There is a reference, however, to independent reading on p. 10: 'Some students, especially stronger readers, will finish Inside Out and Back Again early in the unit. They should be encouraged to complete independent reading related to the topic of the unit. See the Unit 2 Recommended Texts, which includes texts at many levels. The daily lessons do not include time to check on students' independent reading...' A possible suggestion would be to include the link to the Recommended Texts in Units 1 and 2.</li> </ul> <p>Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no evidence in this unit for this criterion. There is a suggestion</li> </ul>
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under optional extensions which states, 'If technology allows, students could record their poems.'

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

#### Dimension IV – Assessment

*The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:*

- Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).
- ✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.
- Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures

Observable Evidence:

- Since complexity of text could not be validated, this indicator could not be credited.
- There is some lack of clarity between various levels of the rubric.

Unbiased and Accessible:

- There does not appear to be any bias or limitations of accessibility with the assessments.
- Analysis of the rubric is done in Lesson 3.

Aligned Rubrics:

- Rubrics are provided.
- It would be helpful if informal guidelines were provided to determine progress on each lesson.

Varied Modes of Assessment:

- Formative, summative and self-assessments are included.

Rating: 2 – Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

#### Summary Comments

This unit received an overall score of 11, within the Exemplar rating.

A strong recommendation would be the inclusion of the link

[http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ela\\_map\\_grade\\_8.pdf](http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ela_map_grade_8.pdf) to the beginning of each module. This would provide some additional information which would explain that Unit 3 is one unit in a series which builds upon other learning. It would provide the user a glimpse into the big picture, prior learning, assessment pieces, focused standards, etc. In addition, a consideration might be to add a short summary of prior units at the onset of Unit 3. Without this information, many of the indicators would appear missing.

There are a lot of strengths within this unit.

- organization and ease of use
- the intentionality in the planning
- specificity of the lessons
- alignment to the CCSS

Suggestions for revision include:

- Insertion of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the texts
- Detailing of supports and differentiation for diverse learners
- Inclusion of technology in the learning

The developer provided the EQuiP Peer Review Panel the complete module. The Peer Review Panelists completed a comprehensive review of Unit 3; however, based upon guidance shared by the developer, the Peer Review Panelists also considered the materials included in Units 1 and 2 where appropriate and made reference to them to reflect the full range of instructional guidance contained within this module.

**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.