

EQuIP Review Feedback



Lesson/Unit Name: Developing a Fact-Based Opinion in Life Sciences

Content Area: English language arts

Grade Level: 3

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.

In the overview (pp. 3, 4), RI3.1, RI3.2, RI3.10, W3.1, L3.3, and SL3.1 are identified as the target standards. Additionally, the ELP and NGSS standards are listed here. All standards, learning targets, and success criteria are identified at the beginning of every lesson.

Suggestion: W.3.5 could be included as a target standard as the Overview describes the writing process.

The targeted Standards meet the required criteria for the Call to Action-English Language Learners' submission.

While the unit is comprehensive and clear, the purpose of the overall unit must be inferred by the reviewers rather than being explicitly stated. Lesson purposes are communicated. For example, in Lesson 1 (p.16) the developers state, "During this unit we will be practicing writing strong arguments for or against a topic. It is important to know how to argue with strong support in life so that you are credible and believable." Another reference to purpose is stated on p. 17, "Define and discuss the purpose of opinion writing..." On page 21 there is a teacher note that indicates the purposes of the unit, "To develop the skills and habits used in conducting research to deepen understanding of a topic, and to use those skills and habits in developing..." However the focus is more on definition versus why it is important to express opinions in writing. Consider stating the overall purpose of the unit in the Overview given the power this unit offers to the field. As written readers learn what students will 'do' in the unit but not why it is important to long-term learning.

Extensive measures of quantitative and qualitative text complexity are provided in the Achieve submission site information. Although measuring at the high end of the grade level, teacher modeling, guidance, and scaffolding allows students to access the text, inclusive of the challenges for ELs.

This unit provides multiple opportunities for students to read, actively engage in speaking and listening through oral rehearsal, and write a fact-based opinion. An example of this comes out of Lesson 4 in which students read a chunk of text, paraphrase their thinking into the reader's notebook, and then meet with their team. Each member rereads the chunk of text, jots down his/her main idea, shares with the team, and as a team, comes up with a consensus for a team paraphrase of the main ideas for each chunk of text. They then record the main idea on their research poster and present their thoughts, ideas, and questions to the rest of the class (pp. 26-27, 42).

Content Knowledge: The unit utilizes primary and secondary source text well-aligned with NGSS and the science topic of animals.

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

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.

The unit makes reading closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction. The close reading activities adhere to the components of close reading with students having opportunities for repeated readings of text, visual, written, and oral processing time, and reliance on text for providing textual evidence. Numerous scaffolds support ELs so they are participating within the close readings.

Text-dependent questions are reliant on the text for students to respond. For example, in Lesson 1 students are taught how to annotate and paraphrase text with sentence frames provided for support. For example, "I agree with....because.... (p. 24). In Lesson 12, students use evidence from the video to determine the perspective of the narrator (p. 55). Lesson 14 teaches students to use evidence to support a fact-based opinion (pp. 60-61).

Throughout the readings and writing, students are expected to identify the main ideas and details, jot notes, and use graphic organizers to record evidence. The students are expected to support their opinion and reasons by pieces of evidence. The suggestion is to use a graphic organizer (i.e. tree-map, flow chart, or other type of chart) with opinion statement, reasons, and evidence labeled (p. 59). The culminating task requires students to use the textual evidence acquired throughout the unit to produce a fact-based opinion piece of writing.

Both academic and content vocabulary are a focus at the beginning of most of the close reading lessons in Phase One. Academic and domain specific vocabulary are listed for each lesson. Lesson 3 (p. 22) serves as an example of the unit's adherence to building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction. In this close reading the text is chunked into sections as students explain meanings of words using examples and non-examples. Index cards are used as a further scaffold for students to grow in academic vocabulary proficiency. These strategies are effective in supporting vocabulary development for ELs.

Students engage in a progression of text complexity and are advanced toward independence through the chunking of the anchor text and through use of the gradual release model as explained on pages 11-12 in the "Balanced Literacy Components."

Student engagements deepen disciplinary knowledge of a science topic that clearly align with the unit's intent of building literacy through the topic of animals.

Texts central to the purposes of the unit are targeted. Developers include an extensive list of additional text that can be utilized. Literary text is not included but this is not the intent of the unit.

Suggestion: Over the course of the year, be sure that students are engaged with a balance of literary and informational texts.

Stages of the Writing Process are explained in the Overview (pg. 12-13). Lessons 13-19 teaches the Writing Process Phase in which students write a fact-based opinion with an opinion statement, reasons, and evidence that supports the reasons. After publishing their opinion essay students are provided with an opportunity to share their opinion through a variety of means on p. 72 (i.e. simple celebration, museum display of writing, co-

	<p>creating the hallway or classroom bulletin boards, writing picnic, or read aloud/author’s chair.) There are also on-demand writing opportunities. Students are expected to take chosen topics and quickly write “flash drafts” stating their opinion and their reasons (p. 17). The flash draft is a way for students to think about their personal opinion related to the article and then quickly write a quick draft stating their opinion and their reasons (pp. 27, 31) of writing, co-creating the hallway or classroom bulletin boards, writing picnic, or read aloud/author’s chair.</p> <p>Extension opportunities are provided to allow students to independently research topics of their choice.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension</p>	

Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<p><i>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts. ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use. ✓ 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. ✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence. ✓ 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. ✓ Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band. <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 and skills advance and deepen over time (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>). ✓ Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection. ✓ Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5. ✓ Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and 	<p>Small and whole group discussion opportunities set the stage for naturally cultivating student interest. The variety of texts (e.g., text, video) and writing and discussion strategy experiences provides students with multiple formats in learning about the topic.</p> <p>The unit's instructional expectations are addressed through the instructional engagements and resources used. The structure is easy to follow and understand. For example, the specificity of materials, directions, and instructional sequence are provided in each lesson. The format and structure of the unit is a major strength. It is arranged in a manner that even an inexperienced teacher would be able to use and understand with ease.</p> <p>The unit is designed to give ALL students opportunities to engage with complex texts (e.g., graphic organizers, small and whole group discussions, independent analysis, sentence frames). Through the chunking of the text by numbering the paragraphs, the optional scaffolds embedded in the lessons (p.17), and the optional scaffolds provided (p. 26), all students are provided with multiple opportunities to engage with the text.</p> <p>Challenging sections of the text are focused upon through chunking, multiple close readings, and teacher modeling of strategies before students are released to practice on less challenging sections. (See pg. 22.)</p> <p>Supports are provided for ELL and students with disabilities to ensure all students can access the intended engagements within all lessons. As stated, these include sentence frames, graphic organizers, chunked vocabulary, and small group instruction. Sensory, graphic, and interactive supports are provided as described in the best practices of ELL instruction.</p> <p>Developers explicitly identify optional, extension activities for students who are able to go beyond the targeted lessons. Posters can be created to share with the class and be used as references for their own fact-based opinion during the writing phase. (p. 24). During the second cycle of the unit students can do additional research on the disadvantage of zoos, a specific topic that supports animals staying in the wild/their natural habitat, or animal rights. They can then create a poster of their research to share with the class (p. 40). Another optional extension is to have the two groups, after developing their reasons to support their opinion, debate the issue (p. 58).</p>
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<p>motivation (<i>may be more applicable across the year or several units</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate. 	<p>The unit scaffolds learning engagements through multiple formats (e.g., whole group, small group) where students have opportunities to deepen understanding of concepts, knowledge, and skills that guide them to the independent culminating task. Specifically, the close reading lessons lead students to independence by students conducting their own close reading lesson. It is clearly communicated as to how to implement the gradual release of responsibility model.</p> <p>In the Overview, gradual release is described (pg. 11): “Gradual Release will be a key component to students learning a concept by taking on the responsibility of the learner. Teachers should provide enough explicit instruction and support to ensure students are successful, but students must be given opportunities to develop concepts and skills through collaborative and independent practice.” For example, “The process for paraphrasing a chunk of text moves from teacher to the students with sentence frames for scaffolding” (p. 25-26).</p> <p>As stated throughout, students are provided opportunities to apply literacy skills in authentic ways around a science topic.</p> <p>Grammar, Conventions, Writing Strategies: The unit uses oral and visual aids for supporting students in applying grammar, conventions, writing strategies, and discussion rules.</p> <p>Independent Reading Workshops are 25-30 minutes with every lesson and hold students accountable for independent reading by both conferring, assessing and teaching strategies to support students in individual progress. During the Whole group sharing opportunities, successes are celebrated and the targeted reading strategy is discussed.</p> <p>The unit includes suggested “Videos Alouds.” In Lessons 1 and 12, students closely analyze the video for perspective. This is a Call to Action for English Language Learners which requires a focus on student interaction, discussion, and speaking and listening rather than on the use of technology.</p>
<p>Rating: 3 – Meets most to all 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 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. <p><u><i>A unit or longer lesson should:</i></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>Optional formative assessment opportunities have been suggested by the developer: “Have students jot down their thinking around the gist of the article or essay” (p. 22, 38); “Flash drafts can be used to analyze the students’ content, structure, and craft” (p. 27, 31, 43, 47); “Have students use their now deeper meaning of the text to write a main idea for the text.” (Teacher Note: This can be used as a formative assessment as evidence about students’ thinking around the main idea of a text - p. 46).</p> <p>Supports are provided for ELL and students with disabilities to ensure all students can access the intended engagements (e.g., providing sensory, graphic, interactive).</p> <p>Rubrics and checklists are embedded throughout the lessons and align with the targeted Standards for the lesson and culminating tasks of the unit.</p> <p>The unit includes multiple formative assessment opportunities that are embedded within each lesson. Also communicated is how the information</p>
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	for these assessments will be used to inform instruction. Specifically, this occurs within the balanced literacy framework.
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Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

Summary Comments

The unit is an exemplary model that meets the English Language Learner Call to Action criteria. Correlation was provided Common Core Standards and NGSS and ELP standards. This correlation leaves no stone unturned for how to scaffold and support rigorous instruction for English Language Learners. Because of the detail and thoroughness provided in the unit, it can easily be replicated in other school context. The research-based strategies used are cited throughout the unit which provides rationale for the instructional methods chosen.
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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

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.